



Jesus set a great example for us as Christians that we have found hard to follow, it seems. We read throughout the Gospels of Jesus moving from town to town meeting individuals and large crowds and meeting them in their own environment. He certainly wasn't a stay in one place guy, he was always on the move, seeking out the lost, the sick and those in need. Jesus was the real deal. His mission was to bring God's love and salvation to those around him. How different this model is from the way church has operated for so many years as we have sat and waited for people to come to us. In years past that may have been the case and people had a desire or felt an obligation to go to church on a Sunday but that has disappeared, as society and life styles have changed. So it seems to me that it is vital for us here at First Presbyterian to actually model the ministry of Jesus more and more. We have made great strides in the last few years of reach out and be present in the community but there is a long way to go. When Jesus arrived in a town or even on the outskirts people thronged to be near him and hear his message. People recognized the authentic Jesus, they had to be curious about what he would do and say so they made it their mission to get near to him. Today we have lost that, as Jesus in so many cases has

been reduced by us to someone who is boring, not relevant and not worth the time or the effort to discover who he really is. Many people will look at our commitment to church and to Jesus and say to themselves that if we don't seem to be really that committed or that following Jesus doesn't seem to be a priority for us then it's probably not worth their while. We desperately need to change this picture and start living lives that draw people to Jesus.

Our work day in the Lincoln community and school last Sunday is just a little piece of us starting to turn the tide. Our actions can speak so much more than our words. Our commitment to the school and neighborhood starts to model the way Jesus did his ministry. You see Jesus was relational, he loved people, remember he came so that all men, women and children would have eternal life when they gave their lives to him. He came to restore relationships! But Keith, how can that happen by us cleaning a play ground, brushing the streets, helping in a classroom or doing some garden work? Well, it can happen because people will see that we care, they will see the love of Jesus being poured out through our presence in the neighborhood and they will start to ask why? It's when that why is asked that we can introduce them to Jesus, we could bring them to church, we could walk alongside them and we could show them the love of Jesus. Our church will never grow if we sit and wait, it will only grow when we go and bring! We are seeing God at work through Care Portal, through Circles of Hope, through our support of the countless groups and agencies that we are involved in but there is still more to do. There is a part for all of us to play and it starts with one simple action which in turn can create the opportunity for you to show them that Jesus really is the real deal. We simply have to be willing to play our part.

