

DAY 38

GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND
PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY
CREATURE
MARK 16:15

This is a pretty intimidating quote. For many of us, the Red Letter Challenge has gotten harder as it has gone on and now it's really ramping up! For some people, this is where they will really need God's presence to go with them, because they are afraid of telling someone about Jesus. They think, "I'll do all the other things, I'll forgive, I'll serve, I'll be generous, but don't make me open my mouth!"

St. Francis of Assisi once said, "Preach the Gospel, and if necessary, use words." People love this quote. And I think it's great because it emphasizes that our actions are very important when it comes to living out our faith. But I think far too many people look at this quote and use it as an excuse to never speak.

There is a time to show people who Jesus is through our actions, but there is absolutely a time to speak as well. It's not an either/or, it's a both/and. I need to both show people who God is through my actions and I need to speak the Gospel.

We've lost our boldness when it comes to speaking about God. Many of us would rather do anything else. But why is that? If God has truly died on the cross for you and paid the price that you deserved to pay, if He has literally rescued you from hell, wouldn't you want to share that good news with others?

My denomination came up with a long study of why church attendance, baptisms, and membership in our denomination is on a decline. The number one answer they came up with is that we are having fewer children. So even though the population is increasing, we've blamed our denominational decline on the birthrate?! The solution is to have more children? I found this ridiculous. We would rather raise a child from birth than actually go out there and tell somebody about Jesus!

I struggle with this because many times throughout Scripture God commands His people to proclaim who He is. Not only that, but He sends us with His Holy Spirit so we can have confidence. We don't have to go out with fear and timidity, but instead we operate from a position of power and strength.

I know it's not easy to speak in public or tell someone about Jesus. It's hard to talk in front of others. As a child, I really struggled with speaking in public. I always got so nervous. Because my last name was at the end of the alphabet, I was usually last and so I had even more time to worry. I remember silently rooting for other people to do miserably in their speeches just so mine wouldn't be as bad as everyone else's. I was terrified.

But God can turn your fear into confidence.

After enough speeches and sermons, I began to get confidence in this area. Now I love to speak in public. I love to preach. I love to tell people about Jesus. It's what I live for. In fact, a couple of years ago, I decided I was going to try to break a Guinness World Record for the longest speech of all time. I

wanted to preach all the way through the Bible and help people understand God's Word better and, at the same time, use the event as a fundraiser for a new non-profit in our area to build a recovery home for men. 53 hours and 18 minutes later I was a Guinness World Record holder and am literally the longest-winded preacher of all time!

There were many times I didn't know what to say, but God came through in a mighty way. There were Bible verses I didn't know I had memorized that God gave me at three in the morning. That particular weekend was living proof for me that I just have to be obedient and show up and God will take care of the rest. He will speak when I don't know what to say.

When I do force myself to be uncomfortable, I experience God in ways I otherwise would have missed. He has always shown up. He never leaves you or forsakes you. There are far too many people out there who don't know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Increasing our birthrate is fine, but there are many people who are already here, already dying and going to hell. It is our job to both show and tell them who Jesus Christ is. Let's not wait. The stakes are too high.

GOD CAN TURN
YOUR FEAR INTO
CONFIDENCE.



#REDLETTERCHALLENGE

God gave the prophet Ezekiel a vision and led him to a valley of dry bones. In this vision, he is surrounded by dry, dead, decomposing bodies. Talk about a tough crowd! This vision shows us that the Word of the Lord is effective. He can make dead bones live again and He can make spiritually dead people live again.

EZEKIEL 37:1-10

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2 He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. 3 He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

4 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. 6 I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'"

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

9 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

WRITE DOWN FIVE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE WHO DO NOT HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

Talk to one of those five today about your testimony. Make a plan over the next month to speak with the other four. This should go without saying, but make sure when you talk with them that you are also there to listen to them about anything they may be going through.

38/40

