



4050 80th Avenue North, Pinellas Park, Fl

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SKYVIEW BULLETIN

THE HOMELESS AMONG US



When we see the disheveled woman pushing a shopping cart full of “junk” she has collected, or that crusty man with a worn, dog-eared sign saying “HOMELESS,” or “WILL WORK FOR FOOD,” what do we really see? Do we ignore them, thinking they choose to be in their present condition? Do we rationalize by saying to ourselves, “They could find work if they really wanted to” ? Maybe we even think, “I’m having financial difficulties myself—I can’t afford to give money to someone else.”

Homeless people do exist—in staggering numbers. One year ago, in Pinellas County there were 5,500 homeless people. Today, the number has grown to 7,500 with 1,300 children in homeless families. We probably cannot imagine what it is like not to have a roof over our heads, a bed to sleep in and a warm meal to satisfy our hunger. Yet, thousands of people all around us sleep on card-board boxes and eat food they have dug up out of garbage dumpsters and other unsanitary sources.

There are a few organizations that have been set-up to help these people on a temporary basis. Bag meals are provided and a place to sleep for one or two nights may be furnished, but there is no long-term help available to most of the homeless population.

We might have empathy for these folks and might even think, “There, but for the grace of God, go I,” and we might even try to maintain balance between enabling and helping someone. But the fact remains, the homeless are still among us and growing in number on a daily basis.

I want to go back to the original question asked in the beginning of this article. What do we see when we see the homeless on our streets? Are we able to look through the veneer of dirty, ragged clothes and see a soul that Jesus died for? Can we see beyond the crusty, soiled garments of the man holding up the “WILL WORK FOR FOOD,” sign and see a soul that needs “cleaning,” more than the physical body?

Can we see each homeless person as someone created in God’s image? I know this is hard to do. After all, we all make choices. Many people make the wrong choices and they end up homeless and hungry. Many may be the proof of “A man reaps what he sows,” (Galatians 6:7 NIV). Yet, the layers of defeat, addiction, pain, abuse and suffering may well hide the fact, that hidden deep within is a person created in God’s own image. And it is true that many don’t want a better life. Being homeless, living each day scrounging for food, searching in dumpsters for old discarded clothing and other necessities may be the only life some people know or even want. But, there is still, hidden somewhere in these individuals, a soul that needs help more than any physical need that we see on the surface. I must admit, I don’t have the answers. I don’t know how we choose who to help—whose life might be salvaged from ruin and destruction.

**What do
we see when
we see the
homeless on
our streets?**

ELDERS

*Ron Bastien
Don Greenlee
Charles Murray
David Roberts*

DEACONS

*Ron Bentz
Frank Edwards
Jim Ingram
George Loyd
Andy Murray
Dennis Trask
Brad VanHaerents*

PREACHER

Charles Murray

MEN WE SUPPORT

*William Stewart--Kingston, Canada
Bob Owen — Trip to Europe
Mike Mendez —trip to Cuba*

WORSHIP TIMES

SUNDAY

Worship.....9:30 A.M.
Classes.....10:50 A.M.
Worship.....6:00 P.M.

WORSHIP PLACE

4050 80th Ave N
PO Box 3118
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WEB: skyviewchurch.org

Sermons & classes now on
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**SERMONS & CLASSES
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WEBSITE**

**MAY 2010 BE THE BEST
YEAR EVER!**

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While we struggle with ourselves trying to decide how we will personally deal with the unfortunate among us, we may allow another need to go unnoticed. We may not be able to do much to help the homeless population. We may not be able to maintain a balance between helping someone and enabling someone. We may decide that any help we try to give may just encourage an individual to continue living as they are without any motivation to change their living conditions. This is a personal decision that we each must make.

But we need to be aware that there are many people around us that have three figure incomes, who drive luxury automobiles, who live in mansions and wear tailor-made clothes who are homeless. There are those who are considered poor, who are struggling to get by, but have a modest home, drive a used automobile, wear non-name-brand clothes who are also homeless. Then there are the middle-class folks. They maintain a good showing as they try to keep up with their neighbors. They are average people, and yet they too are homeless.

The condition of homelessness is the state of every person who is not a Christian.

This condition of homelessness is the state of every person who is not a Christian. While we may not be able to see through the veneer of the ragged clothes and dirty bodies of the "street-people" and see a soul in the image of God, we also may not be able to see through the veneer of prosperity, or just-getting-by to see a soul created in God's image.

The truth is, that regardless of where a person ends up in society, homeless on the street, or at the top of a corporate ladder, or anywhere in-between, if these people are not Christians, they are homeless.

Jesus told His disciples that in His Father's house there were many rooms and that He was going to prepare a place for them (John 14:1-4). The apostle Paul said he would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6). Jesus taught that if we love Him and obey His teachings, He and the Father will make Their home with us (John 14:23).

There is a home that is prepared for God's children. Anyone who is not a Christian cannot live in this eternal home. They are homeless. This fact should weigh heavily upon our hearts. The need for a physical dwelling place is temporary. The need for a home when this life is over is eternal. The homeless among us are aware of their homelessness. Those who are not Christians, who have not obeyed Christ often are not aware of their homeless condition.

This places a great responsibility upon us as Christians. The gospel is for all. It is the power of God for salvation for everyone (Romans 1:16). The Gospel knows no racial barriers, no social barriers, no economic barriers. The Gospel guarantees a home in heaven if obeyed and followed. This is why we must tell the good news. Jesus said He had been anointed to preach good news to the poor (Luke 4:18). We have been commissioned to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:16). "Every creature" includes the poor, the rich and the in-between.

We cannot coerce, manipulate or beg the homeless to come to Jesus. Nor can we force the rich or the middle-class to come to Jesus. We may not be able to change a person and get them off the streets. We may not be able to get those who make their homes in secluded alleys or shelters or wooded areas to come to Jesus. We may not be able to change them on the inside, but we can talk to them about Jesus. We can pray about it and hope they make the right choice. We may not be able to change the inside of the corporate boss who lives in a million dollar mansion and has placed his hope and faith in his wealth and success. We may not be able to change the heart of that next-door neighbor who lives in a house much like ours in a nice neighborhood who may be just an average person trying to make it in difficult times. But we can tell them about Jesus. We can let the Gospel exercise its power. We can try to show them that without Christ they are homeless. We can invite people to worship with us. We can take advantage of our "Friend's Day" that we have planned for May 16. We can hand someone a "Touches Card."

Those who are homeless may never know about the eternal home unless we tell them. Our own eternal home may be in jeopardy if we do not share the Gospel, the story of Jesus, with the homeless.

CEM



Adult

Auditorium

New class

beginning in

January:

The Life Of Christ

GOD'S

PLAN OF SALVATION

Believe—Heb. 11:6

Repent—Luke 13:3

Confess—Rom. 10:9

Be Baptized—

Mk. 16:16, Acts 2:38,

1 Pet. 3:21