

## **Live Out** *Created to Live SENT* Message Series **Week Five**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to Indian Creek. Thank you for sharing this part of your weekend. I'm glad we are spending this time together. We are at week five in a six week series, *Created to Live SENT*. Our groups are studying the same messages we are sharing on Sundays at our gatherings. We are also reading the book, backwards: Created to Live SENT together. If you missed any of the previous messages, go to the website and find both podcast and media to catch up.

### **Today**

We've been learning an easy way to remember how to live like Jesus—the 3Ls: We **L**ove God, **L**ove people and **L**ive out the love of Jesus. Would you please repeat that after me a phrase at a time?

#### To Live like Jesus:

- We Love God
- We Love People
- We Live Out the Love of Jesus

Here is a diagram that depicts how the three components work together:



When all 3Ls are working together they comprise life, Living SENT.

We will learn more about that next week.

### **Live Out**

Let's focus our attention today on how we can **Live Out the love of Jesus**. Let's start with a story.

### **Tim Stout's Story**

He started with a guitar and ultimately impacted South Africa. Tim Stout, a good friend who plays the guitar, patterned his style after Paul Simon of Simon and Garfunkel fame. Tim played Simon's tunes over and over to learn the chord progressions, rhythms, and lyrics. The music wasn't the only thing that grew on him. Tim identified with the soul of the musician and over time adopted a common point of view.

Tim joined protests against the Viet Nam war registering as a conscientious objector. He grew his hair long. On the outside he resembled a son of that generation. Tim and two friends formed a band that performed the music of Peter, Paul, and Mary. On the inside something was happening that would shape the rest of his life. Tim began to think beyond himself.

A common theme in the late 60's was the awareness that the world is full of injustice. A discontent deep inside of Tim with the status quo was planted decades ago that grows stronger with the passing of time.

Tim now works at Hallmark, plays the guitar at church and for fun. He's still pretty serious about the guitar. He's expanded his activism considerably as he has added new interests and skill sets. Artist, photographer, and software designer describe parts of his vocation.

Tim donated his time and talent to do the cover of this book and the diagrams inside. He is also a devoted family man who is a husband, father and grandfather. His avocation is to use his talents for God and in so doing become a world changer.

Tim is a Global Champion for South Africa at Indian Creek Community Church. The holy discontent inside Tim strains to make a difference in the fight against AIDS. Multiple trips as a team leader to Kwa-dick, South Africa gave him a firsthand understanding of the plight of a nation grappling with a national epidemic.

An idea gripped Tim's mind. What if he combined his gifts, natural talents, life experience, and marketplace skill set into the creation of a documentary? *Call Her Momma* was the award winning result. From the time he was young Tim enjoyed telling the back story. Now, he put that passion to use in describing how one *mamma* could impact a whole city. In the process he realized in a fresh way the impact he could have on the world around him. Tim tells it this way,

*God brought photography and South African orphans together for me. I think sometimes we ask for new abilities, new ways to "be the person God wants us to be" when all along He just wants to send us and use the abilities He already gave us. Through Him I found a way to use my creativity to impact change.*

You, too, can be a world changer. Let Jesus change you first but don't stop there. Too many of us do. Unfortunately, many of us want to follow Jesus Christ because He does so much to help us—and it is true that He does change our lives for the better. but part of following Jesus is becoming like Him.

When we invite Jesus to live in us and lead us we will have a heart for helping those around us find Him as well. It goes even further and deeper. Jesus doesn't just want to help people

spiritually. Jesus came to accomplish more. He wants to restore what was lost in the Garden of Eden. He not only wants us to be able to walk with God as Adam and Eve did but He wants earth to be more like the garden. He wants heaven to touch earth and transform earth to be more like heaven. We are blessed to be a blessing. We are gifted to pass on God's provision to others. Don't be the end of the pipeline. Let God use you to continue His mission. This is what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

### **Be a Follower of Jesus**

The word, *Christian*, means too many different things to people. I think of myself as a follower of Jesus Christ, a Christian. The term, Christian can be used to describe a nation, such as *America is a Christian nation*. But, is it really? Our morals or lack thereof would tell a different story. Or sometimes Christian is used to represent a person who thinks that because their name is listed on a Church Membership Registry somewhere they are in a right relationship with God. Their goal is to meet the minimum requirements. Jesus Christ died to save us but He lives to lead us to more than just survive until we reach our final destination of heaven.

As a Christ follower, a Christian, our primary purpose is not just to study the Bible, huddle in a small group, and think, *Us four and no more*. We are called to follow Jesus Christ by making a difference in the world like He did.

A small band of Christ followers **changed the history of the world!** Jesus invested His life in them and they invested in others. The result is that the passion of Jesus Christ reached all the way to Tim and to me and to you. Don't be the end of the chain! Be a door opener for others.

God said through the prophet, Isaiah:

*This is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. **Isaiah 58:6, 7***

### **Be a change agent in your world**

You can do this in your corner of the world AND/or around the world. Here's the truth about you and me. We were made for more than simply serving ourselves. We have a higher purpose or "calling."

Jesus wants you to join Him in His mission of bringing heaven to earth. You won't have to do it alone, but there is something so unique and special with your name on it that if you don't do it, it won't get done.

Jesus said.

*As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. **John 20:21 NLT***

**What does that look like for you?**

God has given every person a unique set of natural talents, spiritual gifts, passions and life experiences. You have them. I have them. We all have them. We have them for a purpose. You were made in the image of God and God put His breath, the breath of God into Adam and he became a living being. You could make the case that since every baby breathes his/her first breath through the umbilical cord while still in the womb that the breathe of God has been passed down through all the generations of man.

When the scriptures say you are made in the image of God I don't think it means that you look like Him. I think He gave you His breath, His Spirit, so you would act like Him. He wants you to use your gift set to join Him in living on purpose, on mission, 24/7.

### **Your Sweet Spot**

If you will serve out of the place where your natural talents, your spiritual gifts, your passions and your life experience come together you will be living out of your sweet spot.

When you serve out of your sweet spot you will burn brighter and last longer. You will be living out the love of Jesus. It is energizing to fulfill God's plan for your life. You will find that when you obey and exercise faith to do God's will the power of God flows through you. It is an awesome feeling to know that the Almighty God, the Maker of heaven and earth, is working through you. It just doesn't get better than that!

I often think of it like this—we are the instrument, imagine a trumpet for example. God provides the wind. We are the instrument that He uses to make beautiful music. Will you let Him use you?

Are you missing this part of life? Simply decide today that you want to get in on the mission and fun of partnering with God to bring redemption to the world!

### **How to Get Started**

Give yourself to the simple process that follows. The Holy Spirit will lead you, and you will find a way. My friend, Tom Bassford, put these terms together: *expose, engage, and entangle*.

Getting started follows a natural process built around three activities: Expose, Engage, Entangle.

Tim Stout naturally progressed through these phases without knowing anyone outlined the process. We can use Tim's story to discover how to create a progression for ourselves or others. If you are going to live out the love of Jesus as a lifestyle, you will likely travel the same road simply with different scenery.

### **Expose**

The beginning can be so simple it is sometimes indiscernible. You may not have a plan or even know something is going to steal your heart. In Tim's case the first time he went to South Africa he thought he was simply providing video support for a mission trip. What happened was much more! He was exposed to the beauty, to the poverty, to the potential and to the problems in South Africa.

You can't go to South Africa? Let's talk sometime. There are opportunities around the world and around the corner. The nursery at Indian Creek Community Church's Olathe Campus is often staffed by two manly men: Tim Murguia and Dan Ettinger. More than once a mother entered to leave her newborn and was initially skeptical of two men offering to care for her precious little one. Tim and Dan have lots of experience reassuring moms that they are good at what they do. They feel called to love these babies so their parents can hear the most important story ever told: the story of Jesus. They've served in the nursery now for over a decade. They never planned it out in advance. They simply filled a need. Caring for babies grew on them and they found a ministry in the process.

### **Intentionally Stretch Yourself – EXPOSE**

Other times it can be helpful to be very intentional about an **exposure** opportunity. Several times in the life of Indian Creek Community Church, we've participated in *The Church Has Left the Building*. On a selected Sunday we have gathered briefly and then dispersed across the city to serve. The hope was never to perform a single effort and then break our arms patting ourselves on the back. We weren't looking simply for a way to salve the fact that we have more resources than the majority of the world. We wanted to meet real needs and open the door for future partnership.

We hoped to **expose** Indian Creekers to community needs. The hope was that they might serve regularly to build relationships and eventually become **engaged**. We had hoped that exposure to the needs and lending a hand like a Good Samaritan would become a lifestyle.

### **What does the world see?**

All too often the only time the neighborhood sees the church gathered is when they see the cars surround a building on a Sunday. While gathering and being equipped has their place, when the people of God live out the love of Jesus they become His hands and feet to the community. Jesus said:

*When you did it to the least of these my brothers and my sisters, you were doing it to me.*

**Matthew 25:40 NLT**

These generous acts of service not only meet legitimate needs but are essential in order for those serving to sense God working through them. Their demonstration of God's love lived out through their lives is a breath of fresh air to a skeptical world.

*When we live out the love of Jesus like this it is as if we become His hands and feet.*

**Exposing people to needs is a way to get started**, but it is even better when it becomes an on-ramp to a more permanent partnership. It can actually do more harm than good if the other steps don't follow. Without building relationships it can be an act of charity that leaves the receiver feeling disempowered, unworthy, or embarrassed. Helping hurts if it enables a cycle of poverty or unhealthiness to continue unchallenged. If you asked our inner-city friends, they could tell you sad stories of how suburban churches served and managed to accomplish *drive by acts of charity* that cost the recipients more than it helped.

Make the goal clear from the beginning. Put a plan in place to start with relationships. Determine to empower the stakeholders or indigenous people. Give them the ownership and decision making authority. Strive for long term partnerships. Commit to address the systemic nature of the problem in order to create lasting transformation.

### **Engage**

Participation in multiple exposures to service will help you discover one or more that results in a longer term investment. Look for one that feels like a fit. This is a place to engage. Return and serve there several times to experience it during the various seasons of the year. Learn the names and faces of those you serve and those with whom you serve. It is not uncommon to take home information or research it on the Web.

You'll probably tell some friends and invite them to go with you the next time. What began as someone else's project has now become personal. Before you realize it you may find yourself praying for the needs and even giving financially. **Congratulations, you are engaged!**

### **Larry and Kathy Endecott**

Larry and Kathy didn't know what to expect the first time that they volunteered. They attended a First Serve opportunity at Indian Creek and Community Church that took them to the inner-city of Kansas City, Kansas. They served at The Urban Scholastic Center, a ministry led by Chuck Allen and his staff. They were impressed. USC was under-resourced and the community needed more than what they could give in a day or a lifetime for that matter.

Larry and Kathy decided to return weekly. They found opportunities to serve that fit their gift mix. Before long they became so committed that they woke up nearly every day thinking about ways to change that corner of the world. Now they regularly drag their network of friends to USC and serve together. They have community and community impact simultaneously!

### **Entangled**

No doubt there will be a place where, over time, the needs will capture your heart. You may be inspired to start a ministry that doesn't exist to meet an unmet need. Serving gives you the chance to discover your sweet spot. When you do you'll find living out the love of Jesus isn't a burden but a joy!

Soon you'll find yourself problem solving for your new passion continually. At night you'll lie on your bed thinking of ways to improve. You'll pray for the people there by name. You'll not only give regularly, but you'll find yourself gathering supplies when you run to the hardware or grocery. It has become a part of your life. This is good! **You are entangled.**

Every follower of Jesus is called to be a missionary (one who lives *SENT*) and most of us don't get paid for what we do! The mission field starts at the doorstep of your home. You can go halfway around the world, but you don't have to in order to be a world changer.

### **Terry Geenens and Countryside**

Terry Geenens began serving at Countryside Grade School because Tom Bassford, the Live Out Director at the time at Indian Creek Community Church, asked the right question of Stacy Shipley, the principal, of the local grade school.

*How can we serve you?* It seemed a simple way to begin. That question launched a six year ministry that is still growing. Stacy, the principal, knew in her heart that without the help of parents, the community and the church that the large number of unmet needs would impair the learning environment she hoped to create. She was ecstatic that Terry visited her school!

A volunteer at Indian Creek Community Church, Cheryl Johnson, had already built trust with the Countryside staff and students. She scouted numerous opportunities where individuals or the church could serve. She dropped hints continually that the church should be involved in the school. When Terry arrived on the scene, Cheryl and Stacy knew it was only a matter of time before she would fall in love with the kids. They were right.

Terry worked tirelessly to involve others from the children's ministry and the larger church body. New ideas emerged. Backpacks were needed to start the school year. Some students couldn't afford their school picture or the Countryside T-shirt and felt left out. *We could help*, were the words that came out of Terry's mouth.

These children also needed meals during the holidays when school wasn't in session. Many of the children had single parents and one-third of the school population lived at or below the poverty level. More than thirty of the children were homeless. They needed mentors, lunch friends and extra sets of hands for field trips. A year into the partnership Stacy asked Terry if they could sponsor a summer camp together. The church already conducted a Vacation Bible School but we changed the name and invited the community.

More and more people caught the vision and partnerships grew between the school, the church, the community and the business world. The latest project is a Life Enrichment Center where under-resourced children are transported to Indian Creek Community Church after school to learn, cultural arts, life skills and develop character.

The Deputy Superintendent of the school district, Dr. Allison Banikowski, and the Mayor, Mike Copeland, took note. They put together a task force to campaign that every school in the Olathe School District would have a church and corporate partner. Six years ago I didn't know of any other church that had a partnership in the Olathe School District. But other churches began to notice. The next year there were three schools with such partnerships.

Then Nancy Mitchell and Gary Schmitz began to document the steps of how to form a school partnership and invite other churches to participate in Caring for Kids. Soon there were nine churches partnering, then 19 and at the last count there were over 40! The Olathe School District has received national attention for these partnerships. Now city leaders in the Greater Kansas City area are dreaming of a day when every school in the Kansas City Metro area would have a church and business partner.

### **Start Somewhere**

Within the Countryside partnership there are people at all three of the different stages. Some are just getting **exposed**. Many are **engaged** at some level. Others are **entangled**. Terry resigned her job at the church as the children's ministry director to become a volunteer at Countryside, a coordinator of Indian Creek's work at the school and to direct the Life Enrichment Center. She successfully combines her educational training as a teacher with her heart that the children will have what they need to succeed in life.

There is a place for you! Start simple and small. Start with what you have. What natural abilities do you have? Your skills, gifts, talents, and resources were entrusted to you for more than simply your own benefit. What is your holy discontent, what can you NOT, not do? How could you use your life experience to make a difference in your world? Could there be a way these could come together in a place of service? Where would you invest and give back? Start somewhere and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. You will know in the appropriate time where to put down your roots. The relationships will be a fit. You will find your heart engaged when the time and place is right. You won't have to manufacture it. It won't be like you have to active motivation to serve. You will discover God's plan. It will flow powerfully from God through you. You may someday declare, *I was made for this!*

### **Closing**

A life full of purpose, fulfillment, meaning and joy awaits you when you determine you are going to Live Out the love of Jesus. Someone needs to hear your story. You can be Jesus with skin on for someone who doubts that Jesus cares. You can pay forward what others have invested in you. You can be the hands and feet of Jesus. It doesn't get any better than that!

**Will you dedicate your whole self to God today and essentially say, *Put me in the game Coach! I'm ready to play!***

### **Prayer**

***Jesus, I dedicate myself to living out Your love. I'll do what You ask me to do. I thank You in advance for doing what only You can do. Together we can bring heaven to earth and make earth more like heaven. Thank You for this high calling and the anointing of Your Spirit to get it done. Amen***

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

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