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SERMON TITLE: Reclaiming, Proclaiming the Church's Core
Mission: Evangelism
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28:18-20
DATE: May 22, 2022
Online service at www.fpcd.org/live-stream

Read also 1 Chronicles 16:23-36.

Where in the Bible does it say that we are to go tell others about God? Or Jesus. Where is there instruction to you to talk about God?

1 Chronicles 16:23-27

Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.
Publish his glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! He is to be feared above all gods. The gods of other nations are mere idols, but the LORD made the heavens! Honor and majesty surround him; strength and joy fill his dwelling.

Why do you share?

*God's deeds are glorious;
God is worthy of praise
Gods of other nations are mere idols (inanimate, powerless)
God made the heavens
Believing in God fills you with strength and JOY*

Where does the Bible instruct you to talk about the Lord?

Exodus 13:8

You shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' Egypt for us is our bondage—those things we need to be brought out of.

For instance, I came to Christ at Young Life camp as a teenager. My bondage was a sense of guilt that I was not good enough for God to love me. But I learned that God loved me even though I was filled with guilt over the things I did wrong.

Why do you share?

Because the Lord has done something for you.

Ezekiel 33:30-31, 33 – God speaks to Ezekiel, a man who was passionate for God:

As for you, mortal, your people who talk together about you by the walls, and at the doors of the houses, say to one another, . . . "Come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD." They come to you . . . as my people, and they hear your words, but they will not obey them. For flattery is on their lips, but their heart is set on their gain. . . . When this comes -- and come it will! -- then they shall know that a prophet has been among them.

Why do you share?

So people know that the Lord speaks today.
Truth guides people to the right path.

Where in the New Testament are you told to talk about the Lord? Matthew 28:18-20, The Great Commission. Let's hear it:

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Why do you share your faith? Take a moment and write it down.

Can you share your faith because –

*God's deeds are glorious;
God is worthy of praise
Other gods are mere idols (inanimate and powerless)
God made the heavens
Knowing God gives you strength and JOY
God has done something for you
It helps people to know that the Lord speaks today.
People need the truth to be guided to the right path.*

These are not the only reasons the Bible says we should share.

Last week I attended The Fellowship Community's annual Conference. We have not met in person for two years so it was wonderful to convene in person. Did you know that our church belongs to The Fellowship Community, the Evangelical arm of the PC (USA) We talked about the Church's Core Mission: Evangelism."

What is evangelism?

In the Greek the word means: *go to one's death making disciples*. Woah, I am shocked! Our passage from Matthew says more: *Conduct oneself; live; follow me—because I have been given all authority*. That means Jesus is the victor over the world. As I wrote this, I was sitting on an airplane reflecting on all the things I learned.

Imagine what evangelism means. It means the news is very good. But the best news is what happens in us—the freedom we gain by having the Spirit of Christ live in us because we invite him in. Jesus does not do this by force. There is no domination by God.

It is simply accepting the Spirit into your being—allowing his authority in your life. Then you freely follow.

In our meeting, we talked about the loneliness people feel, like our anthem says:

*No one knew how alone I was feeling
And the emptiness I tried so hard to hide
Though I laughed and said my life was fine without You.
I was covering up the secret tears I cried.*

*I'm amazed that you love me . . . I'm amazed that you care
Through Your precious blood I've found pardon
And my sins are washed, They're all washed away!¹*

Evangelism is going to one's death to be a disciple; go to one's death making disciples. To share the good news is a worthy purpose.

At the Conference I learned that . . .

- 60% of active attenders of a church cannot define what evangelism is
- 90% of active members do not “do” evangelism

This results in an inward-focused church. Here's what happens to an inward focused church:

“Moreover, that whole generation was gathered to their ancestors, and another generation grew up after them, who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10).

What do you think when you hear this?

Do you feel like we are facing a dismaying reality? Does it feel like the whole burden is on your shoulders? Here is more:

- 2/3 of Gen Z young people raised in the church are turning away from the faith.
- The biggest problems: anxiety, depression, feeling they do not belong, despair

But I know that you and I care deeply! So what are we to do?

Let us recalibrate our opinion and actions about evangelism to an “all in” attitude! Let us not be afraid to risk our own comfort level, for people need the Lord.

Jason Tucker, one of the presenters at the Conference, shared his story. He pastors a Presbyterian church in New Jersey. He was not raised in the church, nor did he grow up being taught any faith at all. But, somehow, when he was a teenager someone shared Jesus with him and he became a believer. He went home and told his mother and stepdad. They said, “You are never to mention the name of Jesus in this house or you will not be able to live here.”

It was devastating. He thought, *I will never be able to bring my family to the Lord.*

One day, he learned that his mother had incurable cancer. A church down the street somehow heard about this. At Christmas time they sent gifts for Jason and his brother and sister. They were not even marked with their names—just ‘teenage boy, young girl.’ And then, as his mother's cancer progressed, they began receiving casseroles on a regular basis. One day, the phone rang for his mother. He heard her talk, then pray on the phone.

Afterwards, she said to him, “Jason, I have become a Christian.” The caller was a member of that church that gave the meals; that brought the gifts. One of the women had called her to ask, “Would you like to accept Christ?” And she said yes.

“Really?” Jason thought. She said, “Yes. Because of you, Jason. I noticed that something changed in you—you treated your brother and sister better. You treated everyone better. I knew something real had happened to you and I wanted it too.”

Where in the Bible does it say that we are to go tell others about God? Or Jesus? **All over it.** It's time for the church—for you and me to be intentional about bringing the greatest hope in the midst of this post covid generation! We will talk more about this over the next month. Always remember, we have the greatest good news.

AMEN

¹ Lyrics from “I'm Amazed” by Brooklyn Tabernacle.