

March 27, 2011

## **Born Again Series - Discipleship**

### **Matthew 9:23-31 – “Do I have to share my faith with others?”**

This morning as we conclude our series on Discipleship...we are going to answer a couple of questions that every believer...

- ...every Christian has asked at one time or another in their Christian walk...especially when they first come to faith in Jesus Christ...
  - ...**“Do I have to share my faith with others?”**
    - ...AND...**“What do I do now?”**

### **PRAY...**

ILLUST: My first car...1957 Chevy...before I turned 16...\$150.00...

- ...I could not wait to show the world what I had...I told everyone I could possibly think about that I had this new car...
  - ...or I should say old car...12 years old at the time...BUT...it was new and exciting to me...

Let me ask you a question...

**Q:** Is there anything more exciting than being a Christian?

KNOWING...that we were once dead in our sins...with no hope of a relationship with a perfect God...

- ...and when there was nothing we could do to save ourselves...we came to a knowledge of Jesus Christ...and entered into a personal relationship with Him... J
  - ...and in an instant...we became a new creation...our sins were washed away...and we could come boldly to God...in prayer...with no shame...
    - ...before a Holy God who was once so distant from us that we didn't know if we could ever be right with Him...

**Q:** Is there anything more exciting than that?...NO...there isn't!...

- ...Should we share our faith in Christ with others...ABSOLUTELY!!!

ILLUST: Don Francisco...an artist in the late seventies...

- ...just as I was re-committing myself to the Lord...getting really excited about being forgiven...being cleansed of my sin...
  - ...AND...he sang a song... *“Gotta Tell Somebody”*...some of you may remember it...and in it there was this chorus at the very end in which he sang...over and over again...
    - ...*“Gotta tell somebody, Gotta tell somebody...what Jesus did for me!”*

It was a song written about part of our text this morning...

### LET’S LOOK AT IT TOGETHER...

A ruler had come to Jesus and worshipped Him...announcing that his daughter had just died...

- ...pleading for Jesus to come and lay His hand on her that she might live...

**Matthew 9:23–31 (NKJV)** — **23** When Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing [...the professional mourners...], **24** He said to them, “Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.” And they ridiculed Him. **25** But when the crowd was put outside, He [...Jesus...] went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. **26** And the report of this went out into all that land [...people couldn’t wait to tell others what had happened...in all that land...]. **27** When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” **28** And when He [...Jesus...] had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” **29** Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” **30** And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See that no one knows it. [...not wanting anything to prematurely interfere with God’s perfect timing of things...]” **31** But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

Keep it to themselves...are you kidding me? People could not wait to tell people what they had just witnessed...

- ...a person was so dead...that the professional wailers had come...so blind they could not see...
  - ...AND...Jesus raises the little girl from the dead...and makes the blind

men to see...there is no way you could keep that to yourself...

NOW...some may say...*I would do the same thing if I saw somebody raised from the dead...*

- *...or if I was blind...and somebody healed my blindness...then I would eagerly tell somebody about it...*

BUT...you see...before we were born again...we were in much worse shape than that...we were all once spiritually dead...

- ...and had we died in that state we would have been eternally condemned to hell...

We were all once spiritually blind...unwilling to see how destructive the things in our lives were...

- ...things that were keeping us apart of our loving Creator...

### **TURN WITH ME...Ephesians 2:1-9...**

Before we were born again...we were **dead**...deader than a doornail...

**Ephesians 2:1–9 (NKJV)** — **1** And you He [...God...] made alive, who were **dead** in trespasses and sins, **2** in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, **3** among whom also we all **once** conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. **4 But God**, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were **dead** in trespasses, **made us alive** together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Before we became new creations...we were **blind**...blind as a bat...

### **LOOK AT...Ephesians 4:17-19...**

**Ephesians 4:17–19 (NKJV)** — **17** This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, **18** having their understanding **darkened**, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the **blindness of their heart**; **19** who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

We were in sorry shape...

### **LOOK AT...Ephesians 5:3-8...**

**Ephesians 5:3–8 (NKJV)** — **3** But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; **4** neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. **5** For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. **6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not be partakers with them. [...I was guilty on each and every one of these things...and therefore had no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God...and the only thing I could expect from God in that state was...His **wrath**...] **8** For you were **once** darkness, **but now** you are light in the Lord...

Jesus raised us from the dead and opened our blinded eyes...and the only reason we would not want to tell others about it...

- ...is if we didn't believe it has actually happened...BUT...when you stop long enough to realize **what** you once were...
  - ...THEN...then you get excited...you are so thankful...that you start looking for opportunities to share your faith with others...to tell other about it...
    - ...especially those who are lost in the same darkness in which you once were lost...

The bible tells us that God desires that none would perish...

**2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)** — **9** The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that **any** should perish but that **all** should come to repentance.

The last thing that Jesus said after He had risen from the dead...just prior to His ascension into heaven...

- ...was that we ARE to tell others about what He did for us and how others can be saved...

**Acts 1:8 (NKJV)** — **8** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be **witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The interesting thing about this word...*witnesses*...is that it comes from a GK word

*martus*...from which we get the English word...*martyr*...

- ...which means...*one who bears witness by his death*...

Jesus died on the cross for our sins...so that we might be saved from eternal damnation...

- ...and thereby assured of eternal life...surely we can be willing to be witnesses...willing to testify of who Jesus is...
  - ...and what He is capable of doing in other people's lives as well...

Sharing our faith with others...is called...*evangelizing*...which literally means...*to advocate for a cause*...

- ...in the context of Christianity...it means to *share the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ*...

This is the method which God has established in order for others to come to salvation...

### **TURN WITH ME...Romans 10:13-15...**

**Romans 10:13–15 (NKJV)** — **13** For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” [...this is what every Christian does when they are saved...it is how a person is saved...they call upon the Lord...] **14** How then shall they [...shall people...] call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear **without a preacher** [...without a herald...]? **15** And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

AND SO...once we understand what we are to do...it is reasonable to ask the question...

**Q:** Where do I start?

FIRST...you pray...that God would open the doors of opportunity for you to share your faith with others...

- ...AND...because He desires that none would perish...and that all would come to repentance and be saved...He will be faithful to answer prayer...

THEN...you trust the Holy Spirit to give you the words to say...remember...this is the role of the Holy Spirit...

**John 14:26 (NKJV)** — **26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and **bring to your remembrance** all things that I said to you.

In time...you will begin to get more and more excited about the doors that the Lord opens up...

- ...and as you share your faith with others...you will discover how incredible it is that the Lord will use you to share Him with other people...

The perception about sharing our faith with others is that we will get completely snubbed...

- ...AND...while this is the case sometimes...more times than not...especially after you have prayed...
  - ...you will find that people are eager to hear REAL answers about what happens after a person dies...
    - ...and how it is that they can be rescued from the heaviness of heart that comes from a life of sin...

Always keep in mind...what we learned in Acts 17...

**Acts 17:26–27 (NKJV) — 26** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has **determined** their **preappointed times** and the **boundaries of their dwellings**, **27** so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

The bible tells us that the people are out there...seeking the Lord...all we have to do is pray that the Lord will bring them into their path...

- ...you will be so encouraged as you see this come to pass...

ILLUST: Gentleman sitting on a plane... *“I need to let you know that I am an engineer!”*

- ...as I recall he worked for Boeing...and before it was all said and done...I had prayed with him to receive Christ...

LISTEN...never...never...never...underestimate the power of your testimony...

- ...consider the woman of Samaria...whom Jesus asked for a cup of water...

She...like many of us once were...had some serious sin issues...married five times...and was living with someone who she was not married to...

- ...she was so moved...by the things Jesus said to her...

## **TURN WITH ME...John 4:28...**

**John 4:28–30 (NKJV)** — **28** The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, **29** “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” **30** Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

Her testimony...her witness was so powerful that many people went out to hear the words of Jesus for themselves...LOOK...at vs 39...

**John 4:39–42 (NKJV)** — **39** And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him **because of the word of the woman who testified**, “He told me all that I ever did.” [...they believed because of her testimony...] **40** So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. **41** And many more believed because of His own word. **42** Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

Don't get discouraged if the people you share with...don't get saved and accept Jesus right on the spot...

- ...trust that the testimony you give...will lead them to search for themselves more about this Jesus...who transformed your life...

The Bible makes it clear...that there are some who sow...as in share God's word with people...

- ...AND...some who reap...as in pray with them to received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior...

I have prayed with a lot of people to receive Jesus as Lord...BUT...I have sowed a lot more seed...that I have reaped what I have sowed...

**John 4:37–38 (NKJV)** — **37** For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ **38** I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

When you are share your testimony...your story of how Jesus rescued you from sin and saved you...

- ...be sure and think about what you are going to say...as often the tendency is to get caught up in the sordid details of your past...
  - ...leaving you less time to share with them the most important part of your testimony...THE SOLUTION...

Remember...they have their own past...in fact for them it is their PRESENT...they are

living in it...

- ...and they are much more interested in hearing about the solution to getting them out of the vicious cycle...
  - ...then they are about yours...focus more on what Jesus did to save you...rather than on how messed up you were...

ALWAYS REMEMBER...that the best way we can tell others about Jesus is how we live our lives...

- ...the most powerful testimony of a transformed life...is that we are different...than we once were...

ILLUST: My dirty joke list...and my cursing...

- ...I was the life of the party...and Jesus took that all away...and when people who knew how I once was...
  - ...saw me as the ‘new creation’ Jesus made me...there was no denying it...

### **TURN WITH ME...2 Corinthians 2:14...**

When we are living our lives...in a manner that accurately represents the Lord...people will begin to take notice...

**2 Corinthians 2:14–16 (NKJV)** — **14** Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and **through us** diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. **15** For we are to God the fragrance of Christ **among those who are being saved** and among those who are perishing. **16** To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

ILLUST: The first time I sat next to Jenny in church...before we actually started dating...

- ...was one of the happiest nights of my life...as the sweet fragrance of her perfume...came upon me...
  - ...this is how we are to be towards others...in how we live our lives...the fragrance of Christ...the aroma of life to others...

Don't ever be discouraged by those people who reject you and aren't interested in hearing your testimony...



- ...the fragrance of Christ...is the *aroma of death*...to those who are perishing...BUT...
  - ...to those who are searching...your testimony...will be...the *aroma of life*...

**1 Corinthians 1:18 (NKJV) — 18** For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

When you are feeling rejected because of your testimony...just remember how Jesus was rejected...scorned and crucified...

- ...on order that we might be ACCEPTED by God...that we might have the assurance of eternal life...

Take comfort in the words of Jesus...

**John 15:20 (NKJV) — 20** Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

## CONCLUSION...

I want to conclude our time together and this series on discipleship by answering one final question...

- ...**“What do I do now?”**...I have accepted Jesus...I understand those things that we have been talking about these past 10 weeks...

I understand...*what happened when I became a new creation*...I understand...*that the devil is real*...and...*what the role of the Holy Spirit is*...

- ...I understand...*why the bible is so important*...and...*how easy it is to talk to God...to pray*...
  - ...I now know that I don’t have to go to church...BUT...*I want to*...I know how...*to deal with temptation when it comes*...
    - ...AND...that...*the world really is coming to the end*...and I can take great comfort in the assurance of eternal life in heaven...

BUT... *“What do I do now?”*...

- FIRST...just keep doing what you are doing...as I have said before...being a Christian is the most exciting life you could ever imagine...
  - ...I have been walking with the Lord since 1977...and it is more exciting and fulfilling today than ever...

Continue to do all of the things you have been learning about...praying, reading the word...putting into practice all of the things that Jesus said...

- ...asking God for even greater understanding of spiritual truths...and then...as you are growing more and more mature in your faith...
  - ...start looking for ways to SERVE...

### **TURN WITH ME...John 13:12-17...**

**John 13:12–17 (NKJV)** — **12** So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? **13** You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. **14** If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. **15** For I have given you an example, that **you should do as I have done to you.** **16** Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. **17** If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Jesus said...

**Mark 9:35 (NKJV)** — **35** And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and **servant** of all.”

There is nothing quite like serving the Lord...not only does it strengthen our hearts...and our faith...

- ...BUT...it also is contagious and has a tremendous effect on others...I love serving the Lord...

ILLUST: Women’s Retreat...

- ...I can’t even begin to tell you what a blessing it was...just serving Jesus alongside these brothers...
  - ...and right there in the midst of us all...Steve Pastuch...just a couple of years out of high school...
    - ...AND...Curtis Sorgenfrey...working side by side with each of us men and his dad...

