

Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

Sermon Title: Witnessing to Someone Who Thinks They are Already Saved

February 18, 2018

Theme verse: Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (ESV)

Introduction: You know the kind of person who thinks they are saved. . .

John 3:1-14

Exegesis

Water and spirit: *Ezekiel 36:25–27 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (ESV)*

If you are witnessing to a person who thinks they are already saved:

1. Expect them to react with prideful resistance just like Nicodemus.
 - Read and explain John 3:1-15 to them.
 - But, realize that their understanding of what it means to be “born again” will be just as hidden for them as it was for Nicodemus.
 - Don’t get upset with their arrogance, but respond with gracious and probing questions, like “What do you think Jesus meant when He said you must be born again?”
2. Know that the more comfortable a person is, the less they will be open to search for spiritual truths that will make them uncomfortable.
3. Know that the more educated your friend is in all kinds of religious teachings, the harder it will be for them admit their ignorance of basic truths that will lead to life eternal.
4. Know that the more a person is steeped in their own “Christian” religion of works the harder it will be for them to turn away from their traditions and fellowships.
5. Knowing all of the above, do not attempt to debate, instruct, teach, argue, because

Jesus didn't do that with Nicodemus. Jesus knew the only hope for them was if the Holy Spirit brought them to repentance.

6. Don't write them off as unredeemable since Nicodemus himself became a true believer later.
7. Most importantly, make sure the transformational power of the Spirit has already blown you over, and knocked the pride, right out of your sails. Just because we are first, or second or third generation Baptists does not mean we have all been born again.
8. Do not think they are "unsaved" unless you see no signs at all of transformation. They may not have said the right words or known the exact moment they surrendered to Christ and abandoned their trust in their own righteousness but God knows their heart.

Final note:

- As much as this passage teaches election and that salvation comes from God alone and not from the will of man – do not conclude that this doctrine is in any way unfair of God. No one will ever face God on Judgment Day and say I wanted to surrender to you as Lord and follow you as your servant and obey you but you never elected me, I wasn't one of the chosen. No, if they had that desire at any time in their life, it was the work of the Holy Spirit regenerating their hearts to love God and deny self.