

How to Share Your Faith Pt. 1

The Attitude of Evangelism

This morning I want to continue in our series about essential aspects of a believers life and look at the whole idea of sharing our faith with others. We have so far established the idea that God has a purpose and will – a design and destiny for us, and that he desires a personal relationship that includes a daily routine of learning about him and allowing him to play out that design in our lives. This morning I feel that once we have established these two things in our lives, we are ready to share with others what we have found in God. Jesus told his disciples in **Matthew 28:18-20**:

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The act of evangelism is a command of God. A theologian once wrote, “To win men to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the only reason why Christians are still on earth.” If life was simply about our own salvation then the game clock of life would have already expired. We have been given a task and purpose to fulfill.

Now, that doesn't mean that God is going to ask you to go door to door and pass out tracks. It doesn't mean that God is going to ask you to stand on a street corner and preach as loud as you can about Hell and damnation. It doesn't mean that you will have to hold up a sign at a sports stadium reading John 3:16. Whatever picture that you established in your mind when I began to talk about sharing your faith, set it aside for the time being because just maybe sharing your faith with others is far from your worst nightmare.

Instead, what I want us to do this morning is first establish the attitude that we should have in our approach to evangelism, and discuss some of the hang-ups people have with evangelism. Let me start out by saying that the act of receiving salvation is first of all the result of a miracle. As each of us have asked Christ to come and live in us, the connection of our soul with God, and the rebirth of our spirit is a miraculous work. The fact that we as human beings – full of pride and sin, would desire God even to the point of humbling ourselves and choosing his plan is not an everyday occurrence for many.

That is why we need to see that God has to be involved in the evangelism process. If God's Spirit does not speak to people, if God does not quicken their hearts, if God doesn't move events in their lives in order to gain their attention, then evangelism would simply be the result of mere human effort. That is why Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 12:9**:

⁹ Each time he said, “My gracious favor is all you need. My power works best in your weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may work through me.

We need to get it into our heads that evangelism is the result of God working in the hearts of men, using our lives and what we say simply to draw them to the working of His Spirit. We go and catch the fish, but God cleans them and draws them unto himself. As I sit back and think of all the people that I have seen come to the Lord, it amazes me how God does it.

At times I have felt like I had the perfect words to say, and it seemed to roll off the tip of my tongue, no one responds. But the times when I felt like I was stumbling all over myself, and I felt like my words were dropping to the floor before anyone could hear them, that was when there was a response. Evangelism is not about our work, but it is about the work that Jesus can do in someone, through our words and life. If we can catch this truth, then a lot of the pressure that we put on ourselves can be relieved. How should I approach evangelism then? Through the attitude of humility.

Jesus gives us a great example of humility in **Luke 18:9-14**:

⁹Then Jesus told this story to some who had great self-confidence and scorned everyone else: ¹⁰ “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a dishonest tax collector. ¹¹ The proud Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don’t sin, I don’t commit adultery, ¹²I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’ ¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ ¹⁴I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For the proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored.”

We find here that the tax collector showed his humility by acknowledging two things: 1. He understood the reality and ability of God. He did not look up to heaven because he knew he didn’t deserve it, yet it was up to God to decide. 2. He understood the reality of who he was in contrast. He knew what he had done and asked for mercy. Let me tell you, none of us deserve the mercy of God. The one’s with whom we share our faith do not deserve the mercy of God, but God chooses to show his mercy and that is what makes it so miraculous.

You and I are simply vessels for God to use. We can fall into the danger of thinking that our own effort is what determines whether or not a person comes to Christ. We can have a self-dependent mindset that shuts out any sovereign move of God. Humility is essential to effective evangelism. A pastor once wrote: “Few of us are big enough to become little enough to be used by God.” How can pride effect our sharing of our faith? This morning I want to look at the life of Samson and apply it to our topic this morning.

You don't have to look very far and realize that Samson had some problems: He violated his vow and God's law on many occasions, he was controlled by sensuality, he confided in the wrong people and he used his gifts and abilities unwisely. He showed great pride. In **Judges 14:1-3** we read:

¹One day when Samson was in Timnah, he noticed a certain Philistine woman. ²When he returned home, he told his father and mother, "I want to marry a young Philistine woman I saw in Timnah." ³His father and mother objected strenuously, "Isn't there one woman in our tribe or among all the Israelites you could marry? Why must you go to the pagan Philistines to find a wife?" But Samson told his father, "Get her for me. She is the one I want."

Samson's pride had no interest in others. He could care less what his parents wanted, he could care less what the commandments of God were, and he could care less if the Philistine woman wanted marry him or not. "I want what I want." I am sure that there are some of us here who don't want to tell others about what Jesus has done in our lives. I am sure that there are some who are not open to interjecting truth and viewpoints for the benefits of others.

The reality for you and I this morning is that if it wasn't for the humility and risk that men and women were willing to take, then you and I would not be sitting here this morning. Paul tells us in **Philippians 2:5-8**:

⁵Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. ⁶Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. ⁷He made himself nothing ;he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. ⁸And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross.

Pride is only self-seeking – how I can look good, what I can get, how I can benefit etc., while humility is willing to risk for the sake of someone else. In **Judges 15:3-5** we find Samson's response of retaliation to the Philistines:

³Samson said, "This time I cannot be blamed for everything I am going to do to you Philistines." ⁴Then he went out and caught three hundred foxes. He tied their tails together in pairs, and he fastened a torch to each pair of tails. ⁵Then he lit the torches and let the foxes run through the fields of the Philistines. He burned all their grain to the ground, including the grain still in piles and all that had been bundled. He also destroyed their grapevines and olive trees.

Samson's pride solves no problems. In fact, we find that his retaliation results in the death of Samson's wife and father-in-law. Pride isn't interested in helping others but instead is more interested in getting one's point across. I have seen people avoid Christianity because a Christian has used the Word of God as a sword to hurt and wound

rather than to present truth. I will tell you this, that if a person is not ready or open to receive from you, then back off and pray that God will provide another opportunity. Pick your battles! Don't tear apart a person's life, but start with issues of the heart. Beware! There are some who will try to get into arguments with you in order to mislead you or impose their viewpoint. Don't be so set on being heard that you lose sensitivity to where a person is at. **Proverbs 13:10** tells us:

¹⁰ *Pride leads to arguments; those who take advice are wise.*

A person with pride is not looking out for what will solve a person's problem, but is looking for a way to take advantage of them. That is why Paul said in **Philippians 2:3**:

³ *Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself.*

Think about their salvation, their life, their challenges, their hang ups, and then speak gently to those areas. Finally this morning, we read of **Samson's pride being humbled**. We reading **Judges 16:17-20**:

¹⁷ *Finally, Samson told her his secret. "My hair has never been cut," he confessed, "for I was dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as anyone else."* ¹⁸ *Delilah realized he had finally told her the truth, so she sent for the Philistine leaders. "Come back one more time," she said, "for he has told me everything." So the Philistine leaders returned and brought the money with them.* ¹⁹ *Delilah lulled Samson to sleep with his head in her lap, and she called in a man to shave off his hair, making his capture certain. And his strength left him.* ²⁰ *Then she cried out, "Samson! The Philistines have come to capture you!" When he woke up, he thought, "I will do as before and shake myself free." But he didn't realize the LORD had left him.*

Here we find that eventually Samson's pride results in his capture. He is then thrown into prison and exploited as a trophy by the Philistines. You may say, what does this have to do with sharing my faith? Consider this – your pride limits you from saying something about your faith to your friends, your pride produces a self-righteous attitude, and in the end you have done more damage to the Kingdom of God than you have good. I guarantee you that you will be humbled when you stand before God and have to explain your actions. You will have to stand there in heaven and look your friends in the eye and know that you did nothing to save them.

We all know the verse that states that "pride comes before the fall" and we can either get off of our pedestal and think of others now, or wait till it's too late. Samson, after his capture faced humility. He humbled himself and called upon "Sovereign God" to give

him the strength to destroy the temple of Dagon. He finally acknowledges that all that he was able to accomplish was due to God power and ability and not his own. You and I can begin to approach evangelism with an attitude of humility, or we can continue to beat people into the Kingdom of God.

Effective evangelism is the result of seeing ourselves and God through humble eyes. The miracle of salvation is a result of God's work through us, not because of us. Having a heart that serves others and not simply wants to be heard. Willing to speak to open and searching hearts instead of needing to condemn. And looking out for the hope of souls instead of simply pointing out their sin. We are vessels used by God. People are not saved by our words alone but because the Spirit is who quickens them, and convinces them for their need for God.

It is said that "the bring of one soul to Jesus is the highest achievement possible to human life." And as we consider this topic for the next couple of weeks I pray that it will all be built on this attitude to serve others and God.