

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 6 2Q 2012

Personal Evangelism and Witnessing

Read Memory text: "You are my witnesses," says the Lord, "and My servant whom I have chosen." (Is 43:10)

Thoughts?

What does it mean? Is this speaking only of the Jewish nation or would this include all those who accept Jesus as their Savior?

What does it mean we are his witnesses? About what? To whom? For what purpose?

Romans 3:4 "God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, "You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried." GNT

Is God being tried? Does He need witnesses?

Does Revelation 14 bear on this trial of God? "Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come."

Is this, rather than speaking of a time when God sits in judgment of us, speaking of a time when His witnesses are called to bear Him glory because the hour He is being judged has come?

Doesn't the Revelation 14 text go on to say we are to return to the right knowledge of God as creator? And what does Paul say we see when we look into creation?

Rom 1:20 God's eternal power and divine nature! We are called to reveal God's character of love and turn minds of men back to God as creator, not just that He is powerful, but to show them His design for life, the law of love in action in nature.

How will that help? Why is revealing God's law of love in nature needed by God at this time in earth's history?

Two grand theories have enveloped the world and hold the minds of men in bondage:

- Penal Substitution – God is a being who must kill, punish, torture and who needs to be appeased, propitiated etc. And in reaction to this distorted view of God that came out of the Dark Ages....
- Evolutionary theory and there is no God

At this time in earth's history these two distortions fight back and forth for converts and both cloud the mind. God is calling a people to show the perfect harmony that exists between His character of love and the laws of nature & science - the protocols upon which life was constructed.

We are to give God glory by revealing His character of love in our lives and teach people how God built the universe in harmony with His character of love, thus turning the minds of men back to the Creator God!

What were the allegations made against God?

- God is arbitrary makes up laws and rules because He is powerful, thus misuses His power
- Severe and unforgiving (one small mistake and poof your toast)
- Controlling
- Power over – threatens to get conformity
- Domineering
- No freedom
- Willing to sacrifice others but not self

How did God answer the allegations?

God made planet earth and mankind in His image.

- How does this planet, mankind answer the allegations?
- The law of love as the protocol upon which life was constructed – what does it reveal?

But mankind chose to follow Satan – which means what?

Our characters were changed from love to be selfishness. Who then did we reveal?

- And all nature groans under the weight of the survival of the fittest principle and
- What does nature now reveal? A clear cut revelation of God, or a battle between two antagonistic principles?

Christ came to do what?

- Reveal truth about God
- To destroy the lies of Satan (which is Satan's power) thus disarming and destroying Satan
- Destroy death
- Heal mankind to eternal life

If Christ did this, if He revealed the truth about God, if His life is the answer to the questions about God – what are we witnesses of or for or to?

Do we have something to witness to in regard to God Himself?

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. Jn 14:12

Thoughts? What could we do greater than Jesus?

Does this text have something to do with our witness?

What does a witness do?

If a doctor claims to have a cure for cancer, what would the doctor need? Medical records? Or actual patients who were sick and now well? Would there need to be patients, those who have been seen to be sick, who have been seen as ill by someone other than the one claiming to have a cure, and then wouldn't those patients need to be seen well, cancer free?

Is there a difference between presenting a person who has never had cancer and is therefore cancer free, and one who has had cancer and is now cancer free?

Is there a difference in God's healing solution in what we see in the life of Jesus and what we see in the lives of the saved?

If a patient with cancer takes a remedy that cures the patient, does the patient become a witness for that doctor and his treatment? Does the patient get to brag and take any credit to themselves? No!

This is our situation – we get to be witnesses to our incredible heavenly Physician, who loves us, woos us, draws us, gave Himself to achieve the Remedy, and then works with us, patiently, slowly healing as we are able to tolerate (i.e. allow Him). We get to tell of His character, reveal His character in our lives and to live out His love in how we treat others.

Our lives show how He is so gracious. Was there ever any reason for the Father to be disappointed with Jesus? Or did the Father say, this is my Son in who I am well pleased?

What about us? Is there ever any reason for God to be disappointed with us? Yet, how does He treat us? Does His treatment of us, despite our failings, sickness, twisted hearts, reveal something about the Father?

Consider the list of people who have been His witnesses recorded in Scripture, what do we learn about God from these witnesses:

- Adam and Eve
 - Incredible Creator
 - Giver of freedom, intelligence, individuality, procreative power, dominion, and everything for health, happiness
 - When they fell, how did God approach them – what do we learn about God?
- Noah
 - The world is dying, bent on self-destruction, what do we learn about God through Noah?
 - Did God want the world to die? Or did He warn and try to save?
- Abraham
 - What about Abraham's idols? How did God treat Abraham?
 - What about Abraham's lies? How did God treat him?
 - What about when Abraham argued over Sodom?
 - What about when Abraham took other wives?
 - What does Abraham's life witness about God?
- Lot (and his daughters) – what do we learn about God?
- Jacob/Israel
 - What do we learn about God?
- Moses
 - Moses was a murderer – How did God treat Moses?
 - When God called Moses, how did Moses respond?
 - When God said He was going to wipe out Israel what did Moses say?
 - What is Moses' witness about God?
- Gideon
 - What about Gideon's faith? Strong or weak?
 - What do we learn about God in responding to Gideon as He did?
- Samson

- What does Samson's life witness about God?
- Gives gifts but doesn't control
- Patiently waits for us to be willing to be healed
- David
 - Murderer, adulterer, violent man – How does God treat David?
 - And what do we see in David's life?
 - Does it witness something about God?
- Solomon
 - What witness does he give about God?
 - Who wrote Ecclesiastes?
- Manasseh
 - Manasseh brought prostitutes into the temple
 - Sacrificed his own son to Moloch
 - Was taken captive, but repented and God had him restored to his throne
 - What witness does Manasseh give about God?
- Your life – what do we learn about God from your life and mine?
 - If we have messed up, done awful things, can we still be witnesses for God, if we surrender to Him and allow Him to work in our lives?
 - What do we witness about God?
 - Do we witness about Him by what we tell others, how we describe Him? What about how we treat others?
 - But what if we, in our human weakness, have moments in which we don't act graciously – what then?
 - How will God treat us?
 - Will He cast us off?
 - How should we respond after a mistake?
 - Can we still be used of God if we have made mistakes?
 - How should we treat someone who has made mistakes? How would God treat them?

God takes the worst cases and heals, restores, cleanses, recreates. The weak things of the world to confound the wise!

Read Key Thought: “Those who have the joy of assurance of salvation will want to lead others to experience the same.”

Thoughts?

Does the idea of assurance of salvation bring peace or anxiety?

Do you think this is a helpful question to ask people, “Are you saved?” or “Do you have assurance of salvation?”

Would it be different if we asked, “Do you have assurance of friendship with God?”

Does that question “feel” different to you?

- If you have a restored “friendship” with God, wouldn’t that necessarily result in salvation?
- But where is the focus of the assurance of salvation question?
 - Isn’t it on self, which increases fear, because we are looking at ourselves. Whereas the friendship with God question is looking at God! This is the key.

It is like a cancer patient looking at their cancer and asking if they have assurance they are going to get well, what happens? Worry, fear, insecurity, as they see lesions and problems from the cancer, which is in the process of being healed.

But if they instead focus on their doctor, (assuming the doctor has a cure that works 100% of the time) then they see him, his confidence, smile, assurance that all is going well and fear is removed.

We are not to focus on self, our status, our “sins” but our focus is to be on God. Jesus said, “Life eternal is knowing God.” Jesus did not say, “Life eternal is getting your sins pardoned” or even “getting yourself cured.” These outcomes happen when we genuinely know and trust God!

Can the idea of “assurance of salvation” actual make it harder for some to be saved?

- Could a person accept, say the idea of “legal payment” and experience “assurance of salvation” that all their sins are paid, but still not know God and thus be lost? While feeling assured they are saved?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Our personal...” thoughts?

Can we share knowledge, facts, truths?

Can we share errors, distortions, misunderstandings?

Can we make it easier or harder for people to know God depending on what we share?

Can we tell others about our relationship with God? Can we pass on a relationship?

What is our first duty? Is it not to know God intimately for ourselves? And then represent Him as accurately as possible?

Read second paragraph, “Of course...” thoughts?

Does what we have read here mean she has left the church? If one leaves a denomination, does that mean one is not part of God’s family or true church?

Does it sound judgmental to suggest if a person leaves a denominational group they have left the faith, or are lost, or have left God?

Could God actually lead people out of a particular church?

Regardless of what church, isn’t it generally the case the people in the church who was left regard those leaving as lost?

Why? Is it because those leaving are lost, or because those staying need to justify their staying, and are afraid to consider the possibility the one leaving may be moving forward in light and truth?

This process is called devaluation. It classically happens when a woman, who having been mistreated, beaten by her husband, leaves him and he accuses her of being unfaithful. He devalues her to avoid accepting the problems in himself.

Of course, people can leave the church because they are turning their back on God and His true kingdom, but is that always the reason?

What is the reason to belong to one particular denomination over another?

Would it be because you can fulfill God's purpose for your life more effectively within that group? So that you can collaborate with others in doing what God has called you to do?

Wouldn't it be great if some denominational church, instead of trying to make other's members of that denomination, would focus its evangelistic energy on helping each person attain God's plan for their life? Helping each person find where God wants them and supporting them in that mission?

Remember the movie Miracle on 34th street? The person playing Kris Kringle was Macy's Santa and he started sending people to other stores to get what they wanted, and suddenly Macy's was getting all this great good will. He was showing genuine concern for the happiness of the customer and not seeking to promote what was best for Macy's.

What would happen if denominational churches were not focused on making people loyal to the denomination, but focused on helping people find God's will for their lives and fulfilling that purpose? Even if that meant staying in another denominational church?

Do you think in the end it would draw more people to that church because they would experience that organization genuinely interested in their welfare?

What message is sent if we imply that if you don't belong to a certain organization you will be lost, or if you don't worship on a certain day you will get the mark of the beast? Would this draw people or drive them away?

Should we presume to know where the Holy Spirit wants another person to work?

MONDAY

Read last paragraph – “The early movement...” thoughts?

Come and See – what can we invite people to come and see?

It seems there invitation was fairly easy – Jesus was on earth, come and see Jesus for yourself, watch Him, talk to Him, listen to His sermons, see Him heal the sick, feed the hungry, confront the arrogant theologians, get to know Him.

Do you think you would be able to invite people more easily if Jesus were here in person?

If we knew Jesus would be physically visiting us next week, would it be easier to invite people? Why?

What can we invite people to come and see now, today?

Can we invite people to come and reason? Come and think, evaluate and consider the truth Jesus revealed for themselves and decide for themselves whether they want to know this God?

Can we invite people to get to know us? And if they get to know us will that encourage them to know God or not?

Would you want to get to know God if the only example you knew was you?

TUESDAY

Last sentence of first paragraph states, “However, the Bible reveals to us that God is not necessarily looking for those who are the most qualified as much as those who are willing to be used, whatever their gifts or talents.”

Thoughts?

Middle of the lesson it states, “God does not focus upon past performance but upon personal potential. Each believer has tremendous potential to contribute to the Lord’s work.”

Thoughts? If we are to reveal God should we have the same attitude toward others?

Do we find that organizations, people in organizations, you and me, are willing to overlook past mistakes and value people and join with people to work for God’s cause?

Or do we focus on the past? Continue to see people through the lens of past difficulties?

What do we say about God when we behave this way?

What might cause a person to look at past mistakes rather than current condition and whether the person has experienced change of heart?

If we view a person through the lens of sickness, struggling with disease, and mistakes happen, do we consider them differently than if we view them through the lens of an imposed law?

Have they paid for what they have done yet? Or, that was a symptom of heart sickness, but they are being healed?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Do actions...” thoughts?

How does it look to act like you love God? Would it depend on the God you love?

Might a person burn someone at the stake, shoot an abortion doctor, protest a homosexual for the love of the god they serve? And might such action be in harmony with the god they worship?

But, is such a god like Jesus? Do we ever find Jesus burning people at the stake, using power to coerce, stoning the adulterer etc? Isn't God just like Jesus?

Why do people want to represent God differently than Jesus did?

Read third paragraph, “We can imagine...” thoughts? Why would one take an argumentative and nagging approach?

Could it have anything to do with the kind of god the person was converted to? Could it have anything to do with her understanding of God's law? If God's law is imposed and God is required to impose penalties, might she feel obligated to pressure her husband into conformity of behavior?

What if she saw her husband struggling with a disease? Might she express her concern, love, desire for his wellness, and yet not be argumentative?

How can we be more effective in warning others of the danger of alienation from God and His kingdom of love, without sounding threatening, condemning, critical, arrogant, mean spirited, etc.?

How do we warn of the dangers of smoking, drinking, drunk driving, drugs etc?

Is this how we should warn of alienation from God and His kingdom?

Would this require we change our view of His law from an imposed view to a natural view? And sin as a condition out of harmony with God's design for life?

THURSDAY

First paragraph asks, "Are you aware of what strategies your church has in place in its work to lead people to Jesus?"

Thoughts?

Are the strategies leading to Jesus or to church affiliation and denominational loyalty? Are these one and the same?

Jesus told the religious leaders of His day,

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are." Mt 23:15

Are we in danger of doing the same thing today?

What did Jesus mean? Doesn't it mean that they filled the minds of these converts with more distortions about God, more errors regarding God's kingdom, more confusion over God's law of love such that the person who converted was actually had more barriers to knowing God than they did before conversion.

Could this happen in churches today? Could churches bring people to know about doctrines, but those very doctrines, which might be correct in and of themselves, be presented in

ways that misrepresent God and thus add layers of barriers to knowing God?

For instance, could a person be converted to the seventh-day Sabbath, but have it presented as an arbitrary test of obedience, from an arbitrary god? So they are converted to a right doctrine, but a false god?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “While we would...” thoughts?

How can we ensure we are cooperating with the Holy Spirit?