

CHAPTER 6

SHARING YOUR FAITH

Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.

—Mark 5:19

After Jesus was crucified and resurrected three days later, he spent a few final moments with the disciples downloading the critical directions for the mission of the Church. As you can imagine, those last conversations with Jesus would be crucial to understanding what was next for his followers and ultimately all of us as his Church.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples and all of us after them what we now call **THE GREAT COMMISSION**. Jesus laid out the mission and sent them off to accomplish it. Let's read what Jesus says in these few verses in Matthew 28:

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

—Matthew 28:16-20

Jesus was commissioning them to go and spread the message of God's love, proclaiming that the grace of Jesus provides forgiveness for our sins and brings us close to God again.

Now that the disciples had experienced the grace of God, they were instructed to go out and share the good news with the entire world! It's true that not all will welcome the message or be interested in it. Some may even be persecuted for sharing it, but when you've received forgiveness and grace, it's crazy to keep it to yourself.

Imagine if the whole world had an outbreak of a disease that was killing everyone, but you had discovered the antidote that totally cured you of the disease. Would you keep it to yourself? Would you share this answer? I think we all would try to tell everyone we could and distribute it to as many as possible!

In reality, that is what has happened to us. Because of sin, all of humanity has a deadly disease. I think we often forget that the eternity for someone who doesn't believe in Jesus is hell, which is a painful eternity away from the goodness of God. Yet we have the answer in Jesus; how could we not share it?

We love because he first loved us.

—1 John 4:19

Since we've received the love and grace of Jesus, we get to live free and full of hope. With that new life we have been given, how can we not extend that hope to others around us? The most selfish thing we can do after receiving grace is to not share it with others.

If you had found something that provided endless joy and was completely free; wouldn't you want to share it? Wouldn't it be sad if you lived your whole life with that joy, but never shared it with those hurting around you?

It's the same with sharing the gospel. We have been radically rescued by Jesus, completely forgiven of all our sins, and now we have a hope and security of eternity with Jesus. We are blessed with all of God's amazing promises and favor; we must share our faith! I love how these verses talk about this great privilege we have in sharing our faith:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:

The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

—2 Corinthians 5:17-19

Jesus has commissioned us with this beautiful message of reconciliation! There is no greater message.

SHARING YOUR FAITH

So, how do we share our faith? What does it mean and how can we do it in a way that is effective? It's important to note that while it is our job to share our faith with people, we cannot force anyone to accept Jesus. Everyone must make that choice on their own.

Sharing your faith is often called "evangelism," but what does that mean and how should we go about it? In Mark 5, Jesus heals and forgives a man, and naturally he now wants to go with Jesus, but Jesus gives him other instructions that I think are the best description of what it means to share your faith. Jesus said,

Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.

—Mark 5:19

Sharing your faith is simply telling the story of how Jesus has changed your life and helping to introduce someone to Jesus.

In the initial stages of following Jesus, you may not know all the right words to describe what has happened, but you can still tell people that you have experienced the love of God in a new way and you want them to know that love too.

LIVING YOUR FAITH

The best start to sharing your faith is to *live* your faith. Your life won't be perfect, but live your life filled with the love of God in such a way that it is attractive to people and makes them wonder what you have. As we live life, we look for moments to share about this incredible mercy and love that we've experienced so we can introduce people to Jesus.

When leading someone to Jesus, start by loving them. The Bible says that Jesus came to earth as a response to his love for us—not out of obligation. When we are sharing our faith with someone, let it be out of care, compassion, and love for him or her. This is not a religious formality or a chance to try to impress people with your spirituality.

When I was younger, I was taught how to share the gospel and lead a person to Jesus by walking them through several Bible verses that introduce them to their loving father and his plan of salvation through Jesus. Let's look over these verses and a few key thoughts to help you in sharing your faith. As a note, while it's a great idea to commit these verses to memory so that they can just flow out of you when talking to someone about Jesus, it's key to remember that this isn't a script or a sales pitch.

1. GOD CREATED US AND LOVES US

We are not an accident; God created us and loves us very much. Refer to the verse that almost everyone has heard at least once—John 3:16. This verse shows that God loves us enough to give his life in exchange for ours.

For God so loved the world that he gave
his one and only Son, that whoever believes in
him shall not perish but have eternal life.
—John 3:16

2. SIN SEPARATED US FROM HIM

Explain that sin is what separated us from God. It started with

Adam and Eve and continues with us today. Sin is simply missing the mark, or disobeying God. We've all done it. Romans 3:23 describes how we've all sinned and fallen short of the standard that God has.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
—Romans 3:23

3. OUR SIN NEEDED TO BE PAID FOR

Not only did we sin, but the cost of that sin was high. Actually, the cost of our sin toward God is so high that we deserve death. Even if we tried to repay this debt or bridge this gap caused by sin, it wouldn't be enough. This is why God sent Jesus. We deserve death, but God gives us the gift of eternal life through Jesus. Jesus paid the bill for our sins! Not only did Jesus come and pay the debt for us, he did it in advance, regardless of whether or not we accept it. He doesn't wait for us to get our life "fixed up"; he loves us right now, even in the midst of our sin.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
—Romans 5:8

4. GOD WANTS A RELATIONSHIP WITH US

Many people assume that God is angry, doesn't love them, or isn't interested in them. Often people feel like God is up in heaven just waiting for humans to make a mistake so he can punish us. But God absolutely proves otherwise when we see in John 3:16 that he sent his only Son to pay our debt. The next verse is awesome and shows the heart of God toward us.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.
—John 3:17

5. DECIDING TO FOLLOW JESUS

Salvation and grace through Jesus is a free gift. It is not something we earn, but something we receive. Romans 10:9-10 explains how to receive grace, forgiveness of sin, and a restored relationship with God. The verses highlight two steps: declare and believe. We must *declare* that Jesus is Lord. This means that we are submitting our lives to his leadership and direction. We also have to *believe* in our hearts that Jesus died and was raised to life for us.

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

—Romans 10:9-10

6. PRAYING THE PRAYER OF SALVATION

Oftentimes we get nervous about this part because we might assume that a pastor is more qualified to pray or that there is an exact formula to follow. Actually, it’s really simple and anyone can lead a person through this.

The prayer of salvation is basically a paraphrase of the verses in Romans that were just mentioned. It’s about declaring and believing. When you ask the person you’re talking with if they are ready to make the decision to follow Jesus, and they say yes, then have them repeat a simple prayer after you. Here is an example:

“God, I know you love me. I also know I’ve sinned and I’m sorry.

Jesus, I believe that you died on the cross for my sin and you were raised again to give me life. I turn from my sin and return to you and receive your free gift of salvation. Today I declare you are my Lord, and I choose to follow you, Jesus, with everything that I am. Amen.”

INVITING AND BRINGING

In addition to telling people about how Jesus has changed your life, another great way for people to encounter Jesus is by inviting them to come to a church service or event with you. Often this can be an effective, disarming way for them to see and hear more about Jesus while being introduced to a community of loving Jesus followers. Invite, and bring as many as you can to a church gathering with you. When people encounter the presence of God in church it has a life altering impact and softens their heart to respond to Jesus.

THEY SAID YES, NOW WHAT?

A quick note about the second half of the Great Commission: First, we are to go and tell people about Jesus, but secondly, we are to show and teach new Christians how to live according to the Bible. This is called discipleship. Discipleship is simply showing someone how to follow Jesus.

We don't have to be experts to show others how to follow Jesus. I'll talk more about how to disciple someone in our final chapter.

Leading someone to Christ and then showing them how to become a devoted follower of Jesus is the most fulfilling experiences that we have as a Christian.

For more devotionals, videos, Bible reading plans, blogs and podcasts, download the Following Jesus App.



DOWNLOAD THE
FOLLOWING JESUS APP

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

STUDY IT THROUGH:

How are we saved? Ephesians 2:8-9

What will the Holy Spirit empower us to do? Acts 1:8

What is it about God that leads people to turn to him?
Romans 2:4

How did God often validate the gospel? Acts 14:3

WALK IT OUT:

- Pray for your city to be saved.
- Share your faith this week.
- Invite someone to come with you to church.