

Connecting with Intention
October 27, 2024
Liberty Baptist Church of Clermont

KEY TEXT

- **Titus 3:1-8 (READ)**
- **Colossians 4:2-6**

INTRODUCTION

• **[THE GOSPEL BLIMP; SHOW VIDEO TRAILER]**

- Many years ago, I ran across a book called The Gospel Blimp by Joseph Bayly, that was published in 1960. 7 years later it was made into a movie and you saw the trailer for that movie. It's a great 40 minute movie, and makes a great point. You can watch it for free online.
- The story is about George and Ethel who are concerned about the salvation of their next-door neighbors, but don't know how to reach them with the good news of Jesus Christ. During an evening get-together of George and Ethel's Christian friends, everyone is captivated by the sight of a blimp flying overhead.
 - Then Herm, one of the neighbors, gets a bright idea: why not use a blimp to proclaim the Christian message to the unchurched citizens of Middletown including George and Ethel's neighbor? The group incorporates, buys a used blimp, hires a pilot, then commences to evangelize their George's neighbor and the hometown by towing Bible-verse banners, 'firebombing' folks below with gospel tracts, and broadcasting Christian music and programs over loudspeakers.
 - But a series of misadventures puts the blimp ministry in jeopardy. And George becomes increasingly uneasy about the methods and business practices of International Gospel Blimps Incorporated and its "Commander", Herm. Do the personal sacrifices made by the group's members justify the results? And will George and Ethel's next-door neighbors ever receive the Gospel message?
 - Weeks and then months passed by, and before everyone knew it, it had been three full years since the meeting had been held at which the idea for the blimp was born. For old time's sake, George and Ethel invited everyone over for a picnic supper, like the one three years before.

- This one was a little different, however; because George and Ethel's next-door neighbors were there, too. And they had some good news to share. They had become Christians!
 - How did that happen? It must have been the gospel sign on the blimp. No? How about the program that came over the PA system — it had to be that, right? Wrong again. And it wasn't the tracts wrapped in colored cellophane, either. Then what did influence George and Ethel's next-door neighbors to become Christians?
- They simply loved their neighbors in tangible ways, invited them over many times, had fun with each other, and more importantly, were intentional in connecting with them, and eventually led them to Christ.
- Today, I am preaching another topical message. Since wrapping up our series in the epistles of Peter, I have taken advantage of some time here before going into another specific series of messages from one of the books of the Bible.
- We are moving into a very busy time of the year for Liberty Baptist in the Fall time with our annual Fall Festival, Men's and Ladies events, Thanksgiving, and before we know it, we are in the Christmas season!
 - We also take advantage of our property being a voting location on election day, by serving donuts and coffee in the morning and hot dogs later in the day.
 - For many of these events, we are intentional in connecting with friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and our community.
- Today's message I have titled **“Connecting with Intention” (SLIDE)**
- This will be a practical message from God's Word to equip us on being intentional as we connect with people in our lives. Every moment that we can.
- Reaching people with the Gospel takes many forms. Each person plays a part in following our Lord's directive before His ascension...His directive being...
 - **Mark 16:15 (SLIDE)**
 - 15 And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.
 - **Matthew 28:19 (SLIDE)** we are told....

- 19 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,
- **Acts 1:8 (SLIDE)**
- 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- So in these verses, we are told to proclaim the Gospel, to make disciples and to witness for Christ everywhere we go....”As you go...” is the verb tense that is given.
- Of course, Biblically we understand we cannot save anyone, the Holy Spirit has to do that work in a person’s heart....and faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.
- So just as our Lord used the parable of the seed (or soils), and the seed being the Word of God, we have some understanding of the process of the Holy Spirit guiding and drawing people to Jesus and our part in that process.
- We see in.....
 - **1 Corinthians 3:6–9 (SLIDE)**
 - 6 I **planted**, Apollos **watered**, but God gave the **growth**. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building.
- Now for me, that takes the pressure off....knowing I may be planting, watering, and sometimes reaping since God had given the growth of that seed. But I can’t pressure people into receiving the free gift of salvation.
- Sometimes we make evangelism harder than it needs to be. I thought it would be fun to share the trailer for the Gospel Blimp to make a point and to help us understand the importance of connecting with people, to ultimately share the Gospel if they are unsaved.
- Today’s direction will take an expository approach (which is my preferred style of preaching as you know) from the opening passage of Scripture which will make up the 1st key point, and then we will look at some other passages for the 2nd key point.

- I have broken down the high-level parts of today's message into these 2 parts:
 - **Part I: The Premise in Connecting with Others Intentionally**
 - **Part II: The Practice of Connecting with Others Intentionally**
- **Let's begin with Part I: The Premise in Connecting with Other's Intentionally.** It is from our opening Scripture in Titus 3 that we make our simple outline from these 8 verses.
- Now a premise includes that idea as a foundational point for which to make assumptions as a starting point for a course of action or reasoning
- As followers of Christ, with the thought of connecting with others intentionally, it is critical that we begin with this premise...
- First of all, we should
 - **Live a Life Above Reproach 3:1-2**
 - To get a little bit more of an idea to ramp up into chapter 3, let's look quickly starting in Chapter 2 of Titus starting in verse 11 (**READ 2:11-15**)
 - A little background to this letter:
 - Titus was a Greek Gentile convert who had served and traveled with the Apostle Paul. Titus had also functioned as a faithful emissary to the troubled church in Corinth
 - In approximately a.d. 63–64, sometime after they left Timothy behind in Ephesus, Paul and Titus traveled on to Crete. After a brief visit Paul then left Titus behind to help provide leadership for the Cretan churches, this tiny island.
 - The Cretans had a reputation for being idle and dishonest. In Titus 1:12 it says: One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
 - With the church there in Crete, Paul is admonishing Titus to teach a life that is above reproach. Let's look at the first 2 verses again (**READ 1-2**)
 - Look at these (**BREAK DOWN EACH THING**)

- **Live a Life Above Reproach**
- **Live a Life of Humility 3:3-7**

- These next 5 verses get to the heart of the matter when connecting with others intentionally. Let's look at them again (**READ 3-7 VbV with comment**) (**Verse 4- Chuck Swindoll -said he wanted some day to preach on the famous "buts" of the Bible! Ha!**)
- I wish we had more time to break these down and get more into the weeds, but we don't have time this morning in this message....but do you see what these verses are saying? It speaks to every single one of us about what we once were!
- When connecting with others with intention, starting with the premise of who we were before we came to Christ should keep us in a life of humility. This is critical!
- Who are we that any of us think that we are better than anyone who is not a believer? That we have somehow "arrived" and are all that and that the unsaved.
- So many times believers can be arrogant and proud, forgetting about who we once were....whether in thought or deed and are somehow surprised and shocked by the actions or words of someone who is lost and without Christ.
- Lost people do what lost people do, because they are lost! Just like you and I once were!

- **Live a Life Above Reproach**
- **Live a Life of Humility 3:3-7**
- **Live a Life of Good Works 3:8**

- Because we know that good works have nothing to do with saving us or keeping us saved (what we read in Titus 3:5, also Ephesians 2:8-9), and we point out error when there is teaching and preaching that implies that they do, sometimes we are afraid to speak of good works, lest we be put in that category.
- The reality is that Christians SHOULD do good works....not to save us, but because we are saved!

- Notice the importance and value to doing good works in verse 8 (**READ 8**)
 - Notice 8b again....”these things are excellent and profitable for people”
 - Good works are good and profitable for people on the practical level.
 - Warren Wiersbe said: “The best way a local church has to witness to the lost is through the sacrificial service (or good works) of its members”
 - Spurgeon said: “After all, we shall be known by what we have done, more than by what we have said.”
- So in order to connect with people with intention, we should start with the premise of:
 - **A Life Above Reproach**
 - **A Life of Humility**
 - **A Life of Good Works**
- These are the foundation of connecting with others with intention!
- And now we move into...
- **Part II: The Practice of Connecting with Others Intentionally**
 - It is here that I want to take a practical (almost pragmatic in a good sense of the word) approach in connecting with people intentionally.
 - Keeping in mind that the ULTIMATE idea is to play a part in pointing them to Christ. Whether by planting or watering. To be intentional in doing this.
 - I would like to begin with Colossians 4 to see just in verses 2-6 some very practical ways that we can be intentional in connecting with others. Look and listen carefully to these verses to see if you can pick out practical things:
 - **Colossians 4:2–6 (SLIDE/TURN TO) (READ AND COME BACK TO VbV)**
 - 2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be

gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

- Did you catch them? Look again:
 - Continuing in prayer with thanksgiving (build on)
 - Prayer for open doors for the Word and clarity in speech in how we are to speak (build on)
 - Walking in wisdom towards outsiders (unbelievers)
 - What's the opposite of wisdom? Foolishness
 - Gracious speech!
 - "Say what you mean, mean what you say, and never be mean when you say it."
 - Speech seasoned with salt! (To make others thirsty. Our Savior was the master of this. An example is the woman at the well...which was very intentional!)
 - Knowing how to answer EACH person (everyone is different). Let's look quickly at 4 things: **(SLIDES)**
 - Using the **right words** are important
 - **Proverbs 25:11** tells us, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver."
 - **Ephesians 4:29** says, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up."
 - Saying things the **right way** is equally as important:
 - The English language depends heavily on tone and manner of speech. The same sentence with the same words can actually communicate two entirely different messages depending on the tone.
 - Speaking at the **right time** means speaking according to the need of the moment.

- Think of the friends of Job in the book of Job. They said some right things and used some right words, but they were ultimately destructive because they spoke at the **wrong time**.
- The Preacher exhorted in Ecclesiastes 3:7 that there is “a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.” And James 1:19 says: “Be quick to hear, slow to speak.”
- Connecting with others with the **right reasons** is also very important. It is being intentional!
 - It is essential in connecting with intention to convey wisdom from our hearts to others’ lives.
 - We shouldn’t connect and strike conversation simply to hear ourselves talk or to relieve ourselves of some kind of burden or something we need to get off our chest
 - Connecting and communicating with intention is not for self-gratification but is for the recipient’s edification, plant a seed, water it, or point them to Christ!
- These are some practical things from God’s Word in connecting with others with intention.
- We have some events coming up that will be great opportunities to connect with intention right here on our church property. People coming to us!
 - Our Fall Festival is a great way to just walk around, connect by simply being friendly, strike up a conversation, using the Premise and Practical ways we have spoken of this morning
 - (GIVE EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY AND DO AND NOT SAY AND DO)
 - We want you here, even if you don’t have an assigned role, you are ultimately an ambassador for Christ...representing Him and His church!
 - Voting/Election Day (another opportunity)
 - Every single day when out (using invite cards, tracts, etc)

- Are we to be friendly towards unbelievers? Absolutely! Are we to have intimate relationships with unbelievers? Biblically speaking, no.

GLEANINGS...

1. Whenever possible, leave a reason for people to seek more information about the Savior

- Whether planting a seed or watering, when we are intentional, it can lead to pointing people in His direction
- Remember, it usually takes time, but still be intentional
- Being gracious, simply being friendly and helpful with someone you see often who may not know the Lord can allow additional connecting opportunities to show them the Savior. Remember:
 - Right words
 - Right way
 - Right time
 - Right reasons

2. Seek God's wisdom and His Spirit's guidance ALWAYS when connecting with intention....NEVER in the flesh

- Being sensitive to these things brings wisdom for those right words, in the right way, at the right time, and with the right reasons and gives boldness, even joy... along with fun at times
- His Spirit will guide you when it is time for going right at Spiritual things...but at least start the process of pointing that way....and pray someone else will come along and water!