

Evangelism 2007 "THE JOY OF SHARING JESUS"

Reaching the LOST-- Colossians 4:1-5

Recently one of our members brought us some
Fresh green beans right from her garden.
They were delicious.
I appreciated them because I know the work to gardening.
In fact you ask any person new to gardening,
What is the hardest part to get used to and what will they say?
WEEDS? No.
They will say... WAITING!

SLIDE- It was true for me as a boy on the farm
My Dad would plant a 3 acres of garden.
That included watermelon and muskmelon,
Squash and pumpkins.

We would plant and hoe,
Weed and water.
And then we would wait.
Oh it seemed to take forever for those watermelons to ripen.
What a special day it was when we cut our first home grown melon.
SLIDE - And after that the harvest came.
What a harvest we had.

SLIDE When we sow the seeds of God with the people we LOVE
When we sow a word of encouragement,
When we share the forgiveness
The hardest part is the waiting.
Waiting for them to make a decision for Christ.
We have prayed with them,
Shared with them
Loved them and
Oh the joy of a soul that has come home to Jesus.
Nothing can compare with the experience
Since the salvation of one soul is so important,.

SLIDE-- To follow the law of Love for the lost first we must
I. PRAY FOR OTHERS.

SLIDE **PRAYER IS THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT**
Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in Chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Colossians 4:2-4

These vs. were full of Prayer.
Pray is to the harvest of souls,
What cultivation, raking, seeding, sowing is to a garden.

It is what prepares the soul for the seeds.

I don't know about you but I would much rather harvest than cultivate or weed.

Pauls says:

SLIDE Ephesians 6:19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.

How many of you have an unsaved person in your family that you're praying for? WE ALL DO.

Mark was the last person you would expect to trust Jesus.

He and his young wife were not Christians. And Mark made it clear that he did not need God and his language reinforced his conviction. But, he was willing to concede that his wife and children needed God and the church. So Mark's wife went to church. She found Jesus. And she began to pray for the impossible--Marks salvation. The church joined in and after six months of concentrated prayer, a man at the church had the opportunity to introduce Mark to Jesus. The miracle was made possible by prayer and the change in Mark's wife which had moved him toward God.

Prayer moves the power of God to action.

It awakens angels to ministry.

When God goes after you he will go all out.

SLIDE "The Lord...is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but wants everyone to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

Now you may say:

Well you don't know my friend, husband, sister, or brother.

They're hopeless.

There are a lot of people in the world who would resist God.

There was a bar owner who liked the music at John Wesley's revival meetings.

He went to the meeting resolved not to listen to the sermon. He sat with his head down and fingers in his ears when Wesley preached. But God desired him to hear it and God does have a sense of human. He has His ways. A fly flew on the man's nose and when he attempted to drive it away, he heard nine words that changed his life. He heard Mr.

Wesley say, "**He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**"

From that moment he had no rest in his soul.

He returned the next night, listened intently and was converted.

Prayer can even send the Flies that open ears and hearts.

That's why its is so important that we began with this ingredient.

First we must pray.

Second We must

SLIDE II. OPEN THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY

SLIDE And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Colossians 4:3

Paul is praying that God will open the door of opportunity.

What is the **key** that opens the door of opportunity?
 The key is when you and I love people
 When we care for them,
 Show concern for them.
 Work with them,
 They began to respond.

SLIDE **When I was at the Lewis and Clark Resort in Yankton over the 4th of July, It was full of campers.** And as I walked around I realized that ours is the only country in the world where people pay \$200,000 for a house and then leave it for two weeks every summer to sleep in a tent.
 But I also noticed that when people are in a park tent, they talk to each other. They visit.
 They have time to share.
 They have time to talk.
 I met a man and his daughter out walking. I said Hi as I would do in Aberdeen. He stopped, I almost didn't, shocked me.
 And then we began to talk.
What an opportunity there is for us as Christians.

SLIDE **We must be open to the touch points of people's lives.**
 Touch points are :
 Specific topics (internet, parenthood vacations)
 Our emotions (anger, frustration, tiredness)
 People (children, siblings, mothers, and grandparents)
 Experiences like (floods looses, accidents, successes, challenges.)
 Touch point might include relationships (life changes, job or health issues)

When we spot a touch point,
 We return the conversation to that point
 And let people know we care by listening.
 We might have to bite our tongue.
 Keep our opinions to ourselves.
 And just listen.
What is the open door of opportunity that God is giving you right now in your neighborhood, job, or family?

Joe was their neighbor but they didn't have a lot of contacts. Until his wife had left him with three small children to raise.
Joe had hit a low in his life and his neighbors befriended him. They helped him, encourage him, brought meals, babysitting, and listened. They knew he needed more than just their help. Joe needed Jesus. They began to talk with him about faith and invited him to their church. When Joe came he was ready to hear about Jesus.

-SLIDE That's why your church family at First church has tried to be there for you,
 When you have had water in your basements,
 When your children have been sick,
 When your spouses have left you,

When your jobs have been ended.
 When surgery has complicated things.
 The church family responds with meals and money, errands and support,
 Because they want you to know that Jesus cares.
 You should see the letters of appreciation for the action your church has taken in their behalf.

Paul speaks of this in I Thessalonians 2:8

SLIDE We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

My vision for this church is for the people of God
 Will **gather weekly** for corporate worship,
 Will **get acquainted** through fellowship of small groups, bible study, and social activities.
 Will **gratefully serve** thru prayer, work, tithing, and sharing our lives.

SLIDE “Under Christ’s control, the whole Body is nourished...and grows as God wants it to grow.” Colossians 2:19 (GN)

That’s the way God made us that why the apostle Paul said

SLIDE “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

It is our responsibility to have an attitude that
 Is respectful, prepared, and gentle.
 We need to get rid of some of the baggage we carry
 And clean up our lives.
We need to get prepared.

THIRD

SLIDE III. BE READY TO GIVE AN ANSWER

SLIDE “Paul writes Colossians 4:5-6 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Colossians 4:5-6

Paul is saying we must be wise toward outsiders.
 And above all we must be truthful with them.

In a recent survey of church members 89% of them said that the number one purpose of the church is to “take care of my needs and those of my family.” Only 11% said, “The purpose of the church is to win the world for Jesus Christ.”

But Jesus Himself gave us the Great Commission
 to motivate the church to outreach.
 If we are going to remain healthy and grow.
 We must go to the people who need Jesus.

Now there is always someone who will say:

Lets not worry about numbers because

SLIDE The Bible tells me to feed the sheep, not to count them!

Think about this.

You ask any shepherd and they will tell you that to care for the sheep

You must count your flock every day.

You count them to see if they are all there,

If they are not sick, or suffering.

What kind of shepherd would it be that never checked his sheep or counts his lambs?

Peter Wager said: Its just good shepherding.

Counting sheep is such a natural part of the shepherd's life

And Jesus took for granted his people would know that.

It is biblical to feed the sheep, but it's also biblical to count them.

The early church counted. Peter preached.

SLIDE **About three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:41**

How did they know that?

Jesus counts them.

When Jesus feed the 5000

How did they know that?

Disciples counted them.

When the shepherd knows that one is missing.

He leaves the 99 and goes out to find the one.

God does a lot of counting.

When you accept Christ,

Your are counted with the righteous.

SLIDE **Luke 15:7 "There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents."**

Your name is written in the Lambs Book of Life.

That why it is so important that we're ready when God opens the door.

SLIDE **Peter writes: Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. I Peter 3:15**

We are the only religion that has

the **sacrifice** of the cross,

the **saving** power of Jesus'

The **sanctifying** power of the Holy Spirit.

If we don't share it,

we are in danger of becoming self centered and maintenance minded.

SLIDE **"Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life," Matthew 28:19 (MSG)**

Are you prepared to share your faith?

On day Calvin in the Calvin and Hobbes cartoon? come marching into the living room where his mother is sipping her morning coffee. She looks up at young Calvin. She is amused and amazed at how he is dressed. Calvin's head is encased in a large space

helmet. A red cape is draped around his neck, one hand is holding a flashlight and the other a baseball bat.

She asks him: "What's up today?"

Calvin answers: "Nothing, so far,"

She says: "So far?"

Calvin says: "Well, you never know, something could happen today. And if anything does, by golly, I'm going to be ready for it!"

Calvin's mom looks out at the audience and she says,
"I need a suit like that!"

Are you ready for it?

**Are you prepared for that time God will place someone before you
Who needs TO HEAR YOU SHARE the love of Christ with them.**

There is a time to be born and a time to die. Ecc.

And in between is the time of our decision.

We do not know what the day will bring.

30 second changed the life of a lot of people in Minn. this past week

Who knew that for some the 35W bridge would be the last to cross.

Friend if the Lord is speaking to you,

Don't miss your opportunity to start the rest of your life with Jesus.

We don't know what this day holds for us or for our loved ones.

That's why it is so important that we are ready.

Just as Jesus was ready to give his own life for us.

We must be ready to give our lives to others.

PRAYER

"Father this week I ask that you will make me more sensitive to the needs that are around me. I ask Lord that as I go about my business this week that I would be open to the opportunities to share Your love with the people I come in contact with. Give me the boldness to speak up and the wisdom to know what to say. And may you make people's hearts receptive to the good news. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."