**Bishop’s Isle of Wight Lent Course 2017**

**Living the Marks of Mission**

The Five Marks of Mission

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

**3. To respond to human need by loving service**

4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation

5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

**A reminder, once again**

* What in the life of our Church shows this Mark matters to us?
* How is this Mark reflected in our worship?
* What more could we do as a Church to live this Mark?
* Who else in our community does this? How can we help them?

**Where are we now?**

Introduce yourself to the group.

A baby doesn’t understand the words ‘I love you’ but knows that s/he is loved by the things that happen. What things make you appreciate that you are loved?

**Look, listen, see, hear**

What different kinds of ‘need’ are there in your family, church and community? Briefly identify one or two from **each** part of your life.

**Biblical reflection 1**

*Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favour with his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy.**\** *2Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman’s wife. 3She said to her mistress, ‘If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.’**\** *4So Naaman\* went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. 5And the king of Aram said, ‘Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel.’*

*He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. 6He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, ‘When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy.’**\** *7When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, ‘Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy?**\** *Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me.’*

*8 But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, ‘Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel.’ 9So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha’s house. 10Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, ‘Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean.’ 11But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, ‘I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy!**\** *12Are not Abana\* and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?’ He turned and went away in a rage. 13But his servants approached and said to him, ‘Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, “Wash, and be clean”?’ 14So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.* (2 Kings 5: 1-14)

*You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” 44But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. 46For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? 47And if you greet only your brothers and sisters,**\** *what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* (Matthew 5:43-48)

Who do you most associate with in this account?

Who is/are the hero/heroes in your view?

Who are we called to love?

**Tough places**

What does love look like in the hard places of life? Sometimes we don’t know what to do when we are faced with the overwhelming needs around us or the sheer scale of distress.

*Now when Job’s three friends heard of all these troubles that had come upon him, each of them set out from his home—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him. 12When they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud; they tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads. 13They sat with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.*  (Job 2:11-13)

How does the example of Job’s friends help us?

**Biblical reflection 2**

*They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ 48Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ 49Jesus stood still and said, ‘Call him here.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart; get up, he is calling you.’ 50So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher,**\** *let me see again.’ 52Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your faith has made you well.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.* (Mark 10:46-52)

What do you think Bartimaeus’ greatest need was?

Why did Jesus ask him the question?

What effect did this question have on Bartimaeus?

What does this story teach us about responding to the needs of others?

**So we ask:**

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