

Most of us go through the day with blinders on. We take quick glances at one another; but for the most part we fail when it comes to really connecting with people. We move so quickly through our days that most of us will never remember the faces of all the people that we meet in one day.

I posted a video clip on my Facebook page this past week from Pastor Dave Gibbons. In that video Dave made the comment that blessing is connected with seeing people. So before we do anything else this morning I want you to stand up and look around at people. Don't say anything; just take the time to look at a few people and really look at them.

For some of you this is going to be really uncomfortable because we're not used to looking at people eye to eye for any extended period of time. But you may just look at someone this morning who feels like no one ever sees them; and to that person your look- the connect that you make with them- may be just the connection they need today to know that someone sees them and in seeing them they know that they are blessed. So stand up and look around, no talking, and I'll tell you when to stop.

I want to challenge you this morning to walk through your week one step slower so that you can see the people who are all around you- your brothers and sisters whom God has called you to be the keeper of.

Now with the image of that brother or sister that you just focused on; listen to the story of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

"Am I my brother/sister's keeper?" You know the answer to the question. But my question for you this morning is will you be your brother's or your sister's keeper?

When you think about what drove Cain to strike down his brother Abel all you have to do is think about what holds us back from being our brother's keeper. Most of us will never go the extreme that Cain did; but nonetheless we daily struggle with being our brother's keeper.

Sometimes it is subtle. We simply ignore our brother. We don't see the brother or sister that is need.

Sometimes it is more pronounced. We are envious. And our envy becomes jealousy and we are unable to love our brother or sister.

Sometimes it is just out there for everyone to see. We murder our brother or sister with hurtful words.

Will you be your brother's keeper?

But who is your brother?

On one occasion Jesus had a conversation with a man who wanted to know who his brother was. And to get his point across Jesus told a story about a man who fell among robbers. A priest walked by the man who lay along the road dying. Then a Levite walked by the man passing as far as he could on the other side of the road.

Then Jesus says a Samaritan comes down the road. Jesus audience knew that Samaritans were the enemy so they probably hoped that Jesus would say he fell into the hands of the robbers. But Jesus told them that the Samaritan stopped and helped his brother who was half-dead.

To the stunned audience Jesus asked, "Who was this half-dead brother's keeper?"

Am I my brother's keeper? Am I my sister's keeper? Am I willing to be my brother's keeper? If we open our eyes to see our brothers and sisters, many who are on the side of the road left half-dead by the world; then we know the answer to that question.

I read a story this week that first appeared on the video version of the NPR radio show, This American Life. (You can find the video on our church FB page)

The story captured the experience of a prize-winning photojournalist. At one point he soberly confessed that many photojournalists remain spectators as they observe and record the misfortunes of others. Then he told the interviewer a disturbing story about an incident in which he continued snapping pictures as a woman eventually drowned.

He says, "I was sent out on an assignment from when I was working for the Lawrence Eagle-Tribune. They wanted pictures [of a coastal storm], so I went out to nearby Plum

Island. [I] walked out on the beach, and there was this one figure standing by the ocean looking out."

The video then scans to a photo that shows a lone woman standing on the shore's edge with waves crashing in front of her. He continues, "She was drinking a beer A split second after this picture was taken, a wave came in, hit the embankment below her feet, knocked the sand out, and she went sliding into the water."

The video scans to a second photo that shows the woman lying in the shallow water after the wave had retreated.

Then he says, "I was probably at least 50 feet away from her, shooting with a telephoto lens. She was in the water either in shock or drunk or whatever. I thought about, okay, am I going to make a rescue? I already got the shot I need."

The video turns to a third photo that shows two men approaching the woman, who has her hand outstretched.

"I turned around, and within 100 feet of me there was a lifeguard. So I continued to photograph the sequence. There was someone who was with the lifeguard who got there first. He rushed to her. [He] was ready to reach out and grab her and pull her to safety. But at the last second something stopped him."

The next photo pictures the two men backing off as a large wave prepares to crash on top of the helpless woman.

The photojournalist finishes the story: "The wave looked to me like it was 20 feet high. Within seconds after this photograph was taken, she was covered by the wave. I realized that she was gone. The sequence of pictures received quite a bit of attention, and a lot of criticism came into the Lawrence Eagle-Tribune about their photographer, who watched someone drown in the ocean while he just continued to take pictures."

Later in the interview he admits that he could have made a difference, but instead he chose to observe and take pictures.

My Way, This American Life, DVD Season 1, 21:22 - 24:28; submitted by Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Montreal [Photojournalist Continues Taking Pictures as Woman Drowns](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcGZhXAI9M8)

Every day someone is standing on the edge. And every day we have a choice to make. We can stand on the sidelines or we can become our brother's keeper. It all begins with removing the blinders from our eyes and seeing those who God calls us to bless.

Am I my brother's keeper? You know the answer. But what will you do? That's the question that you need to answer. Will you be your brother's keeper?