

Experience Authentic Worship

Rich Mullins is one of my all-time favorite song writers. During one of his concerts he said that *"The Church is God's plan A for the world, and there is no plan B."* What he meant was it is the Church that is empowered to be His witnesses to the world, to preach the Good News of the gospel, and continue the works of Jesus on earth until He comes back. That is **the plan** of God for reaching the lost on this earth for salvation.

For as long as I have been in full-time ministry I have closely held the belief that since we are the Body of Christ on earth we are to be the practical and functional hands and feet of Jesus on this earth. Meaning we are to be available to help people in their need, to be with them to bring comfort when they suffer, to share in life with them the way Jesus did. I still hold this to be true today, however my understanding of this has become richer and fuller in its meaning for my life.

We know from Scripture that it is God who draws people to Himself; it's not me, not you, not your pastor or anyone in church leadership. It's God Himself. But God does this through us. When people are drawn to God by His kindness (*Romans 2:4*) it is done through the Christians that those people are interacting with.

We are His hands and feet, but it is not enough to simply be in the right place at the right time, or to share a word with someone, or to preach the gospel or spend time with people. No, God teaches us that if I do all these things but lack love—**His love**—I have done nothing eternally consequential.

We can share the gospel but have no compassion in our hearts for the lost. We can give a cold drink of water to the thirsty, but have no empathy for their spiritual condition. We can offer a word of prophecy and encouragement, yet have no

concern for their current needs.

I believe this is why Jesus told His disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait until the promised Holy Spirit was given to them (*Acts 1:4*). He said that the Holy Spirit would **empower** them to be His witnesses. And what was and is this power? It is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and the same power that took Jesus to the cross. He is the Spirit of truth and love, and it is only the Spirit of truth and love that reveals the heart of God to us (*1 Cor. 2:10-13*).

God draws people through His kindness through the hearts of believers who have given themselves, their lives, their hearts, to know and release the loving kindness of God to others. We are His body, and that includes His heart. We are to overflow His heart to those around us, just as Christ poured out His life as an offering.

Romans 12 says that this is our **spiritual act of "worship,"** each day offering our bodies as living sacrifices so we can be not only His hands and feet to others, but His heart as well.

And whether God empowers you to share the gospel, or a word of encouragement, pray for healing or provide help to those that can't help themselves, each of those good works is to come from the loving and kind heart of the Father. The works are "good" because of the heart from which the worker does them. And if done without love, they are nothing (*1 Cor. 13:1-3*).

Scripture encourages each of us to do regular self-examination of our hearts and test to see if we are truly living the faith we proclaim to have. **Are we loving God** with all our hearts, in all of our decisions, in all of our dealings? **Are we loving our neighbors**, those around us, with the same love that took Jesus to the cross? If we find that we are far from loving others in that way, then **let us pray** that the Holy Spirit would convict us of this, and let us ask Him to reveal His heart to us, that we may reveal it to those around us.

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