

THE

HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

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SHARING OUR FAITH

Sharing is one of the hardest lessons to teach a child. How do you get a youngster to let someone else play with his favorite toy? - In most cases you don't! Usually the prevailing attitude is that of selfishness, like the two children who wanted to ride the same tricycle. One child finally said to the other, "If one of us would get off this tricycle, I could ride it much better." I'm afraid this also illustrates our thoughts when it comes to sharing our faith in Christ. "If you'll do it my way, if you'll agree with me and let me be the boss, and if I like you enough, then I'll be happy to share my religion with you." Perhaps many of us are missing the whole point of WHY, WHAT, HOW, and WHEN we should share our faith.

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There are four basic reasons WHY we should share our faith. First of all, it is very important for the simple fact that God commanded us to do so in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19,20). He stated in plain language: *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). GO and PREACH is another way of saying, "Share your faith. Tell everyone about your newly found blessed assurance!"

The second reason why we should share our faith with others is because of the condition of mankind. *"There is none righteous, no, not one ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:10,23). Because all are lost, there is a definite need for all people to hear the words of salvation. If we do not share our faith with them, there will be little chance that they will ever be converted.

Third, my sharing of the faith is the method God chose for telling others. *"How then shall they call on him whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? ... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom. 10:14-17). It is my duty as a Christian to tell those who are "walking in the dark" about our Savior Jesus Christ. God has chosen me as a vessel to bear His name before everyone I come in contact with, just as He chose the apostle Paul as a vessel before the Gentiles and kings and Israelites (Acts 9:15).

And fourth, it is important to share our faith because God wants everybody in the world to be saved. *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should*

come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). The only way we can spread the Truth is by SHARING the Truth. Then it will be possible to please God *"who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:4).

Now that we have established the significance of WHY we must share our faith, let us next define WHAT we are to share. Essentially, the one thing worth sharing with the unsaved world is the "Good News" or gospel of Christ. As Paul strongly expressed it, *"for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"* (1 Cor. 9:16). I pray each one of us feel the same sense of responsibility.

What exactly is the "gospel of Christ"? It is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). He, Who knew no sin, died for us, who knew nothing but sin! He was buried, sealed in a sepulchre yet on the third day He arose! Just as He had predicted, Jesus Christ conquered Death forever more! He overcame Satan and the power of Sin!

That same victory can be shared by every follower of Christ. That, my friend, is the "Good News." All spiritual blessings and victories are found only in Christ Jesus. We must believe that He is the Son of God (Acts 16:31). We must repent (Acts 2:38). We must confess our faith in Him (Acts 8:37). We must be baptized (Acts 22:16). It is at this point that a person is IN Christ (Gal. 3:27) and has gone through the likeness of His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5). Thus, obeying the gospel of Christ is the only way we can achieve victory over eternal death (2 Thess. 1:7-9) as Christ Himself was able to achieve.

HOW are we to share our faith with the world? First we must make sure that we are 'clean'

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vessels. Nobody will listen to us if we are not "living proof" of the faith in Christ. As a sinner, David prayed for forgiveness and cleansing. Upon receiving that he stated, *"THEN will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee"* (Psa. 51:13). To Isaiah the prophet, it was said: *"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord"* (Isa. 52:11). But while God does not demand golden or silver vessels, He does require 'clean' vessels.

Next and most important is that we use God's word when we share our faith. If we will look carefully at Paul's evangelical work, we will find that a lot of his success was attributed to his use of the holy scriptures (Acts 17:2; 18:28). His constant theme was *"Christ, and him crucified"*, not necessarily words that came from man's wisdom (1 Cor. 2:2-4). Our methods in preaching the gospel should be identical. Give the simple facts, avoid side-stepping arguments which lead nowhere, and base everything on the Scriptures only! That is HOW we share our faith -- using the valuable words of God because *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). There are no stronger weapons than that!

WHEN is the proper time to share our faith? A famous evangelist once ended a revival meeting in Chicago by advising the unbelievers who were present that night to go home and seriously consider the claims of the gospel, and then return on the following night prepared to make a decision for Christ. But on that same night, October 8, 1871, the tragic Chicago fire broke out. Before it was finally extinguished nearly four miles of buildings were consumed, along with 250 human fatalities. The evangelist then vowed never to end a service without giving an invitation to accept Christ immediately.

There is never a better time for salvation than right now! *"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near"* (Isa. 55:6). *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Cor. 6:2). Why, may I ask, do so many people insist on putting things off for tomorrow when their lives could end at any second? Our life is like a mist, here one minute and gone the next (Jas. 4:14). Think about that. It really can be over that quick! Thus, we have no reason to boast about 'tomorrow' (Prov. 27:1). The time to share our faith with others is NOW.

Brethren, let us not be selfish with the faith that has given us hope. Instead, let us share it with the whole world because that is what God wants us to do. He wants all the lost to be saved (Luke 19:10) through the preaching of the wonderful gospel of Christ. To do this, we must be proper examples and we must speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). And He wants us to start immediately. Are we sharing our faith as we should?

RAY McMANUS

FEW OF US GET DIZZY FROM DOING GOOD TURNS.
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CHRIST IN THE BIBLE

From the very first sentence to the last one, the Bible is a story about Christ. Its pages breathe of the Messiah, and come to life with references to the Anointed One. Composed of 66 individual yet universal books, the Bible keeps our attention constantly focused on this theme. Its author is God and it is the story of his Holy One.

The first book of the Bible introduces us to Christ. GENESIS records the "beginning" of the world, of life, of man's fall into sin and God's plan for man's redemption -- Christ. We learn a great deal about the Messiah in this book. He is promised to be a member of our own race. In fact, the Messianic line starts from Seth, through Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and continues into the tribe of Judah. The book of Genesis also allows us a few glimpses into the person of Christ. He is a 'figure' of Adam. He is Abel's blood sacrifice. He is like the high priest Melchizedek and like the mistreated Joseph.

EXODUS signifies the "departure" of the chosen race out of bondage. Under a new leader, the Messianic nation is developed. Likewise, Christ can lead the departure from sin into the Promised Land. Although Exodus contains no direct prophecies of the Anointed One, we are given these 'shadows': Moses, the Passover, the seven feasts, the exodus, the manna and water, the tabernacle, and the High Priest. Each one is able to portray our Redeemer.

The book of LEVITICUS deals with the Levites and priests. It is a continuation of the book of Exodus. The Old Law kept the Israelites separated and peculiar, recognizing sin and the need for atonement. Here we are able to see

more fully the work of Christ. It is in those five offerings, Aaron the high priest, and the seven feasts that we find our Messiah as both sacrifice and priest in accomplishing our salvation.

NUMBERS derives its name from the two censuses of the children of Israel. This book tells the history of the wandering in the wilderness. Many events occur, which seem to remind us again about the Messiah. The brazen serpent, the rock that quenches thirst, the daily manna or bread, the pillar of cloud and fire, and the six cities of refuge can be considered figures of Christ.

The fifth book of Moses, DEUTERONOMY, is a second declaration of the Law. The priests in those days were required to read this book publicly so that all would be once again reminded of the prophecies already fulfilled. The most important prophecy was yet to come: God would raise up a Prophet like Moses from their midst. And as Moses filled the offices of prophet, priest, and king (or ruler), similarly our Messiah would have the necessary qualifications to provide for our salvation.

RAY

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TROUBLES

*I've got a heap of troubles
And I've got to work them out.
But I look around and see
There's trouble all about.
And when I see my troubles,
I just look up and grin
And count all the trouble,
Dear Lord, that I'm not in.*

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. When Abraham took Isaac to offer him as a sacrifice, on what day of the journey did they see their destination?
2. How did Nicodemus know Jesus was a teacher sent from God?
3. Who paid the Roman soldiers to lie about the resurrection?
4. According to Proverbs, who was the craftsman at God's side during the creation?
5. Who was the last judge of Israel before the kings?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. After Joshua's death, which tribe of Israel did God say should go up and fight against the Canaanites? JUDAH (Judges 1:2)
2. According to John 15, Christ chose the disciples for what? TO GO AND BEAR FRUIT (John 15:16)
3. When should one not let the left hand know what the right hand is doing? WHEN GIVING TO THE NEEDY (Matt. 6:3)
4. Solomon says his darling is like what kind of flower among the thorns? LILY (Song of Sol. 2:2)
5. What prophet is quoted by name more than all the other prophets? ISAIAH

A preacher is expected to be prepared to preach a funeral at any time, but how some people do object when he tries to prepare them for their funeral.