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Don't Keep the Gospel to Yourself



Sometimes we need hard and harsh words to wake us up. Like a wife who says to her husband, “We need to see a counselor; I can’t do this anymore.” Or a doctor who says, “We need to operate right now,” or a firefighter who bangs on your door, yelling, “Leave everything; you need to evacuate immediately.” Sometimes the situation is too dire for gentle words.

Jesus spoke harsh words of warning. For example, in Luke 12 he said to the crowds, “Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the

judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny.” (Luke 12:57–59)

Jesus wasn’t talking about avoiding a lawsuit with your neighbor, but rather about avoiding an eternal life-sentence in hell. The kingdom of God arrived in Jesus, but the crowds were blind. They could rightly interpret things like the weather (Luke 12:54–56), but missed the glory and splendor of the Messiah standing and speaking inches away.

His words still indict us two thousand years later. We follow fantasy-sports standings, binge-watch the latest television show, track the presidential race, line up for the latest Apple product, but we often miss the glory and majesty of Jesus Christ in his word.

And not only this, I miss rays of God’s glory placed right before my eyes every day in creation. As my four kids run around me, I’m convicted regularly that these are little people made in the image of God with souls that will last forever — and that I only have limited time to impact their lives for good. And yet I’m glued to my phone.

Saved to Save Others

In 2007, the *Washington Post* did an experiment where world-class violinist, Joshua Bell, played in the D.C. metro during rush hour. About a thousand people passed by, and only seven people stopped to listen. Here was a virtuoso, hidden in plain sight, playing intricate music on a 300-year-old violin worth millions of dollars. Yet the crowds lacked the eyes or ears to recognize greatness in their midst.

And then there stood the Christ. His teaching was unlike any other man before him, his works were clearly of God, and he claimed to be God. The crowds, like so many others today, missed the glory, majesty, and splendor of the Messiah.

But to miss his glory is fatal.

Therefore, we want to live with urgency. We want to stop frittering away our lives with inconsequential and meaningless activities. *Life and death hangs in the balance*. Those who have been reconciled to God have a ministry of reconciliation to help others get right with him (2 Corinthians 5:19). This means we ought to consider our activities, priorities, and passions.

Jonathan Edwards captured it well in his seventh resolution: “Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.”

Three Questions to Consider

We can agree that the kingdom is imminent, but it’s meaningless when our lives fail to reflect urgency. So consider these three questions.

1. Who can I pray for regularly that doesn’t know Jesus?

If we truly believe in the saving power of the gospel, the eternal damnation of the lost, and the eternal joy we have in Christ, then the least we can do is pray for the lost to be saved. This priority trumps coordinating your outfit, playing your golf game, scheduling your lunch plans, fulfilling your bucket list, or planning your next vacation. We tend to spend our free time on hobbies and diversions at the expense of asking God for more laborers to enter the harvest fields or consistently making ourselves available as a laborer (Luke 10:2).

2. How can I intentionally befriend and engage with lost friends and neighbors?

I like to do all my banking online, and I always use the self-checkout at grocery stores. I sometimes prefer people-less transactions. And I doubt that I’m alone.

Yet because of the need to engage the lost, we must lean in where we'd prefer to lean away. How can you intentionally weave others into your life? Reduce how many times you play golf, scrapbook, shoot hoops, hit the gym, go jogging, or embark on a DIY project *alone*. Be strategic in inviting those who don't know Jesus into those activities and others in your daily life.

3. When can I introduce the good news of Jesus into our conversation?

I know we all do evangelism differently, some better than others. But at some point, you need to witness to the power and work of the gospel of Christ. Be winsome and loving, but also be clear and straightforward. Don't do "friendship evangelism" that has ten years of friendship but no evangelism. And don't mow people down with Bible verses when you haven't earned their trust, ear, or time. The balance is delicate, and the task is urgent.

There's no perfect way to do it. It will look different with your context, situation, personality, and gifts. But just don't make excuses for not doing it. Time is of the essence. Jesus calls his listeners to reconcile with urgency, and so we call others to do the same. Behold the glory hidden in plain sight, and declare Jesus's glory urgently for the joy of the lost.



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