

“WRCC’s Mission ≈ Evangelize the Lost” [1. 14. 07]

This morning, let’s allow the passage to set the context for us;

(R) II Kings 6: 24 or p. 287 in the pew Bible

The entire army of Aram had ‘besieged Samaria’ literally encircling the city, cutting off all supply lines

(R) II Kings 6: 25

“As a result, there was a great famine.”

- Donkey’s head sold for (80) pieces of silver
- Cup of dove’s dung sold for (5) pieces of silver
 - For the record, dove’s dung is not even a delicacy in my home state of TN. ☺

(R) II Kings 6: 26 – 30a

When times become this hard - words just fell ☹

(R) II Kings 7: 3 – 9a

This beautiful O.T. narrative describes the 1st piece of WRCC’s mission; ‘To evangelize the lost’

The story of these (4) lepers [is packed] with life lessons;

- I. 1st life lesson = ‘Stepping out of comfort zones – produces real life!’
 - A. [Notice] when the leper’s lives began to change?

Their lives changed the moment they decided to take a risk!
Listen to v. 4b, “...if they spare us, we live; if they kill us, then we die”

- Leper’s understood this dying thing is going to happen; it’s inevitable!
 - Either going to starve to death inside the walls of Samaria
 - or risk death @ the hands of the opposing enemy
 - Either way – anything was better than just waiting around to die!
 - Love their attitudes; we have nothing to lose & everything to gain!

They really began to live [the moment] they risked their lives & stepped out beyond the gates of the city.

(Same for us)

The Christian adventure begins the moment an individual steps out of their comfort zones & begin to consider the potential impact of their lives upon others!

← ← Stasia Humphrey’s present story

B. In [quiet moments] of reflection – I consider what’s really important!

- My family & loved ones
- [Life] & Death
 - [Heaven] & Hell
 - God’s amazing gift of [grace]!

Question (s)

Is sharing Jesus really worth the RISK?

Then what’s keeping us from sharing the gospel?

Cost Benefit Analysis:

What is the worse case scenario if I share the gospel – what is the absolute worse case that can happen if [I take the risk] of telling someone how much Jesus love them?

v. 4b for the lepers = ‘...then we die’

For me & you in the U.S.A. = someone will decline our offer; that is as bloody as it gets, as close to martyrdom as we get.

Is that so horribly tragic; so devastating as to hear:

‘Thanks for sharing – but I’m not ready at this time – I’m going to need a little time.’

Some of us are paralyzed @ the thought of a mild rejection; we have fallen into the trap of never even risking an attempt to share our relationship w/Jesus!

Let God’s word encourage you today w/Parable of the Sower
(R) Mark 4: 3 – 9 or p. 764 in pew Bible

Notice the seed fell into (4) different types of soil;

- ‘a footpath’ = where birds came & ate it up ☹
- ‘shallow soil w/underlying rock’ = plants soon withered under the hot sun since it did not have deep roots ☹
- ‘among the thorns’ = grew up & choked out the tender plants ☹
- ‘good soil = produced a wonderful crop ☺

So, why did Jesus tell this parable?

The 1st (3) attempts @ sowing seed were busts; notice Jesus said, ‘don’t give up, don’t fall into a pattern of quitting if you get rejected!’

You keep sowing the seed; Your ♥ will get broken periodically – you keep trying!

[Personal note] occasionally I get rejected; good people that are not ready to be obedient to what Jesus desires for them!

- I’ve learned...

- It's not personal
- I just pray over these good people & ask God's spirit to convict!

[When discouraged] hold on to two things;

- 1st, esteem in my spirit
 - @ least I was a faithful witness
 - Romans 1: 16 = 'I'm not ashamed of the gospel'
 - Quiet disappointments I hear the whisper of God, @ least you tried; Holy Spirit whispers, 'Well Done.'
- 2nd, @ least I know that seed has been sown = seed has a chance to germinate!
 - Recent studies indicate that an unbeliever needs to hear the gospel (7) times
 - 1st time = open door
 - 4th time = ½ way
 - 6th time = Almost across that line of faith

No one ever comes to Christ until an ordinary person decides to risk sowing the word of salvation!

Cost Benefit Analysis:

- Terrible downside = might get a no thank you; I'm not ready!
- Upside is huge = Jude 23 draws a vivid picture;

'...someone will be snatched from the very fires of Hell!'

- This idea gets me up in the morning;

Someone might end up w/Jesus in heaven because of my risk!

- [Don't be afraid] to ask the question – eternity hangs in the balance!
 - [Past Monday] I met w/Jeff Hoist – shun; great family
 - Jeff told me about his dad; a very good man; honest to the core; but his dad was a professed atheist ☹
 - Prayed for him – tried to convince him to no avail!
 - (72 yrs. of age) a friend was shooting with him @ the gun range; & just asked him what would it hurt to accept Jesus – H.S. took hold of him; they knelt down & asked Jesus into his heart
 - (4) months later Jeff's dad Larry had a brain aneurism & died;
 - Guess where he went immediately – into the loving arms of Jesus!

Another life lesson I learned from the leper's is...

- II. 2nd life lesson = 'It's okay to enjoy God's gifts of life!'
 - A. (R) II Kings 7: 8

- [IMAGINE] these (4) leper's sampling the food – drinking every beverage; trying on clothes & saying look @ me ☺
- [Most effective ambassadors] of the love of Jesus over the long haul are those persons who have permission to drink in the...
 - Wonder of God's grace
 - & enjoy the abundance of God's Kingdom

B. Show me someone who knows of God's...
- Love – grace – our adoptions as sons & daughters – wonder of worship – promise of Heaven – who drinks in the goodness of God's spiritual blessings; & I'll will show you someone who is spilling over to tell someone else about Jesus!
- III. of Mary Blake = budding evangelist ☺
 - She loves 'the Zone,' w/Ms. Jodi
 - Ask frequently what day it is – hoping it might be Sunday!
 - Zone has become expensive @ my house
 - New Bible – new camo shirt for 'Bible boot camp' – this weekend needed a new cowboy hat & boots
 - Worth it – she's genuinely excited to invite school friends & neighbors to come and enjoy (Harvest Parties – weekend services)

C. What is it that we really have to offer lost people [those w/out Jesus]
- (2) Gifts to offer
 - 1st – gift of the gospel = forgiveness & grace [eternal life]
 - 2nd – gift of community
 - Don't just join God; join us [you will love it]
 - Acts 2 in motion; helping out one another – caring for one another – celebrating Christ's redemptive gift!

Just this week; I had lunch w/one of my small group members who took time to just make sure all was going well w/me; nothing like sensing God's love 1st hand!

A final life lesson I learn from the leper's is that...

III. 3rd life lesson = 'We are accountable for the gifts we receive'

A. (R) II Kings 7: 9

- Unconscionable for lepers not to share their good fortune
- [Imagine] trying on clothes – enjoying the food – finally remembered the condition of those inside the city [eating dove's dung & little children]
- [What are we thinking] – people are dying and we could help by sharing!
 - Parallel is obvious – w/out Jesus; good people die & go to Hell
 - {Last Tuesday} met Pat Clark [Sherry Budd's dad] how would we live our lives differently if we knew w/certainty that Jesus would be returning this coming Wednesday @ 1: 30pm?

- I would take a few more risks!
- B. (R) II Kings 7: 16 = rest of the story; city was saved from starvation!
- [Worth it] – the more the merrier; it's incredible to share God's gift!
 - Remember – taking someone to heaven is worth the risk!
 - 2007 don't hoard your blessing!

- ← ← Disney World trip w/Emilee ☺