

Who Will Bring Them Living Water?

Introduction

Coordinator of an association in Valencia. The team assists women and transsexuals in street prostitution and aim to show them friendship and to detect possible victims of human trafficking. We want to share the love of God with these women and help them leave the life of prostitution where possible.

- Silla Vacía (Empty Chair) - working in this area since 2014 in collaboration with Esclavitud XXI (Slavery in 21st C) & we work in a network with other teams and refuge houses across Spain and Europe.

The name 'Silla Vacía'

1. an empty chair is one of our main detection tools, when we see an empty chair on the roadside we know there is a potential new friend for us to come back to meet later on (**JOHN 4:13-14**).

2. We want to see that chair empty forever and the woman fully restored (**PSALM 82:3-4**). We are called to work with those who others may not want to associate with and have a biblical basis for this ministry. It is a team born out of prayer and serious and continuous reflection on the Word of God.

3. An example from the UN – when a representative in the UN leaves their seat empty they are protesting a decision that has been made – as a team we are committed to speaking up for these women and their rights and to protest against the injustice being done to them (**PROVERBS 31:8-9**).

In John 4 Jesus has an intentional encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. This woman is 'triple' marginalised by society;

1. She's a woman 2. She's a Samaritan 3. She is marginalised for being an adulterer.

This woman reminds me of the women and girls we work with – they are complete outcasts of society. Made to believe they are worthless, unseen and without much hope. And much like the Samaritan woman they have a real need, a thirst for real love, for peace, joy and acceptance.

Throughout Jesus' ministry and life he has a starkly different attitude towards women, outcasts, the poor and 'sinners' – he radically challenges how society views these people and through his teaching and through his actions he changes *this* perspective to that of the viewpoint of the Kingdom of God. And what does that look like?

If we take a look through the Gospel accounts of Jesus' earthly life and ministry, he spends time with the most unlikely people for a Messiah King. He makes a lot of time for women, children and the poor, takes hold of the lepers' hands, heals the sick and

he denounces the politicians and the religious leaders for their pious “better than” attitude.

Human history has shown that humans are not capable of creating a just society, based on love and freedom because instead of God being at the centre, “man” is. My needs, my desires at the centre.

This is the main cause of all social injustice – violence in all of its forms, human trafficking, marginalisation of people.

Ephesians 4:17-19

17 “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their *thinking*. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and *separated* from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the *hardening of their hearts*. 19 Having lost all *sensitivity*, they have given themselves over to *sensuality* so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.”

God is taken out of his central position in our thinking, our lives and our hearts and this in turn exposes the failure in our human reasoning which leads us to descend into sin. This is what leads us to find women in the situation that we often do – in a life of violence, slavery, and exploitation.

No one had ever spoken to this Samaritan woman about the living water before. Jesus explains clearly how he IS the living water that fulfils all need and satisfies the soul. He is hope, joy and peace.

Who will bring this message? Who will bring them living water? To the women on the street? To the exploiters? To the people in your place of work watching images of someone else’s abuse on porn sites?

Desmond Tutu “There comes a point when we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out WHY? they are falling in.”

We were also motivated as a team to delve deeper into the “WHY?” - why is this issue on the increase around the globe? Why is slavery and human trafficking on the up instead of being dealt with? The basic law of supply and demand – where there is a demand for commercial sex there will be someone ready to supply it and make a hefty profit in the process. (Including a demand for porn - as long as there’s a demand for porn, especially the extreme, abusive or degrading type – the porn industry will continue to exploit vulnerable people to meet that demand.)

We started working with education teams that deal with this issue and especially focus on the harms of pornography and the link between pornography and sexual exploitation (the link is that they are exactly the same thing).

We need to talk about sex and pornography within the church – one because Satan has used it as one of his greatest tools to debilitate the church – he wants your guilt, your shame and will use a taboo subject just to make sure you can't quite talk to anyone about it. We want to encourage churches to be a safe place where people can talk about sexuality, about their needs and desires without fear of being judged.

The Bible talks about sex a lot. God has something to say about the beauty, the connection, the purity, the love and the enjoyment of sex. The church and our kids should be getting their information from the Bible and from responsible Christians rather than from the media, from a device, or mates on the playground.

Research from AXIS.ORG group – 9 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls are exposed to pornography online before the age of 18. – they are seeing and hearing the lies about what sexuality is supposed to look like from an industry dedicated to destroying lives for profit.

God is the creator of our sexuality and he did it with the purpose of expressing love in a deep and sacrificial way that looks like his own love for us - so, if we want to live that, free from hurt, pain etc. we have to be connected to the vine, which is Christ Jesus. **John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”**

John 4 – notice how Jesus, the only person who has the right to judge anyone, shows this woman respect, asks a few probing questions, offers her freedom and life and creates a safe place for her to talk openly about her issues. He's honest with her, but doesn't give her a telling off, he doesn't rush to tell people about her sins. He showers her with love, he respects her so much he reveals his deity to her – one of the first recorded non-Jews to discover that Jesus is God is this marginalised, adulterous, Samaritan woman who no one wants to associate with.

Are we bringing living water to those who need it? Those who others might not associate with?

Why does the local church exist? What is it for?

The church exists to fulfil the mission of Jesus until he returns.

It isn't here for your comfort, for you to feel better than others, to fill your spare time, to help you feel like a 'good' middle class citizen, it isn't to tick your religious affiliation on a census.

The church is Jesus' plan – it exists to fulfil his mission until he returns. It is our duty and privilege to bring living water to those who need it while Jesus is not here in physical form. If you've received it, you'll know what I'm talking about and you won't want to keep a lid on it!

The foundation of sharing the Gospel – meeting the needs of others is the type of love that glorifies God because it reflects our love for Him.

Let's go out and meet people with intention – it was not a coincidence that Jesus met this Samaritan woman – it was his intention to bring her living water that day.

Romans 6:4-6

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

If you are a child of God and you are dealing with some of these issues talked about today – remember that the chains that once bound you are open – you are no longer chained, no longer a slave to it but what is it that keeps bringing us back to the same sort of sin? – that would be a lie – the lie that this is what you are, what you need, and that you can't ever be free. To remove lies from our lives we need to read truth consistently - if you are in need of some truth today then I encourage you to read all of **ROMANS 6** as your first reminder of what God thinks of you.

***Prayer points**

- Street team – vision, obedience
- Education teams – energy & boldness
- The women – hopes, dreams, bravery
- Exploiters – need Jesus too
- Lawmakers & social awareness
- Global church – to fulfil Jesus' mission

***Resources**

Covenant Eyes.COM

Axis.ORG (course 19th-24th AUG)

hablamos.clear@gmail.com

@OFFJUSTLOVE