

Showing God's Love – I don't think we care.

This is as much for myself as it is for all of you.

A guy named Tyler Mann recorded himself talking with a homeless man and later posted it on YouTube—the same place you can watch the latest K-pop music video and the funniest comedy sketches. Without any formal introduction, the homeless man tells the camera, “Well you asked me if going to prison was the hard part, and—I spent over 12 years in prison. In 18 years, I did 12 total. And it wasn't, the hard part wasn't going to prison it was getting out...and trying to become part of society again. Um....there was one time I was a contractor, I had 4 employees, 3-bedroom house, blah blah blah blah, and I...I had to lose it all to realize it was just stuff but still...Then, when you're done with your time and I discharged my sentence in February 11th 2011, I got my parole papers signed off, I became a citizen again. I can actually vote! I can actually go in and vote for the president.”

“*But*, I can't get a job *here or here or here*, I can't have any apartments because they won't accept felons, and I even went to an agency that *took* felons, and they'll give a *pedophile* an apartment before they will *me* because I had a drug charge. I wasn't even *dealin'* drugs, I had possession. But anybody who had possession of drugs, they're worried about them sellin' drugs in their apartments so they won't give 'em one. And I guess the hard part was just becoming part of society because it's just like they didn't want me. They didn't want me to be part of their society anymore... I meet a lot of good people, I believe there's a lot of good people out there, but for the most part, those people, all they care about is themselves. You can be standing there on the corner bleeding and people just drive by you...and they wouldn't want no part of it—they wouldn't want to be part of the drama. There'd be 1 in 10 that might stop to help.”

Then he wipes a tear from the corner of his left eye with the back of his index finger. And then another one from his right with his thumb.

“I walked up to a woman once and asked her what time it was...I was pushin' the cart—my wife and I were pushing our cart—we had all our stuff in the grocery cart...I was pushing and I needed to know what time it was so I went up to ask this woman what time it was, she's like, ‘Oh get away from me, I don't have any money, leave me alone!’ I'm like, ‘I don't want your money,’ she's like, ‘Just get away from me, go!’ I'm like—and I'm thinking...what could this woman have been through that she's so terrified...of a stranger that she...what if my wife was pregnant and her water just broke and she needed help...I mean, who knows. What if I had chest pain and needed her to call 911—she didn't care, it was just, ‘get away from me, go, I don't got no money.’ She thought all I wanted was her money...I just wanted to know what time it was. And it hurt. Y'know it's like...it's humanity—so many people—what have they been through that makes them so terrified of relationships and people that they just don't want nothin' to do with nobody?”

“Relationships are *beautiful*. Nobody wants relationships. Check this out—I got over 240-some ‘friends’ on Facebook, most of them I knew from high school, I mean, I knew a lot of people...um...240-some friends on Facebook, most of them I thought were good friends from highschool but....Christmas day—I Facebooked them all and I'm like, ‘Hey, it's *Christmas*, I haven't talked to some of ya'll in over 20 years, here's my number, *call me*. Let's have a

conversation. *Nobody*. And I posted that thing over and over *Christmas day*. Nobody. And I'm talkin' about people that wanted *me* to become their friend."

He shakes his head in just...overwhelming disbelief and sadness.

"They never called...It means people don't want relationships no more. They're so into their internet and so into their Facebook, they got their...This is their idol. The internet's become an idol, man, it's like, people don't want relationships."

And then Tyler says to him, "Well, I wasn't scared when I saw *you*." And this man looks at the ground, and after a while he looks up at Tyler and says, "Well... you're one in a million, y'know? I mean, you're actually sittin' down and talking to me, y'know?"

Tyler says to him, "You matter." And after a pause, "You matter, bro." And this man takes a little bit...and says, "I feel that way about you too, man, you matter, I mean, you care." And he looks away toward the empty gas station and says, "It's sad to see that most people don't."

If Tyler is that 1 in a million, then who are *you*? Are you the other nine-hundred ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine who drive by because you don't want the drama? It doesn't *have* to be 1 in a million. It just doesn't *have* to be.

In just a few weeks, we'll be going to the fair to share the truth that is the gospel which is, as we read last week, the greatest act of love. But some people don't see it that way, and how can you blame them when there's people who have experienced the things this homeless man has, and even worse? You don't *have* to preach the gospel in people's faces. You don't have to do that from the get-go. Sometimes there are things that people ought to hear, but aren't ready to hear it—sometimes there are things people *need* to hear *first* before they can go any further. Why *don't* we start with, "You matter?" When you see a homeless person on the street, please think about the man speaking today in this devotion. It's so much easier to treat people with disregard when we label them: Homeless. We dehumanize them—everything they are is just a word now. Homeless. But they're *people*. What if we *treat* them as *people*? The man today wasn't asking for money but what the next person you see *is*? What are you saving up for? That next big board game or video game? The next time we can eat out at Ki No Spoon or Iron Age or Green Bamboo after service? God calls us to be his stewards. In this area we are blessed with so much—we are entrusted with so much and God asks us to give, so why aren't we? Is that not what Jesus would have done?

And you don't *have* to only give money. What about your friends, your family? Do you *give* them your *attention*? Do you treat you *them* like people? Do you *notice* when they're upset or when they're...*different*? Do you trust that "they got it" and you'll see them tomorrow alive and well, or do you *say* something? Do you *do* something? Do you sit with them in silence when you don't quite know what to say? Do you pray with them? Do you pray *for* them? Do remind them that you still care when everything's "all good"? Showing God's love is *showing* people they matter...to ultimately show that God *cares*. We are God's redeemed children and stewards, and **this** is our real **mission**. What's yours? Do you *know* what you're doing?

What are *you* doing?