

Sunday, February 19, 2023 pm

Evangelism

LIVING SO THAT I CAN REACH OTHERS

From time to time we emphasize the importance of evangelism and Christian growth. I am convinced this is something we need to think about often. That is why we share lessons like these. Last year, we had a gospel meeting devoted to reaching the lost. In that series, a number of subjects were presented including how people need the Lord, how we need to be working together and using our varying abilities to try and reach others. Today, I would like to talk about us for a few minutes. I want to remind us of some qualities that we need that will help us live so that we can reach others.

I. We need to know we are saved

- a. If we are going to be effective in reaching others, we need to first heed to the message ourselves. If you have not obeyed the gospel, how are you going to reach others with it? You may know it and be able to tell it to others, but if you do not have not obeyed it yourself, the conviction you need will not be there.
- b. But how can I know that I am saved? That is what John dealt with in his first letter. Briefly:
 - i. Did you obey the gospel with knowledge of what you were doing?
 - ii. 1 John 5:13 – John wrote so that you might know.
 - iii. 1 John 2:3-6 – it is based on keeping His commandments.
 - iv. Matthew 28:19-20 – do you have the attitude of a disciple? Are you genuinely striving to serve and obey Him. If so, you ought to have confidence that you are saved (cf. 1 John 1:3, 7 – are we walking in the light?)
- c. Knowing you are in a right relationship with God gives you the confidence you need to go and tell others about it!

II. Concern for others –

- a. In our evidences class, we have continually noted the conviction of first century saints and proof of the gospel. They lived as they did because they cared. They cared about the Lord and they cared about others.
- b. Caring for others is where our efforts to evangelize will begin.
- c. If we are to follow the example of Jesus, we are going to care – John 15:13 – greater love has no one than this...; John 10:10-14 – as the Good Shepherd, Jesus cares for us, unlike the hireling.
- d. We need to care about the destiny of souls – 2 Corinthians 5:10-11. This can be a great motivator in learning to reach the lost and working to keep the saved.
- e. We need to love others. My definition of Christian love involves caring for them. Consider Matthew 7:12 – the “golden rule”. What would you want someone else to do for you if you were in their situation? Consider the greatest commandments – Matthew 22:37-39 – love God and your neighbor.

III. Knowledge

- a. Most here are fairly knowledgeable in God’s word. But we all have more to learn.
- b. BUT, having said that, most of us believe we do not have enough knowledge to try and reach the lost. Many are fearful of being “stumped” and blowing an opportunity.
- c. You DO need some knowledge to reach the lost. And it is true that the more you know, the more confident you will be and the better prepared. But what you need to know to start with is fairly basic and can be learned in a relatively short period of time. That is one of the purposes of our monthly home Bible studies – to give us tools to start with others.
- d. For a while, that is a valid concern. But how long can you use that as a crutch IF you are not trying to learn more. 1 Peter 2:1-2 – are you desiring the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby? 2 Peter 3:18 – are you “growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?”

2 Timothy 2:15 – are you diligently striving to learn so that you can handle God’s word accurately?

1 Peter 3:15 – are you working to “give a defense for the hope that is in you”?

- e. Where do you start? Where you are at right now. Start learning. Practice. Use available resources to study with others. There are plenty of home Bible study resources you can use to help you.
- f. ONE other point: Most people that you try to study with do not know as much as you anticipate. But what if someone asks a question you do not have the answer for? Be honest and offer to find the answer. The DO IT! Get help if you need it!

IV. **Commitment**

- a. Another primary factor in reaching others is the commitment to do so. It has to be something you are determined to learn and accomplish. It has to be important to you
- b. Serving God is about commitment. God’s kingdom must be first - Matthew 6:33. Romans 12:1- we present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice. Galatians 2:20 – it is no longer about what I want, but what Christ wants of me.
- c. I am fully persuaded God wants me to share the gospel with others – Matthew 5:12-16. Note that Jesus said we do not hide our light under a basket, but let it shine brightly hoping to bring others to Him.
- d. That commitment will also keep us going when we face obstacles and discouragement. Matthew 10:22 – as Jesus was sending out the 12 He noted that they would be hated, “But he who endures to the end will be saved.” Galatians 6:9 encourages us to not grow weary in doing good...

V. **A clean life**

- a. 1 John 1:5-6 notes that God is light and in Him is no darkness. If we are walking in darkness, we will likely NOT be serious about reaching others.
- b. First, it will be reflected in your example. If the world sees you walking in sinful practices, they will be less inclined to listen to you telling them they need to clean up their lives.
- c. We are called upon to walk in purity of life – 1 John 3:10, *In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.* Consider also the context – 1 John 3:6-9. Titus 2:11-12 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, **righteously**, and godly in the present age.*
- d. If you are not living the Christian life, how will effectively share it with others?

VI. **Prayer**

- a. Anytime one engages in reaching the lost, he needs to pray about it. You NEED GOD with you as you work to reach others.
- b. We know that prayer is to be a regular part of our lives – 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Romans 12:12, James 5:16, etc.
- c. We have devoted entire lessons to prayer and reaching the lost. Consider Colossians 4:2-4
 - i. We pray continually, as just noted
 - ii. We pray with gratitude – appreciating all that we have
 - iii. We pray for opportunities – that God will open doors (BTW, we need to be looking for them)
 - iv. We pray for wisdom – Paul desired to make manifest what he ought to say. That is about wisdom – see also James 1:5-6.
 - v. We pray for courage and boldness – also found in the desire to make manifest what he ought to speak. Ephesians 6:17-20 – pray for wisdom as you wield the sword of the Spirit (Hebrews 4:12); Cf. Acts 4:29-30 – after being persecuted, they prayed for boldness to continue teaching.
 - vi. Pray for others - Matthew 9:36-38 – those doing the work you may be unable to do. You can ALWAYS pray!
 - vii. Pray for conditions to prevail so that we can proclaim His word – 1 Timothy 2:1-4 – we pray for leaders, so that we can “lead a quiet and peaceful life.” Also 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

VII. Busyness –

- a. We need to be busy doing good. Is our life about serving Him? The successful personal worker will continually be working.
- b. Consider Jesus – John 9:4, *I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.* Acts 10:38, Peter would declare concerning Jesus, “He went about doing good.” That is what His life was about.
- c. 1 Corinthians 15:58 – we are to be steadfast, immovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord.
- d. Titus 2:14 – we are His people, zealous for good works.
- e. Most fail at reaching others because they are not working at it, or not working at it ENOUGH! In our busy society it is easy to let everything else get in the way of doing this noble work. Our lives may even be filled with “good works”, but are they keeping us from the good work of saving souls?

VIII. Optimism

- a. Finally, if we are to be living so that we can reach others – we HAVE TO believe that there are others who are interested in hearing the gospel. AND, as we do study with others, we need to believe they want to learn the truth.
- b. This is not intended to give you false hope, because many, in fact most, will either reject the opportunity or at some point will walk away unsaved. But we cannot let that deter us from trying again.
- c. I am convinced that someone, somewhere is looking. The question is – are our eyes open for that someone? This goes back to praying for open doors – Colossians 4:3, cf. 1 Corinthians 16:9 – Paul had an “open door” with adversaries also.
- d. We also need to believe that the gospel works – Hebrews 10:4, Romans 1:16, etc.

These are a few qualities to consider as we live our lives as Christians, in the hope of reaching others. I share this lesson with you to encourage you to keep trying – keep working to strengthen your knowledge and boldness to win someone to Him. That is the only way that we will change our society for the better, and the ONLY way to ensure that this church is still here for the next generation. How are you living your life? Think about it!