



DATE: August 9, 2009

TEXT: John 4: 13-42

TITLE: "John XI: Sharing our Faith II"

Last week we began looking at the process of sharing our faith. I took the opportunity to share reasons we do not share our faith. Allow me to begin this sermon with a brief listing of those reasons.

**Reason # 1** We do not share our faith because we do not keep at the forefront of our thinking the consequences of not having a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus introduced this story of the Samaritan Woman with this sentence....

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

Not see life and the wrath of God... serious consequences of a life without Christ

**Reason # 2** We are afraid of being seen as judgmental. Active Christians tend to be very good people... we do not want to offend.... and this often immobilizes us. The truth is this.... Christians will not be offended when you share what Christ is doing in your life.... they will share with you what Christ is doing in their life. On the non-Christian or the marginal Christian will be

offended... they need to hear the gospel

**Reason # 3** We are afraid we will not know the right words. I said last week there are no right words... there is just sharing the actions of Christ in your life.

**Reason # 4** We do not see the opportunities to share the Good News of Christ. I stated last week that Any expressed need, concern or desire is an opportunity to share the wonderful acts of Christ in your life.

This morning I will share 5 lessons on how to share our faith using Christ as our example.

**Lesson # 1** We need to use common language of the occasion to share our faith. Jesus was at a well in need of a drink. He and this woman were talking about his thirst when he made this statement....

**Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**

Now there is a statement that will spark conversation. Stop and think for a moment how Christ has met the needs in your life. The need for meaning..... the need for comfort.... the need for guidance..... the need for presence.....emotional support..... physical support..... blessing of a

family. I could go on and on and on. Sharing our faith means sharing the sufficiency of Christ in our lives... in times of joy and in times of struggle. That is the “living water” that Christ has poured into our lives.

We do not use “set speeches” to share our faith. Now there is value in knowing evangelistic plans. Dr. Kennedy’s Evangelism Explosion plan can be very helpful.... it begins with the question... “If you were to die tonight would you know for certain that you would be in heaven?” The “Bridge illustration” can be very helpful and I often use it in my pre-marriage counseling. But even “set speeches” must be personalized. People want to know what Christ is doing in your life and what He can do in their lives. That is what we share.

**Lesson # 2** We must not let man-made boundaries stop us from sharing our faith. Again we use Jesus as our illustration. Jesus was breaking 3 boundaries in this conversation. **First**, he was speaking to a Samaritan. The Jews hated the Samaritans. In 722 B.C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel of conquered by the Assyrians. The area was repopulated by the Assyrians. The people of the region intermarried with the new people. The Southern Jews considered the

Samaritans as half-breeds and as impure. As a result of the rejection the Samaritans established an alternative place of worship at Mount Gerizim rather than Jerusalem. This caused even a greater hatred. Jews would usually avoid Samaria.... Jesus went right through the region.

**Second**, Jesus was talking to a woman in public. Jewish men did not talk to women in public.... even their own wives. *Verse 27 of our text states.....* **”Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman.”** This was just not done.

**Third**, Jesus was talking to a prostitute. Everyone in town knew about this woman. It was not a big town... it was not a common profession back then. But Jesus invited this woman to come to a living faith in Him.

The lesson is this.... a Christian we must be people of love. In the eyes of God there is no race. In the eyes of God there is no gender. In the eyes of God there is no nationality. In the eyes of God every person is a sinner in need of a Savior. Our attitudes and our actions must be our witness to others. We have just been exposed to the Connecticut case with professor Gates. Let me say racism is wrong... whether it is white against black or black against white... in God’s

eyes there is no race.

**Lesson # 4** Notice that Jesus loved the non-believers. Allow me to read *John 4:17*

**He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." 17"I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.**

Notice this.... Jesus did not ignore sin.....but in the sin he loved the person. He spoke to her... he cared for her. Allow me to make a practical statement... A person will only hear the gospel of Christ when the person feels cared for. REPEAT

I hear this statement again and again and again.... "Christians are not suppose to judge."

Let me say that is a false statement. Paul in Corinthians clearly teaches the need to judge other Christians. Last week I shared how the session of the church would grant permission for a person to come to the communion table. If you read the old session minutes of the church again and again people would come before the session to be judged. The most common error in a persons life was "failure to join the fellowship of believers in worship." The most common punishment was "denial of the table." They could not take communion until they began coming to worship.

Was this legitimate? This is judgement. Yes. Scripture clearly teaches that Christian are, in love

to help and hold each other accountable. This must be very, very clear... only scripture must be used as the basis of judgement. Does this ever take place? Yes... as a matter of fact about every other I am part of this process..... it takes place at Presbytery with ministers. Should ministers be more accountable than elders... think about that.

Scripture also says we can not give final judgement to a non-believer. Only God knows if a person has surrendered his or her life to Christ. We must love and care for all people. Praise be to God he loves the sinner. Christ died for sinners. God loves us in our sin. We do not need to reform our lives before we surrender to Christ..... we surrender to Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit we are made new.

Our witness for Christ begins by our love and care for those around us.... as a matter of fact we care for them so much we are compelled to share the love of Christ with them even in their sin. No sin is too great that Christ can not forgive.

**Finally, Lesson # 5** We never argue a persons into the kingdom of God. *John 4:19-21*

**19"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 20Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."**

**21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem"**

The woman was beginning the traditional argument between Samaritans and Jews..... Jesus

just dismissed the argument and got to the core of the issue. Allow me to share this quote

from the *New American Commentary*.

**Christians who seek to be ambassadors for Christ must always be wary of falling into the trap of arguing about the "right" place to worship or the "right" denomination. Just as Jesus did not argue with the presuppositions of Nicodemus (John 3:2) and the paralytic (5:7), Jesus did not argue with the woman here. The point is not winning arguments but introducing people to the dimension of God in their lives. But Jesus did not leave the woman with a vague witness about God. He pushed her to think about the personal God who acts in history. Jesus reminded her that salvation is directly related to God's working in history (4:22). The issue was not a matter of national or tribal pride. That was the woman's perspective of God and religion. It is also a familiar theme among many Americans. The issue, however, was understanding how God had chosen to reveal the divine purpose in history. Worship devoid of understanding God's activity in history operates within a vacuum.**

I love this quote. Here is the message we share with the people around us. God is here.

God is present in this world. God is present in history. God is present in my life. Allow me to

close with a possible conversation you might have with a person at work

**"What did you do this weekend?"**

**"Not much... went to church on Sunday."**

**“Why?”**

**“Because I love spending time with God and I love listening to Him?”**

**“God speaks to you.”**

**“Sure... I was worried about my kids... you know how that is with teen age kids.... When I go to church I can just give the worry to God .... I still struggle with that... but giving it to God makes it a lot easier. Have a good day.... talk to you later.**

Short, simple conversations like this over a period of time could, by the power of the Holy Spirit, bring a person to the realization that God is in their lives and wants an intimate relationship with them. Praise be to God

AMEN