

Sharing God's Good News naturally

Session 1 A presence- have to be there.

In Matthew Ch 5 v 1-12 Jesus looks at his followers and says, 'I want to describe to you how you ought to behave, and what your attitude should be like.' In vs13-16 Jesus is reminding his followers that nothing packs a punch like a genuinely transformed life, so in effect he is saying. 'My children, each of you should see yourself as salt and light to people outside of the Kingdom of God.' With that in mind look at the following questions.

1A. What qualities or characteristic of salt are valuable and helpful?

1B. What qualities or characteristics of light are valuable and helpful?

Read Matthew Ch 5 v13-16

2. What parallels do you see between both light and salt and your role as a witness/ evangelist in the world?

2A. how are you like light?

2B. how are you like salt?

Bill Hybells in his book *Becoming a Contagious Christian* writes about a mathematical formula which is $HP+CP+CC=MI$. He writes about this in relation to witnessing. HP stands for high potency, and CP stands for close proximity while CC stands for clear communication, which results in MI, maximum impact. What begins to emerge from the Mathew ch 5 v 13-16 passage is the impact that our lives should have on other people. Jesus is saying that someone with high potency [HP] has to be willing to get into close proximity [CP] to someone else and clearly communicate [CC] the message of Jesus, if maximum influence or impact [MI] is going to happen. Jesus chose the metaphors of salt and light because they both follow the same formula.

3. So, what can you do to increase your potency as a Christian?

4. What can you do to increase your proximity to non-Christians in the course of a regular week?

5, how would you evaluate your life in light of Hybell's equation/ formula?

If followers of Jesus are going to have a potency level high enough to impact non-Christians, then they will need specific qualities in their life. Why are the following characteristics below essential in the lives of fully devoted followers of Christ if they are have maximum impact

6A spiritual confidence

6B an authentic faith

6C and urgency about the gospel.

The age-old daily spiritual disciplines or just allowing the word of God to speak to us, prayer, using fellow Christians to help negotiate life and faith, spiritual gifts, and speaking of Jesus when we are able are all ways in which God adds savouriness to our life, and how we begin to shine a little more brightly

7A. why do you think that strength in such spiritual disciplines is mandatory for high potency?

7B. How do you think you are doing in practicing daily spiritual disciplines at this time in your life?

7C what specific spiritual disciplines do you need to develop in your life at this time?

7D what is one way your group/ cell members can help you grow in this spiritual discipline?

Over this next week make a list of three people with whom you are in close proximity. It is important to build relationships and friendships with folk regardless of how they will respond to Jesus. The fact that they matter to God and matter to you should be enough

Prayer

Yourself- ask God to help you live an attractive and authentic Christian life. Ask also for the wisdom and knowledge necessary to share the good news of the gospel.

For others- ask God to draw seekers to Himself, to open their eyes to the condition of their lives, and help them grasp the meaning of the Cross.

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Session 2 A motivation- have to want to.

Why should we share our faith?

Four reasons spring to mind. Firstly because Jesus is amazing in what he has done, and the hope he offers. Secondly, because we have been honoured with a great invitation to participate in God's grand endeavour to bring people to faith. Thirdly, because if heaven is real, then so is hell, and the eternal destinies of people should matter to us. Fourthly, to help someone to appreciate all that Jesus has done for them is one of the greatest contributions you can make to another human being.

1. How have others communicated their faith to you? What do you think motivated them to take the risk of communicating faith?

2. When you ever had the opportunity of explaining the gospel message to someone? How did you do it? What was your motive for doing this?

Read Acts Ch 1 v 6-8

3. How do you feel when you realise God's plan to reach others relies on your willingness to co-operate as His messenger?

When we live with a profound thankfulness of all that we gain from a relationship with God, this has an incredible effect on our attitude to sharing our faith. We just need to live with a great awareness of all that we benefit from, and all the blessings we receive from this relationship with God.

4A. Can you identify some of the benefits you have gained since becoming a Christian?

4B. Does all your benefits and blessings motivate you to share your faith? If so why? If not, why do you think it has no motivational power on you?

5A. How does it feel to be honoured by God with the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel message?

5B In all honesty, does this responsibility motivate or overwhelm you? Why?

6. How do you think the Holy Spirit works to ignite a witness sharing flame in each of us? How does this help us share the truth of Jesus?

Take time over the course of the week to list all the benefits and blessings you receive because of your faith in Jesus Christ. Think of all that God has done for you, what he offers.

Who are a few of the folk in your life you would love to see receive the same kind of benefits and blessings; take time to list them below.

Take time this coming week to praise God for all the good things He has given you and done for you, also go back to your list of three people from week 1, and those you have listed above, that they to would begin to realise that they need God's benefits and blessings as much as you do.

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Session 3. A mind-set- have to like people.

As Jesus walked along the shore of Sea of Galilee he spotted two men with fishing nets casting them into the sea to catch fish to bring to the local fish market. The two men Peter and Andrew had done this almost every day of their lives, It was their livelihood, their occupation, the key to their daily survival. In fact it was probably the single most important pursuit in their lives. Jesus wanted these two hardworking, committed fishermen to realise that there was an infinitely more significant endeavour than catching fish. We all need a living, we all need a career or a vocation, but we all need to be able to capture the attention of sinful folk with the good news of the challenge of the cross of Jesus Christ.

1A.If you could design a dream job and be successful at it, what would it be? If you are retired what would it have been?

1B Why would you choose/ have chosen this vocation?

2A what is the major vocational pursuit in your life at present?

[This can range from an education pursuit to homemaker]

2B what makes this pursuit valuable to you?

Read Matthew Ch 4 v18-20

3A. describe the differences between being fishermen and being fishers of men?

3B.can you identify some similarities

4A.how did Jesus' invitation change the lives of Peter and Andrew?

4B. how has the invitation to follow Jesus changed your life?

Jesus wanted Peter and Andrew to realise that the most important business on earth is the people business. Fish business, food business, banking, insurance, travel, building, are all fine and necessary, but the people business is the most important business in the world.

5. If you have come to this realisation how did you come to it?

If not, then what do you think needs to happen to help you realise this reality, so that it becomes primary in your life?

A Christian asks you how can they make a difference between themselves and a moral humanitarian in their place of work

6A what would you say to the person?

6B what sets a Christian apart from a good moral person? What marks a Christian life out as distinct?

6C what makes a follower of Christ stand out in the market place?

7 Consider the following passages, in how they affirm that people are the most important pursuit in all of life?

Luke Ch 4 v 14-21 Luke Ch 14 v 12-14 Luke Ch 15 Luke Ch 19v 1-10

8A. What changes as a result of this study do you need to make in your daily life to shift some of the energy away from the daily chores and onto the eternal work of fishing for people?

8B how can you begin to shift priorities?

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Session 4 A message- have to have something to say

Courtroom drama's can be very captivating, especially as the tension begins to rise as the case nears its conclusion. The high drama created, especially if the case involves some celebrity, and has been avidly followed by the press, can be electrifying to either watch or be involved in, especially when it comes the verdict being handed down.

1A. When have you waited for what seems like an eternity for some critical news or essential piece of information?

1B how did you feel during this time of waiting?

Read Acts Ch 2 v 14-41

2A what kind of drama do you see unfolding in this passage?

2B what are the critical questions and issues found in Acts Ch 2 v 14-41?

2C How are these elements still central to the way we present the message of Jesus for today?

2C what elements of the gospel did Peter share with the crowd when they called out 'What shall we do?'

There are many ways of communicating the good news of Jesus. For example there are the 6 P's of programmed, presence, proclamation, persuasion, prayer, power, prophetic, all are valid and legitimate ways and means. We shall just focus here on the following 3 approaches to sharing faith.

A. Personal Testimony

One of the best ways to share the Christian faith is to tell your story of how you have fallen into God's on going story. Most people are willing and glad to hear someone share what their faith means to them. You just to talk about how you became a follower of Christ, and the difference this makes to your living today.

A1. take a couple of minutes to briefly tell your personal testimony

A2. what difference has becoming a Christian made to your life?

B Do vs. Done.

Religion is spelt D-O. It is all about what we do to please God. Go to Church, give offerings, try to be good, follow the rules, problem is that we never know if we have done enough

Christianity is spelt D-O-N-E. Christianity is all about what Jesus has done for us. Coming from heaven to earth, living a perfect life, died on the cross, rose again, offers forgiveness, eternal life. The focal point is on what Jesus has done for us, not what we do for him.

B1 why do you think a religion of doing always falls short?

B2 when you hear that Jesus has done it all, how does that impact you?

C The Roman Road.

This is a classic 3-step presentation using the Biblical book of Romans as a guide, hence its name, the Roman Road. Firstly Romans 3 v23 reminds us we all fall short of God's standard. Secondly Romans Ch 6 v 23 reminds us of the cost of sin, and the cost of God's gift to us in Jesus. Thirdly Romans Ch 10 v 13 reminds us that when we call on Jesus for forgiveness he responds.

C1.what central elements of the gospel are found on the Roman Road?

C2.How can this simple 3 step presentation help a person to new life in Jesus?

Which of the above presentations feels most comfortable to you?

What is appealing to you about that particular presentation?

Take some time over this next week to write out your personal testimony.

Look back on the illustration you found the most helpful, can you begin to commit this to memory and use, as you feel appropriate?

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Session 5. Finding a style - have to say it your way

Try and use your imagination as you approach this study. Slowly consider the list of people below and try to bring a clear picture of each person to your mind.

What do you see when you think of:

A Librarian A Fighter Pilot A Sumo Wrestler A Ballet Dancer

A Doctor A Evangelist

Each of these titles causes some kind of picture to form in our minds. Some pictures are positive some are negative. When we think of an Evangelist we either think of an animated, extroverted, Bible pounding speaker, or a dynamic, eloquent, powerful communicator.

What we don't see is ourselves. Our mental image doesn't match up with the person we see every morning.

1A. What images come to mind when you think about an evangelist?

Can you list negative and positive responses?

1B. Who are some effective evangelists you have known? What makes them effective?

Read Acts Ch 17 v 16-34

2A. How would you describe Paul's style of evangelism in this passage?

2B. What makes his approach effective?

Intellectual style.

In Acts Ch 17 Paul spend a lot of time reasoning with both Jews and Gentiles. He debates with people about the Christian faith. Paul's approach is an intellectual one, the people needed to be presented with a thinking approach.

3A. What do you think are some of the values in an intellectual style of evangelism?

3B what do you think are some of the possible problems?

3C How can a person with an intellectual style of evangelism develop their ability to effectively communicate their faith?

3D Can you think of people you know who would respond this style of evangelism?

Confrontational Style.

In Acts Ch 2 v 14 and v 40 Peter uses a confrontational approach. His style was a frontal assault that required courage and confidence. The way he spoke was direct.

4A .What do you think are some of the advantages of a confrontational style of witnessing?

4B .what are some possible problems with this approach?

4C. How can a person with a confrontational style of witnessing develop their ability to more effectively communicate their faith?

4D. What kind of people can be reached with this style of evangelism?

Testimonial style

In John CH 9 there is a story of a man born blind whom Jesus heals. The man is questioned as to who has healed him. All the man initially knows is that 'he was once blind, but now he can see.' This is an approach to faith sharing which look for opportunities to tell their story about the difference an encounter with Jesus has made for them. It's not confrontation, or aimed at being intellectual, but rather it's about sharing their story.

5A. What are some of the advantages of a testimonial style of faith sharing?

5B. what are some of the possible problems with this approach?

5C. How can a person with a testimonial style of faith sharing develop their skill in explaining the gospel more effectively?

5D What kind of person do you think is best reached with this style of faith sharing?

If you don't personally relate to all of the styles above, then there are more coming up in the next and final study.

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Session 6 Finding a style- have to show it your way.

Some folk have the idea that in order to be effective in sharing this faith then they feel that they will have to behave in ways that are foreign to how God created them. Therefore many make a silent vow to leave faith sharing to the more extravert, and those whose personalities and temperaments are best suited to that kind of thing. Which is a tragedy and loss to the people who think like this, and to the Church as a whole. There are many styles in the task of faith sharing, in fact there are as many effective styles in faith sharing, as they are Christian believers. God made you precisely the way you are so that in part, He would have an evangelists just like you. There are some folk who will only be reached by someone like you.

1A. Why do many followers of Christ fear sharing their faith?

1B. How does a fear of faith sharing hurt the kingdom of God?

Read Luke Ch 5 v 27-32

2A. When Matthew became a follower of Jesus one of the first things he did was hold a banquet, and invite his friends along. What do you learn from Matthew's approach to faith sharing?

2B. how could you mirror this strategy in your own life?

Interpersonal style

Matthew's party was a party with a purpose it was so that his friends could rub shoulders with Jesus. It is all about interpersonal style faith sharing. This is the ability to build relationships with those we seek to reach, and to be partners with them on the road to faith.

3A. What are some of the unique advantages of an interpersonal style of faith sharing?

3B What are some of the possible problems with this approach?

3C How can a person with this style of evangelism develop their ability to explain the gospel to others?

Invitational style

In John Ch 4 we see a style of faith sharing where a woman leaves behind her water pots and goes and tells others that she has been speaking with the Son of God. She invites them to come and hear what Jesus has to say. For some folk this is a preferred style they lack confidence in themselves but feel comfortable in inviting a friend to hear someone else. The woman at the well had a great impact because she invited many people to come and hear.

4A .What are some of the benefits if using an invitational style of evangelism?

4B. What are some of the problems?

4C. How can a person with this style of evangelism develop their ability to explain their faith?

Serving Style

In Acts Ch 9 we read about Dorcas. She made an enormous impact on her community because of her deeds of kindness. This is called service evangelism. She used her love and service as a vehicle to share the Gospel.

5A. What are some of the advantages of a serving style of faith sharing?

5B. What are some possible problems with this approach?

5C. How can a person with this style of faith sharing develop their ability to explain their faith in Jesus Christ?

5D. Which of the above styles best fits you and why?

5E. What can you do to develop this approach to faith sharing?