

The Convicting Spirit
February 2, 2020

There is an old television show titled, "I Love Lucy." In one famous episode, Lucy and her best friend, Ethel, have taken jobs in a candy factory. They have failed at every job they were given in the factory. Their last chance is to work at a conveyor belt wrapping individual chocolates in paper. Then they are to lay the wrapped pieces back on the belt to go to the boxing room. The boss lady sternly warns them that if any of the chocolate pieces get to the boxing room unwrapped the two would be fired.

At first, they keep up quite well, but before they notice it the candy starts coming out more quickly and they get behind. They scrape candy off the belt so it won't get past them. They try to wrap faster. But it doesn't work. They can't catch up. They start popping pieces in their mouths just to get rid of them. Lucy hears the boss coming back and scoops into her chef hat all the chocolates in front of her and loads her mouth up. The boss enters, sees there are no unwrapped chocolates on the belt, compliments them, and yells for the belt to speed up. The scene closes with Lucy grabbing chocolates and throwing them down her shirt to try to keep up with the demand. It is a very funny scene.

No four people could have kept up with the pace of candy coming down the belt, much less just the two of them. It was an impossible task. This morning we are going to consider an impossible task that Jesus gave his disciples to accomplish. We need to do this because this task applies to us as well.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them (his disciples) and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations (peoples), baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

There are three commands here. They are: make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey Jesus.

The command to baptize disciples is not impossible. Churches do it all the time. We will baptize two people next Sunday. All we need in order to baptize people is enough water. We have a container up there that holds enough. Baptizing isn't impossible.

The third command is not impossible. We have weekly Bible study groups that are focused on teaching people how to live in obedience to Jesus. It takes teachers who are committed to the task. But it is not impossible to fulfill this command.

The impossible command is the first one, make disciples. The command to make disciples is not something we can accomplish on our own. There is a part of it that is impossible for us to

accomplish. I have diagramed what goes into this command to make it clear what is impossible.

> Make Disciples

1. Evangelism (sharing the Gospel) by Christians

- 1) Tell the bad news about our sin.
- 2) Tell the good news about our Savior.
- 3) Invite a response to Jesus.

2. Conviction by Holy Spirit

The first part of the command to make disciples is to tell people the Gospel. We call this evangelism. The Gospel includes both bad news and good news. It is the bad news that makes the good news good.

The bad news is the fact that we are all sinners in need of a savior. Without someone to save us from the consequences of our sins we will each be condemned to hell. That is the bad news.

The good news is that God loves us and has provided us a Savior, Jesus. Jesus died for our sins. He died in our place. As proof of God accepting Jesus' death in our place, God raised Jesus from the dead. If he had died for any sin of his own, which he did not, he would still be dead.

Putting our lives in the hands of Jesus saves us from the penalty of our sins.

This first part of making disciples is not impossible. It isn't easy, but it's not impossible.

Any Christian ought to be able to tell someone the why and how of becoming a Christian.

After all, you had to know both the why and how of becoming a Christian in order to become one yourself.

This first part of making disciples isn't impossible for us to do. It is the second part of making disciples that is impossible for us to do. This second part is God's part. We see what this is in the book of John. Jesus is instructing his disciples in this passage.

John 16:7-11 (NIV) But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

We need to understand what this work is, as it plays a part in us making disciples for Jesus. I cannot speak to a person's heart. You cannot speak to a person's heart. We could play on a person's emotions with a tear jerker of a story. But that is not the same as speaking to a heart.

In sharing the Gospel, we can use facts, our personal stories, illustrations, and logic. In doing so we can only speak to their minds. Speaking to hearts is a spiritual thing. Speaking to hearts is something only God can do. The Holy Spirit speaks God's Word (Hebrews 4:12) to a person's heart, a person's spirit, as we share the Gospel with them.

1. The Holy Spirit will convict people of their sin.

When people encountered the miracles of Jesus, they encountered the power of God. This surprised people and confronted them with their own sinfulness. We see an example of this in the life of Peter. This event was before he became a disciple of Jesus. Jesus was sitting in Peter's boat teaching a crowd of people who were on the shore.

Luke 5:4-8 (NIV) When he had finished speaking (to the crowd), he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

In the realization of God's power in Jesus, Peter was confronted with how sinful Peter was. Let me illustrate.

I have a white car. We did not want to buy a white car because we thought it would show the dirt more. But it really doesn't. The car tends to get uniformly dirty. So you don't notice the dirt very much. It is only when I decide to wash it that I find out how dirty it is. I take that soapy sponge and swipe the fender and then the difference between clean and dirty is glaring. I think to myself, "I did not think it was very dirty. But it really is." Once I see what clean looks like, I can't stand the dirt. I have to wash it off.

Being around Jesus, the Son of God, people noticed how dirty they were with sin. But Jesus was going back to heaven. How would people be confronted with their sin with Jesus gone? This is the job of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit speaks to people about their sin, especially the sin of unbelief when it comes to Jesus.

This is a necessary work of the Holy Spirit. For any person to become a Christian, he or she must believe they are dirty with sin.

2. The Holy Spirit will convict people of the righteousness of Jesus.

On earth, Jesus lived a perfect life with God and others. When people met him they met a truly righteous man. Look at this example in the book of Luke. This statement is by one of the Roman soldiers who participated in the crucifixion of Jesus.

Luke 23:47 (NIV) The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."

Righteousness means to relate to someone in a right way. If you fully fulfill your responsibilities, obligations, and commitments to someone you are righteous in that relationship. You might possibly be righteous in or two of your relationships. But none of us are righteous in all of our relationships. And none of us are righteous with God. The only person who has been righteous in every relationship was Jesus.

With Jesus gone, how are the disciples supposed to convince people that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior and Lord of the world? They were eye witnesses of the resurrection. But their testimony was not proof to anyone that Jesus had really been raised from the dead.

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to speak this truth to people's hearts when they heard the Gospel. This is impossible for us to do. It can only be done by the Holy Spirit.

In order to be saved a person needs to know he is a sinner. And then he must believe in the Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus is righteous, an acceptable substitute for us. The Holy Spirit speaks to hearts of who Jesus is so they can put their faith in Him. Again, we say these words to people's mind, but the Holy Spirit must convict the heart.

As we trust in Jesus as a perfect substitute for our sin, he extends to us his righteousness with God.

One more thing the Spirit convicts of is...

3. The Holy Spirit will convict people that they will be held accountable for unbelief.

The third area of the Holy Spirit's convicting work concerns judgment. The death and resurrection of Jesus was a condemnation of Satan, the devil, also called the prince of this world.

John 16:8-11 (NIV) When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt... and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

The prince of this world is the devil. I preached about the devil in November. On our website, look for the sermons in November concerning "Unseen Enemies". The devil roams the earth looking to trick humans with lies and deceptions of various kinds to prevent people from trusting in Jesus and serving Him. Paul describes the situation on earth like this:

Ephesians 2:1-2 (NIV) As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

The devil has been condemned and those he has led astray also. The Holy Spirit convicts people of God's judgment upon them if they reject Jesus.

Now let's bring this to a conclusion.

If you have a relative or friend or coworker that you want to see become a Christian, you need to be praying for an opportunity to share the Gospel with this person.

And trust/pray that the Holy Spirit will do the convicting work needed.

There is no guarantee that your friend will become a Christian. Every person must make that personal choice.

You might ask, "Why would someone not put themselves into the hands of Jesus?" The answer is revealed to us in God's word.

John 3:19-20 (NIV) This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

The Spirit forces no one to choose belief in Jesus. The Spirit forces no one to yield their lives to Jesus. The Spirit cannot make your friend love Jesus. Sadly, many who have heard the Gospel and been under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, have failed to put their trust in Jesus. If you have shared the Gospel and they have rejected it, do not feel guilty over their rejection. You can not make them believe. It is only your job to share.

But keep on praying. The Holy Spirit can keep convicting someone, keep speaking to hearts of those who have heard the Gospel. While they still live there is a chance they will change their attitude towards God.

Invitation

Any of you can change your attitude towards God today. Today you can respond to his invitation to believe, to entrust your life to Jesus.