



CHILDREN'S SERMON

Have you ever been in bed during a hot summer night and heard a mosquito buzzing around your head? (*You might move your head as if following the sound of a mosquito flying around you.*) What does it make you do? Yes, swat around with your hands to try and hit it. (*A little dramatic swatting could be inserted here.*) Why do we try to get rid of mosquitoes? You're right! Because when they bite they make us itch, itch, itch. (*some vigorous scratching*) I don't think anyone likes mosquitoes, do you?

Well, there's something a lot worse about mosquitoes than making you scratch. Some mosquitoes carry diseases that make people sick. In some faraway countries in Africa and Asia, malaria, which is carried by mosquitoes, kills thousands of babies and children. In fact it kills more babies and children than anything else. So you can see that it is really, really important that people not be bitten by mosquitoes, especially in countries where there is malaria.

But there are some problems keeping mosquitoes away from people. For one thing, the countries where there is malaria are usually hot and wet and mosquitoes LOVE hot and wet places, and so there are lots and lots of mosquitoes. Another problem is that the homes of some people don't have windows or doors that close, and there are other spaces that mosquitoes can easily fly through and get inside. One very good way to keep mosquitoes away from people is to use this. (Show the net if you have one—or show a photograph of a net) Mosquito nets like this one are put over the places where people sleep. The mosquitoes can't get through the nets and so they can't bite people.

We can help babies and boys and girls have the mosquito nets they need to keep them healthy. It doesn't cost much to provide a net and the information families need to keep mosquitoes away. It only costs about as much as your Mom and Dad would spend to treat you to a movie and a Happy Meal. Perhaps instead of taking you to a movie or buying you another toy, you and your parents could decide to buy a mosquito net for a child like you in Africa or Asia. Then when you go to sleep on a hot summer night you could think about that boy or girl far away who is tucked in their bed, protected by the mosquito net that will keep them healthy. I bet that will give you and that other boy or girl sweet dreams!

Let's have a prayer. Dear Jesus, we thank you that your parents were able to keep you healthy when you were a child. We thank you that we are healthy also. Help us to share some of what we have to help parents in Africa and Asia keep their children safe from malaria. We know we are all precious in your sight and we pray in your name. Amen.

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(Adapted from sermon written by Ginnie Stevens of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina)