

RESPONDING TO A DEEP NEED

My daughter and I are big fans of Formula One racing. This past weekend marked the opening race of the 2025 season in Melbourne, Australia. Even though the start time for this race was midnight on Sunday (yes church was the next morning) my daughter put on her F1 sweater, I got us each a coffee, and we settled in front of the television excited to see racing again.

What is making this season of F1 even more interesting is there are so many rookie drivers that have earned a spot to compete against the best racers in the world. It had been raining in Melbourne just before the start of the race, and more rain was expected over the next two hours. As the drivers were doing a formation lap around the track prior to the start of the race, one of the rookie drivers had his tires lock up causing him to crash into the wall. His debut in F1 was over before the race was even started. This racer is just 20 years of age. He has so many races ahead of him but naturally he was devastated at being eliminated. Even though he was still wearing his helmet it was very evident from his body language that his emotions were taking over. It was hard not to feel sad for this driver seeing his tears.

As the driver was walking back toward his team's garage, the father of F1 driver Lewis Hamilton suddenly appeared and put his arm around this young man. For the next few moments, the cameras showed this father offering words of encouragement to this heartbroken driver. We could not hear what was being said at the time but afterward it was revealed how the father spoke about some of the setbacks his own son Lewis experienced in F1 early in his career. It was touching to see the efforts Lewis Hamilton's father went to in order to console this new driver in a time of deep need.

There are so many people in life right now who are experiencing deep needs and could benefit from some consoling and encouragement. I saw an example of this in a store recently. A mother with two young children was trying to pick up chocolate bars laying on the floor that they had accidentally knocked over from a store display. Two employees saw what had happened but just kept talking with one another leaving the mother to desperately try to clean up the mess. Another employee who was just leaving for the day saw this mother in need of help, so she stopped to assist in picking up the remaining chocolate

bars and reset the display. The mother was so thankful to this employee who stopped to help in her time of need. What Lewis Hamilton's father did on the weekend, and what this employee did as well reminded me of the parable Jesus told of acts of compassion and mercy He would like to see more people doing.

Even though this parable had to do with the final judgement one day, Jesus included in it acts of compassion when He saw people help others in deep need. This comes out when Jesus said: **Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me. (Matthew 25:34-36)** Upon hearing this, the people asked when they had seen Him in these moments of need. Jesus replied, **"I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me." (Matthew 25:40)**

Jesus described in this parable various acts of mercy we can all do in order to console people who are in deep need. It is evident in His telling of the parable that Jesus is looking for us to get personally involved in caring for other people's needs and not just standing by and watching. When we make these kinds of efforts to show care it is not only noticed by Jesus but shows how our love of God is being reflected by our love for others. I saw this kind of love offered by the father of Lewis Hamilton at the F1 race on the weekend, and by the employee at the store as well. Jesus wants to see this kind of love offered by each one of us as we come upon someone in deep need. Let's strive to be that person who helps those in deep need.

Keep safe and God bless

Pastor Dean