

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 7 2Q 2012

Cooperate Witnessing and Evangelism

Read Memory Text “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” 2Tim 2:2

Thoughts? Any ideas what Paul taught Timothy that Timothy is to teach others, who are to teach others?

Could the verses that follow give any clues? Read 2Tim 2:3-7:

Here is the NIV:

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. ⁵ Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷ Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

Thoughts? What are the examples Paul gave? Is there a theme? A principle? Something that would give insight into what Paul taught Timothy, and that Timothy is to teach others?

Here is my paraphrase:

2Tim 2:3 Remember we are on the same team, so endure with us the hardship of advancing the Remedy as a dedicated soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No active duty soldier spends his energy on civilian matters, but carries out his orders to please his commander. ⁵ Similarly, an athlete will never win a competition if he fails to exercise, work out, or operate in harmony with the laws of health. ⁶ And

it is the farmer who is diligent, who plants, waters, fertilizes and operates in harmony with laws of nature that receives the best crop. 7 Meditate on the principles of God's kingdom I am describing, for the Lord will help you understand all of this.

Is Paul saying that God's kingdom is not arbitrary, is not built on civilian laws and rules, but has natural laws? That we should not get diverted into the governments of the world, either in their politics, or allowing their concept of law to enter out theology, but we should remember how an athlete wins, he exercises and naturally gets stronger and more proficient, and a farmer works in harmony with the laws of nature and reaps the benefits.

Is Paul actually pointing to the evidence of nature to help Timothy understand and remember God's kingdom of love is built on natural laws of giving? And we are to teach others these same principles?

SUNDAY

The lesson title is "Letting the Left and Right Hand Know."

Historically, within this church, what has been considered the "right hand" of the gospel?

The medical missionary work is to be to the work of the church as the right arm to the body. The third angel goes forth proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. **The medical missionary work is the gospel in practice.** All lines of work are to be harmoniously blended in giving the invitation: "Come; for all things are now ready." {8T 77.2}

Again and again I have been instructed that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message that the arm and hand bear to the body. Under the direction of the

divine Head they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. **But it is not to be made the body.** At the same time the body is not to say to the arm, "I have no need of thee." The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work. Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other.--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 288. {ChS 134.4}

Thoughts? Why is the medical ministry to be the right arm of the gospel?

The health message is to be the right arm of our work because it not only opens doors, but models most powerfully the plan of salvation as God's plan to heal us from sin and restore His law of love in our minds. It is "the gospel in practice." Why? Because the practice of medicine operates upon natural laws of health, which are based upon the law of love.

Only in cooperation with God's design template are physical ailments cured and that means leading people to understand the law of love. As they see this law in nature, through the health message, their minds can be elevated to see the reality of God's character. The reason it is the "right arm" and not the "body," is that we need mental/spiritual healing, not just physical healing. We need heart/mind renewal with fear and selfishness removed and love restored within. So if we made the medical missionary work the "body," we would merely help people live longer in sin, rather than helping them experience, through the Holy Spirit, renewal of mind, heart and character.

Thoughts? Have we done this as a people? What has gotten in the way?

When we divorce Scripture from Science, from God's laws of health, from the laws of nature God built His universe to run

upon, then we get confused and misunderstand God's character, Word and intent.

Read first paragraph, "Most people..." thoughts?

What should our goal be as a ministry?

MONDAY

How do you define evangelism? Do you have any ideas on avenues to evangelize?

What can we do to be more effective?

What can we do to get this message to others?

Don't we have to provide a message that resonates with where people are, what they are struggling with, that makes sense to them, that meets a need they actually have?

We are going to have a Potluck followed by Let's Talk, Saturday June 16, and I will present the program on Domestic Violence in the church that I presented at the AACC and then we will have a discussion. We will plan on webcasting this so anyone can participate live and recording it for a future DVD set. Please invite friends from other churches who can't come to our class to come to this event.

Do you have ideas on what we can do to create materials which reveal the truth about God, His methods and principles in a way that connects to where people are today?

I have discovered that there are no children's materials available that teach this message. No children's books, no children's lessons, nothing for our kids. No wonder so many grow up confused, we indoctrinate the children on legal God constructs, teach them beasts, and scary scenarios of wrathful punishment and then are surprised when many leave the church or reject God.

Wouldn't it be great if we could develop children's material? It would take a team. One person couldn't do it.

TUESDAY

Working together as a team.

First I want to thank all of you who are already engaged and involved and part of our team. So many of you are active and working to make this ministry thrive.

Any ideas on how we can coordinate and work together more effectively to expand the impact and reach of this message?

Read third paragraph, "Without question..." thoughts?

Do you experience this solid team, connection, support in the church? What about in our class? If not what can we do to build this cohesion?

In the military one of the keys to success is morale and cohesion. If morale and cohesion break down then the fighting effectiveness of the unit is lost. But a unit with high cohesion and morale, even when outnumbered and poorly supplied can rally and turn a battle.

One of the methods to create morale and cohesion is to have soldiers train together and face obstacles, challenges, difficulties, which they overcome by working together. They are put in situations where they depend on each other and learn to trust each other. They must get to know each other, and actually come to love each other. The bonds of camaraderie forged in battle are some of the strongest human bonds formed.

How can we as a class, as a community, forge such bonds?

Do you notice a similar dynamic in the upper room? Christ had just been killed, the community of His followers were

under attack, their lives were in danger, and they were putting themselves in harms way meeting together, and opening their homes up to hide and protect each other.

In this state they pulled together, facing a common enemy, and reached out together for God's grace, protection and interventions.

Do we face a common enemy? Do you experience the reality of that enemy or is it more theoretical? "Oh Yeah, that old devil, he's such a trouble maker..." Or do you recognize this is a life and death struggle in which we are engaged?

Do you get riled, upset, incensed?

Which is more dangerous, and also more offensive, putting a bottle of poison in the kitchen cabinet labeled with skull and crossbones, with bold letters "POISON" or putting the poison in a juice bottle which advertises the health benefits of drinking the juice?

Which is more dangerous, and therefore more outrageous, those who reject God altogether, or those who claim to be followers of God, but who misrepresent Him?

I had a patient once, some time ago, a Christian, church attender, married to an active member in their church. The wife prior to ever meeting the man she married, had had a one time sexual encounter in her adolescence, never again. Since marriage she has been faithful, and never even considered straying from her marriage vows. Her husband, views porn regularly, and talks about other women he is attracted to, and he constantly criticizes his wife for being an adulterer for having slept with someone before they were married. He accuses her of being defiled, of deceiving him, of not being pure, of being unholy, of being unworthy, because she had sex before marriage and he never did.

Thoughts about this?

Does this offend you? Are you outraged by it? Why? Why is this offensive?

Do we have an enemy who is attacking? How does the enemy work? Do we unite together, or do we get played, used, by the enemy to attack each other?

I look back on my life and I sadly have made mistakes, found myself being critical, rather than simply focus on presenting the love of Jesus, the truth of God's kingdom. It sickens me to realize how many times I have fallen short, and I don't want to fall short any more!

I want us to pull together, to work together, to present the truth about God's kingdom of love, to drive back the distortions and lies, to knock down the strongholds of Satan.

What can we do to experience greater unity, cohesion, friendship and mutual support?

Read bottom pink section, "Eager to witness..." thoughts?

How do we balance the reality that a group can protect us from certain errors or mistakes, with not surrendering our individuality to the group?

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth, know not what they believe. **They do not understand the evidences of their faith.** They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others, who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested, they knew not their great ignorance. {CW 39.2}

And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe, but,

until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. **When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth.** Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God, and a turning to men, putting human wisdom in place of divine. {CW 39.3}

How do we balance the safety that comes from being part of a group, with the danger that can come from surrendering our thinking to the group?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “When a unified church...” thoughts?

What is the task at hand? What is our mission at this time in earth’s history?

I love this quotation from one of the founders of our church:

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

I so much want to tell the truth about God – and I am so imperfect at it. Yet, Christ calls upon us, imperfect, sinful, human’s to be his witnesses.

What methods do you find effective in telling people about God?

What obstacles do you run into as you try and share?

- Theological –
- Business of life (yours and the society)
- Financial
- Family conflict or crisis
- Avenues to share
- Fear of rejection
- Lack of confidence in one's ability
- Human prejudice
- Personality differences
- Gossip/rumor
- Evolutionary theory

First paragraph states that we are commanded to love one another, what do you understand that to mean?

- To have positive feelings for each other?
- To act in harmony with God's methods and principles when dealing with each other?
- To actually regard, value and care about each other – more than self?

What can we do to experience this growth in love?

Read bottom pink section – “As you think...”

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “It has been..” thoughts?

What does it mean to be incorporated into the body of Christ?

Does it mean “accepted”? Does it mean to experience oneself as valuable, precious, useful, and part of something larger than oneself?

What are the obstacles to incorporating people?

- People themselves are elusive – hold back, are often spectators and afraid to commit
- We often don’t reach out and ask for involvement – why?
- Differences in people
 - Different views on what is to be done?
 - Different views on how to do it?
 - Different visions?
 - Different views about God?
 - What about different views about women leadership?
 - What about different sexual orientation? Does this paragraph about incorporating people into the body of Christ apply to homosexuals? Can they be incorporated into the body of Christ? Why or why not?
 - Is advocating for the loving outreach to homosexuals the same as promoting homosexuality as God’s design?
 - Can a church love homosexuals, even include them in ministry, choir, usher, greeter, working with visitation, helping others, and simultaneously send a message that homosexuality is not God’s design for human relationships?
 - Can a church include people with blindness, deafness, and send the message that blindness and deafness are not God’s design for humanity?
 - Can a church include sinners and send the message that sin is not part of God’s design?
 - Where is the balance between loving people in sin and sending the message that sin is destructive and not part of God’s design?

Read second paragraph, “The Christian’s...”

How can we help members mature? What can we do to foster spiritual growth?

Do we need to spend more time together?

- I know when trying to recover from injury and going to PT we often need to spend more than 1 hour a week with the physical therapist, and then do we need to spend time each day doing the exercises prescribed?
- Do we need to have activities designed to foster personal growth and victory?
- Have we fallen into complacency, business with life, have we allowed the cares of the world to begin choking out the good seed?

FRIDAY

The lesson suggests that evangelism have some form of evaluation – how can we evaluate the effectiveness of our ministry?

Churches generally use membership numbers and tithe/offering tallies to measure effectiveness.

Can you think of other measures?