
**CAMINO: WALK IN THE WAY
PART THREE: SERVICE**

Mark 2:1-12; Daniel 7:13-14; Isaiah 35:5-6

1. Saved to Serve

- Mark 10:45; John 20:21-23

2. Serve to Share

- Matthew 5:16

3. Share to Save

- Ephesians 5:15-17; 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 10:13-15

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West Valley Church
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Camino: Walk in the Way Part Three: Service

After a great day last Sunday enjoying the NNU Choir and Orchestra, we are continuing our four-part series entitled, "Camino: Walk in the Way." If you've been with us, you might remember that the Camino is the most famous 'pilgrimage' trek in the world.¹ The full name for it is the "Camino de Santiago," or "The Way of Saint James." At the least, it is a 500-mile hiking trail through the Pyrenees Mountains in the South of France and along the northern portion of Spain. At the most, it is a spiritual pilgrimage that people have trekked for over a thousand years. In this sermon series, we are using the Camino as a metaphor for our spiritual journey.

All of us who have become Christians have stepped onto the path of following Jesus. The word "camino" in Spanish means "way," or "path," or "journey."

This four part sermon series is giving an overview of what it takes to be on this journey, walking the way of Jesus. We began by talking about how important *discipleship* is for us on the journey – that we begin the journey by accepting what God has done for us through Jesus Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, and that we make progress by keeping in step with the path that we've created for spiritual growth here at our church with "Starting Point," the four Core Classes, other classes and Bible Studies, Small Groups, Outreach Events, and Outreach Teams.

The second week we talked about the importance of what is called "Evangelism" – that each of us are to introduce people to Jesus Christ and encourage as many people as possible to join us on our journey. This is God's priority task for every Christian on the planet – and he gives us his Holy Spirit for our growth in holiness so that we can be the power and presence of God in this world as we love others and share the Gospel – the Good News of God's love – in ways that others can understand. We also talked about all the ways that we as a church are doing that through our work at Wide Hollow, and now Mountainview, through our intentional hospitality events like Trunk or Treat, Breakfast with Santa, Christmas and Easter worship services, and our Gospel-sharing ministries like Upward Soccer and Science Night on Tuesdays. I shared with you how these efforts are resulting in people becoming a part of our church family, attending worship and small groups, and putting their faith in Jesus Christ. This is happening!

I shared with you on the other Sundays how our middle son, Ryan, took the Camino pilgrimage right after he graduated from college, with three of his roommates. Two

¹ Hiking Spain's Oldest Trail: Camino De Santiago
Sam Burbank - <https://gearjunkie.com/hiking-spain-camino-de-santiago>

of them dropped out within a couple of weeks, but he and his good friend finished the 500-mile hike in about a month. It was an incredibly moving experience for him.

I also told you that he and his friends were inspired to walk the Camino after two men spoke at a chapel service at Northwest Nazarene University where my son attended. These two men were Nazarene University alumni, and they had taken the Camino together. But their story is far more inspirational than just two guys walking the Camino. It is the story of two men, Justin Skeesuck & Patrick Gray. "Born just over 36 hours apart, Justin & Patrick are life-long friends with a rich, deep relationship that spans beyond 40 years. They travel together, live life together through its ups and downs, and most importantly, will do anything for each other."²

Justin was diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy. The disease continued to eat away at any control he had over his body, rendering him so powerless that his wife and daughter had to feed him. But the friendship of Justin and Patrick through the progression of the disease only deepened the love they have for each other.

One day Justin heard about the Camino while watching the PBS travel show, "Rick Steves" – a clip of which we watched together on the first Sunday. Justin researched it more, and then asked his close friend if he would want to take the Camino together. Patrick didn't hesitate; he said, "I'll push you." That response became the title of their book, of a documentary movie, and led to the founding of "Push Inc." where the two help organizations and individuals realize they can achieve more, together.

That film can be seen in limited release, in fact it will be shown on November 2 in Kennewick at the Columbia Center Mall.

I want to show you the trailer for that film, because it is a beautiful illustration of what we are going to learn from the Bible today.

video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7gKD3q0-V0>)

What a powerful story – similar to a story in the Bible about the lengths that some men went to in order to help their crippled friend get to Jesus. We can read about it in three of the four gospels, but for the sake of time, we'll read it from Mark's gospel. Since the Word of God is our priority, and since we work very hard to ensure that we preach solely from God's Word, would you honor God's Word by standing with me as I read it to us? Thank you:

"When Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'

² <https://illpushyou.mykajabi.com/p/About>

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, 'Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up, take your mat and walk"? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So he said to the man, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:1-12, niv)

May God bless and apply and empower the reading and preaching of His Word to our hearts. Thanks for standing – you can have a seat, please.

Like the story of "I'll Push You," this is a powerful story from Scripture of love, friendship, forgiveness, healing, and correction. Let's look at this.

The passage tells us that Jesus had come "home" – most likely it means that after the events in chapter one, he came back to Peter's house, where he had been staying. It was made up of several small roofed rooms surrounding a courtyard. Jesus taught from within one of these rooms, and the crowds were pressed in to all the spaces of the house and outside, straining to hear Jesus speak. No one was willing to make room for this crippled man and his friends.

The Bible is clear that Jesus was telling them "the Word" – the "logos" or the Gospel, the Good News of God's love for them and that his Kingdom had arrived in himself – the person of Jesus Christ.³

The man on the mat was an adult – because of the way he is described and because it took four men to carry him. Remember that these were small towns and people didn't travel much, so probably everyone knew the man and his condition.

The friends were probably able to get access to the roof by a wooden ladder or an outside staircase. Either way, it could not have been easy.

They figured out which room Jesus was in, and they dug through the roof. Most houses at that time and in that area "had flat roofs made of a mixture of clay and brush, reinforced by wooden beams."⁴ It wouldn't have been too difficult to cut through, but there's no way they could have done it without everyone underneath hearing it and seeing all the dust and materials falling in on them. Imagine that scene – Jesus is teaching, then you hear some noise up on the roof, then dust starts to fall on Jesus and the crowd, then suddenly a shot of hot middle-eastern sunshine breaks through the roof, the shafts of light filled with dust and falling debris. I

³ Kent Brower, *Mark: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, "New Beacon Bible Commentary" (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2012) pg 83

⁴ John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Mk 2:4.

imagine that once the hole started, the friends stopped worrying about the disruption and really started to tear open the hole. Then a man on a mat, with ropes in the corners, is clumsily lowered right in front of Jesus – there were probably moments that the man might fall out!

The faces of people in the crowd probably showed astonishment or irritation at the interruption. What do you think the look on Jesus' face was like? Do you think he was frustrated with the intrusion? I think, knowing his character, he probably broke into a big, broad smile, and then was ready to catch the guy if he fell out, but waited for the man to make it to his resting place on the floor in front of him. I think Jesus also knew who was in the crowd, and that he was being given more than an opportunity than just to heal this guy. Jesus knew that there were strict religious rules followers in the crowd watching him carefully, and he was being given an opportunity to demonstrate what the Kingdom of God is really all about – not being enslaved to rules, but being in a loving relationship with God.

The Scripture says that Jesus intuited the faith of the men lowering down the cripple (it doesn't say anything about the faith of the crippled man), and so Jesus takes action. We can only assume that the men brought their friends to Jesus because they had heard about his ability to heal to people. They had hoped that finally their friend could be healed, and no crowd was going to keep them from it. They were determined to get their friend into the presence of Jesus.

But instead of healing the man, he announced, "Your sins are forgiven." Now, that seems a strange thing, doesn't it? The friends brought the man to be healed from his paralysis, and Jesus forgave the man of his sins.

There are several things going on here. One, there was a common perception in that culture, that if a person was sick, they must have sinned. We know that isn't correct, at least not all the time. *Some* sins *do* result in mental, physical, or psychosomatic illnesses. But not all sins do. And not all physical illnesses are the result of sin. But *they* didn't think of it that way; they thought all physical illnesses were the result of sin. Here's the cool thing: Jesus was willing to deal with them at their level of understanding. He didn't go into a big debate about the theology of illness and sin. Jesus instead got straight to the heart of the matter – the condition of the man's soul. So he forgives his sins.

It's also interesting that, *due to the faith of his friends*, Jesus forgave the man's sins. The man didn't ask for that, even though he needed it. But Jesus knew the man's heart and his need, and so he gave forgiveness, prompted by what his friends were doing for him. That tells you that *what we do to meet the needs of others has a direct result, a direct blessing, on their spiritual lives as well*. Remember that.

But Jesus also saw this as an opportunity to set some things straight. Remember, there were religious leaders, or "scribes" in the crowd. They represented the religious scholars; they were the theologians who thought they had God all figured out, and they knew the rules – they *wrote* many of them!

So when Jesus forgave the man's sins, the scribes blew a gasket. They knew the Old Testament well enough to know that only God has the authority to forgive sins. Not

only that, their rules stated that God would not forgive sins unless someone had gone through the prescribed rituals of sacrifice and cleansing. They were angry because, for Jesus to brazenly declare that the man's sins were forgiven was tantamount to calling himself God. *Which is exactly why Jesus forgave the man's sins:* he was declaring that he was not only sent from God, he was God's Son, the Messiah, the Christ.

Then we are told that Jesus knew what the scribes were thinking. Jesus had a supernatural discernment into the hearts of people. So he went straight to the heart of the crippled man's need, and he went straight to the heart of the Scribe's problems.

But just saying that the man's sins were forgiven didn't really prove anything – anyone could make that claim, but how could you prove it? It's not like you could take the man's temperature to see if it changed. So Jesus was ready to actually prove his authority – he said, "What's easier to do – to claim the man's sins are forgiven, or to actually heal him physically? To prove that I can do the first, I'm going to do the second."

Just before that, though, Jesus referred to himself by an interesting title – did you see that? He called himself, "the Son of man." That's a strange term if you are not familiar with its history, but I can promise you that the people crowded into that house knew exactly what Jesus meant. The term literally means, "Human One." But it is used in the Old Testament book of Daniel to describe the Messiah – the Sent One of God. This is what Daniel described in his prophetic vision:

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a *son of man*, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14, niv, *italics added*)

The "Son of Man" that Daniel described clearly has the authority of God – he is on the clouds of heaven – which was a description of God's presence; he comes in and out of God's presence. He has authority, glory, and sovereignty, and will be worshipped by the entire world. He is a King whose kingdom is eternal. So for Jesus to call himself "Son of Man" left no doubt in anyone's minds that day – Jesus was declaring himself to be the Son of God, and he proved it by forgiving sins and healing the crippled man (by the way, the prophet Isaiah said that one indicator of the Messiah would be that he would restore sight to the blind and heal the crippled so that they would walk and leap (Isaiah 35:5-6).

So now you can understand that it is no exaggeration that everyone was amazed, praised God, and said, "We've never seen anything like this!" Because as soon as Jesus told the crippled man, "Pick up your mat and go home," the man did exactly that – right in front of everybody!

So let me just share with you a few quick applications about how important service is when it comes to our pilgrimage on the Camino – our walk on the journey of the

Christian life; to being a Christian. Living a life of service is essential. Two weeks ago we talked about the importance of inviting as many people as we can to join us on this journey; today we are seeing that we not only invite – there are some people we need to *carry* into Jesus' presence through our loving actions of serving those in need.

The first application we need to see is that we are...

1. ***Saved* to *Serve***

Like those friends, we know what Jesus is capable of doing; so we need to carry others who are in need to Jesus so that he can heal them.

The Camino – walking in the way of Christ – is about carrying out Christ's work in this world until Jesus comes back. Jesus was very clear what he had come to do. He told the disciples:

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45, niv)

He came to serve, and to expend his life in the service of others. And Jesus saves *us* to carry out *his* work. He told his disciples, and he tells us:

“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’” (John 20:21-23, niv)

The Father sent the Son to serve, and as the Father sent Jesus, so Jesus sends us. We are saved and sent to serve, just like Jesus. Serving is essential to the Christian walk.

So you might ask, what is serving? At its most simple, *servicing is sharing what I have with someone else who needs it*. If there is a need, and I have a means to meet it; I do what I can for that person in need. That means that if someone has a need and I don't have what he or she needs, I am not able to serve in that capacity. But it's not just money or material goods – it might be time, or attention, or encouragement, or friendship, or teaching a child to read, or assisting a teacher who teaches a child to read. We all have something to give, in some way. Do we serve only to meet their physical, social, or emotional needs? Yes. We serve simply because we are Christians, and that is what Jesus does. Serving has value for its own sake; we serve for the sake of serving. But we also know that when we serve it gives the Holy Spirit room to work...

2. ***Serve* to *Share***

While serving others has value in its own right, we also serve because we want to share this Good News about Jesus with them. Meeting needs is the best way to show and to share the Good News of God's love to people. Jesus said:

“Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” (Matthew 5:16, nlt)

I like how the Message Bible translates that verse:

“Be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16, tmt)

When we love and serve people, they have the opportunity to see the One who is in us.

Those friends served their crippled friend, and in the process they brought him into the presence of Jesus. We have the same opportunity to do so in our day, every time we love and serve someone, we are bringing them into the presence of Jesus because Jesus is in us!

Why do you think we do what we do as a church? We serve the needs of the families at Wide Hollow Elementary School and now at Mountainview because in doing so we are bringing the presence of Jesus to them. At Trunk or Treat, we give children a safe, demon-free environment to celebrate Halloween. Lord knows they need a safe place to have sanctified fun! We do it because when those 2,000+ people come through, every 150+ of us that they meet is 150+ opportunities to be in the presence of Jesus. We do Breakfast with Santa for the same reason. We do Upward Soccer for the same reason. It’s the same reason we meet their needs at Homework Club, and Science Camp, and Science Night on Tuesday. When you serve your neighbors or coworkers or those lonely, bullied kids at school, you are bringing them into the presence of Jesus. And when you do, they will eventually recognize their need for their sins to be forgiven. I heard from someone this week who was at a local store and struck up a conversation with an employee at that store – a young woman. The conversation turned to our church – West Valley Church. This unchurched woman said, “I just love your church and all that you do for our community! We love coming to Trunk or Treat! It is such a fun, safe time for my little ones. They aren’t old enough yet to join Upward Soccer, but as soon as they are, I will sign them up.” Because of our *service*, this young mom loves our church. She hasn’t attended worship yet, but she knows all about us and feels loved by us. Soon her children will be at Upward where they will hear about Jesus and have an opportunity to accept him. She will learn about Homework Club, and Science Camp, and Science Night, and Caravan, and Wednesday Night Dinner, and small groups, and worship where she will encounter God.

We are saved to serve, and we serve to share Christ with them.

Finally, we...

3. Share to Save

When we are on this journey of discipleship in the way of Jesus – the Camino – we are so amazed and overwhelmed by the love of Christ that we want others to know Him too. So we will invite others to join us on the journey, and we will serve others

to bring his presence to them, because we want them to see in us how great Jesus is. Our deepest desire is that others would know how much God loves them, too, and respond to his saving forgiveness and love for their own lives. The Bible reminds us:

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” (Ephesians 5:15-17, niv)

The Lord’s will is that no one misses the opportunity to be saved:

“The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.” (2 Peter 3:9, nlt)

He wants everyone to be saved. He sends us to meet needs and bring people into Jesus’ presence so that as they see him they will respond to him and realize they need their sins forgiven, and will ask us about him so that we can share the Good News with them, and they might respond and be saved. I shared this verse two weeks ago but I want to share it again:

“‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, ‘How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!’” (Romans 10:13-15, nlt)

We are saved to serve, and we serve to share, and we share to save.

I remember one young mom whose marriage was about to end in divorce. Both she and her husband were completely unchurched – their life and their language showed it. She had four children – all under the age of two! She had two sets of twins. They had been premature, so they were often sick in the hospital with severe respiratory issues – not to mention the incredible need for formula, food, and diapers! So a small group in our church loved her family, cleaned her house, brought meals, diapers, and provided childcare relief. Soon she attended that small group. Soon she invited her husband to join her. He went once, reluctant to go back because he said, “No one is that happy!” Soon she accepted Jesus, and soon after her husband did too.

People, folks today did not grow up the way many of you did. Many of you grew up hearing about the church or even being raised in it. People today know nothing about the church, other than a bad reputation. People today can only be *loved* into the kingdom. It used to be that if they accepted Jesus, they could belong to the church; first people believed, then they would belong. They did not belong to the church until they believed. But today is different. Today, people belong *before* they believe. People need to know they are loved and accepted – served – and *then* they will believe. People are loved into the Kingdom. Belonging leads to believing.

The Christian way is back to the same simple style of Jesus: saved to serve, serve to share, share to save. On the Camino we carry those who are in need, until *they* are in the presence of Jesus and *their* sins can be forgiven.