

## Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 8 2Q 2012

### Equipping for Evangelism and Witnessing

Read Key thoughts: “Whatever the important proper training, we must first be grounded in our relationship with Jesus before we can be ‘properly equipped’ to effectively witness for our faith.”

Thoughts?

What would it mean to be grounded? What would you say is necessary?

- Those Christ healed went and did what?
  - The blind man did what?
- The woman at the well went and did what?
- Did they witness about Christ?
- What was their relationship to Christ?

I am not saying we should not be grounded in our relationship with Jesus, I am only trying to establish what being grounded is?

- Is it grounded in the reality that Jesus is Savior?
- Is it grounded in the reality that Jesus is God?
- Is it grounded in the knowledge that He is not only Savior, but is also good, loving, kind, and trustworthy? That He is interested in our welfare and restoration?
- Is it grounded in a trust relationship with Him?

We are talking about witnessing and being grounded, last week someone brought to my attention Philippians 1:15-18:

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. <sup>16</sup> The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>17</sup> The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me

while I am in chains. <sup>18</sup> But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Thoughts? Some versions say they preach Christ for profit, why is Paul rejoicing rather than trying to stop it?

Would this be true today, should we rejoice when people preach Christ out of selfish ambition and to gain profit? Are they representing Christ and His kingdom correctly, or are they misrepresenting God and making it harder for people to come to Christ?

Why did Christ chase out the moneychangers from the Temple?

I love this description in the book Desire of Ages:

As Jesus came into the temple, He took in the whole scene. He saw the **unfair transactions**. He saw the distress of the poor, **who thought that without shedding of blood there would be no forgiveness for their sins**. He saw the outer court of His temple converted into **a place of unholy traffic**. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange. {DA 157.2}

**Christ saw that something must be done.**

Numerous ceremonies were enjoined upon the people without the proper instruction as to their import. The worshipers offered their sacrifices **without understanding** that they were typical of the only perfect Sacrifice. And among them, unrecognized and unhonored, stood the One symbolized by all their service. He had given directions in regard to the offerings. He understood their symbolical value, and **He saw that they were now perverted and misunderstood**. Spiritual worship was fast disappearing. **No link bound the priests and rulers to their God**. Christ's work was to establish an altogether different worship. {DA 157.3}

With searching glance, Christ takes in the scene before Him as He stands upon the steps of the temple court. With prophetic eye He looks into [the future], and sees not only years, but centuries and ages. **He sees how priests and rulers will turn the needy from their right, and forbid that the gospel shall be preached to the poor. He sees how the love of God will be concealed from sinners,** and men will make merchandise of His grace. As He beholds the scene, indignation, authority, and power are expressed in His countenance. The attention of the people is attracted to Him. The eyes of those engaged in their unholy traffic are riveted upon His face. They cannot withdraw their gaze. They feel that this Man reads their inmost thoughts, and discovers their hidden motives. Some attempt to conceal their faces, as if their evil deeds were written upon their countenances, to be scanned by those searching eyes. {DA 157.4}

The confusion is hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. **It is as if they were arraigned before the tribunal of God to answer for their deeds.** Looking upon Christ, they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity. **The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge will stand at the last day,**--not now encircled with the glory that will then attend Him, **but with the same power to read the soul.** His eye sweeps over the multitude, taking in every individual. His form seems to rise above them in commanding dignity, and a divine light illuminates His countenance. He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice--the same that upon Mount Sinai proclaimed the law that priests and rulers are transgressing--is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: **"Take these things [away]; make not My Father's house an house of [commerce]."** {DA 158.1}

Thoughts?

What were the spiritual leaders doing? They were doing their ministry for selfish ambition, but Christ didn't rejoice in it, why? Because they made God's house appear to be thievery, they misrepresented God.

Then how can Paul be rejoicing in the situation? And should we today?

What was the circumstance for the new Christian church?

- Was Christianity widely known and accepted?
- Did they have established synagogues/churches in every city?
- Would there be large groups waiting to book meeting halls for famous preachers?
- Was their religion approved and given protection by the state?
- Would they be risking their lives to preach Christ?
- Did the Jewish nation have an official relationship with Rome?
- Was their power still being bargained for between the Jews and Rome?
- Did the emerging Christian church, at that time, have any official relationship with the state?
- Did the emerging church have any power to bargain for?
- Could the church expect the protection of the state?

And converts, was it popular to be a Christian when Paul was writing?

Would this make a difference in why Paul was rejoicing in Christ being preached for whatever motive, but also why Christ was offended by what the Jews were doing?

What about today? Should we rejoice or grieve when people present Christ for selfish ambition or as a way to get rich?

Read first paragraph – “It is highly...” thoughts?

- Are there people in church organizations without any personal assurance of salvation?
- Are these people ever involved in evangelism?
- If a person without assurance of salvation is witnessing, to what are they witnessing?
  - What might be a problem with this?
  - What might they convert people to?
- Where is the focus when we focus on “assurance of salvation?” Is it on knowing God and Jesus or on ourselves, our condition and situation?
- When you are in love what do you want to talk about and think about, the person whom you love, or how you now have assurance that your situation is better, that you are not alone, that you have someone to help with the bills etc.
  - Is the focus on you, or on the other person?
  - Isn't the assurance you have subsumed under your love for that person?
- Yet there is a sense our joy, love, admiration, devotion derives from our awareness of being saved, delivered, rescued, etc.
  - If we were dying of cancer and then cured, wouldn't delivery from that disease give us joy, wouldn't it generate in us appreciation for those who helped get us well?
  - What would be more powerful, the promise of cure, or experiencing the cure?
  - What brings greater assurance, the promise of legal pardon, or experiencing a renewed heart/mind and trust relationship with Jesus?
  - The plan of salvation, the plan of healing, starts here and now, and as we experience the work of the Holy Spirit actually transforming us, we experience greater love for and confidence in God!
- Could a person have “assurance” and actually not be saved? How, can you think of such a situation?

What do you understand the relationship between doctrinal and spiritual to be?

- Would spiritual be the personal relationship with God, developing a love for God and others, character development?
- Would doctrinal be the specific beliefs one holds?
- But, what is the purpose of doctrine if they don't inform us about God?
- Do doctrines affect the spiritual? How?
  - Scientific studies have documented that extrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor of child abuse potential, intrinsic religiosity was not (Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005)
    - This means spiritual development reduces abuse, while doctrinal religious structure increases abuse
  - Physical abuse has a negative relationship with spiritual development, but not with religiosity (Webber & Cummings, 2003)
- When Jesus said that God is spirit and wants his followers to worship Him in spirit and in truth, to what was He referring?

What do you think of the trend to move away from doctrine and focus only on spiritual development?

- Left brain is the more analytic, facts oriented, doctrinal oriented part of the brain. The right brain is more involved with experiencing the connections with others, sense of self and others.
- The Holy Spirit focuses where?
  - Both – the Spirit of Truth and Love and truth is left brain and love/relationships/connectedness is right brained.

Is there danger in focusing on doctrine without spiritual development? What might that be?

Is there danger in focusing on spiritual development without pursuing more accurate doctrinal understanding? What might that be?

How can we achieve a proper balance?

- Make all our doctrines connect to the truth about God, as revealed in Christ, and help in our relationships with God and others?
- If some doctrine undermines what Christ revealed about God it is wrong
  - In other words if some doctrine makes God out to be different in character than Jesus revealed it is wrong!
- If some doctrine violates God's testable laws, like law of love, law of liberty, law of worship etc. then it is wrong

## SUNDAY

The lesson talks about training people to witness for Christ. What training do you believe would be helpful?

- Is it training in the truths of God's kingdom?
  - The law of love, liberty, worship
  - The origin of sin
  - The purpose of creation of man
  - How Satan prosecutes his war, his methods of attack
  - God's methods of combating Satan
  - The two antagonistic principles at war in our lives
  - The purpose of Christ's mission to earth
  - What was accomplished by Christ?
  - How this translates into practical application to our lives today?
  - God's plan for the future?
- What about training on speaking skills?
- What about training regarding interpersonal dynamics?
- What about psychological training?

What training would you like so you would feel confident, comfortable and ready to tell people about God's kingdom?

If we were to have training sessions what would you want included in those sessions to help you?

How many of you would be interested in having some ready to use slide kits and programs you could use to share this message?

Where would you use them? What would you want them to contain?

Is anyone willing to help plan and organize such events?

MONDAY

Read third paragraph, "The principle of learning..." thoughts?

What did they observe? Did they see a tribunal? They observed healing, feeding, teaching, what was happening?

Jesus was imparting, giving, distributing love, resources, substance, energy from Jesus to the people. He was giving of self to heal body and mind/heart/character.

Would Jesus be doing this if He held a grudge? Would Jesus be doing this if He was against sinners?

Was Jesus carrying out His own purposes or the Father's?

Would Jesus be doing healing, feeding, giving of self to heal and uplift if the Father was against us, if the Father held grudges or was unforgiving?

Then did Jesus come with the Father's love and forgiveness to dispense, or did He come to earn, enable, or otherwise put God into a position where God was willing to forgive?

What about Jesus authority over sickness, disease, demons, evil powers? Did He have authority? What does this say the idea that Satan was the actual ruler of earth? Did Satan have any real, valid, legitimate claim to earth?

Was Jesus always the rightful ruler of earth? Did Jesus need to do anything to get His rightful rulership back, or did He need to do something to convince intelligent beings of the reality and righteousness of His rulership?

Where did Satan have to be defeated by Christ –

- In a heavenly courtroom to gain some legal verdict from His Father over Satan?
- In some actual physical confrontation to defeat Him in strength power and might?
- In the minds of intelligent beings exposing Satan as liar and fraud and confirming God and Christ as completely trustworthy, loving and honorable?
- The only place Satan has power is in the minds of intelligent beings, and Christ only needs to defeat Satan in the minds of intelligent beings. There is never a need for any courtroom, legal defeat of Satan.
- In Zech 3, when Satan is accusing the high priest, the angel of the Lord, (Christ), doesn't engage in legal arguments, doesn't plead His blood, doesn't beg His Father, doesn't even acknowledge the allegations of the devil. No! He simply heals the person, removes the sin and creates righteousness within!
- When Christ resurrected Moses and the devil attempted to debate and argue, Christ didn't give him any discussion, simply rebuked Satan and raised Moses.

Any theory which has God or Christ doing something to earn, merit, reclaim, attain, legally achieve any power from Satan is based on the false premise that Satan actually has anything to be taken.

The battle is always and only been in the minds of intelligent beings, who do we trust, what do we believe.

This is why Christ never argues with Satan, never responds to Satan's accusations, never listens to what Satan says.

Instead Christ heals, feeds, frees, raises from the dead, cleanses, restores, recreates. Christ doesn't argue with Satan, He defeats him by revealing the truth about God to win us to trust, by healing humanity in His own personhood 2000 years ago and by healing and setting people free from lies, fear, and selfishness whenever one of us will let Him.

What do we learn by observing what Christ did? To actually go out and teach the truth, heal, feed, set minds free. Don't waste time arguing over whether you have the right to do it, speak the truth in love and let the Holy Spirit bring conviction!

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "No matter...." Thoughts?

What happens when we begin to put into practice what we have learned?

Ideas become behaviors, behaviors reinforce the ideas, neural circuits change, repeated behaviors become habits as neural circuits become established and reinforced and we slowly are changed and transformed.

Does this always happen in a positive direction?

## WEDNESDAY

Learning through "failure" what do you think about the title?

Here are a couple of quotations attributed to Thomas Edison:

- I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward.
- I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.
- Many of life's failures are men who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.
- Nearly every man who develops an idea works at it up to the point where it looks impossible, and then gets discouraged. That's not the place to become discouraged.
- Show me a thoroughly satisfied man, and I will show you a failure.

Thoughts?

What is the point of the first quotes? Every attempt that didn't work is not a failure but a lesson learned, information gained, experience attained. If we use such experience we grow wiser with each experiment.

The last quote – did it remind you of anything in scripture? It reminded me of Laodicea – complacent and satisfied with their station and success. Are we resting satisfied with where we are as individuals, a church, as a ministry?

Read first paragraph, “Sometimes...” thoughts?

What do you think about setting baptismal goals? Do you think Peter had a goal of 3000 baptisms at Pentecost? Should our goal be on who responds, or on how well we present the truth, how well we fulfill God's purpose for us?

Moses didn't get great response from Pharaoh, Elijah didn't get a great response from Ahab and Israel, Jesus got initial amazing response, but then everyone left, Stephen didn't get a great response from his preaching –

How do we set goals? What is a healthy way to measure our effectiveness in achieving our goals?

Will everyone respond to the Lord the first time they hear a message presented?

While the Holy Spirit calls everyone to the same character development, to love God and others, does the Holy Spirit call everyone to the same organization? Why or why not?

Doesn't the Holy Spirit want men and women working for Him everywhere, to be salt to the earth? Would that mean He would want to have people loyal to Him in other organizations? Until the great shaking?

#### THURSDAY

What does success look like? How can we measure it?

What do we learn from success? Can you name any lessons we learn from success?

- To give God the glory and credit
- Are we not to experience any joy or happiness about our participation?
- Story of the man who bought a run down old farm, spent several years fixed it up, rebuilt barn, planted crops and turned it into a beautiful productive farm. Then a new pastor moved to town and came out to the farm and commented to the farmer, "You and God have done a wonderful job on this place," to which the farmer replied, "You should have seen it when God had it all to Himself."

What else do we learn from success?

- What works
- What resonates with people
- What gets through

FRIDAY - Read and discuss questions 1, 2.