

DATE: August 1, 2009 Communion sermon

TEXT: John 4: 1-42

TITLE: "John X: Sharing our Faith"



We move forward in our study of the Gospel of John and we see Jesus moving forward in his ministry. He is traveling from southern Israel to northern Israel. He chose to travel through Samaria. In our text Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at the well. This is the greatest example of faith sharing seen in all of scripture. I have a total of six lessons. I will share the first lesson this morning and the other 5 lesson next week.

Lesson # 1 Jesus was sensitive to the opportunities of faith sharing given to him by God.

I will read *John 4:7*

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

This sounds like a very simple question. A chance encounter. After all Jesus was by a well. It was 12:00 noon and Jesus did not have a cup with him. Jesus turned this simple conversation into an invitation to become a believer.

Allow me to share with you reasons we often do not share our faith with other.

First, we do not really believe the enormity of not surrendering a life to Jesus Christ. Let me remind you of the verse we saw last week immediately preceding our text this morning. *John 3:36 states....*

36Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Again, look at the consequences of not surrendering to Jesus Christ.... 1. They will "not see life." 2. They will experience the wrath of God.

God created humanity to be in relationship with Him. That was the purpose of our creation. We were never created to be independent from God. When a person chooses a path of independence and not dependence upon God.... we thwart God's very purpose in creation. That angers God. In did in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve, when they chose a path of independence... when they chose a path to "be like God," Were thrust out of the paradise. They were punished and experienced the anger of God. The same is true today. A person outside of God's purpose, will experience the anger of God.

Today we are coming to the table of the Lord. In a few minutes we will share the bread

and the juice... the body and blood of our Lord Jesus? Should you take this communion? We as a church, no longer assume the responsibility for your taking of communion. At one time we did. For the first 150 years of our church, in order to come to the table of the Lord the session had to give you permission. They would examine your walk with Christ... they would examine your faithfulness in worship... they would offer preparatory services... and they would then issue a communion token to those who were given permission. This practice was common, at least in the UP church until the 1950's. The church was assuming some of the responsibility for a person coming to the table of the Lord. Why? Why would the church do this? Because the church wanted to protect it's members from the wrath and judgement of God. REPEAT At that time, there was a much greater sense of accountability to God than in the church today. Their action was based on *1 Corinthians 11:27-29*. It states.....

26For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 29For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

The action of communion is a wonderful, wonderful blessing for the Christian.... it is a act

of judgement for the non-Christian. Understand what the self-examination will reveal. We are not told we must be without sin when we come to the table..... no one would come. No, we must “proclaim the death of Christ.” We must say..... by His death... and by my surrender to Christ.... my sins have been forgiven. Then, and only then, we celebrate the communion with Christ. The church no longer takes this responsibility. The only requirement we have is that the person is a member of a Christian church... and truthfully, even that requirement is not enforced. No, responsibility and accountability is now fully on your shoulders.

Remember our original question: Why do we not feel an urgency to share the Good News of Christ with our co-workers and neighbors, and friends at school? Because we have minimized the wrath of God. Because we do not, really, believe a person can eat a judgement upon themselves. The urgency is gone. The result of the lost urgency is tragic. But there are additional reasons why we do not share the Good News of Christ

Second, We are afraid of coming off as judgmental. Isn't this true? One of our greatest fears is the fear of offense. Here is a tough question in our day and age..... is it easy to tell if a

person is a Christian? At your work place.... at your school.... in your social clubs.... can you tell

who is a Christian? I would hope the answer is mostly yes. *Galatians 5:22 states....*

19The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Being a Christian means a new life in Christ. That new life is evident in our lives and in the lives of others. Are there good people who are not Christians? Yes. Are there people who still struggle with serious sin who are Christians. Again the answer is yes. But the Good news is this.... when you begin sharing the Gospel of Christ with a Christian, they should immediately thank you and share with you how they are already walking with Christ. Truthfully, for the most part, only non-Christians get offended.

The fact is this... the first fact must overcome the second fact. Our realization that the person is under the wrath of God should overcome our fear of offense. But there another reason for our failure to share the gospel

Third, we are afraid we will not know the right words and our ignorance will show.

Again, I'm trying to be very practical this morning. The truth is this... sharing your faith is not difficult because all you are really sharing is your own story. You are not trying to give a theological argument for your belief in Christ..... almost no one wants that....you are simply sharing what God is doing in your life. It does not have to be a fully thought out 'Christian testimony"... it could be what you heard in church this week... or you read in a book./.. Or a thought you had in your time of prayer... or an experience you had in raising your kids... or a failure you had when trying to hold your temper. Sharing the Good news of Christ is just sharing how the Good News has touched your life. At let me be perfectly honest right now.... if you can not think how Christ has touched you life in the past week or two... then you need to take this communion service as a opportunity for confession and re-surrender. *In Isaiah 55 God states...*

So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Finally, We do not share the Good news of Christ because we do not see the opportunities God has placed before us. This returns me to our original lesson. Let me assure you it is very

unlikely that someone will ever come to you and asks “how do I become a Christian?” No, God will open other doors for us. The door is usually this.... a expressed concern, need or desire. Let me say that again... any expressed need, concern or desire is an opportunity to share about our faith. Some examples.....

My kids are driving my crazy... I don't know what to do.
 My job is going no where... I don't know what to do
 my boss is a jerk how you stand him?
 I hate my teacher.. How can you stand him?
 My mother is sick... I don't know how I will handle her illness.
 I am worried about....anything

Again, we don't give instant solutions... we share our discoveries with Christ... successes and failures. We share the sufficiency of Christ in our lives. We don't pound... we don't ‘preach’ we love and we care because Christ is the answer and surrender to Christ is necessary to overcome the wrath of God.

We need to stop making excuses and obey the word of God. In love, share your faith.

Next week we see practical lessons on how to share our faith.

AMEN