Session 1: Becoming a Witness
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Called as a Witness

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

Jesus came to earth for many reasons. He came to provide abundant life to all who would receive it (John 10:10); He came to bring judgment upon the the things that needed it (John 9:38); He came to die (John 12:27); and He came to earth to be an exact representation of the Father so that men receive a greater understanding of God (Heb 1:3).

Even so, Jesus’ primary purpose in coming was to seek and save the lost. He said of Himself, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

And of course, the familiar verse that we all learned in Sunday School, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

We don’t quote the next verse as often, but it expands upon John 3:16. It reads, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:17).

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

As His body on the earth, believers are to continue Jesus’ mission of seeking and saving the lost.

Matthew 28:18-20 reads,

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, " All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

The church has received an unmistakable mandate from the Lord. After His resurrection and before His ascension, the Lord commissioned the church in what had been called the Great Commission. The Great Commision, referred to in all four gospels in a variety of ways, calls for believers to witness to others that Jesus is the Savior of the world, lead people to saving faith in Christ, baptize them, and then disciple them to observe all that Jesus taught.

We can also find God’s commission to the church to carry on His work in the following scriptural passages: Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:46-48, and John 20:21.
Every local church needs to be involved in reaching out into their community for the purpose of leading people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church, a Southern Baptist Church located in the greater Los Angeles area, writes about the importance of local churches balancing five biblical purposes of church life. He writes,

Every church needs to grow warmer through fellowship, deeper through discipleship, stronger through worship, broader through ministry, and larger through evangelism. These five purposes of the church are commanded by Jesus in the Great Commandment and Great Commission, explained by Paul in Ephesians 4, described in Jesus' prayer for the church in John 17, and modeled by the first church in Jerusalem. In Acts 2:42-47 these five facets of health are mentioned: They fellowshipped, edified each other, worshipped, ministered, and evangelized. As a result, verse 47 says, "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

The Five Dimensions of a Healthy Church are:

1. Churches grow warmer through fellowship.
2. Churches grow deeper through discipleship.
3. Churches grow stronger through worship.
4. Churches grow broader through ministry.
5. Churches grow larger through evangelism.

Church growth is the natural result of church health. But church health can only occur when our message is biblical and our mission is balanced. Each of the five New Testament purposes of the church must be in equilibrium with the others for health to occur.1

As you will notice, Rick Warren includes evangelism as one of the five ministries necessary for a local church to be healthy. And, we concur. For a local church to be healthy, there must be a regular sharing of the gospel among the church members.

Every local church needs a strategy to empower and motivate its members to consistently reach out to people with the good news of Jesus.

If congregational members are to share about Christ and their local church regularly, the local church must have a strategy to reach out into the community.

This class presents one such strategy.

Approaches to Sharing a Witness

It is not as difficult as you might think.

When most of think of witnessing, our mind immediately runs to those days in the past where the pastor made us go door to door. Or we might think of the times we had to go to the streets to participate in some form of street ministry. Others think of prison ministry or feeding the poor. Some think of church visitation night at which
you went unannounced to the house of a family who visited the week before. Even others think of going to another nation to share your faith.

To many, these types of evangelism are frightening and, if not frightening, distasteful. And even though these methods can be successful, they are not the only way people ministered in the Bible.

The scriptures speak of at least two ways of “going” into the harvest field. And once in the field, the Bible also speaks of at least two approaches to witness to those encountered.

Let’s discuss these four aspects of witnessing. First, let’s discuss the two approaches that address ways to go into the harvest field.

**Approach 1: Going with a purpose.**

After His resurrection and before He ascended to be with the Father, Jesus spoke these words, “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation’” (Mark 16:15).

Even though the imperative—that is, the command—in this verse is not “go” but “preach”, this verse suggests that witnesses should go with a purpose into all the world for the purpose of preaching the gospel to all who will listen.

Jesus used this method of sharing the good news of the kingdom regularly. He called first on the twelve apostles and then on seventy others to utilize this approach. He sent them out with a purpose: to heal the sick and to proclaim that the kingdom of God had come (Luke 9:1-6; Luke 10:1-9).

For the most part, Paul approached evangelism in this way. A few years after his conversion, he was set apart for the purpose of the work God had for him and then sent out specifically for the purpose of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 13:2-3). Paul went on three missionary journeys during which he shared the gospel, planted churches, and strengthened and discipled believers. He planned his trips, raised up a team to go with him, and set out with a purpose.

Peter on the day of Pentecost also utilized the approach of going with a purpose. Even though those gathered in the upper room that day were surprised by the Holy Spirit and did not have time to plan their Pentecost message or even travel to another city to witness of Jesus, they stood with a purpose before the people in Jerusalem to preach the gospel. In essence, they went into their local community with a purpose. And 3,000 people were saved as a result of their witness.

Even though this approach to sharing a witness of Jesus is widespread, it is not the only approach used in the New Testament to share the gospel. New Testament believers also shared *as they went*.

**Approach 2: As you go.**

Whereas the great commission recorded in Mark suggests an intentional going to share the news of Jesus, the great commission recorded in Matthew advocates an "as you go" approach to sharing the gospel. It reads, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and
the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20).

Just like in Mark’s commission, the word “Go” in Matthew’s commission is not the imperative—or command— in the sentence. In Matthew’s case, the one Greek word translated “make disciples” is the command.

Based on this, the commission recorded in Matthew suggests the following. As you go about your normal course of life, make disciples by sharing the gospel with people, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe what Jesus has taught you.

Jesus used this method of evangelizing. Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well (John 4) offers a great example of how Jesus witnessed as He went on His way. In this passage, which we will discuss in detail in the next session, Jesus had left Judea and was on His way to Galilee. He passed through Samaria on the way. He was weary from the journey (John 4:6) and decided to stop by a well to get a drink of water. As He was there resting and being refreshed, a woman came to draw water. Jesus immediately began to engage her in conversation for the purpose of sharing the good news of His coming with her; that is, He witnessed to her. But, the point for now is that He did not go to Samaria specifically for the purpose of witnessing. He shared with the woman because He was there and an opportunity arose for Him to lead someone into the kingdom.

Another example of “as you go” sharing of your faith occurs in Acts 3. Peter and John were on their way to the temple for a designated time of prayer. While on their way, they encountered a man who had been lame from birth. The man asked them for money, but instead they raised him from his infirmity. Again, they were not going on an assignment to heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom. They were on their way to a prayer meeting. But, as they went, they encountered someone in need and helped him enter the kingdom of God.

Thus, we observe in the scriptures two foundational approaches to encountering people for the purpose of the gospel: 1) going with intentionality for the expressed purpose of sharing the gospel and 2) being alert to opportunities to share the gospel as you go throughout your normal daily activities.

Now that we have discovered the two foundational approaches to encountering people for the purpose of witnessing to them, let’s examine two methods of leading people to an encounter with Jesus.

**Witnessing Method 1: Go and tell.**

The common witnessing method that we are most familiar with is the method where someone goes to a person—whether with intentionality or in the course of daily life—and tells them about Jesus.

This is the method employed by Jesus with the woman at the well. After discussing many things with her, He told her about Himself, and not only was she led into the kingdom, many in the city were saved.

In the two examples we used earlier in which Jesus sent out the twelve and then the seventy, they went out and they told the people they encountered about Jesus. As
Luke 9:2 states, “He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God...”. And as Luke 10:9 reads, “...and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’”.

When Peter preached his message on Pentecost, he gave a clear invitation into the kingdom saying, “

“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” (Acts 2:38-40).

Peter and John’s encounter with the lame man in Acts 3 ended with Peter once again standing before the people and preaching about Jesus. Again he called on the people to turn to God through Jesus saying to them, “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

Even though this witnessing method is very common in the scriptures, there is another Biblical method of sharing Christ—and that method is telling people to *come and see*.

**Witnessing Method 2: Come and see.**

The come and see method of witnessing is a little different than the go and tell method. Whereas the “go and tell” method is to go to someone and tell them about Jesus and to call on them to make a decision to receive Him, the “come and see” method calls on followers of Jesus to tell people that Jesus is going to be at a certain place at a specific time and then inviting them to come and see Him.

The belief is that if they come and see Jesus, they will encounter Him, be touched by Him, and after one or more encounters receive Him as Lord and Savior.

This method is founded on the premise that if people see the reality of Jesus and are touched in His presence and by His power, they will want Him. And when they want Him, they will surrender their life to Him.

The followers of Jesus used the “come and see” method. Look at the following passage,

Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, *who had come to hear Him* and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all (Luke 6:17-19).

The above scripture tells us that a large crowd of disciples and a great throng of people from all over had heard that Jesus was going to be ministering and they came to hear and see Him with the desire that they might encounter Him.
In John’s account of Jesus selecting His disciples, we recognize again the “come and see” method of leading people to follow Jesus. The encounter begins when two followers of John the Baptist encounter Jesus and begin to follow Him (John 1:37). As Jesus conversed with them about who He really was, He said to them “come and you will see” (John 1:39). One of those two disciples, Andrew, found his brother, Simon Peter, and brought him to see Jesus. The next day, Jesus found Philip and called Philip to follow Him (John 1:43). And Philip found Nathanael. When Nathanael questioned Philip, Philip said to Nathanael, “Come and see” (John 1:46). These men became lifelong followers of Jesus because they first came and saw Him. When they came, they encountered Jesus and their lives were changed.

To summarize, we have presented two approaches to meet people—1) going with a purpose and 2) as you are going about your way—and two methods of leading people to Christ—1) going and telling them about Jesus and 2) asking them to come and see so as to meet Jesus.

The Community Connection strategy contained in this class draws from one of the approaches to witnessing—as you go about your way—and one of the methods of sharing—come and see. It goes without saying that the other two options are great, and, if you have the opportunity to minister in those ways, then by all means do it. But the specific strategy suggested in this class called the Community Connection is based on the philosophy that as you go, look for opportunities to ask people to come and see Jesus.

With that background, let’s introduce the strategy briefly. The next two sessions will go into much greater detail on how to implement the strategy into your own life.

**Community Connection Strategy**

The purpose of this class is to present a relational evangelism strategy to help believers seek out those in need of salvation and, in the case of those already saved, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, or a church family.

The strategy has been labeled Community Connection because it offers a strategy for believers to relate to those in their community in need of the Savior and to invite them to an encounter with Jesus.

The strategy consists of three simple steps: 1) pray, 2) connect, and 3) invite. In this short three session class, we will explain how to implement this simple strategy into your life so that you can impact the lives of those in your community.

Since subsequent sessions will delve into the details of the three steps of the strategy, we only summarize them here.

The first step is to pray. The process of connecting with your community begins with prayer. The strategy encourages you to pray for the harvest; pray for divine opportunities to talk to people about Jesus; pray for boldness to speak the good news of Jesus plainly and simply; and to pray by name people the Holy Spirit has placed on your heart. Some people have more time to pray than others; but, whatever time you have to pray include a prayer to be used of God to advance His kingdom.
Step two is to connect. The process continues with encouragement to connect with people in need of an encounter with God. The strategy asks you as you go through your day to be sensitive to opportunities to speak to people about the Lord, about how He has worked in your life, and about your church, its ministries and any upcoming events that might be of help to those to whom you are speaking.

The final step of the process is to invite those to whom God has connected you to an encounter with God. The encounter may be to invite the person with whom you have connected into the kingdom or it may be to invite them to a ministry event at your church during which you believe they will be impacted by the gospel in a meaningful way.

As you can readily observe, the process is simple, does not take a lot of extra time, and does not require you to plan or participate in an “outreach event”.

The process merely makes you available to the Holy Spirit to be used daily to advance the kingdom of God in an intentional way. Much like they did in the Bible!

You may be thinking that you cannot do it. You may be wondering if you have what it takes to speak to someone about Christ or a christian event at church. Possibly you have have been a silent christian up to this point.

Well, you can do it. Why? Because you are equipped to be a witness for Jesus.

You are Equipped As a Witness

Most believers feel ill equipped to be a witness for Jesus.

The dictionary defines witness as somebody who gives evidence after seeing or hearing something. This is what believers are to do. They witness to others by telling them what has happened to them for the purpose of leading them to the same experience that they have had.

When it comes to telling others about their encounter with Christ, many believers shrink back in fear or condemnation. They either fear being rejected by others or they feel so unworthy or unable to tell others about Jesus.

As a result many, in fact, most do not often share Christ with others.

And the fact that many do not share Christ with others makes them feel as a failure because most know the mandates of the Great Commission.

Even though many feel ill equipped to witness to others, we should not feel that way. Why? Because we have the tools we need to be a witness.

You are an earthen vessel with a treasure within.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves” (2 Cor. 4:7).
Most of us realize that we are an earthen vessel, weak and unable to accomplish much for God. We feel like we can do nothing for Him. And we can’t apart from His power. We ARE a nothing and we can do NOTHING apart from God’s help.

But the good news is that we have a treasure within us. And the treasure within us—and for that matter, upon us as well—is God Himself. So, as we try to be a witness, we must continually be aware of the fact that God is with us to help us, empower us, speak through us, and interpret what we say or do for His kingdom.

**The Anointed One lives within you.**

There is a phrase that is often quoted in christian conversation; namely, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

The word “Christ” is not Jesus’ last name. It actually means in the original Greek, Messiah or Anointed One. So, when we read Christ in you, in actuality we are saying the Anointed One abides in you.

Of course John confirmed this truth in his epistle. He wrote, “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him” (1 John 2:27).

That is why, Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

We can bear much fruit because the Anointed One abides in us.

**The Holy Spirit is not only within you, He is also upon you.**

When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit also will come upon you to empower you to be a witness for Jesus. Note the following,

Gathering them together, He [Jesus] commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:4-8).

Therefore, we have the Holy Spirit both within and upon us to empower us to be, act, and speak as a witness for Jesus.

And even though we might feel more like we are an earthen vessel than a treasure, the treasure within—the Anointed One—and the empowerment upon—the Holy Spirit’s power to be a witness—enables us to be effective as a witness for Jesus.

**The anointing empowers us to minister as Jesus did.**

Jesus took the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and began to read the following,

When He finished, He told those gathered that He was the fulfillment of this passage.

In essence, Jesus declared that He was anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to those in need of a Savior, to set captives free through the casting out of demons, to heal the sick, to encourage the downcast, and to prophesy the favor of the Lord upon those in need.

But it was not only Jesus who was anointed in this way. We too are anointed to do these same five ministry tasks. And as we note, being a witness is included in the empowerment granted to us.

You can do it. So, let’s accept the challenge of the Great Commission and go forth making disciples for Jesus, leading them to Christ, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all Christ has taught us.

Let’s decide today that we will pray-connect-invite people in our world into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and the fullness of a life found in Him.

1 http://globalchristiancenter.com/strategy-and-planning/a-healthy-church-balances-the-five-purposes.html
3 “Christ”, from Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by Biblesoft.