



ELIZABETHTOWN  
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

PRACTICING PEACE, SERVICE AND OPENNESS TO ALL

*Actor, Ally or Accomplice?*

*Part 3*

*What Now?*

Matthew 25.34–40

By Pastor Greg Davidson Laszakovits

Message from September 2, 2018

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## INTRO TO SERIES

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# 1

This is the last week in our *Actors, Allies and Accomplices* series. Throughout we've pointed out that bigotry and prejudice are sadly alive and well in our world, in our country, in even closer to home in our denomination, and neighborhood. Hate, intolerance, or pre-judgement against any identifiable minority based on things like skin color, nationality, ethnicity, religion, age, and sexual orientation. It exists at the personal level and systemically. It's wrong, and it simply won't do for those of us who follow Jesus.

[As Christians — if we want to be like Jesus — we are to break down walls of bigotry at every turn. It should be woven into our DNA. Jesus knew that all of us are God's children. And that when one of us is snarled by prejudice or blocked by bigotry, none of us are free. Our fates are woven together.]

We've already pointed out the Biblical several connections. Pastor Pam reminded us that God doesn't have any favorites. We see that Jesus drew near to those who were cast aside on the basis of gender, nationality or religion, the mentally and physically ill. All of those that those with power cast aside. Today, we are again reminded in scripture. I tell you, you can't get away from this theme in the gospel. All of God's children have a place in this world. And how we treat one another means the world to God.

## **MATTHEW 25.34–40**

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*Then the king (Jesus) will say to those on his right, 'Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what's coming to you in this kingdom. It's been ready for you since the world's foundation. And here's why:*

*I was hungry and you fed me,  
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me a room,  
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,*

2 *I was sick and you stopped to visit,  
I was in prison and you came to me.*

*“Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’*

### **ACTORS, ALLIES, AND ACCOMPLICES WORK AGAINST BIGOTRY, BUT IN DIFFERENT WAYS.**

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So, how do we go about it? We’ve talked about Actors, Allies and Accomplices.

An **Actor** is someone who is opposed to bigotry much like a spectator at a ball game. We are rooting for things to get better for all people, but like a fan at a baseball game, we’re not going to suit up and take the field so we’re unlikely to really change the outcome.

An **Ally**, on the other hand, is someone who takes the next step and willing to move beyond cheerleading to allying themselves with those treated unjustly. We can do this by naming workplace inequities, talking with friends, serving others. Allies works *for* (remember that preposition *for*) the oppressed group and choose when and how to get involved. To continue with the baseball metaphor, as Allies we put ourselves in the game, but we decide when and what position we are willing to play.

An **Accomplice** is someone who is willing to take on and disrupt the systems that have concretized. Accomplices go public, like Jesus did, eating in the open with the unclean and sinners, speaking directly to the powers. Jesus was God’s accomplice.

There is a difference between being allies and accomplices and today it's not all that important to split hairs between the two. But, it's worth noting that when we act as allies we often aren't ready to give up or share power. Accomplices look for the opportunity. Either way, as we move from being actors cheering on the sidelines to allies and accomplices fully in the game, our actions matter.

Here's an example. A Walmart cashier was being hailed for her act of kindness. Angela Peters lives with cerebral palsy and she was hoping to get her nails done at the salon in a Walmart outside in Flint Michigan. However workers said no because Peter's hands shake due to her condition. And that's when cashier Ebony Harris jumped in. She helped Peters pick out a nail color, and at Harris's break the two sat down right there at the restaurant table and Harris did Peter's nails herself. Harris said she just wanted to make Angela's day special.

Not only did Harris move from the sideline to the game, she bucked the system and shined a light on this disturbing refusal of service to someone who is differently abled. **The overlooked and ignored.**

### **GET IN THE GAME!**

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Last Sunday, on the way out of worship I was encouraged by one of our newer members to give some real ways that we can do this. I was inspired and the result is the purple sheet in your bulletin. Each of these organizations is part of, or related to the congregation in some way.

Imagine if everyone here today decided to do just one of these things. Could you make the commitment to call just one? Maybe you're even in for two.

# 4

## **BECOMING ALLIES AND ACCOMPLICES**

**Brethren Housing Association** (Harrisburg) transitions mothers and kids from homeless and hostile situations into permanent, safe housing and futures. Take a tour to see the amazing ministries of BHA, and/or sign up to paint, clean, do carpentry, or even “adopt” an apartment for an incoming family! Contact Jessica Johnson Vinton at 717-233-6016.

**Lancaster County Council of Churches** provides food and clothing (including work clothes and interview clothes). Volunteers needed to sort food and clothes, help with intake paperwork (no moving or lifting necessary) and drive the truck (!) for food pickups. Carpool every Wednesday from Etown CoB at 8:15 am and return around 12:30 pm. Contact Rose Ann Wade at 717-367-4574.

Volunteer at **Samara Family Services**, which works to heal families. Cook or coordinate meals, provide transportation, donate money or supplies. Contact Pam Haddad at info@samarafamily.org.

**Brethren Disaster Relief.** Have a week or two? Serve those recovering from natural disasters. Care for children, swing a hammer, paint, etc. Sites as close as New Jersey and as far as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Visit <http://www.brethren.org/bdm/rebuild/>. Congregational contacts: Karen Wenger 717-940-8213 & Dale Ziegler 717-367-8629.

Serve one another in prayer. Sign up for the **Prayer Chain**. Contact the church office 717-367-1000 or info@etowncob.org.

**New Community Project Learning Tours** raise awareness and spur personal growth. Travel to a different part of the world, gain an appreciation for another culture, and return ready to be an accomplice to help all of God’s children and

creation. Contact Pastor Greg or visit <http://newcommunityproject.org/learningtours.shtml>.

Sign up for **Etown CoB Witness Action Alert list**. Receive periodic emails with options to attend local witness events, legislative action ideas, talking points and contact info for calling elected representatives, etc. Email [info@etowncob.org](mailto:info@etowncob.org) to sign up.

**Community Place on Washington.** Help build our new Etown community center that will serve local residents in need! Current volunteer needs include painters, drop ceiling installers and electrical help. Contact construction supervisor Doug Lamb, 717-689-0263 to schedule.

**Quilt!** Help quilt pieces auctioned at Disaster Relief to help people in the US and around the world. Wednesdays, 9 am–12 pm, Rm 230. Contact Anna Belser, 717-361-8585.

Every Sunday in season **donate fresh veggies and flowers or buy what others bring** at the CROP table outside by the Portico. Money goes to help end hunger at home and around the world.

Join an **Anti-Racism Study Circle**. Dismantle racism starting with yourself and a small group of people looking to do the same. 4–6 two-hour sessions. Contact Pastor Greg, 717-333-1614.

Join the **Thursdays in Black** movement standing against world-wide gender-based violence. Wear a t-shirt or anything black on Thursdays and stop by the church for a photo shoot or take a picture and post on Social Media. Contact Pastor Pam, 717-475-6513.

Support the **Etown CoB Immigrant Support Committee**. Donate money to help families in the Etown area whose breadwinners are detained, or face legal fees (Check written

**6** out to Etown CoB, memo line: “Immigrant Support Conduit”) Call Damon Wagner Fields at 717-669-5307 to learn more about serving, and look for advocacy opportunities in the coming months.

**Meals to Etown CoB Homes.** If you like to cook this is for you! Meals to Homes serves families undergoing illness/treatments, after the loss of a loved one, or a birth of a baby, and special events! Contact Charlotte Brown, 717-367-7660 jcb443443pk@gmail.com or Marilyn Muston at 717-808-1249 to sign up.

**Volunteer as a teacher or helper here at Etown CoB.** Want to shape the world? Love and teach a child in one of our many children’s ministries, birth to High School. Contact Pastor Jason at 717-367-1000 or haldemanj@etown.edu.

**Buy fair trade coffee and snacks** from Equal Exchange and support fair trade every first Sunday in Memorial Lobby.

**Recycle** those hard-to-recycle items with Herb and Joanne High. Church parking lot every fourth Sunday, following worship.

**Volunteer at the Winter Shelter/ECHOS.** Requests for volunteers to help with meals, intake and overnight assistance coming soon, as winter approaches. Contact Peggy McFarland.

**Drive for our Deacon Transportation Ministry** and help those who do not drive get to doctor and other important appts. Contact Gene & Barbara Ellis, 717-367-6247.

**Attend District Conference October 6** at Leffler Chapel, Etown College to share your thoughts on polity recommendation to strip ordination of pastors who perform same-gender weddings. Proposal and Etown CoB response



available outside Pastor Greg's office. Contact Pastor Pam, 717-475-6513.

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**Attend District Sectional Meetings, Sept 11 at 3–4:30 pm or 6:30–8pm** at Spring Creek CoB in Hershey and/or **District Conference October 6** at Leffler Chapel, Etown College to share your thoughts on polity recommendation to strip ordination of pastors who perform same-gender weddings. Proposal and Etown CoB response available outside Pastor Greg's office. Contact Pastor Greg, 717-333-1614.

**Save lives, give blood.** Several times a year the Bloodmobile comes right to our parking lot, including next **Sunday, September 16.** You can literally save a life! Contact Nancy Becker with any questions 717-367-8828.

**Buy from SERRV International,** a nonprofit dedicated to fighting global poverty through fair and ethical trade. Periodically, church volunteers set up goods for purchase in Memorial Lobby. Contact Karen Ungemach at 717-644-8917.

Please contact me if you have any questions about any of these projects or want to know more!

I know I must be missing some good things. If I am, write it down and get it to me and I will print it in next week's bulletin.

### **WE'VE GOT THIS!**

Every single one of these activities takes us off the sidelines and puts us into the world in ways that serve, that will change other people's lives and will also change us. And maybe even change the systems that

Imagine if everyone here today decided to do just one of these things. There is at least one thing here that fits every

8 lifestyle, fits every age. You could be a visitor with us, or a lifelong member.

*I was hungry and you fed me,  
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me a room,  
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,  
I was sick and you stopped to visit,  
I was in prison and you came to me.'...*

*... 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'*



