

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things
whereby we
may edify one
another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

Anna Surface 2010

John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

August
25
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EVANGELISM REFLECTS WHO WE ARE

by Jim Stauffer

“Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” (Acts 8:4) Immediately following the stoning of Stephen in Acts Chapter 7, it is said that Saul of Tarsus *began ravaging the church, entering house after house and dragging off men and women he would put them in prison. (Acts 8:3)*

The question before us is what motivated those folks who were essentially running for their lives to take the time to preach the word? It appears to me there are three things that when combined lead faithful Christians to preach the word or spread the word to friends, neighbors and acquaintances.

First, they understood the gospel of Christ

They understood the foundation or fundamental reason for the gospel. They recognized *all men have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)*, and that such sin had separated man from God and therefore made us out of touch with Him since He refuses to be connected with unrighteousness (*Isa. 59:1,2*). The gospel then is God’s plan of reconciliation or redemption and involves the blood of His own Son being shed on the cross (*2 Cor. 5:14-17; 1 Pet. 1:18,19*). This illustrates the seriousness of gospel preaching since this is the only way (*John 14:6*) sinful man has of avoiding eternal condemnation (*Mark 16:15,16; John 5:28,29*).

Second, they truly believe it themselves

There were good reasons for them to believe the message they had received. Peter and John explained this point better with these comments, *“But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:19-20)* They had witnessed the personal ministry of Christ, Himself (*Acts 1:21,22*) which was conducted with the power of the Holy Spirit. They had seen the One who taught them the gospel heal the sick, cause the blind to see, etc. This Jesus said would be the power He would grant

to them from on high to both guide them and confirm the words they spoke (*Luke 24:49; Mark 16:17-20*). This conviction is what led them to preach Jesus against the wishes of the Council who would beat and imprison them without success.

Third, they learned to love as our Lord did

We know about the Father’s great love in sending His *only begotten Son (John 3:16)* as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of man. Then we are told of Jesus’ great devotion to our redemption in that He willingly left His place in heaven to accept this death on the cross (*Phil. 2:8,9*). This is the evidence of the teaching of Jesus when He places such a high value on loving our fellow man. First He teaches them to love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul and mind and their neighbor as themselves (*Mat. 22:37-39*). Those that love God and neighbor as they should then are to love their enemies as God did in order to be His sons (*Mat. 5:43-48*). This, Jesus says is the level of maturity or completeness as a child of God one is called to in order to be like His Father in heaven. This kind of love, Jesus says, that differentiates between the children of God and those of the world (*John 13:34,35*).

It becomes clear we are to follow the examples of these early disciples Jesus taught in order to be following Him.

It is indefensible then to ignore those who are lost. It goes against what we understand about the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not in harmony with what one who truly believes the gospel message would do in response to his faith. And we by our inaction would then deny our love for our neighbor and our enemy as the Lord loved us in His great sacrifice (*Rom. 5:10*).

So, we ask ourselves, “Do we understand the gospel of Christ?” If not, why not? “Do we believe the gospel of Christ?” If not, why not? “Do we love and care for the souls of others, neighbors and enemies alike?” If not, why not?

Salt and Light

Berry Kercheville

Imagine being an early disciple of Jesus, a Jew in northern Palestine in the first century. You have grown up under the power of the Roman Empire and never traveled more than 50 miles from your home. You are a virtual nobody. Then you hear Jesus say, *“You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world”* (Matt. 5:13-16). Jesus did not say, “You are the salt of Palestine or the salt of Capernaum, but you are the salt of the earth. With these simple words, Jesus laid out the vision of his kingdom. *“Salt of the earth...light of the world,”* – it is through you, my disciples, that my kingdom will cause the world to glorify God. Amazing.

Understanding “Salt of the Earth”

I am amazed at the different ways salt has been interpreted over the years. There are lengthy descriptions of how salt was a preservative in the first century and therefore we are to be a preservative to a corrupt world. While it is true that salt was used as a preservative, that is not the sense in which Jesus uses the metaphor. Look carefully at the words, *“but if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?”* Salt transforms that which it touches. Salt makes that which it touches salty. We are here to make salty people! Jesus said, people who are not salty are good for nothing.

Notice that Jesus does not say, “You have salt” or “you need to put some salt on people.” He says, “You are salt.” Salt and light influence people and change the nature of people. Jesus is describing who we are; he is giving us our identity. Just think of the two metaphors: you are salt, you are light. This is who you are. Please allow me to be blunt. Many, many Christians have forgotten this vision. We have lost sight of who Jesus said we are. You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world. The picture, indeed, is amazing. But even more amazing is how many churches, claiming to be followers of Christ, put little or no effort into using their lives to salt the earth or light the world. How can that happen when the Sermon on the Mount, the “manifesto of the King,” tells us that this is our purpose?

You see, salt must touch that which it flavors. If the salt is left in the pantry, the food will not be flavored. Salt must touch the food. Therefore, if we are the salt of the earth, we must touch the lives of people. Salt is worthless until we touch a life. Our houses are pantries in which salt is kept. We either invite people into the pantry or we get out of our pantries to touch a life. Jesus was accused of being *“a friend of sinners”* (Lk. 7:34), and indeed he was. He touched sinners and changed them.

Now notice: *“If the salt has lost its taste...it is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.”* Okay, who are we to God if we

have lost our flavor? Who are we to God if the salt remains hidden in the pantry? Jesus is giving a strong warning here. Many come together as God’s people come, assembling in beautiful buildings, rejoicing in their salvation and enjoying the pleasure of being a spiritual family, but they are salt that has lost its flavor and light that is dimmed. On Sundays and Wednesdays the walls, the carpets, the pews, and the saved are evangelized, but the salt remains in the pantry, and the earth and the world are not transformed.

However, we need to also look at the positive side. When Jesus said, you are the salt of the earth, he implied confidence that through his disciples the world would be salted. We may not have confidence in ourselves, but Jesus made us salt, and he said that through us the earth would be salted. Indeed, if we live salty lives, the world will glorify the Father.

You Are the Light of the World

In some ways, calling disciples the light of the world is more amazing than the salt metaphor. This is a direct reference to the words of the Father to the Messiah recorded in **Isaiah 49:6**:

“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

The proclamation is that God would make Jesus the light of the world so that salvation would reach to the end of the earth. But Jesus did not stay on this earth. Jesus spent his short ministry teaching his disciples how to be light. Therefore, in **Acts 13:46-47**, Paul quoted **Isaiah 49:6** and said, *“For so the Lord command us, saying, ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.’”* Though Isaiah spoke of God making Jesus the light, Paul understood that through the work of Jesus we all have become light to bring salvation to the end of the earth.

Consider that Jesus calling us light is exclusive: you *alone* are the light of the world. There is no one else who is light. If we alone are the light of the world, what a challenge! What a responsibility! What a purpose! What an honor given us by God to be his light! God did not save us to gather in our meeting places and “high-five” each other because we are saved. He saved us and created us salt and light so that the world would glorify him. We need to be careful lest we become self-centered. Before all else, our salvation is about God’s glory. He created us salt and light, *“so that men might give glory to your Father who is in heaven”* (Matt. 5:16).

It is time we got out of our pantries. It is time we stop covering our light with a “basket.” If the salt loses its taste, who are we? If the light does not show the way, it is darkness, and all the solemn assemblies will not change that.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Each gospel ends with a variation on the Great Commission. Matthew says to *"make disciples"* (Matt. 28:19). Mark says to preach the good news *"to all creation"* (Mark 16:15). Luke said that the preaching done was to be done in *"his name to all nations"* (Luke 24:17). John ends by saying, *"feed my sheep"* (John 21:17). The book of Acts tells us where the apostle and other disciples went as they carried out this commission. While the gospel began on Pentecost with the Jews, before Acts is finished, the gospel has gone all the way to Rome (Acts 28:30-31).

When we come to the last book in the NT, the Apostle John fleshes out the gospel of Christ, with specific application to the seven churches of Asia. The gospel had gone forth; churches were established. Now, what has happened to them? Believing that the book of Revelation was written around AD 90, then sixty years have gone by since Pentecost. Have the churches grown? Are they stronger? What has happened to the progress of the gospel? While the overall theme of Revelation might be *encouragement in the face of persecution*, still the thrust of the book applied to these churches (and all other churches). How is the church doing sixty years after Peter preached the first gospel sermon?

Domitian reigned over the Roman empire from AD 81-96. He insisted that everyone acknowledge him as "Lord and Goda." The persecution of Christians during the time of Nero was localized; now, though, Domitian reached throughout the empire as he demanded allegiance from all. What was John's crime? He wrote:

"I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9). Still, the question is: Who would the church obey? Jesus said preach His word; Domitian says stop preaching the word. Acts 5:29 still applied: *"But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: We ought to obey God rather than men."* The symbolic struggle in Revelation pictures Christians spreading the word in spite of persecution; the world of Satan combined with false religion and political power brought great opposition to these faithful yet struggling Christians.

Revelation closes with the invitation of the Great Commission. *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely"* (Rev. 22:17). Persecution could not and cannot today stop the preaching of God's word. The Apostles were commanded "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18). We meet the enemy: *"the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world: (Rev. 12:9).* Would you agree that if we do not preach the gospel, we cannot blame outside interference? Our

greatest struggles are within. Christ is perfect; the gospel is infallible. Let us go forth with His word.

Randy Harshbarger

Don't Follow The Crowd!

It's nice to know you're not alone, isn't it? We all like to know that we aren't the only one who thinks a certain way about a subject and the more who agree with us the better we feel about our stand. That's just natural and in most instances it is neither here nor there as the consequences don't amount to much. There is, however, one area where the crowd is absolutely certain to lead us wrong!

Jesus said in **Matthew 7:13f**, *Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.* The context indicates that Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters here, so what He is telling us plainly is that popular religion is almost certainly wrong and will lead us down the primrose path to perdition. Everyone wants an easier road to follow. Here is one which claims to lead to the good life so that's the way I'll go! Look how many other people are choosing this way. All these millions of people can't be wrong! Many years ago on the front page of a major newspaper there was a boldface pullout which said, If 40,000,000 people believe in a dumb idea it's still a dumb idea! Jesus couldn't have said it any better. Getting into heaven is not a democratic process, might doesn't make right. If you want to get to heaven, to see life, you must do it Jesus' way and that involves the narrow gate and the straightened way and that means we must willingly leave the bustling crowds behind us. They're not safe!

Cleveland Reddinger

It is easy to determine when something is aflame. It ignites other material. Any fire that does not spread will eventually go out. A church without evangelism is a contradiction in terms, just as a fire that does not burn is a contradiction.

Christian Theology in Plain Language, p. 162

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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BIBLE CLASSES - SUNDAY -

STUDY OF AUTHORITY - TEACHER
BILL MILLER

WEDNESDAY - 1&2 TIMOTHY

JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING

SERMON:

AN UNWAVERING FAITH



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10