

In search of...



Volume 07 Issue 40

September 30, 2012

Yes, You Can Teach

In Matthew chapter twenty-eight, we read where Jesus gave what is called "the great commission." In it He told His followers to "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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." In essence, what we have here is evangelism. Our Lord has left this Earth and will come again to collect those that bear His name. Until that

time, He leaves in our hands the gospel- the good news of salvation, so that we may share it with everyone and expand the borders of the Kingdom.

Yet this is perhaps the most daunting command found in scripture. Your average person will have no trouble with working honestly, walking not disorderly, and abstaining from fleshly lusts. It is the idea that they- not the elders, not the preacher, not some other

group- but that THEY are to be teaching which is cause for alarm. This is evidenced by the plethora of excuses which readily follows any exhortation to evangelize: "I'd love to but I don't have enough time," "How could I teach? I don't know enough," or "I don't know anybody that will listen to the Bible." All of these have one thing in common: they seek to conveniently skirt the issue of teaching by disqualifying one's self.

There's just one problem with having that attitude, though; it does not change what God expects of you. Maybe you think that teaching has to do with being in front of a class. If so, that would explain why so many are apprehensive, because public speaking is always at the top of the list of things people are most afraid of. But remember passages from God's word. In John chapter three, it says a ruler- Nicodemus- came to Jesus by night. Jesus taught him that in order to enter the kingdom of God, a man must be born again. No crowd was there, nor was this a "worship service." Yet someone was taught a basic truth that is necessary to know in order to come to God.

Something that everyone (and yes, that includes you) needs to understand is this: you can

teach others about Jesus and about the Bible. "But how?" you say. Wait just a moment, and I will address the "how," but first realize what I am saying. I am saying that you can teach because God has commanded us all to teach. The scriptures tell us that our Father is just, honest, and loving; therefore He would not and does not impose something on us that is impossible. Nor does he intend all evangelism to be carried out by a select few. The Lord expects each & every one of us to do His will.

Now, as to the "how" of going about talking to people concerning God, let me say this: How did Jesus teach? If you look at the Bible, most of the time when Jesus was faced with a test, He answered a question with a question. For example, in Mark 11:29-30 He asked the Pharisees, "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?" Jesus of course did this to point out the fact that they were trying to trip Him up. But asking questions is still one of the best things we can do to start talking about religion. It shows our interest in the lives of others, it gives us an idea of how much they do or do not know about the gospel, and it shows that we are not preaching from a script.

In addition to asking questions, to examine how to teach, let us look at the apostle

Paul and what we see him doing during his missionary trips. Acts 18:4 says, "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks." Maybe the first thing we can notice is that it says he went to the synagogue, so he went where there were people interested in religion and those wanting to know more about God. Sometimes that is a hurdle for us because it often seems like no one is interested in God and that people are too busy to discuss things. But no matter how enthusiastic those around us may or may not be, the principle of knowing your audience goes a long way.

Make sure that you notice something else about Paul's preaching habits: it says he went out every Sabbath. I don't know about you, but that tells me that he did not give up; it stands to reason that there were many who heard Paul talk about Christ several weeks in a row. Who knows if they started to pay attention on the second, third, or fourth weeks? The bottom line for us is this: we cannot give up and we cannot discount anyone. The gospel is for all and thus all can respond to it. We will never know whose heart is open until we try. It could be that all someone you know needs is time; time to look at their life, time to read the Bible, and time to realize that

they are wrong and need God.

Above all else, please understand that you can teach simple because you are a child of God, and that means you know what it takes to be saved. You say you're not perfect like Jesus? No one is. You say that you don't have the faith of Paul or his years of wisdom? Few can match his track record of service. But think about the crowds on the day of Pentecost. Did they know much about being Christians? Of course not. But they could tell anyone, after hearing Peter's sermon and obeying the gospel, how to be buried with Christ in baptism. And you can teach others about that very same thing.

Finally, one last thing that should be said, is that not all teaching is done verbally. By your example alone you may give others reason to pause and think about their state before God. Peter said that wives could win over their husbands based just on holy conduct. Let us all live as Christians ought to.

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This bulletin is published by the
WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST



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Wellsburg, WV 26070
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- Elijah felt that he was alone until God told him otherwise
- Stephen preached to a crowd that covered their ears
- Noah preached for 100 years and converted no one
- Joseph's dreams incurred his brothers' wrath
- Caleb said the people should enter the land
- Joshua also said to enter; it was two against ten
- Zaccheus was a rich tax collector no one liked
- Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet
- Bartimaeus sat blind by the road until Jesus healed him
- Pilate was despised by the Jews but they used him to kill Jesus
- Rehoboam taxed & disrespected the people and the kingdom split