

Mark 1:14-17

Read text. Do we believe this Scripture? Of course we do! But is it true in our lives? Have we become "fishers of men" since we began to follow Him? If not, why not? Jesus said, "I will make you to become fishers of men." Not I can make you, or I might make you, but I will make you.

The tendency today in the church is to be "program oriented" rather than "people oriented". The church was meant to be a specific local gathering of people where the Pastor would teach, preach, and equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Therefore, each individual believer, being gifted of God, was to be responsive to the Word of God and active in the work of God.

Because of unresponsiveness and unproductiveness on the part of the majority of believers, the church has chosen to substitute schemes and programs to compensate for their failure. But how effective have we been with our programs? Note the results of a survey taken a few years ago. The survey asks the question "How do people come into a relationship with Christ and the church?"

- 4-6% = Walk-ins
- 6-8% = Pastor
- 2-4% = Church programs
- 1-2% = Visitation
- 3-6% = Sunday School
- .0001% = Evangelistic crusades or Television programs
- 70-90% = Friends and relatives

Let's take an informal survey here tonight and see if this really true. If it is then we should rethink how we witness and minister to our local community.

2 Witness & Ministry

I. Essential Attitudes for Witnessing.

A. We must be convinced that being a Christian is the greatest thing in the world, not just an option!

1. If we have any other attitude, then we are wasting our time and the time of others.

2. We must understand where we were, where we are now, and where we are going in the future. cf. Eph. 2:1-10

3. We were dead...now we are alive with Christ...we will sit in heavenly places and enjoy the exceeding riches of His grace in the ages to come!

B. We must understand that there has never been (nor is there now) anything wrong with the harvest field. cf. Mt. 9:35-38

1. There are those who will say that it is just so difficult to get folks saved today.

2. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" cf. Ge. 18:14 NO!

3. The trouble has always been with the reapers! cf. Lk. 10:2 and Jn. 4:35

C. We must believe that people are hungry for the gospel, they just don't know that it is the gospel for which they long! cf. 2 Co. 4:3-4

1. People long for success. cf. Joshua 1:8

2. People long for peace. cf. Is. 26:3

3. People long for fulfillment. cf. Jn. 10:10

4. People long for happiness. cf. Ps. 146:5

D. We must understand that God is the evangelist and we are merely His instruments.

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1. Consider our calling. cf. 1 Co. 1:26-31
2. Paul understood this principle. cf. 1 Co. 3:6-9
3. We must be yielded to God in order to be used of God. cf. Ro. 6:13

II. Genuine Witness.

A. Why have we failed in our witness?

1. We have lost spontaneity.

a. Peter tells us to "...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you..." cf. 1 Pe. 3:15

b. If we were to be honest, we would have to admit that we are not always ready to witness to the lost, are we?

c. We prepare ourselves to go and make a call on someone, whether it be in the home or in the hospital, and we rehearse and plan on how we will say what we want to say to them.

d. There is nothing wrong with being prepared, but according to God's Word we need to always be prepared!

2. We have lost our creativity.

a. There are many other scriptures to witness with beside the "Romans Road".

b. If we only know one method of communicating the gospel, what will happen when we speak to someone the second or third time?

c. Example of King David's Road:

1) Psalms 14:3

2) Psalms 37:38

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3) Psalms 103:10-11

4) Psalms 32:5

B. Genuine witness comes out of our love for Christ, and then our love for others.

1. Note: Lk. 10:25-29

2. Jesus taught through this familiar parable how to genuinely witness to the lost and dying world.

3. Note: v33-35

a. Compassion: when we have compassion toward others, then we treat them as God has treated us.

b. Contact: He went to him. The thieves had left him for dead, and the religionists had merely passed him by, but this man made contact with the one who was hurting.

c. Care: It isn't enough that we have compassion and make contact, we must also minister to their need.

d. Cost: Ministry that costs nothing seldom ever accomplishes anything. It will not always be monetary costs involved, perhaps it will cost your time, or maybe the price you pay will be a broken heart; but do it...invest your life in the lives of others!

C. Determine to be a good neighbor.

1. Love God enough to be obedient to His Word.

2. Care for people and not only their souls.

3. Be a good listener, bear the burden that is obvious, and your neighbor may later speak of the hunger that is hidden.

4. Pray daily for him, and be ready to minister to them through word and action as God opens the way.

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Conclusion: Jesus said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me..." Have we failed in our witness? Have we been living a life that witnesses to those about us? Make no mistake, no one will be saved simply by watching our lives. Somewhere along the way we must give them the gospel message, but how we live our lives before them will determine how responsive they will be to that all important message.

Do we have compassion for the lost? Are we willing to make contact with them? Then will we care for them by ministering to their need? Are we willing to pay what it may cost? These are questions that each of us must come to grips with if we desire to "become fishers of men"!

Let's let God have His way this evening. Whatever the need tonight, won't you come?