

LIVE with Jesus on Mission

Share the Gospel

“Practice hospitality.” Romans 12:13

INTRODUCTION

Sharing the gospel can often feel very intimidating. We fear we won't have all the answers, or we don't want to offend someone. Many in our culture are spiritually jaded and relativistic. Maybe there are previous hurts from the church or a cultural stigma against Christianity. Peoples' guard is often up when you start talking about spiritual things; or they relegate spiritual matters to one's individual feelings. Considering these realities, it can feel almost impossible to share the gospel with others.

Sharing the gospel is hard but what if we were to flip the paradigm. Instead of focusing on communicating the right information and someone's response, what if we focused on genuinely loving people well? It seems like that was the way of Jesus.

Jesus showed his disciples the full extent of his love by washing their feet after a long, sweaty, dirty day—doing a task reserved for the lowest of servants. After he did this, he said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35). We are supposed to be people distinguished by Jesus' love. So, when we think about sharing the gospel, do we do it out of love? Is our primary motivation our care and concern for others?

We see Jesus' love through his heart posture, his actions, and his words. He is compassionate to the woman who was caught in adultery (John 8:1-11), he provides food for the hungry (John 6:1-15), he heals the man born blind (John 9), and he speaks words of healing and hope to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42).

God is love and Jesus is the full expression of His love to a lost and broken world. But his greatest expression of love is in response to our greatest need. The greatest gift of his love through his death on the cross redeems us from the bondage of sin and death and welcomes us as beloved children into His family and beautiful kingdom.

When Jesus heals the paralytic who has been lowered through the roof by his friends, Jesus heals the man so that they might know that “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (Matthew 9:6). The greatest expression of Jesus' love for us is the forgiveness of our sins. So, if we are invited to be people of love to others, that means that as we love others, we also speak of the good news of Jesus' healing and saving work through his life and death.

This honestly can still feel intimidating. First off, we need to remember that the authority and confidence does not come from us; it comes from God. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, he commissioned his disciples by saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18-19). And with his authority he also said, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). With God's authority and power, we are witnesses of God's love, hope, and salvation to the world.

The second reason sharing the gospel should not be intimidating is because you are primarily sharing what God has done for you. People love stories, and our stories of Jesus in our lives are powerful. When Jesus heals the man born blind, the pharisees skeptically investigate this healing and judge Jesus to be a sinner. The man responds by saying, “whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know, I was blind but now I see!” (John 9:25). What has Jesus done in your life that you can share with others?

As we continue to grow in our heart to share the gospel, let us daily come back to God’s love for us and for others. The best way to start is in prayer, praying for our hearts and praying for others. As we pray for others, our hearts will slowly awaken and align more to God’s heart to love others well.

THE PRACTICE

We will use our gospel rhythm, “Prayer, Care, and Share” to awaken our hearts to God’s mission. In the spirit of prayer, let us first be reminded of the fullness of God’s heart for others. Please take a couple minutes to read the following passage three times with 10 second breaks in-between to be reminded of God’s heart and to hear from him.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.
Psalm 103:8-13

Prayer

Take a minute to ask God to bring to your mind a friend that is far from him and needs the love, hope, and saving work of Jesus. With that person in mind, please align your heart with Jesus in prayer for them:

Father, help me to first see _____ as you see them. Break my heart for them and give me your love and compassion. Draw _____ to your Son Jesus, give them a hunger and thirst for you. Whatever is satisfying or distracting them now, help them to see the emptiness of it and give them a divine curiosity towards you. Show _____ the deceitful, enslaving power of their sin and set them free. Open their hearts to see King Jesus as the greatest treasure they can possess and give them the faith to repent and give their life to you.

Care

Now as you have your friend in mind, think of what they are walking through right now. Are they currently struggling with anything? Do they have any needs? How can you care for them? If nothing comes to mind with that friend, maybe think of a co-worker or neighbor that might be in need and think of ways that you could care for them. Sometimes a simple text offering prayer can go a long way. i.e. "Hey, I have been thinking about you lately and wondering how I can pray for you?"

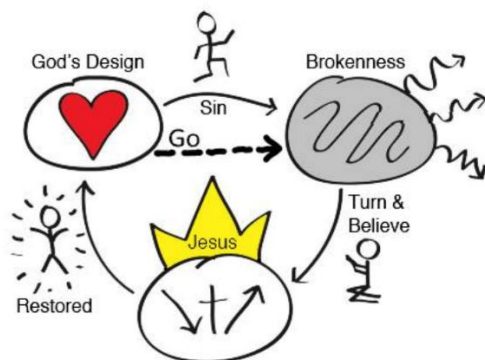
Share

As you think of your friend who is far from God, listen to the Holy Spirit about what aspect of the gospel will connect best with their story and greatest angst (desire/longing, enslavement/addiction, forgiveness/cleansing). What part of the gospel in your story might connect with their story? Remember that your story has power and God can use it in beautiful ways. Take a moment, pray for an opportunity to share the gospel and to have the courage and faith when the opportunity arises.

Tools can also be helpful in sharing the gospel to others. We personally encourage people to use the gospel tool 'The 3 Circles'.

Three Circles video resources:

- How to share The 3 Circles, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W8ynRMr59k>
- 3 Circles in 3 minutes that could change your life, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcj5G_4dwrl



HELPFUL VERSES

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9: 35-37

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation," Isaiah 52:7

"Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:14-15.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile." Romans 1:16

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9-10

INTERESTING QUOTES

"We are never nearer Christ than when we find ourselves lost in a holy amazement at his unspeakable love." – John Owen

"The love of God cost something. I recall decades ago when I was in the hospital lying in bed paralyzed. I was so depressed. My mother would stand by the guard rail of that hospital bed for hours on end holding books up so that I could read them...Those sacrificial hours my mother spent by my bedside. It displayed a far deeper love than I ever imagined. I think that is such a sweet picture of the love of God and its greatness, all because of what it costs. What it cost Him, His precious Son...So you have to think: What could God the Father possibly prize so much that it would be worth assigning His own dear Son to brutal torture? What could possibly be worth the excruciating death of the apple of His eye? How about your salvation and mine?" – Joni Eareckson Tada

"The history of missions is the history of answered prayer." – Samuel Zwemer.

"To be missional today requires that lay Christians be equipped by their churches to do three things: (1) to be a verbal witness to the gospel in their web of relationships, (2) to love their neighbors and do justice within their neighborhoods and city, and (3) to integrate their faith with their work in order to engage culture through their vocations." – Timothy Keller

“Our problem in evangelism is not that we don’t have enough information—it is that we don’t know how to be ourselves. We forget we are called to be witnesses to what we have seen and know, not to what we don’t know. The key on our part is authenticity and obedience, not a doctorate in theology.” – Rebecca Pippert

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before you try this practice:

1. How did you hear and respond to the gospel in your life?
2. In what way did you experience God’s love through the gospel?
3. Have you had the joy of sharing the gospel with someone else and how did it go?
4. What is one thing you feel you need from God as you engage in sharing the gospel? Lift this need up to the Lord in prayer together.

After you try this practice:

1. What came to your mind after reflecting on Psalm 103? Do you naturally see God as loving and compassionate? If not, why do you think that might be the case?
2. Who came to your mind when you thought about praying for someone who is far from God? Do they have any needs that you can respond to?
3. What do you think of The Three Circles? Do you think you can use it to communicate the gospel with someone else?
4. Who are you hoping to share the gospel with and how can we pray for them with you?