

LEADING OTHERS TO CHRIST

April 19, 2009

Many people look for something to fulfill their lives.

Some chase after careers. They would do anything and even hurt anyone to get to the top. But they are not happy when they get there and feel that something is still missing.

Some chase after wealth. They do everything in their power and knowledge to make money and save it. They gain wealth beyond what they can possibly spend in their lifetime, yet something is still missing.

Some chase after relationship. They date, they get married. But they are unhappy because something they've been looking for is not in their relationship. So they put blame on their spouses and go through divorces and get married again, again and again. Something is still missing.

Some chase after religions. They do this, they do that in religious activities, but when everything is said and done, they don't feel fulfilled. Others may admire their religious conviction, but something is still missing.

We find a man who was powerful, wealthy, influential and religious, yet empty in his heart according to Acts chapter 8. He was an Ethiopian eunuch who was in charge of his Queen Candace of the Ethiopians. In other words, he was the Secretary of the Treasury Department of Ethiopia. I don't think he would cheat on his income tax.

He traveled 1580 miles one way from Ethiopia to Jerusalem, Israel by chariot. That would be the same distance between Phoenix, AZ to Atlanta, GA. He was religious enough to travel that much distance to worship the God of Israel.

As you all know we are going to have a four hour class of Evangelism Crash Course this coming Saturday. I cannot encourage you all enough to attend this class. As born-again Christians, everyone of us should jump on an opportunity to make our Lord Jesus as the Messiah known to all the people around us. This morning I am going to show you some principles and methods of evangelism.

A. IT IS NOT ABOUT YOU OR ME

Acts 8:26-28 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."

This is desert. 27 So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.

At this time, Philip who was one of the deacons of the first church in Jerusalem was evangelizing in Samaria area and doing great. We might have thought that Philip would have objected to leaving the great success of a revival in Samaria to go out to the desolate desert, but God had a plan in it all. Philip was simply submissive to His plan.

It may not be your idea to evangelize for Christ. Let me put it this way. For somehow you found a way to cure people from their terminal cancers right away at any stage of their diseases. What would you do? Would you say, "Well, I am not really comfortable to talk in front of strangers." You need to get over that. You need to let others know about this great cure.

We have and we know the greatest cure from the eternal damnation for the entire human race and it is more important than a cure from cancer. It is salvation through

Jesus Christ. If you are objecting to being used by God to speak about Jesus to others, you are saying, "No" to God and that you don't care about other people's salvation.

You may say, "What if they reject?" We should not be concerned about how people might react to what we tell them about Jesus. It is not us who will save them anyway. It is the Lord. When they reject our messages, they are rejecting the Lord's.

John 6:65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

How would you like to be me? I give invitations to come to Jesus time after time at the end of almost every service here. In many cases, there is no response. Is it because everyone is saved? No, people simply reject the message of God, not mine. Don't take it personally. You are doing it for the Lord and being faithful to His commandment.

B. NEED TO HAVE A BURDEN FOR NON-BELIEVERS

Acts 8:29-30 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

How do we know that Philip had a burden for non-believers? To find out, we have to go to the previous section of chapter 8.

Acts 8:5-8 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.

Philip who was a Jew went to Samaria where the Jews considered Samaritans a half-breed tribe. They had extreme hatred for one another. It would be like a KKK member became a Christian and wants to evangelize in the streets of Harlem, New York City.

Philip was doing wonderful in Samaria with this great revival. But the Lord told him to go to the Gaza desert. With a complete obedience to the Lord, he went there with an expectation that God would use him somehow.

Like what Philip did, we should be willing to go and tell someone about Jesus no matter how we feel. But we have to care about them and their salvation. Remember this please: Non-believers might be lost, but they are not dumb. They know if you care about them with sincerity and compassion or you are doing it from mere duty.

One thing believers and non-believers have in common is that both are very uptight about evangelism. Believers are uptight about evangelizing, and non-believers are uptight about being evangelized.

Maybe you remember someone sharing the Gospel with you and you really didn't want to hear it. Or maybe you know what it is like to share with someone who had no interest in what you were saying. As intimidating or uncomfortable as sharing your faith may be, it is something every believer has been called to do.

I have said this before and will say it again. All of us have the Great Commission from Jesus Christ to tell others about Him. It is a commission to everyone of us, not a recommendation. If you are thinking, "I am not going to do it," you are saying to

God, "I am going to disobey Your command again." I don't think that will go very well with the Lord. If that is the case, He will give you His special attention. When He does, I don't want to be you.

C. TACTFULNESS, NOT MEAN SPIRIT

The way Philip approached was so good. It is something that is lacking in many people's witnessing. We call it 'tact'. If you check out the definition of 'tact' from your dictionary, it would say something like this: a keen sense of what to say or do to avoid giving offense; skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situations.

Look at the way Philip handled the situation here:

- 1) He made himself available to the eunuch.
- 2) He approached the eunuch with concern for him.

Some Christians are so confrontational and blow non-believers out of water. "Hey you sinner, come here for a few seconds. You are gonna go to hell and burn in fire." In result, they get pushed away and called a few names. Then these Christians say that they were persecuted for the name of Jesus. No, they were not persecuted for Christ's sake, they got rejected because they were jerks and arrogant.

Jesus was so tactful. When he was talking with the Samaritan woman at the well in the Book of John, He conversed with her. Our witnessing should be dialog, not monologue with yelling. We need to build a bridge to bring the Gospel of Jesus to them.

D. WE NEED TO GIVE THE GOSPEL ACCURATELY

Acts 8:31-35 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 33 In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." 34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

Like there are many quack medical doctors in the world, there are many quack preachers as well. They offer false sense of security to non-believers and they have spiritual malpractice. Their Gospel messages are not from the Bible or if they are from the Bible, they are out of context. They don't talk about hell and repentance from sins, but they only talk about love, mercy and forgiveness of God. In other words, they give non-believers false hope.

But Philip presented an accurate Gospel. How did he do that? We find him explaining the Gospel out of the Scripture directly according to v35. Any presentation of the Gospel must be biblical. Your words and my words will return void, but the Word of God will not return to the Lord void. Besides, Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch. It is all about Jesus.

Jesus who is God the Son came to earth to die for our sins on the cross so that we may have eternal life through His holiness and righteousness. He was bodily resurrected from the dead and is sitting at the right hand of the Father. There is no other way to get to heaven except accepting Him into our hearts as the Savior and Lord. That is the Gospel in a paragraph.

We don't want to talk about another religion. We don't want to tell them about another god. We want to tell them about the truth of Jesus Christ. There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved other than the name of Jesus.

The Gospel message, the Good News can reach every type of person. It doesn't matter what their background is. They may be wealthy, poor, educated or uneducated. It cuts through cultural barriers, racial barriers, economic barriers and age barriers. Everyone can grasp the Gospel, because God honors and blesses it and somehow drives it into the heart of the listener.

Therefore, we make a mistake when we think we need to add on to the Gospel or take away from it or apologize for it. No. We need to proclaim it and stand back and watch God move.

E. ONE-MUST-QUALIFICATION IN EVANGELISM

Acts 8:36-39 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" 37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

When you become a truly born-again Christian, your life starts to change. It is not that you are making a tremendous improvement in your life. It is the Holy Spirit who is the new Resident in your heart. He starts to throw a bunch of ungodly stuff out of your life. In other words, if your life does not reflect your spiritual changes, you have to wonder if you are truly born-again.

With that in mind, if you are not a born-again Christian because you don't see an evidence of changes in your life for the better, please refrain from evangelizing to others. You need to be saved to talk about Jesus as the Savior and Lord accurately.

Jesus Christ finished His work on the cross for you and for me. That was His purpose and His mission. Now our purpose and our mission is to believe in Him and tell others about Him.

If we don't care, we don't share.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) We need to realize that God is the One who saves people, not us. But He uses people like us to make it happen. Just make yourself available to the Lord.

2) We need to have a burden for non-believers' eternal destiny. We should be willing to go and tell someone about Jesus no matter how you feel.

3) We need to give the Gospel to non-believers accurately.

4) We need to evangelize the truth of Jesus with compassion for non-believers in our hearts.