

Sermon Series: “Sharing the Good News—A Way of Life”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—1/11/2009
Title: “A Life That Speaks”
Text: Colossians 3 & 4 (selected verses)
Intro.: *Illus.: Fear of speaking up because your life doesn't speak out*
Theme: The living story of our lives is what speaks loudest in confirming the redeeming and transforming power that Jesus has in our lives and in the life to which we are inviting someone else to experience.

Your life of witness begins with your ‘world-view’

- Knowing where you are headed and where home is (**Colossians 3:1-2**)
 1. What are your priorities—earth bound or heaven scented?
 2. Is your perspective on life — ***In terms of eternity . . . ?***
 3. *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, (John 13:3)*
- “Not so heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good”
 1. We are not part of the ***frozen chosen club***
 2. **Illus.: Lutherans were once described as “plateau Christians” — parachute in either by birth or marriage**
 3. It is because we are saved for heaven that we want to make sure that another dear to us doesn't miss out
 - a. **Illus.: Dr. Philip Bickel — so passionate about another's salvation make them jump over grab by ankles**

Power dressing for the day of witness ahead of you

- Committed to take off the clothes of the old sinful you (**Colossians 3:5-9**)
 1. Because they are killing you and your witness
 2. *For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:6-8)*
- Daily rise and clothe yourself with Christ to be Christ to your neighbor (**Colossians 3:10-17**)
 1. This is not about blue laws or religiosity but about authentic love for the one who lived, died, rose and forgave you
 2. It is wanting to do nothing that would diminish him in the eyes of other
 3. It is being empower by his life at work within you through your baptism to get it done
 4. **Illus.: Evidence to convict**

Witnessing through the everyday and common place of your life

- It starts at home (**Colossians 3:18-21**)
 1. Wives imitate Jesus in your supportive submission
 - a. *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing." (John 6:38-39)*
 2. Husbands, as the Father's representative, love and build up in your home (*vs. 19, 21*)
 - a. *Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? . . . If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:9-11)*
 3. Children show by your respectful listening and doing that you have a higher calling in your life (*vs. 20*)
 - a. ***Audience of One*** – “***Obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.***” **Colossians 3:20**
- Invade a darkened secular world with your Christ light
 1. That is true whether you are the worker or the boss – it is not about you but about Jesus in you
 - a. *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. Galatians 2:20*
 2. Our work ethic and moral conduct can be our greatest witness asset or our worst liability. (**Colossians 3:8-9**)
 3. Being intentional in the spiritual warfare that we undertake to bring Christ to our world (**Colossians 4:2-6**)
 - a. Understand Satan is not going to take it lying down (*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)*)
 - b. Put on prayer (*devoted/passion*) before your attempt to share the good news to open doors/conquer fortresses
 - c. Be wise how you act and watch your step (**Illus.: Eric DeRue's driver — IED up ahead**)
 - d. Seize the moment for Christ (*God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7*)
 - e. Season your speech with grace (**Illus.: Baking soda in spaghetti sauce to take the acid out**)

Fear of speaking up because your life doesn't speak out

Perhaps the most common fear of witnessing is that of being rejected. A survey was given to those attending training sessions for the Billy Graham crusade in Detroit. One question asked, "What is your greatest hindrance to witnessing?" Nine percent said they were too busy to remember to do it. Twenty-eight percent felt the lack of real information to share. None said they didn't really care. Twelve percent said their own lives were not speaking as they should. But by far the largest group were the 51 percent whose biggest problem was the fear of how the other person would react! None of us likes to be rejected, ridiculed, or regarded as an oddball.

Liehton Ford, Good News is for Sharing, 1977, David C. Cook Publishing Co., Page 15.

Evidence to Convict

Early in the history of our country a court case that was lost because of the silence of an attorney. The distinguished lawyer Samuel Hoar (1778-1856) was representing the defendant. When it was time to present his case, he told the jurors that the facts favoring his client were so evident that he would not insult their intelligence by arguing them. The jury retired to deliberate and returned in a few minutes with a verdict of guilty. Samuel Hoar was astonished! "How could you have reached such a verdict?" he asked. The foreman replied, "We all agreed that if anything could be said for a case, you would say it. But since you didn't present any evidence, we decided to rule against you." Silence had lost the case.

Colossians 3:1-25

¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you take off all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since ***you have taken off your old self with its practices***

¹⁰Rather, ***you have put on the new self***, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. . . ¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, ***clothe yourselves*** with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

¹⁸Wives, ***submit*** to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, ***love*** your wives and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰Children, ***obey*** your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. ²²Slaves, ***obey*** your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, ***work at it with all your heart***, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. ⁴ ¹Masters, ***provide*** your slaves with ***what is right and fair***, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.