



Station VIII: HELPING

Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross

Scripture ~ Mark 15:21

²¹ They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Reflection for Adults

Parents are increasingly making volunteering a regular part of their routine, whether it's delivering meals to the homebound, planting vegetables in a community garden, or spending time with people at the local senior center. And when parents and children engage in these activities together, the results are overwhelming. One study looked at 47,000 children in 5th through 12th grades in public schools across the US. The results indicated that children who served just one hour or more a week were less likely to be involved in at-risk behaviors than those who are not active in volunteering.

At this eighth station, we encounter Simon of Cyrene, the man whom the soldiers forced to help carry Jesus' heavy cross: "coming in from the country...was Simon...the father of Alexander and Rufus". We don't know much about Alexander and Rufus. We don't know if they were children on the day of Jesus' journey to the cross, but imagine if they were. Rufus and his brother, Alexander, saw their father give a helping hand that day to someone in need. And that someone in need just happened to be the Son of God.

We should never underestimate the power of our own example in the lives of children. Whether we have children of our own, nephews and nieces, godchildren, or children of friends...they all look to us for examples of how to be kind and helpful to people most in need.

Look at the picture, and notice all the lines that intersect. Imagine all the lives that have intersected with yours over the years because of your kindness.

Going Deeper

- How have you set an example of kindness for the children in your life?
- How would it change the way you helped people if every time you extended a helping hand to someone you imagined that they were Jesus?

Reflection for Children

Jesus was very weak when the soldiers forced him to carry his own cross through the streets. As he walked toward the place where he would die, Jesus got very tired and couldn't carry his cross alone anymore. So the soldiers forced a man named Simon to help Jesus carry the cross the rest of the way. Simon's two sons, Alexander and Rufus, had to watch as their father helped Jesus.

Discussion with Children

- How have the adults in your life given you examples of how you should care for others?
- What is one way that you could help someone today?