

**Articles and Sermons :: Sharing Your Faith: It's Not as Scary as You Think! by David Servant****Sharing Your Faith: It's Not as Scary as You Think! by David Servant - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2019/5/15 6:28**

A sure sign that someone is not truly born again is that they don't care about others who are not born again. And a sure sign that someone doesn't care about others who are not born again is that they do nothing to expose those who are not born again to the gospel: no personal sharing of the gospel, no supporting missionaries who are spreading the gospel, no posting of anything gospel-focused on social media, no inviting unsaved people to events where they will hear the gospel, not even any "seasoning" of conversations with unsaved people in order to drop hints of the gospel. All of that evidence points to the fact that one is not truly born again, no matter how "nice" one might be.

This claim is supported by at least three undeniable biblical truths.

First, every true, biblical Christian believes that only those who are born again will enter God's kingdom (John 3:3-5). Those who don't enter God's kingdom will be cast into hell (Matt. 25:41). So, everyone we encounter in our daily lives will ultimately be in heaven or hell, and every true Christian is conscious of that. How could one believe there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun and be unconcerned about those who are on the road to destruction?

Second, every true, biblical Christian believes that the Holy Spirit has come to live within them. They can therefore say with the apostle Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The Jesus who lives within all true Christians is no different than the Jesus who walked the earth 2,000 years ago. He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Any person who is not conscious that something (actually, Someone) within them cares about the lost doesn't have Jesus living in them, at least not yet.

And third, every true, biblical Christian believes that Jesus is Lord. "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (Rom. 14:9). If Jesus is one's Lord, that means one is seeking to please and obey Him. One of Jesus' final commandments to His disciples was that they should make disciples, teaching their disciples to obey everything He commanded them. So, naturally, Jesus' disciples taught their disciples to obey His commandment to make disciples.

Making disciples is every believer's responsibility (2 Tim. 2:2), not just of the clergy. And making new disciples begins with sharing the gospel, telling unsaved people that Jesus died and was resurrected, and then leading them to repent and believe that He is the Son of God. (And if they truly do, they will begin seeking to please and obey Him.)

For all those reasons, and more, we can only conclude that Christians who are not involved in sharing the gospel, at least on some level, are not Christians at all. Charles Spurgeon said it rather forthrightly:

Every Christian here is either a missionary or an impostor. Recollect that. You either try to spread abroad the kingdom of Christ, or else you do not love Him at all. It cannot be that there is a high appreciation of Jesus and a totally silent tongue about him.

Of course I do not mean by that, that those who use the pen are silent: they are not. And those who help others to use the tongue, or spread that which others have written, are doing their part well: but that man who says, "I believe in Jesus," but does not think enough of Jesus ever to tell another about him, by mouth, or pen, or tract, is an impostor. Objection #1: "Not everyone is called to be an evangelist."

There are many props that sustain the self-deception of Christian impostors. One that is often heard is, "Not everyone is called to be an evangelist." Dubious support for this idea is found in Ephesians 4:11: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers." Standing against this idea, however, is the rest of the New Testament. If all Christians are called to make disciples, all Christians are called to share the gospel. Indeed, most of us do not possess the supernatural gifts given to evangelists that enable them to draw crowds and preach the gospel to those crowds. But there is no reason any believer can't share the gospel with a friend.

If the second greatest commandment is to love my neighbor as myself, and if my neighbor is not born again, the

greatest way I can love him is by telling him the gospel. If I do not share the gospel—the message that can save him from eternal death and ensure eternal life—how can I claim to love him? And if I can't claim to love him, how can I claim to love God in light of the fact that love for God is revealed by obedience to His commandments? (John 14:15, 22). Let us face up to this undeniable fact: If I ignore God's second greatest commandment in regard to unbelievers, I cannot make an honest claim to love God.

Objection #2: I can't preach the gospel through my actions.

You've probably heard this famous quote that is wrongly attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." St. Francis never said that, and he and his disciples certainly didn't advocate or practice silent preaching. The idea itself is silly. What would you think if you heard someone say, "Feed the hungry at all times. If necessary, use food"?

Although it is certainly true that our actions should reflect our belief in the gospel, no one has ever become a Christian by only observing the good deeds of Christians. They must hear and believe the gospel to be saved. And if I am claiming to preach the gospel through my actions, what about the action of sharing the gospel? If I believe it, I will share it.

Let's face it, I can't preach the gospel through my actions is just a smokescreen for I'm afraid to share the gospel (something I will address soon), or worse, I don't really don't believe the gospel myself.

Objection #3: I believe the New Testament teaches in 1 Peter 3:15 that my only responsibility is to be ready to defend my faith if I'm questioned about it.

If someone questions you about your faith, that person must first know that you possess faith. The only way they will know about your faith is if you (or someone else) tells them.

Note that 1 Peter 3:14-16 says:

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. Peter's instructions presuppose that his contemporary readers were sharing the gospel and that their hearers already knew they possessed a hope that was in them, namely the hope of Jesus' worldwide kingdom and eternal life. Thus they should always be ready to make a defense and give an account for that hope. That would include being able to answer basic questions, such as, "How do you know that Jesus was God's Son?" and "What makes you so sure that you are going to live forever?"

The early Christians to whom Peter was writing "because they were true believers" were sharing the gospel:

And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching (or bringing the good news) the word (Acts 8:1, 4).

Objection #4: I feel inadequate to share the gospel with others. They might ask me questions for which I have no answers.

There is a commandment in the New Testament regarding that excuse. We just read it in 1 Peter 3:14-16. We should always be ready to make a defense and give an account. So if I feel inadequate, I have a responsibility to become adequate. To do so, I should read the accounts in the Gospels and Acts that describe how John the Baptist, Jesus, and His apostles proclaimed the gospel. (You may find that their message differed from what is often referred to today as the gospel.)

You can also read instructive books, like Josh McDowell's Evidence that Demands a Verdict and Lee Strobel's The Case for Christ. You can watch instructive videos on YouTube, like those that describe the Three Circles approach to sharing the gospel, after which you can practice with other believers in order to gain confidence to share with unbelievers. (By the way, training every Christian to share their faith should be happening in every Christian church; pastors are called to equip the saints for the work of ministry.)

Objections #5: "I am afraid to share the gospel because people might reject me."

This objection is why so many of us support the promotion of the gospel by giving to churches and missionaries, but remain silent before our friends, relatives and co-workers. No one, of course, likes to be rejected, because we all want to be loved. But loving others is more important than being loved by others. Loving God is the most important thing, and telling others about Jesus is a major way to demonstrate our love for Him.

Jesus, the greatest lover, was loved, but He was also hated to death. It is no different for any of His followers. Sharing the gospel results in being loved and hated. "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

It might help to remember that even the apostle Paul was afraid to share the gospel, knowing that rejection and persecution often awaited him for doing so. However, "the love of Christ constrained" him (2 Cor. 5:14). He confessed:

For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling (1 Cor. 2:2-3).

Being apprehensive about sharing the gospel is normal. But remember, the Holy Spirit is in us. He is not just a spiritual hitchhiker. He is our Helper (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). But we have to give Him something in which to help. If we have no intention of sharing the gospel, He can't help us share the gospel. But if determine to be Christ's ambassadors, He will help us with boldness to share. "Speaking boldly" is mentioned at least seven times in the book of Acts. Here's one:

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

The Holy Spirit will also give us wisdom as we share. Jesus told His disciples:

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute (Luke 21:12-15; emphasis added).

I have experienced the fulfillment of that promise many times in my own life, and I've heard numerous testimonies of believers who have also experienced it. But it only happens to those who intend to share the gospel!

### Getting Started

Perhaps the hardest part of sharing the gospel is turning a conversation to spiritual things. How can you broach the subject?

To begin with, it's very important to be gentle, respectful and loving, qualities that make it more difficult for the other person to shut down the conversation. Starting with, "Hey, you are heading for hell, and you don't even know it, you fool!" usually makes for a short conversation. It is better to start with a question, apology, or compliment, and perhaps even by revealing your own hesitancy. Those can soften and open hearts. Here are some examples:

"Sarah, I know this may seem like an odd question, but can you tell me what you know about Jesus?"

"John, I want to apologize to you. There is something very important to me that I've been wanting to share with you for a long time, because I think so highly of you, but I've hesitated. Can we set a time when we could talk?"

"Jane, this may seem like a strange thing to ask, but do you ever wonder why we all die in the end? Generally, life seems so amazing and miraculous on so many levels. We start as babies, grow into children, and then into adults. But in the end, we're 6 feet under. Why is that? I'm interested in your thoughts."

"Bill, thanks so much for doing such a great job on installing my new water heater. You've been so nice to me, can I return the favor by telling you about something called the Three Circles?"

There are a thousand variations of these same themes.

Anytime someone opens up to share a problem or difficulty with you, you have a welcome mat laid out to share the gospel. They are already expressing some trust in you. (One caution: Share sincere empathy with them regarding their problem; don't just use their difficulty as a quick springboard into the gospel, or they will lose their trust in you quickly.)

Anytime someone pays you a compliment, you have another open door. Start with, "Thanks so much. But let me tell you, I used to be a very different person. Want to hear some of the juicy details?"

### Sharing with Strangers

Like every Christian, I want to share the gospel with everyone. But walking up to complete strangers, at least in America, and immediately starting a conversation, makes them very suspicious. I am, however, trying to practice being more outgoing when I find myself in close quarters with strangers, such as on airplanes, or when I'm being waited on in a restaurant. Sometimes friendliness can pave a path to more meaningful conversation.

Because we live in such a time-conscious culture, it isn't always easy to get someone to give you time to share the gospel, nor is it always considerate (like taking the time to talk to the toll-booth collector on the highway, for example). So you need a supply of tracts. I wrote one (and had it printed) that I can give to people in a non-threatening way, titled "My Surprising Story." Here's the text of that booklet:

Each day, all of us hope that something unexpected might happen that will improve our lives or make them a little more exciting.

I genuinely hope that this booklet will be one of those things for you. I promise, I'm not selling anything or trying to get something from you.

And I sure don't want to bother you or waste any of your valuable time, but reading my story might make a significant difference in your life, just as it has for others. It will only take a few minutes.

You have nothing to lose and something very special to gain. I hope you'll read my surprising story as soon as you have a chance!

### My Surprising Story

I used to be a very different person. Life did not make sense to me. It seemed purposeless—a mix of happiness and sorrow, with death waiting at the end at an undetermined point in time.

Driving past graveyards always left me with an ominous feeling. What was the point of life? And what was waiting for me after death, if anything? I often asked myself.

Along with my inner emptiness and fear of dying, my conscience also bothered me. I had a nagging guilt about my self-centeredness. I coped by comparing myself to others who appeared to be more selfish than me. But I couldn't shake the fact that my own guilt was piling up higher every day.

I'm guessing you might be able to relate.

The surprising news is that all those negative things are no longer part of my life. I'm no longer afraid of dying. I'm actually looking forward to it, but only when my life's purpose (which I now know) is done.

Moreover, my lifelong weight of guilt has been lifted. Better yet, I've been set free from my former habits and addictions that created all that guilt. (Okay, I still sometimes feel guilty—like what I would have felt if I hadn't given you this booklet, for example.)

And those are just a few of the things that have changed. My transformation has been nothing short of miraculous. What made all these changes occur?

It all started when I discovered that God loved me much more than I'd ever imagined. I discovered that He was

concerned about my fear of death, my emptiness, my purposelessness and my guilt. He wanted to fix all those things and much more. (And I'm no one special. God loves you more than you realize as well.)

I discovered all this good news from reading about Jesus in the Bible.

Some people say that Jesus is just a myth. But that is like saying Julius Caesar is a myth. No real historian claims that Jesus did not exist. There is irrefutable historical evidence that Jesus actually walked on this earth and that lots of people interfaced with Him. Tens of thousands of people were eyewitnesses to His life and ministry.

Jesus' closest friends all eventually died defending their belief that He was born, lived a public life, performed incredible miracles, claimed to be God's Son, was crucified, died, came back to life, and ascended into the sky. Obviously, they believed in Him. People don't die to defend a hoax.

Naturally, Jesus' closest friends spent the rest of their lives talking about Him, and in some cases writing about Him. Their writings are in the Bible.

Their eyewitness testimonies influenced many of their contemporaries who were not eyewitnesses, who also wrote what they heard and learned. As the number of Christians grew and the church spread throughout the ancient world, it resulted in an unbroken chain of historical literature that you can read today. And it can all be traced back to one amazing life.

But what about the incredible stories of Jesus' miracles? Aren't they a little hard to believe? Don't they convey a mythical message?

Actually, Jesus' miracles are no more spectacular than the millions of miracles that no scientist can explain happening outside your window and inside your body right now. Think about it. There is a micro and macro magic show going on 24 hours a day all of our lives. If you aren't aware of it, it is only because you take it for granted. It is just another way that God, who loves us so much, is trying to get our attention. And if God ever temporarily came to the earth disguised as a man, wouldn't you expect some accompanying miracles from someone who created the universe?

Some people think of Jesus as just an inspiring moral teacher. But Jesus didn't leave anyone that option. Good, moral teachers don't claim to be God's Son. They don't pretend to have the authority to forgive sins. They don't claim to be the only source of eternal life. They don't accept worship. They don't expect people to love them more than they love their parents, spouse and children. But Jesus did all those things.

Based purely on what He said (apart from all that He did), there are only three possibilities regarding who Jesus was. He claimed to be the Son of God, so either He was lying or telling the truth. If He was lying, either He knew or didn't know He was lying. So:

- 1.) If He knew He was lying, He was one of the most wicked liars who has ever lived, as He has deceived hundreds of millions of people, many of whom have died for their faith in Him.
- 2.) If He did not know He was lying, then He was a lunatic, claiming to be the Son of God when He wasn't.
- 3.) If He was telling the truth, however, then He was the Son of God.

Those are the only three choices. A man who claims to be equal with God when he is not can hardly be called a great moral teacher! No, Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord.

When you add all the miracles Jesus performed (opening the eyes of blind people, raising the dead, multiplying food, and so on), plus all the predictions made in the Old Testament hundreds of years before His appearance on earth (predictions that He could not have fulfilled by His own doing (like the city of His birth, the manner of His death, and His coming back to life)) the only logical conclusion is that Jesus was who He claimed to be.

So that leaves us with a decision to make. Will we believe Jesus was who He claimed to be, or will we cling to some lie about Him?

Many choose to believe lies about Jesus because they instinctively realize that if they accepted the truth about Him, they would have to start living their lives differently.

That's a tragic decision, because no one loves people more deeply than Jesus. That love motivated Him to become human, spend 33 years on the earth, and then willingly die an excruciating death on a Roman cross.

Beyond that, the Bible teaches that God's love for people is the motive for all His commandments. He isn't trying to make us miserable. Rather, He is trying to make us truly and permanently happy. His commandment to love other people as we love ourselves, for example, clearly demonstrates that He wants everyone to love and be loved. Who can find fault with that? If everyone did that, the world would be a much better place for everyone.

According to Jesus, only those who love will live forever in heaven. He promised, however, that He would give His Holy Spirit to live in everyone who believes in Him, which would enable them to love others.

It was when I believed truly believed that Jesus is the Son of God, that my life changed so dramatically, because that is exactly what Jesus promised would happen to anyone who believes in Him.

Of course, many people say they believe that Jesus is God's Son. But they really don't believe it, because if they did, they would act as if Jesus were the Son of God. That is, they would make Him the most important person in their lives and start trying to please Him, following His commandments.

Those who say they believe Jesus is the Son of God but who don't seek to obey Him are like people who say that a tidal wave is coming while they continue tanning on the beach. If they really believed their own words, they'd be scrambling for higher ground.

Jesus claimed that God, His Father, gave Him all authority in heaven and on earth and appointed Him as everyone's future judge. Anyone who believes Jesus has that kind of authority-and future responsibility-does everything possible to line up with how Jesus told us to live.

And so I hope you will stop and consider what you really believe about Jesus. Life and eternity change when you truly believe He is the Son of God.

When you believe in Jesus, He forgives you for every wrong thing you've done, and He starts changing you. It is a miracle. I wish everyone would believe in Him and experience His transforming mercy, goodness and love. Please think about it!

What should you do once you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

First, you should tell Him you believe in Him by talking to Him in prayer.

Second, you should begin reading about Him in the Bible and start doing what He said to do.

The first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are all about Jesus. They were written by some of His earliest followers, who either were eyewitnesses of His life or received their information from eyewitnesses.

Next, read the book called Acts, which is all about the early Christians.

You will soon notice that, back during those early days, the Christians and the Christian church looked much different from today. The difference is that the early Christians didn't just claim to believe that Jesus was God's Son. They actually believed it and lived accordingly.

Once you believe in Jesus, you will find that you want to tell your friends and relatives about Him. That's because, as I've already said, once you believe in Him, He changes you. And in a mysterious way, He comes to live inside you. He loves everyone and wants everyone to believe in Him, so don't be surprised that He wants to live through you.

If any of your friends or relatives decide to believe in Jesus along with you, you can read the Bible and pray together. If they don't believe, pray for them. If they make fun of you, keep loving them, as that is what Jesus said we should do when others criticize us.

Finally, feel free to contact me and tell me where you live. I will try my best to locate some people near you who are following Jesus faithfully. I would love to hear your response to this message or to answer your questions.

I hope you are glad that you took time to read this little booklet. If you are, share it with someone you love! â€” David

P.S. If you still donâ€™t believe that Jesus is the Son of God, may I encourage you to at least offer a sincere prayer in any way that you feel comfortable? Maybe something like, â€”If Jesus is actually the Son of God, please donâ€™t let me be deceived about it, because it is obvious that if the Son of God actually became a man and walked and talked on the earth for 33 years, I should not be ignoring what He said.â€” I am certain that if you earnestly pray those words, God will hear and answer. May God bless you!

OK, I hope all of this helps you extend Jesusâ€™ kingdom wherever you live. And you are certainly welcome to use any of the text in my personal gospel tract in your own personal tract. Whatever you do, get involved in the harvest! â€” David

1 John 5:18; 8:56-58; 10:30-33

Matthew 9:2

John 3:14-16; 5:24; 6:40; 10:27-28

Matthew 14:33; 28:9; John 9:36-38

Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:26

Matthew 25:31-46

John 7:38; 14:17, 23; Romans 5:5

John 3:16; 6:35; 7:38; 11:25-26; 12:46; 14:12

Matthew 28:18, John 5:22

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