

Prayer

Witnessing, Made Easier--part 2

DAY 1: My responsibility, God's responsibility

Evangelism is sharing the good news of Jesus and leaving the results with God.

1. Witnessing Made Easier is our message series. This week we'll look at prayer. When it comes to witnessing there are things that are:

- Our responsibility.
- God's responsibility.

- a. Our responsibilities include praying for people, taking the initiative, and talking to people.
- b. It is God's responsibility to change hearts—to enable repentance and faith.

2. The natural, fallen human heart is in an awful condition, though people rarely recognize it. In the next passage, underline all the words or phrases that indicate man's desperate need.

Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

3. What words or phrases struck you the most?

4. If you think that your words can convert someone to the gospel, you will find yourself very frustrated! The human heart is dead, hard, dark, and disobedient!

5. It is God's responsibility to change hearts, to "turn on the lights" for people! Notice how the apostle Paul transitions from man's deadness to a converted heart:

Ephesians 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

6. When you have tried to witness, have you felt a pressure to "get it right," to "push" people to repentance and faith? That pressure comes from taking on God's responsibility to change someone's heart. Give *the results* of your witnessing to Him.

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: The necessity of prayer: to turn hearts and to help us speak

1. After looking at yesterday's devotions, it should be obvious that prayer is essential in any human heart repenting and believing in Christ!
2. In Colossians, Paul asked his brothers and sisters in Christ to pray for him in this venture of witnessing.

Col. 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

3. How does Paul instruct the folks as to prayer in v. 2?

4. Col. 4:3-6 all have to do with witnessing.
 - a. What does Paul see that God needs to enable Paul's witnessing? (verse 3)

 - b. What does Paul see is his responsibility in witnessing? (verse 3)

 - c. Notice the order of these two items!

 - d. What does Paul both pray for and hope for in verse 4?

 - e. In verse 5, "outsiders" are non-Christians. What two instructions does he give us in how we relate to them?

 - f. What is the nature or tone to be in witnessing? (verse 6)

5. What is God's responsibility in this passage?

6. What strikes you as your responsibility in witnessing?

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: The necessity of prayer and testimony

1. The apostle Paul is sharing his testimony of conversion with King Agrippa. Paul was under arrest for sharing his faith. The following is an excerpt from his testimony.

2. Jesus had appeared to Paul on the Damascus road, and this is part of their interchange.

Acts 26:15 “Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

*“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ¹⁶ ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸ **to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.**’*

3. Notice how in the very minutes of Paul’s conversion, God also “appointed” Paul. To what two things did God appoint Paul? (v. 16)

4. As to being a “witness,” to what was Paul to witness? (v. 16)

5. God was also “sending” Paul. What three things did God want to do as a result of Paul’s witness to Jesus? (v. 18)

6. This is where the matching of our witness and God’s power joins to each other. Sometimes, people’s hearts are changed during your witness. Many times, people’s hearts are changed after your witness.

7. It is obvious that these three things will never happen without God’s power to change someone’s heart. This is another reason why prayer is so important.

8. At the same time, those three things rarely happen without a witness. God almost always uses Christians to share their testimony or the gospel, and that is when “the lights go on.”

*Romans 10:14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone **preaching** to them?*

“Preaching” just means “sharing the gospel”

9. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: The example of the early church

1. In the early days of the church, the Jewish leaders were very threatened by the apostles' testimony and courage. They called Peter and John and commanded them not to preach Jesus anymore.

2. Their response is classic!

*Acts 4:20 "For we cannot help speaking about what we have **seen** and **heard**."*

3. Peter and John go back to the disciples and shared what happened. Here is the response of the early church.

*Acts 4:24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in **prayer to God**. "**Sovereign Lord**," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: " 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.'*

²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

4. Thus far, their prayer is a reminder of the sovereignty of God to accomplish His purposes no matter how dominant and powerful governmental opposition might be.

5. Now notice where their prayers focus.

*Acts 4:29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and **enable** your servants to **speak your word with great boldness**. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*

*³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and **spoke the word of God boldly**.*

6. They knew they needed to bold in their witness. They also knew that would not happen with praying for boldness!

7. They also asked for God to display His power for people to see!

8. The Holy Spirit filled them, resulting in speaking boldly. (Speaking boldly does not imply being rude, insensitive, mean or bullying).

9. Again we see the parallel of both prayer and witnessing.

10. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: Prayer for more workers

1. After Jesus talked to the woman at the well, the disciples asked him if He wanted something to eat.

John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

2. At that very moment, the Samaritans who had heard the woman's testimony were on their way to listen to Jesus! This is the "harvest." These are people hungry for truth.

3. Jesus continues with the farming metaphor.

John 4:36 Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

4. The gospel expands around the world through the witness of His people. They "sow the seed" of the gospel story, and eventually reap the "harvest" of changed lives!

5. Notice, some of the "farmers" (you and me) are *sowing* the seed, and sometimes we are *reaping* the harvest of people.

6. On another occasion Jesus traveled across the sea, and got out of the boat.

*Matt. 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ **Ask the Lord of the harvest**, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

a. He first saw the needs of people. They were harassed and helpless.

b. He then saw *why* the people were in such desperate straits—they were like sheep without shepherds.

c. Jesus then returns to the farm metaphor. What does He say about the harvest in v. 37?

d. What is the shortage in v. 37?

e. What becomes the much-needed prayer in v. 38?

7. You are needed in the "fields". What strikes you from today's devotional?