

Sharing Your Faith / Speaking the Truth in Love

2008 Year End Retreat

Session 1 – Sharing the Gospel

What is the gospel?

- **1 Cor 15: 1-5** “1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, 4 and that **He was buried**, and that **He rose again** the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that **He was seen** by Cephas, then by the twelve.”

Who is **Jesus Christ**? (Paul Canner & Brian Jones have a session titled *Who is Jesus?*)

It is important to know who we are talking about and to be very clear with others.

- 1 John 2:22-23 “22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”
- 1 John 4: 1-3 “1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that **confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh** is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”
- 1 John 5:1 “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, ...”
- 1 John 5:6 “This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood.”
- 2 John “7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess **Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh**. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward. 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the **doctrine of Christ** does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”
 - We need to know doctrine of Christ
 - We should not encourage, house, feed, help others in a work involving a doctrine not of Christ.
- **Jesus** – Man; a man born of a virgin; Jesus- for He shall save His people (Matt 1:21)
- **Christ** – Messiah, Son of God
 - John 1:41 “He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the **Messiah**” (which is translated, the Christ)”
 - John 4:25 “The woman said to Him, “I know that **Messiah** is coming” (who is called **Christ**). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

Witnessing Tips (Applies to gospel and Christian contacts)

- Attitude, attitude, attitude.
- Pray for the unsaved person (by name if it is a planned meeting)
 - Ask the Lord to help you show His love to that person.
 - Ask the Lord to help lead you to witness to the person. Go in the power of the Spirit not in our own power.
- Try to develop a (genuine) relationship with this person. Might need to be in 5 seconds or perhaps a lifetime.
 - Asking questions, small talk, for quick relationships. shows your (genuine) interest in them.
 - When appropriate ... ask them what they believe? What do you think about God?
- Consider having a plan... but be open to modify plan based on response or need expressed.
 - Don't talk down to the person. Acknowledge we were/are sinner... and how we came to be saved.
- Stop and help people along road, in hallway, in stores, etc.
 - Some may try to pay... give tract in response
- Offer to buy lunch or help in some other way (project, chore)
- Provide supply of tracts to some of your Christian friends for mutual encouragement and support.
- Recall that when Jesus was on earth, some believed and some did not. Our experience will be similar.
- Loving does not mean apologetic or ashamed, but also not accusatory
- Word of God is incorruptible. Word remains even after we are long gone.

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- 1 Peter 1: “22 Since you have purified your souls in **obeying the truth** through the Spirit in **sincere love** of the brethren, **love one another fervently** with a pure heart, 23 having been **born again**, not of corruptible **seed** but **incorruptible**, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”
- Create list of verses to memorize.
- Psalms 37:3-5 “3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. 4 **Delight yourself also in the LORD**, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 **Commit your way to the LORD**, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass.”
- Make good use of questions:
 - What do you mean by ____? (Others may use the same words that we do, but mean something different)
 - Where do you get your information? (The bible, pastors, parents, books...)
 - How do you know that is true?
 - What happens if you are wrong?
- Redefine your thoughts of a “successful” discussion. Don’t expect any “results”. If you were able to share a few verses, God can use that in the future... regardless of the “good/bad” response we receive.
 - See 1 Peter 1:22-24 (above)
 - 1 Cor 3:6-7 “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”
 - God, graciously, does **not** always allow us to see or hear of any results.

Examples

- Doug
 - At work: Received an indirect invitation to share what I believe. Able to share, ask questions, etc. In the end it came down to: “Well, that all depends on if you believe the bible is true, doesn’t it?” “That’s right.”
 - Older neighbor1: Asked him what he believed about “religion”? He still goes to church, but doesn’t think he believes in God anymore. I asked simple “why?”... which led to a discussion about faith in God and His word vs men/pastors and religion. Left the door open for further discussions.
 - Older neighbor2: Shared several verses... neighbor laughed it off... Continue talking, giving gifts, etc.
 - Owatonna Fair: How sure are you that you are going to heaven? 50%, 80%, 90% ? If you could be 100% sure, would you like to be? This line of question was helpful with both unsaved and saved.
- Wayne
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Line of questioning that helps others to see themselves as God sees them... as sinners... headed for hell.

- Do you consider yourself a good person? Answer usually is yes
- Have you ever lied? God calls that bearing false witness. What do you call someone who lies?
- Have you ever killed? Jesus says: he who is angry with his brother is guilty of murder. (Matt 5:21+)
- Have you committed adultery? Jesus says: he who looks on another w/lust is guilty of adultery. (Matt 5:27+)
- In God’s eyes you are a lying, murdering, adulterer. That’s just 3 commandments.
- If God were to judge you based on this, would you be guilty? Therefore, you are headed for heaven or hell?
- Now you can move to the good news.

What discussions have you had? What did you learn?

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What other questions do you have?

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Role-playing (time permitting)

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Session 2 – Sharing Faith with other Christians

Speak Truth in Love

- Eph 4:11-16 “11 And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what **every joint supplies**, according to the **effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body** for the **edifying of itself in love**.”
- 2 John 1 “... love in truth... known the truth... (4)... walking in truth”

Walking in Truth (Sharing our faith is more than just what we *say*)

- 2 John “4 I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth,”
- 3 John “3 For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”
- Be consistent in word and deed.
 - Col 3:16-18 “16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”
 - 1 John 3:18 “18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

Truth – Bible is the authority

- God cannot lie (Titus 1:2 “God, that cannot lie”)
- God cannot change (Malachi 3:6 “I am the Lord, I change not”)
- If someone agrees with above two verses, then we can take ourselves out of the picture.
- Truth is not based on men, creed, etc... but is on the One who is truth.
 - John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, “**I** am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
 - John 17:17 “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your **word** is truth.”
 - 1 John 5:6 “And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

Preface discussion w/prayer

- Attitude, attitude, attitude.
- Privately to Lord; publicly if agreeable
- This is perhaps the most powerful part of armor and yet most neglected or under-utilized.
 - Ephesians 6: 10-20 “10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ... 17 ... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 **praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— ...”

Be prepared to:

- Say “I don’t know... I’ll dig into that...”
- Avoid tangents... red herrings... come back to the main topic.
 - 2 Tim 2:23 “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.”
 - Titus 3:9 “But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.”
 - Rom 14:1 “1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things.”
- Always thank them for the discussion, and ask them if they would like to continue the discussion again another time.
- Ok to walk away... try again another day.
- We must not receive (i.e. encourage/help) a deceiver (which is different from someone who has been deceived).
 - 2 John “7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess **Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh**. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward. 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the

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Loving

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-2 and others (Love is the Motivation that will be fruitful)
 - 1-2 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”
- Action (not just words)
- “Forceful”... can be loving (Doug’s story: Trip to Boston)
 - Jesus’ words in gospels. How did He have perfect blend of truth and love?
- What do you believe about ____? Have you ever thought about ____?

Important to grow in grace and knowledge

- 2 Peter 3:17-18 “17 You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.”
 - Learn God’s word
 - Take advantage of elders, etc to keep learning and understanding.
 - Important to not just know what your parents believe, or what others teach, but do **you** understand and believe it as well. If you have questions... then study, read, ask, pray, learn...

Examples

- In Bible
 - Daniel & friends, Jesus, others?
- Other examples
 - Doug: Talk with evangelist friend about eternal security. He once believed in eternal security because of what the Bible says. Later rejected it... because of what he saw in people.
 - Wayne: Bible study with Tom and others at Caribou coffee.

What discussions have you had with your friends?

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What other questions do you have?

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