

HOW TO BE THE HANDS OF JESUS

11 MAY 2025

Summary:

This Message explores the call for Christians to be active participants in serving others, particularly the poor and marginalized, as a fundamental expression of faith. The speaker draws inspiration from the life and work of Mary MacKillop, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph, emphasizing the importance of practical compassion and living out the gospel among people. The message challenges listeners to move beyond comfortable Christianity and engage in innovative ways to reach those disconnected from faith, suggesting a potential shift in the church's approach to ministry and outreach.

Key Points:

- Faith must move beyond words to action, serving others as a reflection of Christ's love
- The importance of being present and living among those we serve, following Mary MacKillop's example
- The need to address spiritual poverty in modern society, both inside and outside the church
- A call to embrace a spirit of radical availability and practical compassion
- The potential for a new model of discipleship training and community service
- The challenge to get "hands dirty" in serving others and reaching the spiritually poor

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 25:31-46 (The Sheep and the Goats)
- Matthew 10:7-8 (Jesus sending out the disciples)
- John 13:14-15 (Jesus washing the disciples' feet)

Stories:

- The life and mission of Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of St. Joseph
- Bruce's experience interviewing Sister Pauline Morgan 15 years ago
- Bruce's recent visit to YWAM (Youth With A Mission) in Townsville and the proposal for a new discipleship training program
- The story of YWAM's ship ministry, buying ships to provide medical care in developing countries

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (For Individual or Group Reflection)

How can we, like Mary MacKillop, respond to the spiritual poverty in our own communities with courage, vision, and creativity?

In what ways might we be called to 'get our hands dirty' and serve those who are marginalized or overlooked in society?

How can we balance the need for gathering in worship and community with the call to actively reach out and serve others?

What does it mean to be the 'hands, feet, and voice of Jesus' in our daily lives and interactions?

How might we redefine our understanding of 'church' to focus more on active service and community involvement?

In what ways can we create spaces and opportunities for people to experience the presence of God outside traditional church settings?

How can we apply the model of Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of St. Joseph to our own context and calling?

What does Matthew 25:31-46 teach us about the connection between serving others and our relationship with Jesus?

How can we cultivate a 'spirit of radical availability' and 'practical compassion' in our own lives and communities?

In what ways might God be calling us to step out of our comfort zones and take bold action to share the gospel and serve others?

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SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Opening Prayer:

Pray the Impacters prayer together as a group. Ask God to open your hearts and minds to discuss how you can be His hands in the world.

Key Takeaways:

1. Our faith must move beyond words to action - we are called to serve others tangibly.
2. Jesus identifies himself with the vulnerable, calling us to see His face in every person we serve.
3. Being the hands of Jesus means being His presence in a world yearning for His touch.
4. Spiritual poverty exists not just in material lack, but in disconnection from God and lack of understanding of the gospel.
5. We are challenged to move beyond comfort and convenience to reach those often overlooked.

Discussion Questions:

1. The message emphasizes Matthew 25:31-46. How does this passage challenge your understanding of faith and service?
2. Bruce mentions feeling a call to take a "90 degree turn" in ministry direction. Have you ever felt God calling you to shift direction in your life or faith? How did you respond?
3. The message discusses Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of St. Joseph. What aspects of their ministry model inspire you? How might we apply similar principles in our context?
4. Bruce asks, "How do we get our hands dirty?" in serving others. What are some practical ways our group could serve the vulnerable in our community?
5. The message touches on spiritual poverty existing even within churches. How have you experienced or observed this? How can we address it?
6. Bruce mentions the challenge of "living a comfortable Christianity." How do you struggle with this in your own life? What might it look like to move beyond comfort in your faith?

Practical Applications:

1. Identify one "overlooked" group in your community. Brainstorm ways your group could serve them in the coming month.
2. Spend time in prayer this week, asking God to show you where He wants you to "get your hands dirty" in service.

3. Research local organizations serving the poor or marginalized.
Consider how your group might partner with or support their work.
4. Reflect on your daily routines. Where might you have opportunities to be the "hands and feet" of Jesus in small ways?
5. Consider organizing a short-term service project or mission trip for your group to experience hands-on ministry together.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for His call to serve. Ask for courage and wisdom to be His hands in the world, and for opportunities to serve the vulnerable in your community.