

Lent 2023

Night 2 Script

3/1/23

Review teaching from Night 1

{TITLE slide}

Good evening, and welcome to session 2 of Life On Mission.

In session 1 last week, we really focused on approaches to outreach or evangelism that fall short of the way of Jesus and then I introduced the way of Jesus and left you with the following questions {last week - take home questions slide} to think about over the past week...

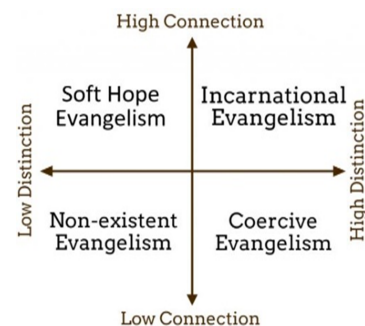
- Do you have an imagination for doing mission the way Jesus did or what that could look like in your context today?
- What questions come up for you about it?

So in a few minutes I'm going to invite you to share with your table your responses to one or both of these questions, but before we do that, just to jog y'all's memory and ensure everyone is on the same page, lemme give just a brief review.

{G&T slide} You'll remember that last week we reviewed the Grace & Truth matrix, which concerns how to love people as Christ does. We said we tend to love people with truth at the expense of grace - trying to control them with the Callout approach - or we tend to love people with grace at the expense of truth - hiding our true thoughts or feelings to retain the relationship the Hangout approach. In contrast to both of 'ways of supposedly loving people' is the way of Jesus, who always approached people with both grace *and* truth: by seeking to connect & empathize with people while still maintaining boundaries and inviting them into responsibility. Recall, we talked about the episode with Jesus and the woman caught in adultery: how he intervened on her behalf (grace) and how he also called her to leave her life of sin (truth). This approach to love is named Call In, because it invites people into way of the kingdom of God.

{Evangelism matrix slide}

And all of this helps us make sense of common approaches to evangelism or engaging non-believers. First, we talked about Coercive Evangelism, which mirrors the Callout approach to love, this is where we use hard sell tactics or trying to *argue* people into the Kingdom of God. This kind of evangelism is what gravity calls high-distinction tactics, because it's all about emphasizing how different I am from you (but how you can become like me if you only turn to Jesus). And it bears little fruit because no matter what we may be offering, people don't feel like we really care about them.



↳ However, on Sunday I added to this category a way Christians are often inclined to frame the gospel called "Inadequacy Gospeling". "Inadequacy Gospeling" an approach to evangelism that highlights the deficiency & inadequacy of a person's life and then offers Jesus

as the solution to all those problems. Now, it is true that Jesus has something to say about the different problems we face and certainly wants to help us navigate them - there is nothing wrong with that - but the inadequacy gospel tends to present Jesus as the fix-all for our problems, the one who will make those problems disappear.

So that's all part of what we're calling Coercive Evangelism. {} On the other hand, we have Soft Hope Evangelism. This is when we maybe hide or minimize our faith around other people and instead hope (maybe even sneakily hope) that they'll become Christians by osmosis, from just being around us. This is when we turn down the distinction between us & the other person and turn up the connection. But at the end of the day, Soft Hope Evangelism bears little fruit because there's nothing really distinct about us or our lives to call anyone to.

Now, on Sunday I suggested that {} sometimes participation in service projects or charitable giving can fall into this category, as they tend to bring physical good to a situation - food to the hungry, clothes for the naked, and so on - but these service projects can TEND to be one-and-done events that are not relationship-building and so they fail to include doing the hard work of listening to people and discovering how we might actually bring holistic flourishing to them and invite them into the fullness of life Christ has for them.

So, in contrast to the approaches of Coercive Evangelism or Soft Hope Evangelism,¹ we're aiming to learn how to Live On Mission in the way that Jesus did. Gravity calls this Incarnational Evangelism, Jesus reached out to connect with people - he did the hard work of listening and getting to know them - AND he called them into the thing that was distinct about him: life in the kingdom of God. And he did this without anxiety about the results or the outcome.

{last week - take home questions slide} So hopefully that review gets us all caught up. Now, I want to invite you to share at your table your responses to one or both of these questions.

- Do you have an imagination for doing mission the way Jesus did or what that could look like in your context today?
- What questions come up for you about it? [and it doesn't have to be just about incarnational Evangelism, it could be about any of this we've discussed]

Are there any comments or questions that you think would be worth sharing with the broader group?

Intro to session 2 {Evangelism = Discipleship and Discipleship = Evangelism - title slide}

So tonight, in session 2, we're going to talk about how to identify where - or more particularly *with whom* - to invest our missional energy. So we're going to start by establishing an

¹ On Anxiety: Whether its Coercive Evangelism or Soft Hope Evangelism, like their counterparts of Callout & Hangout approaches to love, these are approaches to evangelism that are riddled with anxiety. In the Coercive approach, we're anxious about the person we're ministering to - perhaps about their eternal destiny - and so we capitalize on that anxiety by transferring it to them in the hopes of getting them to make a decision. In the Soft Hope approach, we're anxious about them not thinking we're one of those coercive Christians, or just weird Christians, and so we hide it in order to maintain the relationship. In contrast to all of this, there was a complete lack of anxiety in Jesus' approach to mission.

important foundation. And, it may be a surprise to some, perhaps not to others, but here it is... Evangelism and discipleship are the same process. Evangelism is the same thing as discipleship.

{definition slide} Now, just to get clear about a few definitions... Evangelism typically refers to reaching out to non-believers and attempting to lead them into a saving relationship with Jesus, while Discipleship has refers to what you do with people *after they come to believe*.

So, at least in recent history, churches have often had a robust concern for reaching the lost - those who don't know Jesus at all - and then leading them to Christ. But then there is often a different plan concerning discipleship, or what do with people once they convert.

Well, some problems can come with dividing Evangelism and Discipleship into different processes. **{quote slide}** Here's how the Gravity folks talk about it and I think it's helpful. They explain (that),

“When we think that the gospel is for evangelism, but then we “move on” to other things in discipleship, we fall prey to the same problem the Galatians had: starting in the Spirit and trying to finish in the flesh (a Bible word for “human effort”). We start in the Spirit (evangelism rooted in the gospel), but attempt to finish in the flesh (discipleship through shame, manipulation, and human effort alone).”

I resonate with what they're talking about. Maybe some of you do as well. When I came to the faith - or returned to the faith - in my late teens. I responded to an altar call, prayers were prayed, I got baptized. But after that, I was just sort of enculturated into *acting* like a Christian. The implicit message I received was “you're a Christian, so don't do certain things and do do other things”. My discipleship was learning how to act like a Christian, but not *how* to live in faithfulness to him through reliance upon him or where my inside desires matched with my external behaviors. So this quote highlights a major pitfall of separating evangelism and discipleship:

“When we think that the gospel is for evangelism, but then we “move on” to other things in discipleship, we fall prey to the same problem the Galatians had: starting in the Spirit and trying to finish in the flesh (a Bible word for “human effort”). We start in the Spirit (evangelism rooted in the gospel), but attempt to finish in the flesh (discipleship through shame, manipulation, and human effort alone).”

So what they're getting at with all of this, and what I want us to be thinking about tonight is that again Evangelism and Discipleship shouldn't be and are not different processes.² because the gospel is actually just as integral to discipleship as it is to evangelism! Growing as a disciple of Jesus simply means we increasingly trust the good news in our lived experience.

² When we think that the gospel is for evangelism, but then we “move on” to other things in discipleship, we fall prey to the same problem the Galatians had: starting in the Spirit and trying to finish in the flesh (a Bible word for “human effort”). We start in the Spirit (evangelism rooted in the gospel), but attempt to finish in the flesh (discipleship through shame, manipulation, and human effort alone).

{disc wheel image} Some of you recall how during Epiphany we talked through processing kairoses with the Discipleship Wheel. Now, this was just one approach for how to continue growing in Christ; there are others. But the overarching point was that even as Christians, who believe in Jesus, there are all sorts of areas of our lives where we are still believing some bad news, and therefore being held back from the fullness of life Jesus desires for us.

{slide with strikethrough on the following text: Getting people to cross the line }

Now, the cause of the division between Evangelism and Discipleship has become so pronounced comes from a **preoccupation with getting people** “getting saved,” which is when a person “crosses the line,” so to speak, to become a christian. And while it does seem like there is some kind of line you cross, it’s notable that in the Gospels Jesus didn’t seem to make this (getting people to cross the line) his concern at all! Instead, Jesus’ focus was on getting people to enter into and live in the Kingdom of God.³ Jesus seemed very content to proclaim good news, heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, etc, and trust that God will continue to work.

{add to previous slide “orient people in the right direction (toward Christ) and invite them to take a step” }

So our goal in evangelism isn’t necessarily to get people to “cross the line” then. Instead, what we seek to do is orient them in the right direction (toward Christ), and invite them to take a step. If there’s a line, they’ll certainly cross it, wherever it is, as they move toward Christ. But the goal isn’t crossing the line, it’s fullness of life in Christ.

DISCUSSION {discussion question slide}

1. With your table, name at least one touchpoint of clarity (aha!), confusion (huh?), conviction (uh oh!), or conflict (nuh uh!) from what you’ve just heard

Or just share your thoughts about this... about Evangelism and discipleship being the same process centered on increasingly trusting the good news of Jesus and all its implications in our lives

Does anyone have anything from their group or their own heart that they'd like to clarify or share?

People of Peace (people of peace title slide)

³ Notice how Jesus is content to proclaim good news, heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, etc, and trust that God will continue to work.

So even though I've used the term evangelism already a good bit, I've done so with hesitation because what we really want to do is learn how to live our Lives On Mission, seeking to contribute to the process of other people becoming disciples, whether they don't know Jesus at all or have known him a long time or somewhere in between. Therefore, "Living on Mission" means being alert to opportunities to partner with God in orienting someone (more?) toward Christ and invite them to take a step.

Now, I don't know about you, but that can sound like a lot to me: being alert all the time. at the end of the day, very human, we cannot be everywhere and be perfectly alert to everything. So how can we think about this in a way that doesn't create its own anxiety for us, that helps us actually live it out.

Well, first of all, we need to remember that we aren't the ones who save people; God is. And we believe God is always working in everyones' lives to bring them to himself.

But we also might find ourselves really wanting change for someone, wanting them to know God in His fullness and love, and yet sense that the door is just continually closed. What does that mean? Well, the Gravity guys suggest that it's about understanding where God may be opening up opportunities for us to partner with him. They suggest we look for what they call "people of peace".

(Lk 10 slide)

This idea of "people of peace" in our lives, is found in the scriptures. And it comes from Luke chapter 10, when Jesus commissioned seventy-two people to go out and minister in the surrounding communities.

{Have someone read Luke 10:1-12}

1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two^[a] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. **2** He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. **3** Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. **4** Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' **6** If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. **7** Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

8 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. **9** Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' **10** But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, **11** 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this:

The kingdom of God has come near.' **12** I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

(Lk 10 slide with v5-9 highlighted and 1-3 bullet points)

The Gravity folks suggest that this passage indicates that a person of peace will have all of the following three characteristics.

A person of peace is one who... {}

1. Welcomes you - in the context of this passage it was those who who allowed Jesus disciples to stay in their house (v7a &8b)
2. {}(Who) Provides for you - Verse 7 talks about ("eating and drinking whatever they provide")
3. {}(And who) Receives from you. In verse 9, Jesus tells his disciples that when people have both welcomes and provided for you (characteristics 1 & 2), he says to "heal the sick, and tell them "the kingdom of God has come near to you.'

Now, we are of course living in a different time now. At this point in Jesus' ministry, he is just rolling out the kingdom of God, particularly through signs like physical healing, which pointed to the spiritual healing and abundance that was available in Him and His Kingdom. But in our day now - when we are not going town to town reliant on people's charity and when we are now on the far side of Jesus' death & resurrection, ascension & sending of the Holy Spirit - in our day now, how would the characteristics of a Person of Peace manifest?

1. {}Welcomes you - Well, a person welcoming you may look like someone who seems to like spending time with you. Or who you are already friends with.
2. {}Provides for you - A person who provides for you would be someone who has offered to serve you in some way. This could be as simple as someone offering you hospitality when you're in their home. Or, it could look like if you're talking about how you need to fix something around your house and this is a person who has skills and know-it-all in this area, do they offer to help you? So has a person offered to serve me in some way.
3. {}Receives from you - And then, if both of those things are true - both of those boxes are checked - when you share something about yourself spiritually - something related to your life in God - how do they receive that? Do they seem interested? Do they ask good questions? Then this may be a person of peace. But if its crickets or a blank look or they change the subject - you probably shouldn't push it further. This may not be a "person of peace" right now - which doesn't mean they will never be. But continue to push the issue could actually do harm or drive them further away.

{} A *Person of Peace* is simply someone that God has prepared ahead of time to hear the message of the gospel through you.

{Repeat} A *Person of Peace* is someone who God has prepared ahead of time to hear the message of the gospel through you.

Questions??? [open to large group]

REFLECTION (slide - Identifying People of Peace who are already in your life)

So right now I want to invite you not to share with your table, but instead to take a few minutes of personal reflection to consider who might be persons of peace in your life right now?

Use the questions below to help you:

1. Who seems to like spending time with me?
2. Who has offered to serve me in some way?
3. Who seems interested in me? Who asks me good questions?
4. Who seems open to life in community/relationship?
5. Who seems to want “more” out of life?
6. Who am I already friends with?
7. Who seems receptive to the Gospel?
8. Who does God seem to be pointing out to me?

follow-up: what’s interesting is that there may be christians or very religious people in your life who are not persons of peace at all.

If they're not a person of peace in your life that doesn't necessarily mean they're bad or even someone you shouldn't spend time around. Not at all!

It just means that you may not have authority to speak much into their life, or to invite them into something greater with God. It may mean God is still at work there or they may be a "person of peace" in someone else's life and just not yours. Don't take it personally :) God prepares and connects in the ways that He chooses. And he may be giving someone else an opportunity to invite that person in.

And it may be more fluid with some of the relationships in your life... there may be people you have been investing in who maybe haven't actually been persons of peace for you. And if that’s the case, until their posture changes in demonstrable ways - certainly don't hide who *you* are - but maybe lay off pushing the spiritual stuff onto them.

Final Section (slide - finding People of Peace }

So, I’ve just asked you to identify possible people of peace who are already in your life. And maybe you identified some, maybe just a few, maybe not any - that’s okay.

The final thing we want to talk about is how to *find* people of peace.

And if we return to the passage from Luke 10 - where these seventy-two disciples are being prepared for encountering people and discerning *who* is a person of peace - we will notice that there were a few things required of these disciples.

Backing up to the first paragraph...

- A. **{ Surrendered sentness** (v1-2) - First of all, these 72 are people who understand themselves as being sent by God (living on mission) and are living in surrendered reliance upon him
- Verse 1 says Jesus “sent them” And sending into mission is what God does.
 - But even as they are sent, Jesus tells his disciples in verse 2 to “Ask the Lord of the harvest... to send out workers into his harvest field.” At first glance this can be confusing: why ask God for laborers if you are one of the laborers? The point here is that mission is something we surrender to. It’s not something we control or make happen.
- B. **{ Mutual submission** - Second, the text continues that we are to go out as “lambs among wolves...carrying no purse” (v.3-4). So the second thing we see is Jesus instructing them to go in submission to the one you want to reach. Jesus says go “as the one who needs!”
- This is a radical departure from most of the evangelism projects and trainings we’ve experienced in our Christian life. We were trained to go “as the one who has something others need.” [either in service projects or in the coercive posture of “i have something that you don’t”]
 - The worst case is in how the Church has often done foreign missions, where we want to share the good news of Jesus with others but there is nothing we need from them. This is a colonizing posture, is not consistent with the way of Jesus, and has borne some really terrible fruit.
- C. **{ Listening and seeing as Jesus** - The third essential element for finding people of peace is not explicitly stated here, but it is assumed (since Jesus is sending them out as his representatives): that we seek to listen and see the person in the way that Jesus did. [Here is that incarnational evangelism posture from week 1.] When we find a person of peace and they welcome us, we receive not just food and shelter, but their story.
- Steven Covey said, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand, they listen with the intent to reply.”
 - If we’re honest, most of us listen to others while we’re thinking about what we’ll say next. But the greatest way to LOVE others is to LISTEN. Listening *is* an act of love, all by itself. In our listening to another, we are conveying to them that they matter, that we care for them, that we see them.
 - Our presence needs to communicate, “I see you, I hear you, I’m with you, I’m here for you – it’s safe here.” This is the posture that God has with us.

{ So, TO PUT ALL OF THIS ANOTHER WAY: To *find* a person of peace, we have to *be* a person of peace ourselves; we have to approach them in peace ourselves.

4. **{ Willing to Risk meeting people of UNpeace** - fourth and finally, to find a person of peace we have to be willing to risk meeting people of unpeace. Look at verses 10-12.

10 But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’ (down to 16...) ¹⁶
 “Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.

When Jesus sent the 72 out he told them that they would experience welcome *and* rejection. He gave them instructions on what to do when they were welcomed *and* when they were *not welcomed*.

He made it clear that to go out on this mission was to “out” yourself as a follower of Jesus, and see how people responded. Some will receive you. Others will reject you. Or worse. And until we’re ready to face that, we won’t find a Person of Peace.

Discussion option:

Which of the elements of being a Person of Peace is most challenging for you? Which is most encouraging? Why?

TAKE HOME QUESTIONS

Pray for persons of peace

TEASER: And after talking this week about discerning whose lives God is inviting is to participate with Him, my plan next week is to talk about discerning where God is at work and inviting us to participate with Him in our **wider community**.