The Untouchables

Kim Muller 23 February 2017



As we read the life story of Jesus in the gospels, it quickly becomes apparent that what He has in mind when He talks of 'reaching the lost' is often very different to the audience that maybe springs first to our minds. We think of evangelising to our colleagues, our family or our friends; people who look like they have it together. People like us. But what about those who pass us by who are so broken, so confused, so fringe in our society that they seem beyond all salvation?

In Luke 8:27 we read, 'As Jesus was climbing out of the boat, a man who was possessed by demons came out to meet him. For a long time he had been homeless and naked, living in a cemetery outside the town.'

Would we dare to reach out to such a man? As we read the broader context of this story, it seems that Jesus crossed the lake just to save him and left again shortly thereafter! The challenge is that, for each one of us, there will always be a person in our lives that stretches the very limits of our faith in what God is able to do and who He can save.

Evangelising in Milnerton

Whilst leading the Milnerton congregation in 2011, we received a prophetic word from Janet Bran that we would be involved in an outreach programme to the prostitutes in Bellville. My initial

reaction was that she was not familiar with our local surroundings and had got it wrong, because we were based in Milnerton! Soon afterwards, we started ministering in the Milnerton and Rugby area with limited success. It was during these initial 6 months that my heart changed and I began to feel a very strong compassion to minister and to help these women.

Reaching out to the women on the street has been one of the most heart-wrenching things I have ever done. I admit that the task is even more intimidating and hopeless than I originally thought!

The Trap of Prostitution

What do we really know about them? Where does she come from and how did she get here? Here are some things we have learned about how women and girls get involved in prostitution:

- Many were raped or molested before entering into prostitution. Other forms of abuse are also common.
- Substance abuse – some end up in prostitution to pay for their drug habits. Some use the drugs to numb themselves enough to do their job, which usually develops into a full-blown addiction. Many are forced into drugs so that they become dependent on their pimps.
- Many are in a relationship with one of their pimps. Often it is their boyfriend who gets them involved in prostitution.
- For the many times that the average victim is forced to 'render service', their pimps will pay them R20 – R50 a day!
- Leaving prostitution is extremely dangerous (life threatening) and they fear what will happen to them and their families if they do. Their pimps have no problem moving them from one part of the city to another.
- They are stripped of all their possessions, identity documents, finances and clothing. They are forced to share clothing and toiletries.
- Often, after being 'saved' out of slavery, their introduction back into society is near impossible. This causes them to become disillusioned and depressed, causing them to return to what they refer to as a 'place of employment with a steady income', despite their horrific circumstances.

Our God is Mighty to Save

For many of us, the idea of speaking to and reaching out to those we deem 'untouchable' and bringing about lasting change seems both challenging and daunting. When we see the lonely prostitute, the homeless, the addict, the raging atheist at work, it is tempting to place them in the

‘people who never change’ category. At every turn, there’s another impossibility that hinders our faith. Yet even as we face these impossibilities, we do so with the knowledge that although we cannot change them, and they cannot change themselves, we have a Saviour who is mighty to save! No addiction, no pimp, no philosophy or any other thing can stand in His way. We reach out to them, not with faith in what we can do, but rather with faith in Him who sends us to them. It is His blood which breaks every chain of bondage. No one is past the point of saving!

> May we never limit the power of God to save only those who are like us.

Our ministry to the women in the street has brought about a radical change in our hearts and minds as a congregation, and we are witnessing great fruit. We now have people regularly evangelising on the streets, and they have enjoyed some success in the last month, as we have seen five salvations and one of the women being ‘rescued’ out of prostitution, removed from the streets and being integrated back into society! May we never limit the power of God to save only those who are like us. Jesus said, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’ (Luke 5:31-32)