

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church Sunday School

Evangelism Week 7 – “As Fits the Occasion” - Questions to Ask, Next Steps, and Final Thoughts

Summary:

- *It is this evangelizing responsibility of the members of the church that we are so liable to neglect.... No phase of evangelism is more indispensable to the spread of the gospel and to the building up of the church. John Murray on Acts 8:1-4*
- Personal witness is the authoritative declaration of the good news of Jesus Christ. It is bold, conscious-directed speech, calling for a response from the hearer of repentance and faith.
- *Evangelism must be apologetic and apologetics must be evangelistic. -Cornelius Van Til*
- Focus in evangelism: Message centered, not method centered. Away from reductionistic, man-centered methodologies. Goal is extensive instruction, not minimal instruction
- A “pattern of sound words” (2 Tim 1:13) –the usefulness of a gospel outline in order to be ready and able to explain the gospel in its major tenants.
- Necessity of addressing the whole person: Mind, will, and emotion - Reject any form of evangelism that exalts the fallen mind: trusting in man’s reasoning capacities or looking for an intellectualistic response. Similarly, reject any form of evangelism that tries to make an end run around the mind. Avoid manipulation and decisionistic methods, remembering the necessity of the regeneration of the whole person by the power of the Spirit. Thus we reason with men, testifying to the gospel, calling for faith and repentance.
- We must put feet to it all: *all true theology has an evangelistic thrust, and all true evangelism is theology in action. -J.I. Packer*

Knowing the Gear – Method and Approach

- I. Some method required: readiness to speak to build up as fits the occasion

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. Eph 4:29

A. Avoid two dangers:

- i. “Hit and run”

- ii. Relational evangelism that never evangelizes

B. Using questions to speak as fits the occasion

i. Examples:

1. "Are you interested in spiritual things?"
2. "What is your religious background?"
3. "Do you believe in God? If not – why not? If so – what do you believe he is like?"
4. "How have your ideas about God changed since...(coming to college, getting married, having children, being in this job, the death of your friend, traveling overseas, reading that book, being in the military)?"
5. "Do you think God cares about evil and injustice?"
6. "What do you think makes that wrong? Do you think that there will be any consequences for that?"
7. "What is your standard for what is right and what is wrong? Do you think that there is any absolute truth?"
8. "So, do you consider yourself to be a good person?"
9. "Who do you believe Jesus Christ is?"
10. "What do you think a real Christian is?"
11. Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God, and he were to say to you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?' What would you say?

C. Next Steps

- i. Getting to the Content of the Gospel

- ii. Questions to use in appealing to the conscience after sharing the gospel
 - 1. Are there things in your life you are not willing to face and have God change?
 - 2. Isn't the real issue that you can't face your sin and guilt before God?
 - 3. If I were to answer all your questions about Christ satisfactorily, would you be willing to come to him? ...Why not?
 - 4. Assuming that God exists and has created you – don't you have a responsibility to him? Have you ever thanked him?
 - 5. If you had recorded in a notebook all your thoughts and judgments of others for the last day, and then lost it, how would you feel?
 - 6. How do you know what love is – and that you're not actually running away from it?

II. The final analysis

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. - Romans 10:17

Plans to Obey (adapted from Will Metzger, Tell the Truth):

Clearing the conscience: *What has the quiet voice of God been saying to me? Is there a sin to confess? Is there a relationship that needs to be put right? Anything else?*

Prayer: *Am I regularly and fervently praying for the lost? If not, why not?*

Goals regarding Non-Christians: *What is God calling me to do regarding non-Christians with whom I have a long-term relationship (such as family and friends)? What is God calling me to do regarding those with whom I have a short-term relationship (such as neighbors, classmates, business associates and people met in passing)?*