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Preacher: Matt Lee

- [0 : 00] Hey there, church family. It has been a good month of letting the Lord fill my cup in so many ways. and I'm just excited to be back with you, our family, next Sunday, June 1st.
- But I can promise that you don't want to miss today's message. And while it will be a combination of an interview with our team that recently went to Liberia on a mission trip, as well as preaching for Matt Lee, but I think you'll be blessed by the power of God moving through Psalm 82.3 mission that we proudly support.
- So enjoy hearing from my friend and just a devoted follower of Christ, Matt Lee. And won't you go ahead and give him a warm FCC welcome.
- Hello FCC family. I'm Shelly Walsman. I'm the leader of the World Outreach Team. And today I'm here to talk to you and share with you a little bit about our last trip to Liberia.
- And you'll get to hear from several team members about how God used them to go and serve and expand his kingdom. Yes, I was part of the missions team, which went to Liberia at the end of February, beginning of March.
- [1 : 25] Blair and I both went. We went with Psalm 82.3. They're on campus or on the land as they call it. They have four houses taking care of foster children.
- They're on the land. One of the real memorable events that occurs is each night the foster kids do devotions in the homes.
- And during those devotions, they each have the opportunity to share what God has done for them that day. So they all start out saying, in Jesus name or in the mighty name of Jesus.
- And everybody responds, Amen. And then they go on to sing a song or tell what God has done for them that day. And as we went to devotions each evening, that required us to participate.
- And part of participation is also to share a Bible verse and reference that you have memorized. So, of course, those of us on the team had to look up our Bible verses ahead of time.
- [2 : 42] So we had them prepared for that evening. So that the schooling there, they have a school on site. They have 42 foster children or orphans.
- They have a school on site which schools over 100 children each day. And they use an American curriculum in the school.
- But do not press American culture on the children. Besides having the orphanage and working with the children, the mission also reaches out to the villages, providing food to the villages each month, and has an outreach to the prison, four other orphanages in the area, and a blind school and deaf village, blind village.
- And the mission has an outreach as well as just working with the children who are there on the land.
- On the land, they are working to grow some of their own foods that they eat. While we were there, we had lots of fresh pineapple, fresh from the plant, that was grown right there on site.

[4 : 09] We have to remember that Liberia is a very, very poor country. So that our meals primarily consisted of chicken and rice.

But we had plenty to eat. And we didn't go hungry. So the blind school, the day we got there, we found that the blind school was being kicked out of the home that they were in, which was very inadequate as well.

And we were able to find them a new house to move into, which they moved into the day that we left.

And get them established in a new place so that the blind school is now going. And we also work with the ICBM ministry to work with the blind school and blind village there in helping those.

People in Liberia are very poor, but the blind are below the bottom of the barrel there.

[5 : 26] In the villages, which consist of maybe one or two huts or mini huts, they distributed food.

And they continue to take food each month for them as an outreach to bring them rice, beans, and seasoning for their rice.

So that there is a lot going on through the mission, besides having a school, a medical clinic, which a new one is being built, and worship services in their newly built Guava hut.

So on Sunday, they provided, we provided dinner for over 300 people who came to service.

[illegible]

[7:00] There currently is a step-up program being instituted or being begun as several of the girls in the orphanage are approaching the age that we need to help them find what they're going to do as they leave.

Psalm 82:3 after having been on the land for all these years. So that we're working with trying to find something to help them have employment or job.

Employment, unemployment rate there is extremely high. So there's a lot of work to be done in Liberia.

Hello FCC family. I'm Tim Walsman and I just want to share I am part of the mission team here at the church and been to Guatemala several times, really enjoy that and this was my first trip to Liberia.

A little bit out of my comfort zone. The two weeks was quite a spell for me to be gone but it was a very rewarding and kind of loving experience.

[8 : 13] we went over there and no trouble getting to and from. I bought a lot of rice and beans, took it out to the village and people were so warm and loving towards that.

Got to bond with one of our security personnel and that kind of watched over us while we were there. Matter of fact, he texts me about two or three times a week.

And he doesn't ask for anything. He just calls on the WhatsApp and just tells me how much he loves me and how much he misses me and I do the same to him. So I just want to say, you know, the people there were so loving and so kind.

And, you know, it just feels good to go over there and just to serve and to be productive, you know, just to help them with whatever they have, you know, to do.

So if you ever get the opportunity to go and serve like that, you know, I really highly recommend it. You know, it's just so rewarding, so warm to be able to give and not receive, you know, and it's just, you know, a great experience.

[9 : 25] That's all I can say, you know. But I also want to thank you guys for all your prayers, you know, and thoughts and donations and stuff for the make this trip possible because he needed a lot of prayer because when you talk about the flight and stuff like that, you never know what to expect.

So your prayers meant a lot to us. So, but I just wanted to thank you. Hello again. Shelly here. I want to share with you about how God used me to go to Liberia.

This was my second trip to Liberia and I'm a nurse practitioner, so I served a lot in the medical clinic. And my heart is called to the malnutrition, the starving babies that are down there.

And the one I want to share with you, his name is Baby Saturday. He was born on a Saturday, a couple of months before we got down there. He was a two month old baby.

And he weighed six pounds when he was brought into the clinic. He was very thin, malnourished. Mom was with him. He wasn't sick enough yet to be transferred to the malnutrition clinic in Monrovia.

[10 : 29] So we had the opportunity this time to start the feeding program that FCC has been supporting, that we can keep these babies with their moms at home and supplement with their breastfeeding with formula.

And that is what we started with Baby Saturday. And he would take, she would nurse and then she would give him an ounce of formula every time she nursed. He came back in a week. He was already looking better, gaining weight.

And now he is fully round in his new shape, happy and doing well with this program that we've got going with him.

That is how I feel God has called me to serve by using my experience as a nurse practitioner. And I feel he's calling me to be there even more to serve him in third world countries.

This would be my first trip to Africa. I really wasn't sure what to expect. I felt really uneasy going not knowing what our project would be. I soon learned our project would be building relationships and meeting the needs of the people.

[11 : 35] The problem for me was that there were so, so many needs of the people. You don't see help wanted signs in Liberia. There are very few jobs. Instead you see people trying to survive, running after the trucks we brought full of food, and lining up in sometimes chaos or even joyful singing or both.

And then they would come to you and they would hand you their baby and say, my baby is sick. And they would push their daughter at you and they would say, she needs school. And the kids would say football or baby doll.

And the elderly widowed woman would ask for medical help. And they were all poking at you from all sides for help. I came with money, but I was overwhelmed and I really didn't know where to start giving it.

And about the fourth night, I just cried out in bed to God and I asked him to show me. And he showed me this little boy in the village outside the Psalm 82 3 compound, whose eyes and smile captured my heart.

I decided that if I saw him again, that I would make arrangements to sponsor him for school. As God would have it, there he was at church with his dad and arrangements were made.

[12 : 44] Later that week, I visited his village with a bag of rice and beans to feed his family for a month. As you can see in this picture, Tony with his hand raised high feels like a winner.

I can't wait to see him this fall with his school uniform on. He now has hope for the future. After this, giving became easier. Maybe too easy.

Because my money ran out the next to the last day of the trip. And I was devastated that I had nothing left to give on this last day. We visited an orphanage for the second time, taking new shoes for them.

The shoes were going fast. And a young girl tugged at me. And she asked me for a pair. I looked in the truck. And there was none left.

And I told her there were none left to give. But her disappointed eyes penetrated mine. And I looked away. And then I stared down at my own shoes.

[13 : 45] What were the chances that they'd fit? And I slid my foot up against hers to measure. And then I took my shoes off.

And like this Cinderella moment, the shoe fit perfectly. God provided. And I didn't have to have money to do it that day. I think of her now, running in those shoes to a soccer field.

Someone in our group said, Inside the gates of Psalm 82 3 is much like heaven. You can see hope for the people inside those walls. There's jobs, school, a clinic, a love of the malls and the aunties for the fatherless.

But all inside the walls. But all this hope comes at a price. You know, I made a mistake of going to the villages and sending women and children to the medical clinic.

The only problem was they got there and they knocked on the door. But they couldn't enter without someone to vouch to pay. Vivian would come to find me because they would give them my name.

[14 : 50] Who will pay the price? Well, since I sent them, I did. I did. Rest assured, heaven will not be like this. We know and have confidence that Jesus paid the price for us, for all to enter and to believe.

We will enter his gates with praise knowing our hope is restored. But on earth, right now in Liberia, Africa, they need hope right now. And we have the opportunity to give the people there a piece of heaven.

And someone has to pay the price. And be the defenders. And the money came from a Sunday school class here at FCC.

Liberia, well there's going to be not an official trip from FCC, but there's going to be opportunities where people are going with other teams this fall, January. If you're interested, come see me and I'll get you the information.

We're working on nailing down the dates. So if you're interested, there's going to be a sign-up sheet for you to get committed to go and serve God there. Thanks again for being here with us today, and thank you so much for your support in the mission to serve God.

God is doing some amazing work on the 50 acres of land as He continues to develop this, started back in April of 2018, into a safe foster care village, sustainable community center.

[17 : 52] To date, more than 1,000 children have been served medically and more than 425 souls have joined the family of Jesus and been baptized since June of 2018.

Will you pause with me and just give God praise and say, Thank you, God, for what you've done. Let's pray. God, I thank you for today.

Lord, I'm grateful for all you are doing for us as defenders. I'm grateful for those you brought safely back home from their mission trip. And Lord, I just pray that as we go into your word today, as we study it, that your word will come to life for each of us.

I won't be singing this year at all. Especially this little light of mine. But instead, I do want to play a little game about slogans. So, here's how it'll work.

I will say a slogan and hopefully you will know who the company is that this slogan represents. I hope you're ready to play this simple slogan game.

Some of them will be very, very familiar to you. How about this one? Taste the rainbow. That's right. Skittles.

And now, to my Sunday craving friends, I'm sorry because the next one makes you a little bit more hungry on a Sunday. Eat more chicken.

[19 : 55] That's right. Chick-fil-A. I'm loving it. Again, good job. McDonald's. I can never quite say this one without a little Viking tone to it.

What's in your wallet? Again, great job. Capital One. And finally, for almost 40 years, this has been the most popular slogan for this company.

You probably already guessed it. Just do it. Buy? Buy? That's right. Nike. Just do it. Do is a word that carries a lot of meaning around my house currently with five teenagers all preparing to spread their independent wings in the next few years.

Our oldest son, Colton, is now 20 years old and he's focused on being a mechanic. He loves everything about cars and I'm grateful because I tend to brake cars quickly.

Our second oldest son, our son Ona, is now 17. And along with our daughter Marie, also almost 17, they will together enter their senior year this fall.

[21 : 07] Next, our daughter Blessing, also turning 17 this summer, entering her sophomore year of high school. And finally, our baby girl Izzy, soon to be 15 and heading into her freshman year this fall.

Now, since Kentucky wants to fit in with other states like Indiana, they recently changed the driving permit age to 15, which means, that's right, friends. We have four very young drivers in our family all at once.

So I covet your prayers. We are blessed that each of our kids have different things they all love to do and are able to do. From soccer to track to volleyball and football and a lot of church and church camp activities.

A few years ago, my wife Tara and I discovered that each fall meant that the activities the kids enjoy doing also meant that we as parents also added to our to-do list.

With nearly 50 activities each fall between the months of August through October. This idea of doing things and just do it has increasingly taken over all of our lives.

[22 : 15] We are a culture of doing, being active. We almost pride ourselves on being more and more busy. From doing school and work to doing family time, sports time, church time, friends time, and social media time.

The list of being able to do things is literally endless, especially in our American context. While none of those areas that I mentioned are bad things, they certainly aren't at the core of what God has commanded each of us to do as followers of Jesus.

So, if filling our lives with busyness isn't what God wants us to do, then what are we supposed to do? To find that answer, I would encourage us to go to the only place that can truly be our guide, God's Word.

And to me, there is no better place to look at than the interaction that Jesus had with the teacher of the law as it comes to having faith and living out our faith. Let's look together at Luke 10, verses 25-37, also known as the parable of the Good Samaritan.

There it says, On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. Teacher, he asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life? What is written in the law, he replied.

[23 : 31] How do you read it? He answered, You have answered correctly, Jesus replied.

Do this and you will live. But he, the man testing Jesus, wanted to justify himself. So he asked Jesus, Hmm, and who is my neighbor?

In reply, Jesus said, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was, and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him, and he bandaged up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

[24 : 34] The next day, he took out two denarii, and gave them to the innkeeper. Look after him, he said, and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.

Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? The expert in the law replied, the one who had mercy on him.

Jesus told him, go and do likewise. This well-respected teacher of the law asked Jesus for the secret code on how to have eternal life. Quite literally, for you and I, what must we do?

Instead of Jesus giving him the easy answer, Jesus flips everything on its head, gives credit to a direct enemy of this man, and brings the entire Bible into a laser focus with two commandments, love God and love our neighbors.

Today, I want to provide three lessons I find in this story about the Good Samaritan, title lessons to what God is doing in Liberia, Africa, through Psalm 82.3 mission. The first lesson, loving our neighbor is rarely easy.

[25 : 43] If you ask any mission team member about going to Liberia, they will likely tell you that it is not easy. First, it's the cost. A total expense of \$3,700 per person to go to Liberia.

Most people don't have these kinds of funds just laying around, or it comes at a huge sacrifice to use these funds for a mission trip. Second, it's the flights and arrivals. A little more than 20 hours, 24 hours of being in airplanes and terminals, gathering your luggage in what feels like being a cow in a stall in the hot but short ride to the hotel on very little sleep.

Finally, it's the accommodations. The place we stay sometimes has water and sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes the A.C. works in the rooms and other times not so much.

Sometimes the water is running and sometimes you have to do everything in the bathroom with a bucket. Instead of calling it a hotel, we often call it concrete camping.

It's not even glamping. I know that that's not a very good advertisement for a mission trip. So stay with me for a second. Because the moment you step onto the property, you almost feel immediately this peace that God has brought you into this situation for a reason.

[26 : 59] That He has ordained this moment between Him and you. When you meet the kids and see all that God is doing, you might even describe the moment like my friend Melvin.

Take a look. Melvin, how would you describe what God is doing here? Wow. Well, that's a huge question because in one word, what I would say, God is turning this place into what He sees heaven is.

He's turning this place into a safe place that children can grow up here and not worry about anything and become a better leader for like you or tomorrow.

If anyone truly gets how hard it is to travel and serve in Liberia, it would have to be my friend Mike. I think I shared about him last year and what God has been doing.

But if not, let me do some catching up. Our team was already going to the Blind Village about once a year to do a small community service initiative. But when Mike started going to Liberia in January 2023, things started changing quickly.

[28 : 12] Now, after the January trip this year, Mike has been to Liberia a total of three times. I think it's important to note that Mike is in his 70s.

He has a very difficult time of keeping his balance. And my friend Mike is blind. Yet, since Mike trusted God to use him in Liberia, really amazing things have been happening.

Most recently this January, after Mike led a three-day revival service and offered a time of decisions, 21 people, 10 of whom were blind, decided to get baptized.

Instead of taking these new brothers and sisters to our normal ocean location with large rocks and hard waves, we paid \$5 per baptizer and \$5 for those being baptized to use a private pool near the Blind Village.

One of those people even included Mike's younger sister, Missy. Isn't God's ability to write stories amazing? My personal favorite during those baptisms was an older man that I got to baptize.

[29 : 17] As I lowered him into the pool, he yelled out, Oh no, my cell phone! So, we quickly placed him back on the steps, emptied out all of his pockets, and proceeded with his baptism.

Then, after Mike returned home, some of your very own people from here at FCC were on the mission team in late February. Several of them have been for the second time, and on this specific trip, God placed it on their hearts to cover the rent of the blind school.

We don't exactly know what is to come for the next steps in this part of the story, but we know God is doing something incredible. The simplest invitation would be to invite you on a mission trip, of which you are certainly invited and challenged and welcome to do.

But I wonder, do I have to get on a plane, spend thousands of dollars, sleep in less than luxurious accommodations to love my neighbor? Is it possible to take huge strides to love my neighbor directly right here in this town?

In this county? In this state? Yes. But my friend, please know, to truly love your neighbor, it will rarely be easy.

[30 : 35] The second lesson that I learned about this story is, loving our neighbor always includes a cost. See, in the story of the Good Samaritan, the cost to serve was considerable.

The Samaritan could have chosen to only help the injured person a little bit. He could have chosen to just bandage the wounds or prop them against a tree in hopes the next person would truly help him.

The Samaritan probably didn't agree with this person's political views. He didn't first wonder, would this man that was injured even return the favor to him if the roles happened to be reversed?

Instead, the Samaritan chose to let his schedule be changed, arranged for continued care, and willingly gave up two denarii. One denarii would be equivalent to about a daily's wages.

In today's terms in the U.S., the average daily wage is \$250 per day. So this man giving up two denarii would be like giving up a gift of \$500.

[31 : 41] That's a lot more than just a few band-aids or some clothes that we really didn't want or didn't fit us anyway. It's an intentional choice to sacrifice, to put a personal plan on hold, and to trust God to carry us through till possibly the next paycheck.

I am often blown away by our friends here at FCC and their generosity. What a great joy it has been to see nearly all of the children in our foster care now be fully sponsored, as well as all but 21 children in our school being sponsored at \$35 per month.

Incredible people willingly choosing to sacrifice monthly to make sure kids like Felicia go to school. Take a look.

Hi, Thomas. My name is Fidisha Peeplow for Not Defender Christian Academy. I am here to tell you the importance of education in my life. Education is important because if I'm educated, I can educate a whole nation.

But if you're not educated, people will always look down on your teeth. We would love to connect you and your family to one of these kids at \$35 per month.

[32 : 56] But I want to make sure you hear my gratitude as well. FCC, you guys have been incredible. As a church, you are sponsoring a Sato's Care.

You've been a huge blessing to the building of the new King Jesus Children's Clinic that hopefully will open in January 2026. And recently, your church gave \$16,000 towards the building of the new middle school.

It seems like this church family truly understands that loving your neighbor comes at a great cost. And what I love most is you're willing to do so. Final lesson.

Loving our neighbor requires compassion and action. Raise your hand if you agree that you are a sinner saved by grace. Raise your hand if you agree that you and I can't earn this incredible gift of grace, but that it's a gift freely offered to all of us that believe in Jesus.

Raise your hand if you agree that Jesus paid for my sin and your sin for all eternity through His death, burial, and resurrection. So, if we all agree that we can't earn it and that Jesus paid our price, that should put us in a place of being so far amazed and overwhelmed by His grace that we just pour it out willingly to others.

[34 : 24] How beautiful it is to be reminded that God's grace is sufficient. Amen? It's this grace that each of us experience daily that allows us to feel something deeply in our souls when needs arise.

For Psalm 82, as an example, in May 2022, when the government was going to close an orphanage due to abuse, it was a real possibility that the children living there would soon be homeless or placed in even worse situations.

How could we look at two buildings we had just finished and had just started using that were simply dedicated to be a staff house and a mission team house? Yet, turn away ten children.

Giving up the original purpose of these buildings just made sense. We are so thankful that we did. Now, three years later, God has done so many remarkable things in each of these children's lives as they receive and share this grace with others.

Then, in June 2023, how could we meet a baby girl named Asatu and a baby boy named Harris at our medical clinic, both starving, suffering from malnourishment, and choose to walk away?

[35 : 38] Instead, because of God's call to action to love Him and our little neighbors' generous gifts that were given, God has given us as we found ourselves to be blessed to be able to serve these amazing kids.

To close out our time together, I want to give you a glimpse into what happens for our neighbors on the other side of the world when we take this command to do, to live out our faith with action, literally.

What's incredible is that nearly every person's favorite experience in Liberia happens every night in our foster homes. As somehow in the faces and the stories of these children, we are all reminded of grace and love.

Homes that are filled with children that were once broken now being made whole through Jesus. Homes that are filled with children that were once forgotten now found by Jesus.

Homes that are filled with the reality that God's grace is sufficient. And when you realize that loving God and loving your neighbor is the best way to live, well, in those moments, you just do it.

[36 : 49] You, they, we, we worship. FCC family and friends, thank you for being defenders of the weak and the foulest in Liberia, Africa.

Thank you for just doing it. Enjoy this time of worship. And I'll see you next time. What? What Did You Do?

my when kita come I'll come with thee.

God will come with thee. Can you see?

. .

[39 : 14] What is that?

What is that?