

"WHERE DO I BEGIN?"

Does the thought of witnessing to others about your faith excite you or stress you out? Many people think of sharing their faith as either a death sentence or a commandment enforced by knocking on doors and throwing Bibles. Fortunately, this is not what God commands! We serve a loving God Who didn't design sharing your faith as terms to condemn each other. You can spread God's love and joy by approaching witnessing with the right attitude and state of mind.

"Honor Christ in Your Heart"

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect," Witnessing your faith begins with honoring Christ in your heart. God will prepare your mind and give you the words to speak,



but you first have to give Him your heart. Keep giving Christ your heart each day and He will continue opening doors for you to share His love with others.

A. BE CERTAIN OF WHAT YOU BELIEVE

You cannot share what you do not know. If you are not well grounded in your own faith, you will be a miserable failure at trying to share with others what you yourself do not understand.

B. BE PREPARED TO SHARE

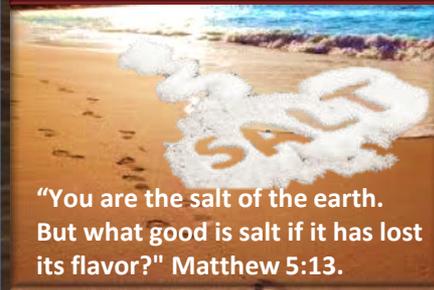
Don't look at it like a burdensome task, but rather a great privilege. I find that we are generally prepared to do what we like to do. If we enjoyed sharing Christ, we would be prepared to do it. We would be, as Paul told Timothy, instant in season and out of season. Be prepared, you never know when God will give you the opportunity.

C. BE SENSITIVE TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD

The gospel runs along the tracks of relationships. The people God is going to use you to reach are most often people whom He has put into your circle of acquaintances. Be sensitive to opportunities, crises in their lives, moments of openness, when they are searching for answers. Have an ear open to the voice of God's Spirit.

D. BE FAITHFUL

Don't give up. People in different cultures respond differently. When we go to Africa, in certain places when the gospel is preached, people respond by the thousands. In western Europe, it may take years of faithful work to see even one person come to Christ. You and I have to be faithful to our Lord in the culture where He has planted us. **"WE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH!"**



"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor?" Matthew 5:13.

You and I, as Christians, are called the "Salt Of The Earth" because our lives enhance and give meaning to this existence we call life. Before salvation, we were like grains of sand, too numerous to count. But after receiving Christ, we were transformed - no longer like minuscule debris of rock having

little or no difference from another lost piece of sand, to something distinctive in taste, texture, and aroma. It may be an odd analogy, but Jesus compared believers to salt for a reason. Salt is a dietary mineral, used for flavoring and preservation - needed by all known living creatures. If abused, it can be harmful. However, it is also detrimental to have no salt intake because it regulates the water content in our bodies. Jesus used salt to describe how Christians are needed to bring balance and hope to an otherwise dying world. The question He asked however is, "What good is salt if it has lost its flavor?" In other words, if a Christian has lost his or her gusto and fervor, then what's the difference between the old grain of sand they once were and the so-called salt they are now? The answer is: very little.

"TRAILS CAN CAUSE US TO LOOSE OUR FLAVOR"

Trials can cause us to become weary if we're not careful. And just like salt can become diluted in water, Christians can become diluted (or altered) by their experiences. For example, what we believed before a traumatic event is sometimes not the same as afterwards. Why is that? There could be many reasons, but the most common is depression, fatigue, self-doubt, and ultimately reservations about what we believed in to begin with. And we have to clearly understand there is an enemy at work in these cases. If we are the salt of the earth and it's possible to lose our flavoring, then it's no secret the Devil will do his best to make sure our effectiveness (our flavoring) isn't what it used to be. And if he had his way in every case, we'd have no flavoring left at all - returning to transparent grains of sand with no threat to him or his kingdom.

CONSIDER THIS:

The sea is full of salt but it is only extracted through the process of boiling (removing the water to retain the salt). I don't like the idea of going through fiery trials, but if that's what it takes to recapture the "SALT" in our lives, than maybe we should be okay with that. What we need to learned is that God is not the destroyer in this life. He said the thief comes to kill, steal, and destroy. (John 10:10) God is not the thief. God is the "Restorer" of broken lives and broken hearts.



The boiling process will either prove or disprove the amount of salt contained in a substance. In the same way, the trials of life will either prove our lives are flavored by God or they will reveal how much we truly lack. Either way, if handled correctly, the end result can be beneficial. For the one, their

revelation of Jesus Christ and His grace and faithfulness will increase; for the other, a realization of their small faith can push them to a deeper relationship with God because despite their lack, He remains faithful. The only problem is: God has left the "Salt Containers" (you and I) to decide.

"BECOMING BITTER OR BETTER"



Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego are Thrown into the Furnace

"So dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad - for these trials make you partners with Christ [and what He went through], so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing His glory when it is revealed to all the

world." (1 Peter 4:12-13) We must learn we can't always control the trials we face, but we are the keepers of our "SALT." Will we be bitter or better? Less seasoned or more flavorful? Will we disappear into the background or stand out as an overcomer? Because in the end, what good are we if we have lost our flavoring?

"SHARING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO A CHRIST-LESS CULTURE"



If one were to go back and document the decline of our culture over the past four decades, one fact that would be glaringly noticeable would be the significant correlation between prayer and scripture being taken out of public schools and the rapid decline of the

culture we once knew. As the scripture says Proverbs 29:18, **"Where there is no revelation; the people cast off restraint."** All of this has led us to where we are today; a generation of people who embrace as truth, as philosophy which says there is no truth. The days of preaching to people who have even the most basic understanding of Christianity are gone in our country. Now, I say this, not to reminisce about the good old days, but merely to clearly establish where we are as we try to communicate Christ to a Christ less culture.

"MAN'S BASIC NEEDS HAVE NOT CHANGED"

Many Christians today, sit around and bemoan the loss of what they consider the "Golden Days." But is this a true biblical response? The truth of the matter is that our culture is still far better off than the culture into which Paul and the Apostles brought the gospel. Even as Paul was called to take the message of Christ to a Christ less culture; so we too have been given this glorious task. Man's basic needs have not changed. Man is still in need of a Savior, and Jesus Christ is still the only way. Man's thinking may have changed, but Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever. Our challenge is to find the most effective way to communicate Christ to our culture.

"THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL TO SAVE"

Many Christians are simply baffled by the culture, they cannot understand it, they do not like it and they seek to avoid it. But Christ has called us to reach our culture, like it or not. And herein lies the tension for modern day Christians. We want to convey the message of Christ to our culture, but not in such a way that will seem tired and worn out. At the same time we cannot compromise the heart of the message, we cannot water it down, or try to make it acceptable to lost people. **The very nature of the gospel means that it will always be offensive to those who are perishing. But remember, it is not our knowledge or our persuasiveness that will win them over, it is the power of the gospel itself.** We are called to share the old, old story, to a culture that needs to hear it in the context of where they live and who they think they are. That is why it is so important for us to understand the prevalent worldviews that lost people hold. We need to understand the times, in order to know how to most effectively carry out our Lord's great commission.

"OUR COMMISSION AND MANDATE" Matthew 28:16-29

"Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore 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 that I have commanded you. And remember, I Am with you always, to the end of the age." The mandate of our Lord remains the same for us as it has for all Christians over the last two millennia. As we go we are to make, not mere decisions, but disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are to teach them to do all things that Christ has commanded us. That's what our Lord has commanded us to do, and we are to do it with all diligence.