

Pr Mark Turner: Jesus' Method of Evangelism (26/5/18)

Scripture Reading: Luke 4:16-21

Introduction:

This sermon is not about how Jesus made Disciples, but about step 1: Jesus winning people to Himself.

"What is the condition in the world today? Is not faith in the Bible as effectually destroyed by the higher criticism and speculation of today as it was by tradition and rabbinism in the days of Christ? Have not greed and ambition and love of pleasure as strong a hold on men's hearts now as they had then? In the professedly Christian world, even in the professed churches of Christ, how few are governed by Christian principles. In business, social, domestic, even religious circles, how few make the teachings of Christ the rule of daily living. Is it not true that "justice standeth afar off: . . . equity cannot enter. . . . And he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey"? Isaiah 59:14, 15. We are living in the midst of an "epidemic of crime," at which thoughtful, God-fearing men everywhere stand aghast. The corruption that prevails, it is beyond the power of the human pen to describe. Every day brings fresh revelations of political strife, bribery, and fraud. Every day brings its heart-sickening record of violence and lawlessness, of indifference to human suffering, of brutal, fiendish destruction of human life. Every day testifies to the increase of insanity, murder, and suicide. Who can doubt that satanic agencies are at work among men with increasing activity to distract and corrupt the mind, and defile and destroy the body? And while the world is filled with these evils, the gospel is too often presented in so indifferent a manner as to make but little impression upon the consciences or the lives of men. Everywhere there are hearts crying out for something which they have not. They long for a power that will give them mastery over sin, a power that will deliver them from the bondage of evil, a power that will give health and life and peace. Many who once knew the power of God's word have dwelt where there is no recognition of God, and they long for the divine presence. The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago--a revelation of Christ. " Ellen White, Ministry of Healing pg 142,143

Story - When Jesus Comes and Holds My Hand:

There was a man in a church who was a deacon. He was one of those deacons who didn't "deac." Every church has deacons that don't 'deac,' and this was one of them. The pastor approached this guy and said, 'You know, you don't do anything around here. Could you at least drive the van that takes the youth group to the old folks' home when they put on a worship service once a month?' The guy agrees, and the first week helps and stands in the back while

the kids are leading out up front. An old man in a wheel chair, obviously senile, grabs the deacon's hand and holds it. All during the service he holds it. The same situation repeats itself the following month when they go—and the month after that, and the month after that. And then one time they go back, and the guy is not there. The deacon asks for him. They say, 'Oh, he's dying, he's not going to live out the week, probably not the night.' He's four doors down the hall. The deacon goes down and there are tubes and electronic things all over this guy lying there with his mouth open, obviously unconscious. He grabs the old guy's hand and prays that the Lord will deliver him to everlasting life in heaven. When he finishes the prayer, the seemingly unconscious man squeezes the deacon's hand very tightly, and he knows that the prayer was heard. The deacon is so moved by this that tears well up in his eyes, and as he's stumbling out of the room, he bumps into a middle-aged woman who says, 'I'm his daughter. He's been waiting for you.' The deacon said, 'For me?' She said, 'For you. He said he didn't want to die until he had the chance to hold the hand of Jesus one more time. I kept on telling him that in the next life he would have a chance to hold the hand of Jesus.' He said, 'Oh no, in this life he got to hold the hand of Jesus. Once a month Jesus comes and holds my hand. And I don't want to die until I have a chance to hold the hand of Jesus one more time.'" When Tony Campolo told the above story he said, "I don't know what you think Christianity is about. But it is ultimately about this—that you become Jesus for somebody."

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."" Ellen White, Ministry of Healing pg 143

The Formula for Success:

1. Socialise: Mingling (Opening Networks)

John 2:1,2 - Jesus attends a wedding.

"Here is a lesson for the disciples of Christ through all time, not to exclude themselves from society, renouncing all social communion and seeking a strict seclusion from their fellow beings. In order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are; for they will seldom seek us of their own accord. Not alone from the pulpit are the hearts of men and women touched by divine truth. Christ awakened their interest by going among them as one who desired their good." Ellen White, My Life Today pg ...

Matthew 9:9-13 - Jesus attends a feast of thugs.

"Jesus was social to save." Mark Turner

"The example of Christ in linking Himself with the interests of humanity should be followed by all who preach His Word, and by all who have received the gospel of His grace. We are not to renounce social communion. We should not seclude ourselves from others. In order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord. Not alone from the pulpit are the hearts of men touched by divine truth. There is another field of labor, humbler, it may be, but fully as promising. It is found in the home of the lowly, and in the mansion of the great; at the hospitable board, and in gatherings for innocent social enjoyment. As disciples of Christ we shall not mingle with the world from a mere love of pleasure, to unite with them in folly. Such associations can result only in harm. We should never give sanction to sin by our words or our deeds, our silence or our presence. Wherever we go, we are to carry Jesus with us, and to reveal to others the preciousness of our Saviour. But those who try to preserve their religion by hiding it within stone walls lose precious opportunities of doing good. Through the social relations, Christianity comes in contact with the world. Every one who has received the divine illumination is to brighten the pathway of those who know not the Light of life." Ellen White, Messages to Young People pg 403

2. Sympathise: Showing Sympathy (Forming Attachments)

"They don't care how much you know, until you know how much you care."

Matthew 9:35,36 - Jesus was *moved* with compassion.

Matthew 14:14 - Jesus was *moved* with compassion.

Matthew 15:32 - Jesus had compassion on them.

Matthew 20:34 - Jesus had compassion on them.

3. Serve: Ministering to Needs (Forming Attachments)

Matthew 20:27,28 - Jesus came to serve and to give.

Poem - I See Jesus:

By Summer Waters, Age 11.

I saw Jesus last week...

He was wearing blue jeans and an old shirt. He was up at the church building;

He was alone and working hard.

For just a minute, He looked like one of our members.

But it was Jesus. I could tell by His smile.

I saw Jesus last Sunday...

He was teaching a Bible Class. He didn't talk real loud or use long words.

For just a minute, He looked like my Bible teacher.

But it was Jesus. I could tell by His loving voice.

I saw Jesus yesterday...

He was at the hospital visiting a friend who was sick. They prayed together quietly.

For just a minute, He looked like Brother Jones.

But it was Jesus. I could tell by the tears in His eyes.

I saw Jesus this morning...

He was in my kitchen making breakfast And mixing me a special lunch.

For just a minute, He looked like my Mum.

But it was Jesus. I could feel the love from His heart.

I see Jesus everywhere...

Taking food to the sick... Welcoming others to His home...

Being friendly to the newcomer...

And just for a minute, I think He is someone I know.

But it's always Jesus... I can tell by the way He serves.

The first three things win a persons confidence!!

- Some people will walk over broken glass to get to the truth, but most will not.

4. Save: “Follow Me” (Conversion)

After confidence is won people are ready to hear what we have to say.

Conclusion:

Story - Richard Wurmbrand:

On February 29, 1948, Richard Wurmbrand was imprisoned for fourteen years and subjected to medieval torture for His work in the Christian Underground. In God's Underground, Wurmbrand tells of “a nice lad” named Josif who was arrested while fleeing Romania to live with his sister in Germany. Following his arrest, the Secret Police put him under the guard of trained dogs, which leaped at him if he moved, snapping at his throat. Next Josif was accused of being a spy and taken to Bucharest to be tortured for information he did not possess. After that he was taken to a forced labor camp where he starved and contracted TB. Finally he was contained at Targul-Ocna where he met Wurmbrand and confessed “I hate God!”

Wurmbrand befriended the lad and upon learning that Josif hoped to go to America taught him to speak English by translating New Testament verses from a smuggled Bible. From what he learned, Josif eventually said, “we have read nearly everything Jesus said now, but still I wonder what He was like to know as a man.” Wurmbrand who had spent two and a half years in Room Four, a place where prisoners were taken to die, told of “a pastor there who would give away everything he had - his last bit of bread, his medicine, the coat from his back. I have given these things also sometimes,” said Wurmbrand, “when I wanted them for myself. But at other times when men were hungry and sick and in need I could be very quiet; I didn't care. This other pastor was really Christlike. You felt that just the touch of his hand could heal and calm. One day he talked to a small group of prisoners and one asked him the question you asked me: ‘What is Jesus like? I have never met anyone like the man you describe, so good and loving and truthful.’ And the other pastor replied, in a moment of courage, simply and humbly, ‘Jesus is like me.’ And the man, who had often received kindness from the pastor, answered, smiling, ‘If Christ was like you, then I would love Him.’ The times when one may say such a thing as that, Josif, are very rare. But to me that is what it means to be a Christian. To believe in His is not such a great thing. To become like Him is truly great. Josif replied to Wurmbrand, ‘Pastor, if Jesus is like you, then I love Him, too.’ There was innocence and peace in his gaze.”

It is doubtful that I will ever be able to simply and humbly say, “Jesus is like me.” I too often act in ways that are unbecoming to Jesus. Though the goal is lofty for one so weak, I endeavour to become like Him.

What it means to be a Christian is not so much about what we believe, but being like Jesus.

"There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit." Ellen White, Ministry of Healing pg 143

Our Prayer needs to be: Lord, make me like Him!!