

life group study guide

February 21, 2016

The Big Ask—

Going deeper into Evangelism, Helping people to find their way to God, and not hinder them...

One of our most basic commands from Jesus is to make disciples of all the nations- (**Matt 28:19**). Yet, for many Christians sharing our faith is a difficult thing to do. We may be frightened of simply speaking to people, or of group settings. We may be worried about how we will be received, or of what we will say. Perhaps just the opposite, we may be the bull in the china shop, crashing through peoples defenses or desires like a runaway freight train.

God, in His grace and knowledge has already anticipated this in us. Throughout Scripture we see ordinary people proclaiming God message or proclaiming God himself. Today's Sermon verses from Acts centers around just such a moment.

Like all of our class notes, for here, or small groups, when we try to outguess where Matt is going to take us, our results are less than stellar, so let's look at the premise of the message:

Sharing our Faith, or Sharing the Good News of Jesus.

The passage from Acts speaks about Peter and John speaking and healing people in the Name of Jesus. We also see them brought before the Sanhedrin, the local authorities of the day, to give an account of themselves and their actions.

Let's look at some of the comments and responses Peter and John offer throughout these two chapters, to help us with our confidence and ability to share the Gospel... (**Acts 3-4**),

Let's start with a few basic premises...

1) God is capable of working without our help, He is actually allowing us to be a part of this.

Q) What does that mean that God is capable without our help? Give an example of what God may be doing as we share or attempt to share our Faith.

Q) If God doesn't need our help, then why does he allow us to be a part of this?

2) God isn't relying on us to get it perfect or even right all the time.

Q) What happens if we say the wrong thing, or turn someone away?

Q) Is God capable of overcoming our shortcomings in how we speak to others?

Can you offer an example of thought to that?

READ ACTS 3:11-12

Q) According to Peter, if not hi, then who made the man to walk?

3) The sharing of the Gospel is supposed to be more about Jesus than us. Peter is recognizing that the healing performed was of Jesus, not Peter's own hand.

Q) When we do attempt to share our faith, are we more interested in the story being about God or about ourselves?

Q) Where is the line between it being His story and your story or desires? Is there even such a line?

READ ACTS 3:24

4) Here- Peter is actually referring to Scripture as he speaks to the crowd, reminding them that these things have already been written. We are not making up some story. The story is already told.

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THINK: When you share your faith- are you able to give an account of what and why you believe? Are you able to point to the scriptures, what parts, the where, the Who? The why?

Q) Perhaps this is best left has a hypothetical question, but if you are unable or are not referring to the scriptures as your authority or knowledge base when you share your faith, then WHAT are you referring to?

Q) Where do people derive their foundation from if not the Scriptures?

Q) What have you overheard others using for their source of ultimate truth?

READ ACTS 4:8-17

5) We are to speak boldly, but that boldness comes from our knowledge and belief and understanding of Jesus and the Scriptures. Not of our own accord.

Q) Verse 13 says they, the authorities, took note that these men had been with Jesus. What do you think they made of that in this situation?

Q) When people hear us speak, will they take note that we are believers? That we have lived in such a manner that we can identify our lives with Christ?

Q) Based on verse 17, do we think that the leaders accepted the Gospel?

Q) Why or why not?

Q) If they knew that these men had been with Jesus and acted accordingly, how can we expect men to act when we share the Gospel if they can't identify us with Christ by our lives?

Q) Where was God during this moment?

READ the following verses:

Joshua 1:9 / Isaiah 41:10 / Deuteronomy 31:6 / Revelation 3:20 / Romans 8:31

The old phrase about catching more flies with sugar, while not exactly appealing, is applicable when we are trying to share our faith. We are trying to lift people, to correct wrong impressions, or teachings, not trying to annoy them, or turn them off to our words.

And yet we are to speak boldly, we are to have courage. We should be sharing not just the Gospel but our very lives.

THINK:-- The fact that God allows us to be a part of sharing the good news is quite an honor. But how we do it, is important, to Him, and to the people we are sharing with... God expects us to be able to share when called upon to do so --but in gentleness of spirit, Therefore how we do it is important.

APPLICATION:

So- now then, how shall we prepare ourselves for such a task? We've noted the need to be prepared to give an account, and to have the foundation of scripture. To be bold,

When you attempt to share your faith-- are you focusing on God, allowing that strength to fill you, or are you focusing on how you will be perceived, or what you will say?

Are we worried about how we will be received? Will they shun us? Will I lose the friendship or respect of a family member, or a friend?

We can't control how others will react, but we can control how we act.

Knowing what to say, or do can be difficult and it will be different in every situation. However we know that God is indeed with us and for us... And if God is for us, then who can be against us? (Rom 8:31)

BE READY! BE PREPARED! BE KNOWLEDGABLE! BE HUMBLE!

BUT HOW? How do we make ready for any such moments?

READ the following versess:

James 1:5 / 1 Peter 3:15- note the ending of the verse / Zechariah 4:6 / and re-read Joshua 1:9

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Q) Back in Acts 3:12 Peter acknowledged that the healing came from God, not himself. So, in converting people, and such a harsh term it seems in today's world, but when people come to Christ, when they see the truth, when they see the light- Who actually made that conversion? Who can and has actually saved that person?

Let's look at one more verse-- READ Proverbs 21:31.

Victory rests with the Lord. We are in a battle. Scripture tells us so. But victory rests with the Lord...

Therefore, since we simply can't save anyone, It is God's responsibility to actually convert the sinner, just as He converted you, as He converted me...

We can overcome our hesitations and doubts about our ability to share the good news... we can have faith that God is with us and will guide us-- We can be bold, we can be brave. But we stand firm, yet do it in humbleness and through God ultimate strength--

Therefore-

We must always be ready, and always be open to any opportunity that God presents us with to Share the Good News. Who knows what person we may encounter this very day, who may need to hear the truth before the next day, which may be their last.

..."Therefore, go and make disciples off all nations, baptizing the in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." **Matt 28:19**

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