

11. Sharing the Story of Jesus (3Q 2020—Making Friends for God)

Biblical Material: Eph. 2:1–10, 1 John 4:7–11, Mark 5:1–20, Heb. 10:19–22, Gal. 2:20, 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 John 5:13.

Quotes

- The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time. *Carl F. H. Henry*
- If there is no passionate love for Christ at the center of everything, we will only jingle and jangle our way across the world, merely making a noise as we go. *William Wilberforce*
- Christians need a new filling of the Holy Spirit to love those who disagree with them. And the greatest expression of love is to share with them the most precious thing a Christian has, which is the good news of the salvation of Jesus Christ. *Brother Andrew*
- Be a good witness by the way you live. The way we live is often more convincing than the words we say. *Billy Graham*
- What is your story? Be ready to share it when the Lord gives you the opportunity. *Billy Graham*
- I am a big proponent of the concept that Christianity is more “caught than taught” and that a person’s meaningful involvement in the process is critical to them experiencing the power of the gospel in their lives. This meaningful involvement takes time and persevering love. *Gary Rohrmayer*

Questions

How do we share “the story of Jesus” without people dismissing it, saying “we’ve heard it all before”? How do we make Jesus relevant in a world that has seen so many false images of who he is? Do we sense the urgency of sharing Jesus whenever we have the opportunity? In what ways can we too mistakenly misrepresent Jesus, and how is this corrected?

Bible summary

In Eph. 2:1–10 Paul outlines the essence of God’s plan to save us. Love comes from God, and since God loves us, we should love others (1 John 4:7–11). Mark 5:1–20 is the story of the healing of the demon-possessed man. In confidence we hold on to Jesus (Heb. 10:19–22). “I’ve been crucified with Christ— so it’s no longer me who lives, but it is Christ living in me. The life I now live in this body, I live by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me, and who gave himself for me.” Gal. 2:20 FBV. “It’s because of him that you live in Christ Jesus, who God made to be wisdom for us. He sets us right, keeps us right, and frees us.” 1 Cor. 1:30 FBV. We have eternal life because we trust in Jesus (1 John 5:13).

Comment

We often see various kinds of “evangelistic techniques” and pre-packaged programs as the answer to the church’s need to witness. However Jesus never used a “programmed” technique. In his conversations with those he witnessed to he always treated them as individuals and dealt with their unique situations. Our problem in today’s media world is that we need to “broadcast”—and the very term includes the word “broad.” In other words we do not tailor our message to individuals and yet still wish to try and reach them through mass media. While it is

surely useful to convey some ideas and information in this way, we cannot rely on any methods that do not follow the way that Jesus shared the good news of God.

What is the good news we have to share? In the words of Jesus: “I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.” So what happened? Between that simple announcement of truth by the Church’s Founder a couple of millennia ago, and now?

When was the last time I really helped someone to a more abundant life in Jesus? That’s the Question that really bugs us all. Because it gets under the skin of our comfortableness, invades our comfort zone, and makes us face the reality of this world and what God wants to do through us.

Lines like: You go into all the world, and make disciples. If you have seen me you have seen the Father. I am come to seek and to save that which was lost. Turn the other cheek. Give your coat, and your shirt too. Give your money to the poor.

These are invitations to service in the fellowship of friendship: for Jesus calls us no longer servants but friends. We are to be friends in the spreading of his good news gospel, good news that is the *god-spel*, the old Anglo-Saxon term that originally meant the *God story*.

However, too much and too often the story is about us. And we don’t tell the right story. It’s time to give up on ourselves, and give back to God. Give back what we value the most—all the world-foolishness that has invaded our lives and exchange it for the treasure that doesn’t rust or rot. For all our techniques and programs, we need to come back to the truth about God as it is in Jesus.

Ellen White comments

As you work for others, as you tell them the story of Jesus, words will be given you. Words are a power. Speech is a wonderful talent, but it is a very dangerous use of this talent to speak discouraging words, or to be cross and fretful in the home. Just what you are in the home you are in the church, and just what you are in the church you are before God. God wants us to speak words of hope to those who need comfort and strength. He desires us to go out into the fields which are everywhere opening to the truth. {GCB, April 23, 1901 par. 44}

At every suitable opportunity let the story of Jesus’ love be repeated to the children. In every sermon let a little corner be left for their benefit. The servant of Christ may make lasting friends of these little ones. Then let him lose no opportunity of helping them to become more intelligent in a knowledge of the Scriptures. This will do more than we realize to bar the way against Satan’s devices. If children early become familiar with the truths of God’s Word, a barrier against ungodliness will be erected, and they will be able to meet the foe with the words, “It is written.” {CG 552.1}

Let there be the wisest planning for the success of the work... The work that the gospel embraces as missionary work is a straightforward, substantial work which will shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.--Letter 215b, 1899. {Ev 19-20}

Sometimes various ways and purposes, different modes of operation in connection with the work of God, are about evenly balanced in the mind; but it is at this very point that the nicest discrimination is necessary. And if anything is accomplished to the purpose it must be done at the golden moment. The slightest inclination of the weight in the balance should be seen and should determine the matter at once. Long delays tire the angels. It is even more excusable to make a wrong decision sometimes than to be continually in a wavering position, to be hesitating, sometimes inclined in one direction, then in another. More perplexity and wretchedness result from thus hesitating and doubting than from sometimes moving too hastily. {3T 497}