

## “Sharing in Your Own Backyard”

Acts 1:8 and John 1:35-46

Mission Month, week 2

- I. Introduction – It began more than five decades ago.
  - A. Florence Rexroth was lead to faith in Jesus Christ through the ministry of her Sunday school teacher.
    - 1) Years passed. She grew up, married and got a job with the state of Maryland.
    - 2) One of the women in her office was a struggling single parent who knew something was missing from her life.
  - B. Florence started to talk to her co-worker (Margaret) about faith in Jesus and it wasn't long before Margaret asked Christ to become her Lord and Savior.
    - 1) As you might expect Margaret wanted to share her new faith with her family, especially her children.
    - 2) On Florence's advise she sent her kids to camp and brought them to church so they could hear the Gospel.
    - 3) Soon Margaret's entire family had made a commitment to Christ and their lives were changed forever.
  - C. I could use different names, circumstances, and could tell this same story over and over.
    - 1) Billy Graham, Bill Hybels, Max Lucado, Beth Moore and others.
    - 2) A story of someone being led to faith and then very naturally leading others to Jesus.
    - 3) This story is nothing special, it just happens to be my story.
  - D. In the New Testament, a very similar story appears.
    - 1) Only here the names have been changed to John, Andrew, and Peter.
    - 2) Read (John 1:35-46).
- II. For most of us, the hardest group to share with is our family.
  - A. Maybe it's because they know us too well.
    - 1) Maybe it's because their memories are too good.
    - 2) Maybe it's because we haven't done a good job of living a life pleasing to Christ in front of them.
    - 3) Whatever the reason, its hard.
  - B. From this story in John, we can learn some important lessons about sharing Christ's message of love and salvation to those closest to us – our family.
- III. The first lesson is modeled by John.
  - A. When standing by the banks of the Jordan River with two of his disciples, John notices Jesus walking by.
    - 1) Almost casually, John says, “Look, the Lamb of God.” (verse 36)
    - 2) You get a picture of John in an offhand matter of fact way saying, “Oh, yeah. That guy I keep talking about. That's him.”
    - 3) Immediately, the two disciples get up and follow Jesus!
  - B. Did you see what John did?
    - 1) Who's the central figure in this story? {Jesus}
    - 2) The guy who doesn't say a thing. The one who doesn't have any actions to perform. He's the central figure!
    - 3) The guy with a walk on role steals the show.
  - C. John knew an important truth – it's not about me!

- 1) John knew that he wasn't the star of the show. AND he knew who was.
  - 2) John 3:30 – "He must become greater. I must become less."
  - 3) Instead of inflating his own position John directed and deflected all of the attention to Jesus (where it belonged).
- D. One of the difficulties we face when sharing the Gospel with family is that we get in the way.
- 1) As we talk about Jesus, they remember our mistakes.
  - 2) As we talk about Jesus, they recall the ways we've hurt them.
  - 3) As we talk about Jesus, they list our idiosyncrasies and failings.
- E. We need to do what John did so well.
- 1) Point people to Jesus.
    - a) Not to a church, a pastor, a denomination, a ministry, but to Jesus.
    - b) Not that any of those things aren't important, but by far the most important is Jesus.
  - 2) Everything begins there with Him.
- F. So what can we do when we're sharing with our families and they point out past mistakes, missteps and failings?
- 1) A good first step would be confession and forgiveness.
  - 2) And then point them to Jesus.
    - a) He's bigger than your mistakes.
    - b) He's bigger than their objections.
  - 3) Another important step would be to examine your own life and be honest about how you're living it.
    - a) Are you living so that God would be pleased?
    - b) Are you witnessing to the life-changing power of Christ in the way you act?
    - c) If not, maybe God is using your family to help you see some ways that you need to grow.
- IV. The second lesson is modeled by Andrew and Philip.
- A. In both cases, they heard Jesus teaching and went to those closest to them and brought them to check Jesus out for themselves.
- 1) Do you sense the excitement in their voices?
  - 2) We have found the Messiah! (Verse 41)
- B. Another masterful moment in this story.
- 1) Again the central figure of this story is Jesus and he doesn't even show up until the end when it's pretty much over.
  - 2) Even when he's not around Jesus dominates the scene.
- C. Andrew and Philip both know their role.
- 1) "I'll live a great, moral life and others will be drawn to me and will ask me what's different?"
  - 2) NO WAY! Andrew and Philip had the same drive: get people to Jesus!
    - a) It's not their holy lives that will lead people to faith.
    - b) It's not the dramatic change in them that will accomplish anything.
- D. When we are sharing the Gospel (especially with our families) our goal is to get them to Jesus.
- 1) Andrew and Philip presented a clear and simple message that would pull at Nathaniel and Simon's hearts.
  - 2) "We have found the Messiah."
  - 3) And the yearning in Nathaniel and Simon did the rest.
- E. How well to we lead people to Jesus?

- 1) Do we truly believe that God has the answer for the aching human heart?
- 2) And if we do, can we sense that ache in people and show them an answer in Jesus?
- 3) Are confident enough that we have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote?

F. How can we lead people to Jesus?

- 1) How inviting are you?
  - a) To church. To Sunday school. To a small group.
  - b) To your house. To your Bible.
- 2) Invitations open doors.
  - a) How many doors do you open?
  - b) And how many doors do you close?
- 3) Some people need a little more encouragement/enticement.
- 4) Finally, how confident are you? How convinced are you?
  - a) Did Jesus really get it done? Or aren't you sure?
  - b) Can you speak with confidence about how God has filled your life?
- 5) Challenge: Identify 2 people you know who need to hear about Jesus.
  - a) Do you know their ache?
  - b) Do you know what Jesus can do for them?
  - c) Then you're all set – get going.

V. Conclusion

A. Sharing your faith with your family and those closest to you is a matter of two simple principles.

- 1) Point people toward Jesus.
- 2) Lead people to Jesus.

B. Sound simple?

- 1) That's because it is. God designed it that way so we could do it easily.
- 2) He wants our success so he paved the way before us and removed some of the obstacles.

C. And isn't it comforting to know that even when you're sharing with those who know you best that it's not about you. It's all about Him!