

Mosaic – The Christian Life – Week 4 – Evangelism Circles – Pastor Jim Sprenkle, August 22, 2021

- I. **Acts 1:8** – “...You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- II. **Go and share Jesus Christ!**
 - a. What a great mission statement for any congregation to have.
 - b. But have you ever wondered exactly what that’s supposed to mean?
 - c. Is it telling people about Jesus, is it our Soccer Clinic and Servant Event, early childcare center, mission trips, luncheons and speakers, CareConnect support group, worship, Noche Familiar, invites, bible studies, visitation, or the many other ministries in our church?
 - i. Yes. Yes to all of these activities in the life of our church
 - ii. Every one of these things has Jesus at the heart of them, and their goal is to share Jesus.
 - iii. The mission and ministry of Ascension Lutheran is in alignment with building up and growing up the Church of God, which means that people come to know and have faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
 - d. The blessing of our mission statement, Go and Share Jesus Christ, is its adaptability to all believers.
 - i. Your work and presence in this place is a part of opening the door to others to know and believe in Jesus too.
 - e. For many of you, that brings a huge sigh of relief... “Phew! Pastor is saying that my part in the Church of God is enough, and I don’t have to actually talk about Jesus to others...”
 - i. [gameshow buzzer 😊] ... wrong.
 - ii. No matter how many times you’ve heard the old, worn out saying, “Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words,” (which by the way, Francis of Assisi did not actually say)... Jesus calls on each of us to testify or witness to His name.
 - iii. I know, that creates a great deal of squirming in the pews or wherever you are... but none of us is off the hook when it comes to speaking the Good News of Jesus.
- III. **Evangelism – what is it?**
 - a. Evangelism – simply means sharing or witnessing about the Good News
 - i. Good News = Jesus, God’s Son, died for your sins, so that by faith in Him you might have life eternal (John 3:16) – and that Jesus is the only way to be saved – (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12)
 - b. The word evangelism is like stewardship – it gets a bad name
 - i. It’s scary – what do I say, what do I do?

- ii. We get so overwhelmed by the pressure to say something that we clam up and don't say anything at all, or we act all awkward and unnatural...
- iii. Remember what I said about stewardship last week?
 - 1. Stewardship is not about compulsion to give... it is a joy...
 - 2. When we recognize our giving does so much to change people's lives and bring blessings to others – it's easy to give!
- iv. Evangelism is the same way –
 - 1. If we are under compulsion to share Jesus it is not a joy but a difficult burden.
 - 2. However, when we recognize ALL the blessings that come with faith in Christ, we really want others to hear about Him and it is easy to share.
 - 3. ALL the blessings include the peace and connection with God, but also a community of faith that encourages and helps us.
- c. The truth is that evangelism almost always begins with relationship...
 - i. If you buy a new blender you love, are you going to the first person you see on the street and blurt out, "I LOVE my new blender!!!"?
 - 1. Of course not, they're going to run away or call the police.
 - 2. If you share with the check out lady you've spoken to once a week for many months, it might seem natural.
 - ii. Most of the time, if we are praying for the opportunities to join Jesus on His mission to redeem and restore all creation – then we are going to see them as they pop up.

IV. **Jesus gives all of us our marching orders... to be His witnesses.**

- a. In the beginning of Acts, Jesus has been raised from the dead for forty days... and it was now time for Him to ascend into heaven.
- b. The last spoken words to His disciples were about the power of the Holy Spirit to come, and that they would be witnesses about Him to all nations.
- c. Jesus said that "help" is on the way – the Helper or Holy Spirit – will give all the power you need and prepares the ground before you.
- d. The disciples would understand what that meant on Pentecost Day when the Holy Spirit came to them in power and the Church of Christ began with 3000 people baptized...(Acts 2:41)
- e. From that point forward the Word of God spread to every part of the globe... in fact, from Jerusalem that very day, to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
- f. The Gospel, or the Good News as it says in Romans 1:16, has the "power to save"!
 - i. What this means is that people began sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ to the people around them until it went all around the world – by ordinary, average people.

- ii. What if those people had said,
 - 1. “you know, my faith is a personal thing, I’m not into sharing Jesus...”?
 - 2. or, “I don’t know enough about the Bible – I’m just not comfortable...”?
 - 3. or maybe, “I’m just too busy with family and work right now...”?
 - iii. No, those people knew the JOY of faith in Jesus and had to share it.
- V. **We know the JOY of faith in Jesus** too – and it’s too good not to share.
 - a. Just stop for a moment and think about what Jesus has done for you.
 - b. Paul says in Ephesians 2:4-5, that “God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”
 - c. I am a perfect example of someone dead in my trespasses and sin – addicted to drugs and alcohol, completely lost and without any hope... when God rescued me.
 - i. My rescue story is one I share often, because without Jesus, I’m either dead or locked up – but instead I’m here sharing Him with you.
 - ii. Your rescue story may not be so dramatic – but that has nothing to do with how genuine and authentic it is – or how much He means to you.
 - d. Jesus our Savior came to change the course of our lives – we were all completely lost and without any hope until the Good News was shared with us – by a parent, a friend, and pastor, or by someone who knew the joy of their salvation.
 - e. Jesus, in His great mercy, chose torture and death to pay for all our guilt and rebellion – God nailed our debt to the cross (Colossians 2:14).
 - f. Whatever benefit and joy we have from being called a child of God, having our sins forgiven us, and walking in newness of life is worth talking about!
 - g. I am joyful in my sharing of Jesus because I am absolutely convinced I would be dead by now – and I know what an unbelievable difference He has made in my life
- VI. **Jesus tells us that we are witnesses...**
 - a. We have each individually seen His love and grace in our own lives, and now we can joyfully share that Good News in the lives of others.
 - b. A witness tells what they have seen and heard... and that’s what we do.
 - c. From Acts 1:8, it says we will witness in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and beyond... which is like concentric circles moving out from each of us.
 - d. From your home, each neighbor around you is your Jerusalem.
 - i. People in your community (the stores and restaurants you visit to the public places you go) is your Judea

- ii. The people as you travel farther out to the coast or to the mountains are your Samaria
 - iii. And wherever you go beyond that is your world to share Jesus.
- e. If each of us took the call of our Lord and Savior to heart, sharing the Good News with the people around us, how many might come to know Him?
 - i. The Holy Spirit always goes before us... and gives us all the power we could ever need to share the mighty name of Jesus
 - ii. Consider your circles... and invite, connect, and by all means, Go and Share Jesus Christ! Amen.