

St Martins C3 – June 26, 2022

Sharing Your Faith –It's All About Relationship

Sermon Notes:

A key part of sharing our faith is building genuine friendships with non-Christians and sharing spiritually with them.

Sometimes the best place to start sharing your faith is with the people you know now.

Fill in this list with the ten people you are closest to outside of your immediate family (Christian and non-Christian). We will look at it during the message.

Name	Where are they at with God?			
	Not Open	Open to God	Christian	I Don't Know
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Read Luke 19:10, Mark 10:45, Luke 7:34

This speaks about Jesus' mission and His means. He came to seek and save those who are lost. He came to serve others and

give His life as a ransom for many. The gospel, the good news of Jesus, is the greatest news the world will ever hear. The way that Jesus brought it was by hanging out with people.

We too can build deeper friendships with non-Christians and share with them spiritually. For us to do this we need to overcome some challenges.

Challenge One: Care about more than people's souls

There is a clear indication that you only care about people's souls: *You reject people if they reject your message*

Judgement over people's points of view or lifestyle is not our job. It is God's. If you are rejecting people as soon as they reject your point of view, then you need to question whether you care about them.

Read 2 Timothy 2:25-26

We need to make sure we don't try and sell the gospel like it is a product. People feel pressure to either accept or reject faith if it is presented as a product. They sense the agenda, and they are wary of it.

Read Colossians 4:3-6

Challenge Two: Build genuine friendships with non-Christians

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. As we care for people it opens amazing

opportunities to see where the gospel makes a difference in their life.

We need to intentionally get to know those who don't follow Jesus and share our lives with them. It is what our world most needs. Think through the list on the first page and see how many you have genuine friendships with – friendships where you know them well and they know you.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Challenge Three: Have spiritual conversations with those people

What if we counted spiritual conversations and not just conversions as a way to know we were doing what Jesus asked us to do?

Ask questions to understand where they are coming from spiritually. Admire what you can about what others believe. Admit you don't have it all together and need Jesus too.

Who can you circle on your list to commit to having spiritual conversations with?

Questions for Connect Groups:

Connect Groups will be using the Life Shared material from Alpha during this series, so there will be no connect group questions in these notes for the next few weeks.

Monday Devotion: Prayer Changes Things

Read 2 Corinthians 4:3-7

This week we encourage you to pray for people in your life who don't know Jesus. These devotions will be reflections on the different things we can pray for as we expect God to break through in others' lives with His good news.

If you haven't done it already make a list of your ten closest friends – you can include a family member or two. Mark on the list where they are at with God. If you have two or three people on this list who don't know Jesus spend this week bringing them before God in prayer. If not, think of some others you know at work or in your family you would like to pray for.

The first thing for us to pray into is that God would open their spiritual eyes. In 2 Corinthians, Paul tells us that those who don't know Jesus have had their minds blinded to God by Satan (vs 4). If people do know God it is because He has done the work of letting the light shine in their hearts and helping them to know the glory of God (vs 6). And for some reason, he chooses to use us in that process – even though we are the most fragile of people (vs 7).

When someone says they don't need God there is very little we can do to convince them otherwise. It is only a work of God's Spirit that will break down the barriers in their life. It is amazing as we pray we begin to see hard hearts begin to soften and pride begin to be humbled. Ask God to do this work in your friends' lives and begin to see them change.

Tuesday Devotion: Pray for Empathy

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

When Paul was with those who were Jews, he would live as one of them. He would continue to go to the synagogue and take part in the prayers and liturgy, using the opportunity to tell them about Jesus as the Messiah.

He also became as one under the law. This means he was prepared to observe customs and key commands of the law, presumably meaning by this that he would keep the sabbaths and the food laws. He knew justification was by faith, but he acted as he did to gain an audience with those people.

When he was with the Gentiles he would become like them, living alongside them without regard for the regulations of the Jewish law which would have set him apart from the very people he was called to speak to most particularly.

He spent time with people. He entered their world. In doing so he made himself weak so he could relate to those who were weak. The gospel and its message never changed but Paul changed to make sure he was in the right position to see how the truth of the gospel might impact their world.

Today as you pray for your friends, ask God to give you the ability to enter into and understand their world. To have empathy and see how the gospel makes a difference to your friend and all they have been through.

Wednesday Devotion: Pray for Boldness

Read Luke 14:15-24; Acts 4:29-31

Jesus wants all people to be welcomed at the wedding feast He is hosting at the end of this age. He has created the invitations and is looking for us to put them into people's letterboxes.

As we pray for the non-Christians in our lives, we can pray for ourselves as well. We can pray that God would give us opportunities to start spiritual conversations with others. We will also need a fair amount of courage to have spiritual conversations with others.

Even if you are extremely committed to Jesus, it can be hard to start spiritual conversations with others about what it means to believe in Him. There can be a degree of awkwardness to bring it up and push through with the conversation.

Fear of sharing the gospel is very normal. As you go to speak it is easy to feel inadequate or as though the other person will be completely uninterested in your questions. Remember courage is not the absence of fear but the ability to speak despite it.

Be aware of what God is doing and then boldly take the opportunities that come in front of you. As the disciples prayed, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and preached boldly. May you know that same boldness today.

Thursday Devotion: Pray for Others to Help

Read Matthew 9:37-38

In the past, we have seen sharing the gospel as an individual activity. But the New Testament very rarely sees it that way. Instead, we see in word and practice that evangelism works best as a team activity.

When Jesus sent His disciples out to the towns and cities to prepare for His coming, He always told them to go in groups. When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He gave it to the disciples as a group not just to each individual Paul and others often went out in pairs or in small groups to share the message of the gospel.

Here we see Jesus asking His followers to pray God would send more workers to the harvest fields. This is a prayer we can pray for the people in our life who don't know Jesus as well.

I have been startled at times to see the number of Christians that surround a non-Christian. I have talked with one person about a friend I have been sharing my faith with and when I mention them the other person says, "You know them? No way. I have been sharing my faith with them too."

God is up to something in the lives of the people around us. Today, as you pray for the people in your life who don't know Jesus pray that God would draw other quality Christians into their life to share His good news with them. You never know, they might be able to say something you can't.

Friday Devotion: Pray for Faith

Read Romans 10:9-17

The last thing we can pray for is that our friends would have the faith to believe and the will to respond.

Commitment to Jesus requires repentance from the ways of the past and commitment to follow Jesus. All of this shows the necessity of faith.

Faith is not an intangible blind trust in a deity that you cannot see. Instead, it is a reasoned understanding that Jesus really is who He said He is. He is God in human flesh, come to bring us back to God. He lived a perfect life, he died for our sins, and rose again from the dead. He is now the King of the Universe, and we choose to put our faith and trust in Him above all other things in our life.

In our world of enlightened, scientific, concrete rationalism faith in all those things can be a big leap for people. We should pray for our non-Christian friends that they would grow to discover faith in God and then work with them to see what that would look like for them.

As you continue to pray for the non-Christians in your life keep praying with faith yourself. God wants to bring them into a relationship with Him. Whether it takes one week or ten years, your prayers are heard by God, and they make a difference both to you and to them.