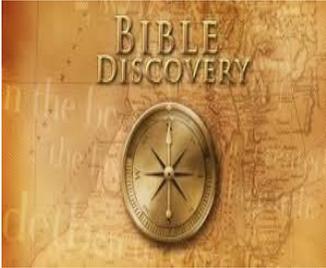


August 16, 2015

John 4:27-38

Sharing the Gospel 101



To ensure each of us is on the same page in our focus with Jesus, a couple of weeks ago I brought you the question Jesus gives each of us, “*What about you, who do you say I am?*” My prayer is that in response there was a shout from your heart saying, “**Jesus is Lord. Jesus is my Lord!**” My greatest hope is your heart is filled with the awe and majesty of your God who revealed Himself to you and welcomed you home, who forgives your sins and exalts you to a life eternal with Him. Today, I want you to consider what you should do with this knowledge. Many may sit back, simply reminisce what such truth means and express it is nothing short of a revelation of the highest degree. And, yes, this should fill us with awe and wonder and majesty of our great God! But even as we stand amazed, pondering with wonder at everything our God has revealed to us, may we ask a serious question? Why has the Lord equipped you with faith, a new life and joy in His Son? It’s my hope you’re bubbling over with the fullness of joy that is ours in Jesus and you’re unable to contain yourself with the change Jesus is working in you. And it’s my hope others are seeing a great change in you and you’ve developed a great hunger for them to know Jesus as you do.

This challenges us in two ways. First, if you’ve truly been affected by the love of Jesus and the salvation He has brought into your life through His death and resurrection as the sacrificial lamb and as the risen Lord, than what has been your response? *I mean, where in the world did we ever get the idea you can receive forgiveness of sins without showing any evidences of repentance?* We tell people they must “accept Jesus into their hearts” or to “ask for forgiveness”. These may be the most popular ways we today direct sinners to Christ, yet there’s a total absence of any mention of repentance.

What is your response to knowing Jesus?

Turn your life 180 degrees and live a holy life following Christ

Yet when Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery, He told her to “*go and sin no more*”; in other words, turn your life 180 degrees and live a holy life following Christ. Here’s the thing we must understand: *there’s no salvation unless there’s turning from sin and turning to God!* This is vital to understand if we, as we should, desire to make disciples for Jesus Christ because, in our zeal to make converts we’ve often skipped past repentance trying to get those we seek to just believe – to just believe and all will be well. Yet the Greek word *repent* is ‘*metanoeo*’ which means to “*undergo a change of mind and feeling*”. To truly repent and receive forgiveness for sins, the mind must first be informed leading to a change in how a person feels about their condition. They must know they’ve wronged God, that they’ve sinned. Sin isn’t just a failure to live a good life; it’s being guilty of breaking God’s Law. The Apostle John reminds us, “*Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.*” [1 John 3:4 NASB].

Not only through repentance do we experience a change of mind and heart, but we truly suffer sorrowfully for what we’ve done – not for simply being caught. It’s easy to understand regretting getting caught whether by those we love or by the God. That’s not repentance. But truly regretting our behaviour and desiring to never do it again is what God requires of us. We see this displayed by David in Psalm 51 where he makes the statement, “*Against you and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.*” David sees the real offense as towards God and God alone. John Murray, professor of systematic theology at Princeton and Westminster, explains,

“God’s holiness, his just and perfect rule stands in glaring contrast with our sinfulness. God cannot look on evil and his perfect justice demands his wrath against sin. This wrath is not a crude fitful human ‘temper tantrum’, but the holy revulsion of God’s being against that which is the contradiction of his holiness.”

So then we must come before our God humbly confessing our sin, acknowledge we've wronged God and deserve His judgment, even while seeking His grace and mercy - recognizing His wrath doesn't have the last word for our lives. We must do as God does - hate sin – we must turn to God and turn our back on sin. We're forgiven when we both confess and forsake our sin.

As we proceed to the second challenge God has for us—sharing the gospel (*I call this a challenge since as a substantial stumbling block to sharing the Gospel, I wonder if we're guilty of hanging onto sin, pursuing sin, relishing in sin, rather than seeking after God in the repentance and humility we've just spoken of*). I wonder if as the church today, we're guilty of the sin of worldliness - watching the same movies, listening to the same music, watching the same TV shows – laughing at the same comedy that humours the world. I'm not suggesting we withdraw from the world or that we can't go to a wholesome movie – Paul reminds us we're in the world but he also instructs we're not to be of the world. So ask this: "Are you more excited about the release of the latest movie than you are the Word of God? Would you rather be popular with friends or be alone with God?" James puts it quite bluntly, saying, "Do you not know that friendship with the world (meaning the way of the world) is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes themselves an enemy of God." [James 4:4] Paul also warns, "*In the last days people will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*". This is a serious examination we, the modern Church, must have if we'd commit to sharing the Gospel with the world about us.

When the Prophet Isaiah heard God's voice asking, "*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*" he didn't hesitate to respond, "*Here am I! Send me.*" [Isaiah 6:8 ESV] The backdrop to this amazing scene is Isaiah in the presence of a Holy God; his lips perched, his life cleansed, by a burning coal from the altar of the Lord. Thankfully our Heavenly Father doesn't ask this of you and me today, but He does require we've repented before we too can answer His call, "*Here I am, send me!*" Having been sanctified by the blood of Christ, having had our sins nailed to the cross of Calvary, we're then able to share the Good News of the Gospel.



The woman at the well's response was to leave her water jar – to leave the task for which she had come out to the well – and go back to town telling those she met to "*come, see the man*". One can almost hear the initial response from the folks in town – "*which one?*" for she had known so many. But she insisted this one could be the Christ. Meanwhile the disciples didn't understand as Jesus explained the time was now for telling the good news. Each of us is called to do his part. To cast his own burdens down where we encounter Jesus; to sow, to reap, to cultivate the harvest – all of us must work to share the gospel of Jesus as a response to our salvation. Like the woman at the well, we're called to call others to come and see the man who has changed our hearts.

Sharing the gospel can seem a little intimidating. Many believe they've never been called to be a preacher or an evangelist and therefore haven't the skill to tell others about Jesus. Yet ALL of us saved in Jesus have been called to go and tell! Don't let fear stop you from living a transparent life for Christ; don't let doubt rob you from letting those around you discover the joy of salvation. If Jesus can take a blood stained cross punctured by the nail-scars of sin and turn it into an empty tomb then He can – and will - take your fears, your lack of eloquence in speech, and turn it into a wonderful invitation for those you care about to meet the Saviour of their Souls. The saying is "preach the Word, and if necessary, use words."

Sharing the gospel begins with an overwhelming knowledge you've received a precious gift of eternal life leading you to want everyone you meet to have that same gift. James Keller reminds us, "*A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.*" As a candle gives light so too must we – I've often thought the only one who wasn't sent to share the Word of Salvation with all those he knew was the thief on the cross who confessed Christ was the Son of God and that day was with Him in paradise. Not many of us are willing to trade places with his circumstance, however. But what we can do - what we must do - is live

If Jesus can take a blood stained cross and turn it into an empty tomb then He can take your fears, your lack of eloquence in speech, and turn it into a wonderful invitation!

the gospel - DAILY. If you want to know what God's missionary today looks like TODAY – go look in a mirror. Although you may not always think of it this way, simply by living the gospel, you're a missionary.

But how can you live a gospel you don't know?

To share the gospel, *you must know the Word of God*. Spend time daily reading God's Word. Meditate on the Word, "Chew on it" like a good steak; let it become the source of your strength. The Lord doesn't ask you to become a scholar, but He does want you to be prepared to teach and defend His gospel. That's why Peter wrote, "*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who ask you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*" [1 Peter 3:15]

Sharing the gospel takes courage.

I love the way the Apostle Paul puts it, "*Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith; be people of courage; be strong. Do everything in love.*" [1 Corinthians 16:13-14] Doesn't that explain well how we can be witnesses, filled with courage? First standing firm in our faith of Jesus Christ, trusting He's with us always guiding us; and secondly finding strength through the same love we've received from Jesus as we do everything to touch others with the love of Christ. King George VI spoke during his 1939 radio broadcast, quoting from Minnie Haskins poem, *The Gate of the Year*, "*I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'* And he replied, '*Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be better than light, and safer than a known way.*" What the world fails to comprehend is that the light, the known way, truly is in the Hand of God. Find courage treading the unknown, sharing the gospel, with the knowledge that you're not alone. Your God is with you.

So go ahead. Extend invitations - realizing sharing the gospel is more than just inviting your friends to come to church. It may mean simply asking them to share a cup of coffee, listening to their concerns, sharing a task in the yard or helping them in a difficult situation. *It will mean* being vulnerable and available. It starts with not wanting to be alone, wanting to have your friends with you in what you love to do. I like what 15 year old Lynnette Lavina B. wrote November 1st, 2014 from Florida after inviting her friend to church, "*I think inviting people to Christ is a wonderful thing to do. We can all do this. We just need to have faith knowledge and courage in ourselves.*" It'll require follow up – perhaps consistent invitations to activities and constantly being available to those whom you seek to reach for Jesus. As you do, show you care about **their** happiness. They'll sense your sincerity, and perhaps they'll feel comfortable asking you more questions about *their* struggles – and *your* faith. Hear the echo of Paul's instruction... "*How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!*" [Romans 10:14-15]

Don't jump to conclusions.

Don't be judgmental. As you share the gospel with others, it's important to realize they've the choice to choose whether or not to accept your invitation. Your success is **not** measured by their response; it's measured by *your commitment to share*. You never know who's ready to receive the gospel, so don't be afraid to share. What's more, don't be too quick to judge who's ready and who's not. You might just be surprised whose heart has been softened, even if that interest is hidden deep down where you can't see it. Yes the reaper even now harvests the crop for eternal life. Are you answering the call to go into the field and harvest for your Lord? As you think about sharing the Gospel, remember to share from the heart – your testimony is personal and translates into living proof of your Saviour's great love for you – and them.

For more information on how to give away your faith, for sharing the gospel with friends give us a call at 1-519-317-8659 or drop us a line at our website. Blessings,

Pastor Dave

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