

Christian Action {Man}

Please join me in saying the Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit,

Fill the hearts of your faithful

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit, and we shall be created.

And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit

did instruct the hearts of the faithful,

grant that by the same Holy Spirit

we may be truly wise

and ever enjoy your consolations.

Through Christ our Lord Amen.

Slide 2 – Making Mashed Potatoes

Good Afternoon! I know we just had lunch but I wanted to start off with a picture of me and a couple of friends making mashed potatoes.

These were some serious mashed potatoes it took 3 guys to work on it.

This picture was taken about ten years ago.

I had come back to the church after being unemployed during the great recession.

I moved back home and started going back to church and that is when things started to turn around for me.

I had met these men in a bible study group called the Man 2 Man group.

As I got to know them,

I started to get involved with activities like this at church.

We are cooking dinner for another bible study group called the ALPHA group.

This was the beginning of my Christian Action!

My name is Mike Voss and this talk is on Christian Action.

Slide 3 – Christian Action characterizes a life in Christ

I had been laid off from my job in Chicago in 2009. That, in and of itself was not unusual, I had been laid off and fired from other jobs. I was struggling in my career anyway. But this time many other people were out of work at the same time, and we were all applying for the limited jobs that were available.

I grew up going to the church that I go to now. And I went to confirmation class. But as I got older, I went to church less and less.

By the time it was 2009 I was living the life of bachelor, spending a lot of time in bars and getting into trouble of all kinds. I went to the emergency room for a couple of drunken accidents and one night my behavior put me in jail. Eventually, I ran out of money and so I went home.

Slide 4 Picture of Mom

Here is a picture of my Mom.

She took me in and I started going to church again after many years.

I came back to the light. I came back to Jesus.

Christian Action characterizes a Christ-centered life and flows from a relationship with Christ.

1. Christian action means representing Christ and his church in works of compassion. Luke 10: 29-37

This quote from scripture is the story that Jesus tells of the Good Samaritan.

What must I do to inherit eternal life?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind ‘; Love your neighbor as yourself.

You are correct, Do this and you will live.

And who is my neighbor?

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho...

Stripped of his clothes, beat him, left him half dead.

Samaritan took pity on him. Bandaged his wounds pouring on oil and wine. Puts him on his donkey, takes him into town and gets him a room. Tells the innkeeper

“Look after him, I will reimburse you for any extra expense...

Now who is the neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? The one who had mercy on him

Jesus tells him, go and do likewise.

a. For the purpose of this talk I will point out that it was not the priests or the Levite that stopped to help.

b. It was an ordinary Samaritan. In fact, Jesus tells this story to an expert in the law and he makes the hero of the story a Samaritan who were the arch rivals of the Jews.

When we do Christian Action, we are not exclusive to our friends and family. We reach out with compassion to anyone and everyone regardless of our differences.

2. It bears witness to Christ wherever you may be in all you say and do. Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

We do Christian Action in our daily lives.

We are kind to people we come into contact with throughout our day, holding a door open or maybe giving somebody a ride to the doctor's office. However when we team up with other Christians we can help more

people in need and we can reach out to the people that need it the most.

3. Christian action makes God and his love real in the world according to the gifts given to you.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Jesus and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

19 That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Reconcile in the dictionary means to restore friendly relations between, or cause to coexist in harmony. We want the love and grace of God's kingdom to be real in our world.

Christian Action brings God's love and grace to our world and in the mean time we are RECEIVING God's love and grace. Christian action edifies us. It instructs us and guides us. We use our personal skills and it improves us.

Christian Action will be the 3rd leg of our project here.

1. The Life of Piety talk encouraged us to give our hearts to God.
2. The Grow Through Study talk encouraged us to give our minds to God.
3. In this talk on Christian Action, we want to look at how we can give our hands and feet to God.

Each of these legs are just as sturdy as the other two. All are needed to support a Life in Grace.

Take a look at this slide from scripture John 14:6.

I am the way [PIETY] and the truth [STUDY] and the life [ACTION]

No one comes to the Father except through me.

Earlier I told you that Christian Action characterizes a Christ-centered life and flows from a relationship with Christ.

Beginning of Natural Response

Well One Sunday morning,

A parent of an old friend from high school band tapped me on the **shoulder** and invited me to a bible study on Saturday mornings.

He said, "It is called the Man 2 Man group.

We have coffee and donuts.

We read two maybe 3 chapters of the bible.

That didn't sound too hard and it was nice to be invited.

Activities like this felt very good after struggling on my own. It felt good to be invited to a bible study group.

What time should I be there.

I. Christian action is a natural response to God's grace.

Christian action is a natural response to God's grace.

1. We receive God's redeeming love and our spiritual kinship
2. Because we have received the gift of God's grace, we want to share it with others.

3. Each person responds to grace in Christian Action according to his gifts or talents.
4. Consider what qualities and gifts God has given you for sharing Christ and his grace.

After the Man2Man group on Saturday, some of the guys would go help at LOVE in the name of Christ. A group from our church would take a moving truck full of furniture and deliver it to people starting over again in a new home.

It could be someone who has left an abusive relationship, or someone who has completed a drug addiction treatment. They may have been homeless or could have recently been released from jail.

As someone who was unemployed for an extended period of time and went off the rails for a little bit and then needed a fresh start, I could relate.

That was something I did a lot in Chicago. It seemed like I moved from one apartment to another at least once a year. This is something that I wanted to do.

II. Christian action calls for a plan

1. Make a plan. Christian action doesn't happen by accident.
2. Work your plan. The Holy Spirit will support you.
3. Keep your perspective, integrate christian action with other aspects of your life.

For me, the plan is presented in the announcements on Sunday morning. All I need to do to become part of the plan is go to the church website and sign up or we sign up in the hallway after church.

Remember that when you do Christian Action you are on God's plan. You're on God's schedule and God's time.

One time at Love Inc. I forgot the plan and took it on upon myself to get started early on Saturday morning. Are regular team leader was not available due to injury so I was left in charge. I did not hear back from anybody and I thought I was kind of on my own.

I let myself in with a couple of other guys and started putting stuff on a truck.

We were not even supposed to ring the doorbell at Love Inc. The police department is contacted when the doorbell is rung when the office is not open.

The furniture is assigned to certain trucks based on the amount of space needed.

The trucks go out in order based on which groups have the farthest to travel so we load the trucks in the order that they need to leave.

My advice to you is to stick to the plan. It's God's plan.

Remember the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such things there is no law.

4. Don't try to do it alone. Call on Christian friends and your local church.
5. Be authentic in your action. Act out of natural concern not a "better than thou" attitude.

6. Consider areas for your Christian action:
relationships, groups, and other people needing assistance and support.

For over a year now I have been involved with the Sunday service. I am on the media team. I mostly follow instructions. I do the slides for the hymns and change the lights on stage.

When I was learning about the media team – I didn't pretend to know anything about how they show the slides or control the lights. I was a little intimidated and some of it was stressful, but I relied on the people around me to show me what to do and to help me keep my place during the sermons.

Consider Areas for your Christian Action

Recently I was given the chance to do media and sound for Vacation Bible School Sports Camp. I have limited abilities for media and sound but they were sufficient for this event. Once I got everything turned on, All I really had to do was press play on a playlist but just for that I became known as DJ Mike. When it was time to play a song the camp counselor would say Kids, say DJ MIKE

PLAY THAT BEAT. And then 75 kids would yell DJ MIKE PLAY THAT BEAT. And I would hit play on the playlist.

This was a very rewarding experience that I was able to do 5 nights in row.

III. Friendship is the style for offering Christ.

1. Reach out naturally to those you have contact with. Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ.
2. Reach out to those **who need a helping hand**, to people you may not know personally, regardless of differences. In this way you make God's grace real to them.

Let me remind you of our story about The Good Samaritan.

3. Reach out with Christ and grow in selfless love as a servant of Jesus Christ.

Just as you do with prayer and study, make service a regular part of your life – a discipline – not something you do only when you feel moved. This discipline is most effective for outgrowing self-centeredness.

One friend that I made in the Man2Man group was John. He was still working as an electrician when I met him. I liked John because he was from Wisconsin.

In our bible study he would talk about growing up on the farm with all of his brothers. My mom grew up in Wisconsin so I just kind of identified with him.

John was a real friend to me. When I was getting back on my feet, John let me come and work with him as a laborer. I didn't have much experience in construction and I didn't know anything about being an electrician.

But John was willing to take me under his wing. He treated me like family and that is the attitude that we should have in our Christian Action.

IV. Conclusion

Christian Action is a natural response to the grace that we have received from God.

Through Christian Action, by being the hands and feet of God we live into our potential as people made in God's image.

Christian Action makes God's love and grace real in our world. Our mission is to pass on the gift.

DeColores