

Sermon Series: “Intentional Disciples—Purposeful Mission”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN–5/7/2006

Title: “Witnesses to your Jerusalem”

Text: Acts 1: 8 and Matthew 10: 5-15

Intro.: Ills.:

Theme: When it comes to taking the good news of Jesus to our world, we, often, do not have to go much farther than the neighbor or friend or family member next door.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses IN JERUSALEM, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Witnessing is relational (Print and read Matthew 10: 5-6)

- Too often “scalp hunting” destroys and discourages individual sharing
 1. Overzealous about timing and results in conversion, we harvest before the harvest is ready
 - a. A grandparent trying to get a baptism done against a son or daughter’s will
 - b. A friend pushing for a “*decision for Jesus*” when the Holy Spirit is not ready to pull the string
 2. **Ills.: Jesus’ parable of the tares and the wheat**
- Jesus uses relationships to advance of the Kingdom of Heaven (“*The kingdom of heaven is near.*” Matthew 10: 7)
 1. That is why Jesus focused his ministry primarily on the people of Israel (*a theme of Matthew’s gospel*)
 - a. *He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” Mat 15: 24*
 2. He sent his disciples to the “*lost sheep of Israel*”, first
 3. He sends us, first, to our **JERUSALEM** (family, neighbors, community, work place)
 - a. It is sometimes easy for us to go on mission trips around the country and world because no accountability
 - b. Often we leave our unchurched friends and family and neighbors unattended but or risk of persecution
 - c. It our relationships with them that allow us to bring the healing touch of Jesus to their personal, known need
 - d. **Ills.: Undelivered message**

Witnessing = Words + Actions (Print and read Matthew 10: 7-10)

- Refusing to conduct a silent witness
 1. “*Faith comes from what is heard and what is heard from the preaching of Christ.*” Roman 10: 17
 2. You actions or your church’s programs or your pastor are not your friend’s/family member’s savior—Jesus is
 3. In the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering. **Howard Hendricks.**
 4. Knowing why you believe in Jesus and what he has done in and for your life
 - a. *Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. 1 Peter 3: 15*
- Living out the daily power of a transformed life
 1. **Ills. Preach everywhere you walk**
 2. Jesus was giving his disciples “*empowerment*” to back up their verbal witness (vs. 8)
 3. Always being ready to **VERBALLY** acknowledge the “**God-things**” in your life
 - a. **Print and read Mark 16: 15-18**
 - b. Praying for eyes to see the miraculous hand of God at work and the courage to point it out to others

Witnessing is not moving on until the other has seen Christ (Print and read Matthew 7: 11-15)

- Doing whatever it takes to win someone for Christ
 1. *I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. 1 Cor. 9: 22-23*
 2. Sometimes you will be rejected and sometimes you will be received (listened to) but it is all about “Heaven” & “Jesus
- Leaving behind a lasting legacy among family and friends
 1. The faith which you leave to your children and your children’s children
 - a. *We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. Ps. 78:4*
 - b. Praying with your children in the morning for their witness of words and actions at school
 2. The witness you leave to your community and neighbors will long be remembered in faith and ministry established
 - a. **Ills.: Enduring Witness**

Undelivered Message

George Sweeting, in his book *The No-Guilt Guide for Witnessing*, tells of a man by the name of John Currier who in 1949 was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison. Later he was transferred and paroled to work on a farm near Nashville, Tennessee. In 1968, Currier's sentence was terminated, and a letter bearing the good news was sent to him. But John never saw the letter, nor was he told anything about it. Life on that farm was hard and without promise for the future. Yet John kept doing what he was told even after the farmer for whom he worked had died. Ten years went by. Then a state parole officer learned about Currier's plight, found him, and told him that his sentence had been terminated. He was a free man. Sweeting concluded that story by asking, "Would it matter to you if someone sent you an important message -- the most important in your life -- and year after year the urgent message was never delivered?" We who have heard the good news and experienced freedom through Christ are responsible to proclaim it to others still enslaved by sin. Are we doing all we can to make sure that people get the message? **Our Daily Bread, November 6, 1994.**

Preach Everywhere you walk

According to the book *Life of Francis d'Assisi*, Francis once invited a young monk to join him on a trip to town to preach. Honored to be given the invitation, the monk readily accepted. All day long he and Francis walked through the streets, byways, and alleys, and even into the suburbs. They rubbed shoulders with hundreds of people. At day's end, the two headed back home. Not even once had Francis addressed a crowd, nor had he talked to anyone about the gospel. Greatly disappointed, his young companion said, "I thought we were going into town to preach." Francis responded, "My son, we have preached. We were preaching while we were walking. We were seen by many and our behavior was closely watched. It is of no use to walk anywhere to preach unless we preach everywhere as we walk!" **Daily Bread, December 15, 1991**

Enduring Witness

Washington -- Graffiti from the 1800s discovered by workers renovating the Washington Monument has quite a different tone from that usually found today on the sides of buildings and subway cars. "Whoever is the human instrument under God in the conversion of one soul, erects a monument to his own memory more lofty and enduing (sic) than this," reads the inscription which can now be viewed by visitors to the monument. It is signed BFB. No one knows who that is, or who left the small drawings and 19th century dates on other walls. The markings in the lobby of the monument were covered over when it was decorated at the turn of the century. They were found when workers removed marble wainscoting as part of a year-long \$500,000 renovation which was just completed. **Spokesman-Review, June, 1994.**

Matthew 10:5-15

⁵Jesus sent these twelve out with the following instructions: "Don't go among people who are not Jewish or into any Samaritan city. ⁶Instead, go to the lost sheep of the nation of Israel. ⁷As you go, spread this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' ⁸Cure the sick, bring the dead back to life, cleanse those with skin diseases, and force demons out of people. Freely you received, freely give. ⁹"Don't take any gold, silver, or even copper coins in your pockets. ¹⁰Don't take a traveling bag for the trip, a change of clothes, sandals, or a walking stick. After all, the worker deserves to have his needs met.

¹¹"When you go into a city or village, look for people who will listen to you there. Stay with them until you leave that place. ¹²When you go into a house, greet the family. ¹³If it is a family that listens to you, allow your greeting to stand. But if it is not receptive, take back your greeting. ¹⁴If anyone doesn't welcome you or listen to what you say, leave that house or city, and shake its dust off your feet. ¹⁵I can guarantee this truth: Judgment day will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city. [GW]

Mark 16: 15-18

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." [NASB]