CAN WE BE AS RADICAL?

*Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them.*

Matthew 4:23-24

What did the man called Jesus do when He walked the earth 2000 years ago? Because of His work during those three short years the world changed dramatically from what it was before He lived. We are benefitting today from what Jesus did at that time.

Jesus was known for his kindness, humility, and gentleness. The love He showed to those on the margins brought them the sense of dignity and value they had been lacking. He calls His followers to love in the way He did by caring for those who are rejected in our world today.

Something we clearly see in Jesus’s life and teachings is the way He included people that everyone else left out. He was a radical in the way he treated social outcasts like prostitutes, the poor, the sick, lepers and others. Before Jesus came, no one had shown them such acceptance. Jesus changed the status quo. Can we, as His followers, be as radical?

How did Jesus overcome the injustices of His day? For one thing, He recognized things that were wrong with the world at a time when others accepted them as normal. He showed compassion for those who were being rejected. He recognized their pain when others didn’t and became an example for all of us who want to follow Him.

He spent his three years of ministry trying to fight the injustices He saw. He spoke out against it. But He did a lot more than that. By his actions He showed how injustice could be overcome with love.

Jesus showed His compassion throughout the gospels. His heart went out to people in their pain and sorrow. The Bible shows how he wept with Mary and Martha when they were grieving the death of their brother Lazarus. *When Jesus saw her [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.* (John 11:33)

He felt the great pain of the woman who touched His cloak, hoping that even closeness to Jesus would bring healing for the bleeding she had experienced for so many years. Jesus showed His affection, saying, *“Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”* (Luke 8:48)

He healed the sick, the poor, those who were considered “different.” He gave them a sense of dignity. He helped them realize they were as worthy as others. They started feeling better about themselves, living more confident lives. Eventually they found the strength to serve God in their own right.

People who had been banished from their families and communities because of their mental and physical illnesses were healed and once more enfolded by their families and communities. They were once more able to enjoy their love and acceptance. What’s more, those who had found healing, witnessed to others about Jesus’ great love. Many came to believe.

We are not God. We are not divine like Jesus. And so, we are not usually able to physically heal people in the way Jesus did. But when we follow Jesus by showing His love for those who struggle, we can help people feel more emotionally whole as Jesus did.

His heart goes out to us too when we suffer. If we ask Him, He will join with us in fellowship when we go through difficult times. We never have to think that nobody cares. As long as we have a relationship with Jesus, He will always be with us.

marja