

“Share- Part 1”

GO: You Have What It Takes- Part 5

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Introduction:

Week 1: *Your most effective tool for evangelism is to be madly in love with Jesus.*

Week 2: *Words about Jesus will flow from our lips when worship of Jesus fills our hearts.*

Week 3: *Praying with fellow Christ-followers for those that do not yet know Jesus is a key to releasing God’s power for mission.*

Colossians 4:2-6

2 Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. 3 Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. 4 Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.

5 Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

Big Idea:

God asks me to advance the Gospel through my prayers, my life, and my words.

How should I pray?

1. Pray PERSISTENTLY

2 Devote yourselves to prayer

Who are you praying for...in a devoted way... in a persistent way?

David Garland writes, *“If Christians prayed with the same zeal that some people manifest to keep themselves physically fit for a longer and healthier life, they might see different results in the life and witness of their church”* (p. 283).

2. Pray ALERTLY

with an alert mind

Prayer is a weapon against temptation. The reason this is so important is that publicly falling into sin destroys our ability to effectively witness.

You have an enemy that wants you to fall into sin so that you will be discouraged...be weighted down...be distracted from Jesus...and be ineffective in witness.

Let's face temptation head on and deal with our enemy the devil. The best way to deal with temptation is through praying...*with an alert mind.*

3. Pray with THANKGIVING

and a thankful heart...

A thankful heart leads us to want to share God's blessings with others. We are so excited about what we have that we want to share it with others.

See 2 Cor. 9:15: *Thank God for this gift^a too wonderful for words!*

Thanksgiving will open doors for witness.

4. Pray for OPPORTUNITIES (TO SPEAK)

3 Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains.

Do you ever get up in the morning, swing your feet over the side of the bed, and just say something like, "Good morning, Jesus. Would you please give me an opportunity today to share about You with someone else."?

Have you ever asked someone else to pray for YOU that you would have opportunities to share God's love and grace that day?

We should pray that God would give us and others opportunities to share the gospel with others.

I did this this week. **Illustration: Talking and praying with Tom.**

Try it every day this week! Then, look and see what God does.

Last week we kind of passed over something here that I want to hone in on this week. We can't miss this. Sometimes, by the way we talk about being on witness for Christ- we end of thinking that what we need to be concerned with is how we live in front of unbelievers. And, this is important. We will talk about this later this morning. But, notice here what Paul asked for prayer for. Opportunities... **to speak**... about Christ. To speak... spoken words...verbal witness. Living a life that models Jesus' love and the Bible's values is important- this demonstrates God's work in our lives. But, at some point, **we have to match this with spoken words to explain the Good News to those we are trying to reach.**

Romans 10: 8-17

And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: ⁹ If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. ¹¹ As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." ¹² Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. ¹³ For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."

¹⁴ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵ And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"

¹⁶ But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, "LORD, who has believed our message?" ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

This passage is so **informative and so challenging**.

It is informative because it helps us hone in on some key traits of the Gospel. Here is what we are trying to communicate to our contacts:

- *(this) is the very message about faith we preach* (Paul is telling us what is most important to speak to others).
- **Salvation is a commitment to follow.** We want to communicate and try and lead others to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord...* This is huge. Sharing with people about Jesus is not just about getting people to recognize their own sinfulness and to see Jesus as the solution for their sin problem. This is necessary...**but so is Lordship.** To follow Christ- Romans 10 is saying that we must turn over leadership of our life from self to Jesus. *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord... is a statement about what we believe and a commitment to WHO will lead our lives. This is something we must model as well.*
- **Salvation is a faith to believe.** We want to help others *believe in your heart that God raised him (Jesus) from the dead...* There is a definite component of faith...of belief. We want to communicate clearly and try to lead people to believe what the Bible teaches about Jesus.
- **Salvation is a public, verbal, decision.** *For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.*
- This passage is why, for me, I describe a Christ-follower as someone who has acknowledged Jesus as their **FORGIVER and LEADER.** These are the two issues at stake. Will our friend acknowledge their need for forgiveness and see that solution in Jesus AND will they turn the leadership of their heart over to Him.

This is the informative part of this passage. Here is the challenging part. I love this passage because it is a logical progression of *how* a person comes to commit to believe in and follow Jesus. And, this is so challenging to me.

- A person cannot/will not call on Jesus for salvation unless they believe in Him.
- A person cannot believe in Jesus if they have not.... **Heard** about Him... because as verse 17 says: *?"¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.*
- And... of course...someone cannot hear about Jesus until someone...**tells them**. Witness must be with our lives... but witness must also be verbal. It is not enough to simply live a good life in front of others for Jesus. Eventually, we want to get to the point where our goodness...where our love...where our wise choices....where our kindness...where our peacemaking... opens the door **to tell...to speak...to explain...to verbalize** the Good News.
- Now...here's what we miss sometimes. *how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?* How will our friends call on Jesus unless they believe? How will they believe if they have not heard? How will they hear if no one tells them? How will anyone tell them... if no one is sent.
- **I've got news for you. YOU HAVE BEEN SENT.** Listen to some of Jesus' last words to His followers (passed down to you and me):
 - Matthew 28:19: *¹⁹ Therefore, (YOU) go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*
 - John 20:21: *"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."*

I want to ask you to do something. Look at verses 14 and 15 and I want you to personalize them.

*¹⁴ But how can (INSERT YOUR "ONE" NAME) call on (JESUS) to save them unless (INSERT YOUR "ONE" NAME) believe(s) in him? And how can (INSERT YOUR "ONE" NAME) believe in him if (INSERT YOUR "ONE" NAME) has never heard about (JESUS)? And how can (INSERT YOUR "ONE" NAME) hear about (JESUS) **unless I tell them?** ¹⁵ And how will **I** go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"*

Friends- we've got to start taking responsibility. God's grace has been extended to us. We've been given the privilege of spreading this Good News. God has placed us around people and sent us to them. It is our job to communicate a verbal witness to Jesus' forgiveness and grace. You are the one sent to your "ONE" so that they can call on Jesus because they believe because they have heard because you have told them *because you gone when you sent!*

Pray for opportunities. Step into them. Just go for it (like a cold shower- it doesn't get easier by sitting around and fretting about it...get in and feel the exhilaration)! Speak!

5. Pray for CLARITY

4 Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.

When we have clarity- we are more prone to be confident in sharing others with Jesus. Clarity leads to boldness.

Perhaps we are not ready to clearly share the Gospel- simply because we have not prayed about being ready to clearly share the Gospel!

Remember- we serve the God who made mouths! He can give us the right words in with the right timing- no matter what situation we find ourselves in or how nervous we are or how equipped we feel...

How should I live?

1. Live WISELY

5 Live wisely among those who are not believers,

"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders" (v. 5). "Outsiders" are unsaved people. These are people that Jesus loves...but who do not yet know Him.

Here's a truth: Sometimes we forget that those around us are watching us. They are watching how we live. They are watching how we make decisions. They are watching our marriage. They are watching our parenting. They are watching our actions and words... Here's a challenging verse:

"Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world." (1 Peter 2:12). The Greek word translated "see" refers to a careful watching, over a period of time.

We are to live in such a way that people can see our good deeds and actually give glory to God because they have been around us! When you know Jesus- we have light. We must let that shine by good deeds...by living wisely!

Matthew 5:16 says: *¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

What does "living wisely" look like?

- Integrity- do what we say...follow-through...
- Following community values- neat property...

- Wise financial practices...*I'd love to walk away from my house...*
- How you speak about others when they are not around? Including your spouse...
- Do you grumble and complain?
- Do you participate in conversations where God's values are demeaned?
- Are you combative or are you a peacemaker?
- Do you notice when others are hurting and take the time to help?
- When adversity or a trial comes your way, do you handle it with faith or despair?

Remember that people are watching you. Don't give people an excuse to reject the gospel. When we pray, God will give us open doors. Let's not shut them by our behavior.

2. Live with a sense of URGENCY

and make the most of every opportunity.

"Make the most of every opportunity" (v. 5). The KJV says, "redeeming the time." In other words, "buy up the time." It's like taking advantage of a great bargain.

We must capitalize on every chance and use every moment to the full. The time and opportunities are not unlimited.

This is such an interesting prayer... **because the fact that Paul says to pray for opportunities- it assumes that there will be.** And, then when we pray this... we have to believe that God will give them. And, when they come, we've got to be ready...got to be willing to make the most of them.

Illustration:

Colleen: *Andy, what does your church teach about homosexuality?* In the midst of answering the question- I was able to insert elements of the Gospel into the conversation.

Talking with drivers about various types of church backgrounds: Many will say (speaking of different churches): *Well, we all believe the same, right?* Perhaps... but here are the key parts to the Gospel... explain the key tenants of the Good News.

Speaking about nature...creation...use it as an opportunity to see God's invisible qualities and His divine nature.

How should I speak?

1. Speak GRACIOUSLY

6 Let your conversation be gracious and attractive...

To be “gracious” basically means to be pleasant. Before we can make disciples, we need to make friends and build rapport. Remember that we are to be witnesses, not judges or prosecuting attorneys! Concerning Jesus, Luke 4:22 says, “*Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips.*” Ephesians 4:15 talks about “speaking the truth in love.”

I think sometimes we’re afraid to enter into conversations of a spiritual nature with people because we’re afraid the conversation will turn into an argument.

Take this pressure off of yourself. The Bible teaches us we must pray for opportunities and be ready to take advantage of them when they are there. But, the point isn’t to argue or get into a heated debate.

*“¹⁵...you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. **And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.** ¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way.^[a] Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.”* (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Any conversation about spiritual things...sharing what God has done in your life...sharing the message of Jesus’ forgiveness with others- is always to be done in a gentle and respectful way...*our conversation must always be gracious and attractive.*

Think of it this way- **what you are doing in talking with people about Jesus is “holy probing”**. You’re using conversation to probe someone’s spiritual sensitivity. As you talk about God, what He is doing in your life, something you are learning from the Bible, your experience at church the previous Sunday, how God has answered a prayer request—you are simply trying to gauge people’s openness to talk about Jesus. The point isn’t to start an argument- the point is to search for open doors.

Paul Little, in his book *How to Give Away Your Faith*, defines witnessing as “*that deep-seated conviction that the greatest favor I can do for others is to introduce them to Jesus Christ.*”

When that door is open (even if we have to give it a little kick...), we need to:

2. Speak INTELLIGENTLY

so that you will have the right response for everyone.

We need to have their answers ready for those who challenge or are curious about their faith.

Common questions:

- How can a loving God allow evil and suffering to exist?

- How could a loving God torture people in hell?
- Isn't it logical to just assume that this is all there is—when you die, that's it. Right?
- Isn't it offensive to claim that Jesus is the only way to heaven?
- I've lived a pretty good life. I've never murdered anyone or anything. If there is a heaven- God would have to let me in, right?
- How can you be sure that you can trust the Bible?

It's sad when people who have been Christians for years cannot give anything more than a pat answer to these kinds of questions. Howard Hendricks once said, *"In the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering."*

*¹⁵...you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. **And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.** ¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way.^[a] Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. "* (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Resources:

Tim Keller's *The Reason For God: Belief In An Age Of Skepticism*

Mark Driscoll's *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*