

## Should you share your faith? (Part 2)

Last month we began a 4-part mini-series which will address several aspects of this question. As a reminder, here's the series overview:

- WHY we should share our faith (Part 1, last month)
- WHAT our message is (Part 2 this article)
- WHO our audience is (Part 3)
- HOW we go about sharing (Part 4)



### What is our message?

You would think a question like this shouldn't even need to be asked or addressed, but I have found we are making a grave mistake if we don't.

In our everyday experiences, we often use phrases that don't exactly mean what they are stating, but virtually everyone knows what we mean. For example, if you say doing something in particular is "a piece of cake," people will know you think it's easy. Another example would be saying, "Elvis has left the building," which means the show is over or it's all come to an end. Imagine, however, if those phrases are used with someone from another culture. They might be wondering what in the world "cake" has anything to do with what you are discussing, or "Who is this Elvis person you are talking about and why is it significant that he's gone now?"

When we try to convey spiritual matters to the unbeliever, they very well may not know the crucial background to what we are sharing, so it can be very dangerous not to say exactly what we mean and in a way they will comprehend accurately. We need to "be on the same page" (to use another idiom) so we are not saying one thing and they are hearing another.

Let me give you a few example phrases commonly used by Christians when witnessing.

"You need to invite Jesus into your heart." Doesn't that sound nice? Maybe, but it's certainly not biblical. The problem is most Christians know what it's supposed to mean or represent, but the unbeliever doesn't and they are the ones for which it desperately matters! A look at the following scenario might shed some light on where I'm headed with this.

Let's say there's a person whose life is really quite a mess and they are seeking any kind of solution that might help improve their situation. You meet them and get into a conversation involving spiritual issues and they seem genuinely interested. At some point you tell them, "You need to invite Jesus into your heart." What goes through their mind at that point? Probably something like this... "I guess Jesus wasn't really in my heart, but he should be, so OK, come in my heart." What in the world does that mean? I don't know and I certainly wouldn't expect them to truly understand either. This is certainly not the Gospel message we find in Scripture.

# Question of the Month

---

The same goes for using phrases such as, “Give your heart to Jesus,” or “Jesus will make you happy,” or any number of other similarly-sounding statements.

So what exactly is our message? The most succinct description is found in the following passage:

1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”

That’s the Gospel message, which has the power to save:

Romans 1:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

What does the unbeliever need to do to be saved? They need to believe the Gospel message.

Romans 9-10, 13

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Becoming a true Christian (as defined accurately by the Bible) means to realize that we have sinned against God and fall short of His standard of righteousness (Romans 3:23), but if we confess our sins (1 John 1:9) and accept by faith that Jesus’ death on the cross paid our penalty (1 Peter 2:24), we will be saved.

Furthermore, we know that salvation is not a matter of our works or “good deeds”, but faith alone in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

# Question of the Month

---

This is all beautifully summed-up in a verse that even many skeptics have heard before (or have at least seen the reference to on signs held up by some people at sporting events)...

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Now, considering everything you just read about the Gospel message, can you see it's quite different than just “inviting Jesus into your heart”? Let's be faithful to Scripture in our efforts to share our faith with those around us and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us as we witness to those whom God grants us the opportunity to meet.

Next month (Should you share your faith? Part 3) I will be addressing the question of “Who is our audience?” There's more to it than you think and what we will share is crucial, so be sure to be watching for that article.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to contact us at [info@TheStartingPointProject.com](mailto:info@TheStartingPointProject.com).