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What would you do?

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Every week the news carries stories of vulnerable people who have been beaten, robbed, harassed, and murdered. Because such stories are about people who live on the other side of the world, across town, or in another city, it's normal to feel unaffected.

But what about the vulnerable within our circle? The woman down the street? The child next door? The homeless man you passed yesterday? Or, a family member, who due to emotional or mental issues is shunned, talked down and bullied? These people need the hope of Jesus.

The downcast and weak were attracted to Jesus because they knew he would protect them.

For instance, on the road to Jericho, when the crowds tried to silence two blind men who were crying out for help, Jesus stopped and healed them (Matthew 20:29-34). While dining in the home of a Pharisee, he defended a sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50). Another woman, caught in adultery and about to be stoned, found forgiveness and safety in his words (John 8:1-11).

After John the Baptist was thrown in jail, he sent messengers to Jesus with a question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Jesus answered, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor" (Luke 7:18-21). Jesus declared that his identity was proven by his ministry, not among the "powerful," but among the neediest of Israel.

Jesus knew the greatest need of the neediest people and met it. And in doing so, he changed lives.