

Prayer Focus: August 2013

‘Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth’
1 John 3:18 (NIV).

Reflection

C.S. Lewis wrote a graphic conversation in *The Screwtape Letters* (© 1996, Simon & Schuster, New York):

‘The more often he feels without acting, the less he will be able to ever act, and, in the long run, the less he will be able to feel.’

Jesus was the antithesis of this and calls us to be like him. He healed broken minds, opened the eyes of the blind, physically and spiritually. He fed the hungry. He announced good news to the poor – the economically poor and those spiritually impoverished. His was a practical ministry as he walked with people, taking life as he met it and being God on earth – in human form.

We are called to ministry. Again and again in the Gospels, Jesus condemns the person who refuses to get involved.

Spiritual Life Commission

We call Salvationists worldwide to join spiritual battle on the grounds of a sober reading of Scripture, a conviction of the triumph of Christ, the inviolable freedom and dignity of persons, and a commitment to the redemption of the world in all its dimensions – physical, spiritual, social, economic and political.

Scripture

Love in Action

‘Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low

position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good' (Romans 12:9-21).

Prayer

*Our God, thank you for reminding us that people of faith are people with a conscience. Zacchaeus's experience challenges us. We are mindful that the journey from unbelief to belief calls for profound changes. Personal salvation is more than a private encounter. Faith invades the public space of our vocations. We accept the inevitable scrutiny of our ethics, our morals and our conduct. We need your help to live with integrity. Along the way, sensitize us to open our ears to the whispers of your Spirit. Amen. (Excerpt 'Close to Home' from 'Challenging Unjust Behaviour', from *When Justice is the Measure*.)*

Prayer

*Gracious God, in these times, may the world not grow tired of feeding the hungry, treating the sick and tutoring the illiterate. May those with resources design social programs that focus on cures instead of symptoms only. May those with political power implement strategic policies that alleviate the consequences of poverty while also eliminating its causes. The challenge is great. The progress is sporadic. The timelines are long. God help us. Amen. (Excerpt 'Beyond our Borders' from 'Advocating for the Poor', from *When Justice is the Measure*.)*

Prayer

Take time to reflect:

Am I joined to the battle (Spiritual Life Commission) or am I a spectator?

Prayer

'You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Psalm 139:1, 2, 23, 24).