

Put In a Good Word for Jesus

By Bob Young

Introduction

Cliché—all hear once before any hears twice...when we go they come....DWAC Club (Down with all Cliches). At risk of triteness, another cliché....PIAGWFJ.

Evangelism has become a mystery for us—we don't do it, or don't do it well, or are not connecting with the world we live in. Lost fervor, knowledge, wisdom, commitment.

Reminds of 1 Chr. 12:32. Need to pray, Jas. 1:5, Matt. 9:35-38; Jas 4:1-4

Evangelism survey: how many have become Christians in last 1/5/10/15/20 years?

Church thrives/survives on continual input. New members/new Christians/new blood.

Tremendous challenge to bring changing world the unchanging word.

Bible is eternal word from God in temporal world. Infinite mind to finite minds.

Church must see and accept this challenge.

Renew emphasis in missions.

Young people—WMW, summer campaigns....

Consider our world. Doors are open all around us...Russia, Eurasia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa.... Wonderful charge to teach of God, Christ, salvation. To bring eternal word to hearts/minds so men/women/boys/girls will be baptized for remission of sins and live committed Christian lives.

As we consider the unchanging word of God for the good of mankind, a problem presents itself.

Problem for all Christians—where do I fit in? How do I put in a good word for Jesus? What should I do?

When should I speak? Where should I speak? What should I speak?

This is about ministry, missions, evangelism. PIAGWFJ.

I. The sent, Rom. 10:9ff

Open doors, but few are ready to go—Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe. Pray.

Joseph Shulam, Bulgarian Jew preaching in Jerusalem. One of a handful who knows Bulgarian.

Church has not had the vision of the potential.

Message from mission conferences and studies: don't send just anyone, send those who are ready.

Young people have the opportunity to get ready.

Glover Shipp—we were not praying for Eastern Europe because we did not believe the wall would ever come down.

We cannot have those sent unless some must prepare, build faith now.

When Jesus gives the model prayer, he teaches dependency. "Our father" reflects a giving God. Give us...forgive us...deliver us.

There must be those sent....more and more. From every church, parents who encourage youth to go.

II. The senders, Rom. 10

When workers prepare, who will send them?

What could the church do if it put its mind to it? Remember, the power is of God. We must consider how to sacrificially send more and more.

Who will send Bibles? Who will send help?

The gospel is for all!

Who will be an occupational missionary?

When Jesus gave the model prayer, "Hallowed be thy name," how do we make his name holy and reverend except in our own lives by our life/response/sacrifice?

Some will be the sent, but many more will be the senders.

Others, almost all of us, will be in one other group, the last group we discuss in this lesson.

Everyone must in some way in some place at every time be....

III. The present.

We've not been very good at being "the present." Matt. 28:19-20, as you are going....

We've not been very good at being Christ's representative at school, at work, as a neighbor.

We've not been very good at sharing the produce.

There are reasons.

- Post-modern world—loss of awareness of absolute objective truth. Truth remains, but truth matters less in the minds of those in our society and world. We must address the needs of this world to show the validity of God's truth. As long as we are only mental, as long as we fail to demonstrate the way truth works in our own lives, we will not change the lives of many in this world. The eternal word from God for the dying world must do more than exalt the teachings and facts. We must exalt the Christ. We must understand the life/death issues before us. Illus: Martha Martin cries. We must do more than convert to correct doctrinal positions.
- ID crisis—formerly we knew who we were, identified ourselves by distinctives in teaching, knowledge, and lifestyle. Others identified us by those distinctives.
- Loss of ID—source of ID is gone. ID crisis, many not know current ID because they have been cut loose from their previous ID. Is not in # of cups, kitchens, cooperation, located preacher or no. Maybe this is good, but must find genuine source of ID. There is a better ID than what we have known. This is God's church, just God's people, you are welcome here if you want to be God's. Imperfect, but knowing him who is perfect. Sinful, but knowing him who is sinless. Formerly lost, but knowing him who saves and keeps saved. Just people—baptized believers, with sins forgiven in the simple picture of immersion into the grave as Jesus was buried.
- Loss of knowledge of Scripture—The present people of God in our society must know the Bible as the message of salvation, the church, Christ, God, last things—these are who we are. Let us know who we are in the ways of truth and Scripture. Those people at the church of Christ are people of prayer. How do you know? Look at what God is doing through them.

Can you put in a good word for Jesus based on the story you have to tell?

Working to solve the problem: ID problem within, kinds and we do not know our ID

ID problem without, community/neighbors do not know

Jesus gave the model prayer—thy kingdom come. Grew up thinking we could not pray that prayer.

Beauty of who we are is that we can change when we are wrong. We don't have a denominational dogma to defend. Just the Bible.

This centers around the kingdom. In OT, kingdom of God was spiritual and not just physical, Ex. 19:6, 1 Chr. 29:11; Ps. 22:28. So how pray, kingdom come? Well, Pentecost, and I know that verse. Kingdom is the rule and reign of God, Rev. 11:15. We need to see the coming of the kingdom into the lives of those who are not yet kingdom people. And we might even see the rule and reign of God more and more completed in our own lives.

Challenge = to be the presence of God. Are you present in the lives of your neighbors and community?

How many do you touch? We have multitudes of friends. Out of Christ, lost, girl friends, boy friends, husbands, wives, on and on.... Are we even praying for them, for the kingdom to be real and to come into their lives? Many of us are not even praying because we have misunderstood Matt. 6.

"But I don't even care." God can deliver you from that too.

Prayer, we need to double/triple our time in prayer, be prayer warriors.

Adults—be God's. Children—be God's.

Evangelism. See the vision. Who are we? What could we be? People uniquely God's.

"Thy will be done." That's the bottom line.

Let us be the people of God everywhere we go...saying good words for God. Put in a good word for Jesus. This is our ID—prayer, dependence on Christ, students of Scripture. Guided by personal faith so the distinction between the church and the world is clear. Sanctified, kingdom people, ruled by God, saved.

Will you pray for evangelism and missions? Evangelism is not just reaching our own kids.

Dream for this church---

Can escape the false ID, become God's people in God's kingdom. Kingdom seekers. People for whom prayer is vital. Look what God is doing among them? Don't you want to be part of that dream.

Milton Jones interviewed church growth guy—how did you get your church started? Found elementary school building, picked a Sunday, started with two services. Just a man and his wife. First week = seven people. All kids. How many last week? 2400! How did you do that? I put in a good word for Jesus everywhere I went. Isn't that great?

Dream for this church, but it is not my dream. It is God's plan and purpose, revealed in the Bible. To be his, reflect him. Some could come today, could be revived, restored, revitalized, rejuvenated. You know the needs of your life.