

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

## NEW JERUSALEM BAPTIST CHURCH

... Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. (Mark 16:15)

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SUNDAY JUNE 19 & 26, 2011

### **FOUNDATION FOR A HEALTHY CHRISTIAN LIFE**

#### **SHARING OUR FAITH**

**Study Texts:** Ezra 7:10; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:2

**Memory Verse:** 2 Timothy 4:2 - *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction.*

**Main Truth:** The objective of this lesson is to exhort you to obey the commandment of Jesus-Christ which is to evangelize the world by teaching you what you must share, how to prepare yourself, why, when and how to do it.

**Introduction:** Most Christians know that they must share their faith with others by obeying the commandments of God and following the advice of their leaders. They have the desire to do so, but they have a problem. It is the challenge of knowing what, when, where, why, and how to prepare and speak. However, the solution is to take the time to get trained because ignorance is not an acceptable excuse.

**1. Sharing Our Faith: Why?** (Matt 28:19) - There are at least six compelling reasons for sharing our faith in Christ with people who have not experienced new life in Christ.

- a) Because God has commanded us to do so. The final words of Jesus while on earth (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8) speak concerning this.
- b) Because it demonstrates our love for God. Christ said that if we truly loved him, we would keep his commandments (John 14:15).
- c) Because all people are lost without Christ (Rom 3:10, 23).
- d) Because our sharing is God's chosen method to tell all people. He could have used angels, but he didn't. Only redeemed sinners can tell lost sinners about Christ. See Rom 10:14-17; Acts 8:4.
- e) Because God desires to save all people (Acts 4:12; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 Tim 2:4).
- f) Because someone once shared his faith with us. It may have been a faithful Bible teacher, or a godly pastor, or a praying parent. In other words, they have the right to expect that we will do for others what they have done for us.

**2. Sharing Our Faith: What?** (1 Cor. 15:3-4) - Before discussing just what is to be shared concerning our faith, let us mention a few things we are not to do. We are not commanded to force Christian standards upon the unbelieving world (1 Cor. 5:12). We are not to confuse people by allowing them to believe that church membership, tithing, or any good works are somehow connected with becoming a Christian (Eph 2:8-10). Actually we have but one thing to share with the unsaved, and that is the gospel (Good News) of Christ. According to Paul, it involves the death and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). A plan for sharing your faith might be as follows:

- a) God's Word says all are sinners, lost and condemned (Isa 53:6; Rom 3:10-11, 23; 5:8, 12; Rev 20:15).
- b) There is nothing lost persons can do on their own to save themselves (Isa 64:6; Eph 2:9).
- c) Christ was born, crucified, and resurrected to save lost people from their sin (John 3:16; 1 Tim 1:15).
- d) To be saved, sinners must believe God's Word and invite Christ into their heart by faith (John 5:24; Acts 16:31).

**3. Sharing Our Faith: How to Prepare** (Ezra 7:10) - In order to share our faith successfully, we must keep the following rules in mind.

- a) First, we must be clean vessels. God reminds Isaiah the prophet of this, "Purify yourselves you who carry home the vessels of the Lord" (Isa 52:11). David the sinner prays for forgiveness and cleansing.

Upon receiving this he states, “Then I will teach your ways to sinners and they will return to you” (Ps 51:15). While God does not demand golden or silver vessels, he does require clean ones.

- b) We must be able to clearly give out the simple facts of the gospel without getting bogged down with profound theological concepts. Philip the evangelist demonstrated how to do this when he dealt with a sinner in the desert; “So Philip began with this same Scripture and then used many others to tell him the Good News about Jesus” (Acts 8:35).
- c) We must avoid arguments and stick to the basic issues of man’s sin and Christ’s blood. Often unbelievers will attempt to sidestep the gospel by asking unrelated questions, such as “Where did Cain get his wife?”
- d) We must use the Word of God. Paul’s tremendous success as an evangelist can be linked directly to his constant use of God’s Word. See Acts 17:2; 18:28; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:14-17.
- e) We must depend upon the Spirit of God. See John 3:5; Acts 6:10; 1 Cor. 2:4-5.

**4. Sharing Our Faith: How to do it** (1 Thess. 1:5) – Sharing our faith is a combination of spontaneous conversation about God and premeditated ideas about the gospel. The following is a set of practical steps to take in witnessing for Christ:

- a) *Regularly talk about God.* Sprinkle your ordinary conversation with occasional references to God’s activity in your life. It is much easier to share your faith when your friends know God is an integral part of your affairs.
- b) *Prepare your testimony.* Learn to describe your pre-Christian life, your encounter with Christ, and subsequent changes in your life in fewer than 5 minutes. If you became a Christian as a child, focus on the impact Christ has had on your adult life.
- c) *Learn a brief summary of the gospel.* If you have never learned a gospel presentation, ask your pastor to help you find one. Perhaps he will assist you to master it.

When you have opportunity to share Christ with someone, be sensitive to that person’s spiritual readiness. Go as far as you can in the progression of mentioning the Lord, telling your story of faith, presenting the gospel, and appealing for a commitment of faith in Christ. Often you will sense that your friend has heard all he or she wants to. When you stop, be sure to mention that you want to talk more about the Lord another time. Keep the subject open.

**5. Sharing Our Faith: When?** (2 Tim 4:2) – A famous evangelist once ended a revival meeting in Chicago by advising the unbelievers who were present that night to go home and seriously consider the claims of the gospel, and then return on the following night prepared to make a decision for Christ. But on that same night, October 8, 1871, the tragic Chicago fire broke out. Before it was finally extinguished, nearly four miles of buildings were consumed and 250 people had died. The evangelist then vowed never to end a service without giving an invitation to accept Christ immediately.

The question as to when we should share our faith is directly tied to when a sinner should accept Christ. The Bible is clear that God’s accepted time is today. See Heb. 3:15; 4:7; 2 Cor. 6:2; Isa. 55:6. The reason for this is very simple –sinners have no assurance whatsoever that they will live to see tomorrow. See Prov. 27:1; Luke 12:19-20; Jas 4:13-15.

Thus, we are to witness any time, all the time, in any place and in all places. The apostle Paul shows us how this should be done. He witnesses everywhere, in a prison at midnight (Acts 16:25-31), and even on a sinking ship during a dark and stormy day (Acts 27:20-25).

**Conclusion:** So, what are you waiting for? Put yourself to the task because you have all the tools. Make a commitment to spend time studying and practicing how to share your faith. The evangelist Billy Graham said: "The Evangelistic Harvest is always urgent. The destiny of men and of nations is always being decided. Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear the full responsibility for the next one; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities."