

Make Disciples 5

We have spent the last four Sunday mornings examining the creative, unique ways Jesus presented the kingdom of God to those He encountered as He traveled from town to town. Often Jesus preached to or taught large groups of people, but many times He also encountered individuals through seemingly incidental meetings, as He passed through their towns. No matter what the higher, greater purpose, He always took time to interact, meet the needs and present the kingdom to individuals He met. There is much we have already learned to help us more confidently and effectively share the gospel as we go through our day.

Passing through

No cookie cutter

Be creative

Earthly to spiritual conversation

Meet needs before presenting the gospel

Today we're going to follow the same course of study but instead of examining the methods of the Master Evangelist-Jesus, we're going to study the techniques of one of His first generation students, Peter. Peter probably could be pretty reasonably compared to an average church member today. When he was with Jesus, in church, he was bold, courageous and outspoken for his faith. But when it came down to crunch time, at Caiaphas' home he denied he knew Jesus, at the garden of Gethsemane he slept, and at the cross he was no where to be

found..... Of course we know that after the resurrection Peter was transformed. At Pentecost he boldly preached the gospel and 3,000 were saved. But how did he do one on one, face to face with individuals? Was he equally bold? I'll honestly admit, it is easier for me, as an introvert, to preach to 250 people in a friendly Sunday morning crowd than it is to approach an individual I don't know out in the community with the intention of presenting the gospel.

Let's see how Peter did.....

1 Now Peter and John were going up together to the temple complex at the hour of prayer at three in the afternoon. **2** And a man who was lame from his mother's womb was carried there and placed every day at the temple gate called Beautiful, so he could beg from those entering the temple complex. **3** When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple complex, he asked for help. **4** Peter, along with John, looked at him intently and said, "Look at us." **5** So he turned to them, expecting to get something from them. **6** But Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I have, I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!" **7** Then, taking him by the right hand he raised him up, and at once his feet and ankles became strong. **8** So he jumped up, stood, and started to walk, and he entered the temple complex with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. **9** All the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** and they recognized that he was the one who used to sit and beg at the Beautiful Gate of the temple complex. So they were filled with awe and astonishment at what had happened to him.

¹¹ While he was holding on to Peter and John, all the people, greatly amazed, ran toward them in what is called Solomon's Colonnade. ¹² When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked to have a murderer given to you. ¹⁵ And you killed the source of life, whom God raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in His name, His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that comes through Him has given him this perfect health in front of all of you. ¹⁷ "And now, brothers, I know that you did it in ignorance, just as your leaders also did. ¹⁸ But what God predicted through the mouth of all the prophets—that His Messiah would suffer—He has fulfilled in this way. ¹⁹ Therefore repent and turn back, that your sins may be wiped out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and He may send Jesus, who has been appointed Messiah for you.... **A**cts 3:1-20 (HCSB) And Peter continued to preach a gospel message..... then....

1 Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests, the commander of the temple guard, and the Sadducees confronted them, ² because they were provoked that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in the person of Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ So they seized them and put them in custody until the next day, since it was already evening. ⁴ But many of

those who heard the message believed, and the number of the men came to about 5,000. Acts 4:1-4 (HCSB)

Learn from Peter:

1. Had a partner John was with Peter. It was Peter primarily who did the talking but they were side by side. I wouldn't say that this was or is a biblical mandate but it certainly is permissible and the benefits are quite positive. The partner can.....

be praying

contribute to discussion. (though it is best for one to be the primary speaker)

provide security/safety

*remember Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs

*we send our teams out in threes (one prays, one interacts with the kids or the dog, while one presents the gospel)

Application- The benefits of witnessing with a partner are significant. The only thing is, it may not always be convenient to have our witnessing partner with us all the time. Sharing the faith would likely have to be more intentional or scheduled. So it would be wise to come to the point of being comfortable sharing Christ whether with are with a witnessing partner or not.

2. Creative communication Did “silver or gold have I none” come out of the Peter’s witnessing manual or did it come from his Spirit led creative, compassionate mind? It was off the cuff, from the heart, beautifully creative communication at its best.

The man was looking for a few coins. Peter didn't have any but it he had something much more valuable, the Good News of Jesus. So simple! So brilliant!

Application- Why can't I think of something like that? If I could be so clever and quick witted I would be more confident and bold in my witnessing. You can be! And you don't have to have been voted most witty or most likely to succeed in your high school yearbook. You have the Holy Spirit.

25 “I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. **26** But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit—the Father will send Him in My name—will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you. **John 14:25-26 (HCSB)**

11 So when they arrest you and hand you over, don't worry beforehand what you will say. On the contrary, whatever is given to you in that hour—say it. For it isn't you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. **Mark 13:10-11 (HCSB)**

What is much more important than being a highly educated, well trained, eloquent orator is simply that you make your self available to God. Just say, “Here am I, Lord, send me.” Here I am, Lord, speak through me.

3. Met needs first It is interesting to note that the man didn't know, or at least didn't express what his greatest needs were. He thought his most pressing need was to get a few coins so he could get through another day. And I guess if you're hungry that is a significant need.

He had a greater need though. He had been lame since birth. He had never taken one step in all his life. He had relied on his

parents and others since childhood to take him to the busiest areas of town so he could sit there all day and beg. He was ignored, cursed, insulted, condemned and abused.

If he could walk, he could work. He could earn a living. He wouldn't have to beg. But that possibility had long escaped his even wildest dreams. He was doomed to the life of a crippled beggar.

What Peter, and John the silent partner, had to offer was the awesome, miraculous power of God to bring life, health and strength to the dead muscles and bones in this man's legs. It was instantaneous. There were not even any prayers offered. Peter said,

“In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!”⁷ Then, taking him by the right hand he raised him up, and at once his feet and ankles became strong.⁸ So he jumped up, stood, and started to walk, and he entered the temple complex with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

Was the man disappointed that he didn't get any coins? Of course not! My guess is he ran around giving away the coins he had already received to the other beggars. Then he spent a whole lot of time testing out his new legs as he praised God. He probably wouldn't have been welcome in a lot of churches today with all that dancing he was doing.

Application Once again, as frequently modeled by Jesus, a great human need was met prior to any presentation of the gospel. You might be thinking, “I don't think I can just say the words and someone be healed.” It is true that there was a special

anointing and power on the apostles after the resurrection that you and I may not experience, but healing wasn't all that Jesus or the apostles did. They fed, served, helped, and ministered too. And you and I can do that. If a man is hungry, suffering or just needs help, he won't be much interested in what we have to say until we make some attempt to meet some of his needs. And what is the greatest of all human needs? To be loved and accepted. We can do that!

30 Give to everyone who asks from you, and from one who takes away your things, don't ask for them back. **31** Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them. **32** If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. **33** If you do [what is] good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. **34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to be repaid in full. **35** But love your enemies, do [what is] good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. **L**uke 6:30-36 (HCSB)

4. Gained an audience If Peter had just started witnessing or preaching, a few people may have gathered around, or maybe not. But because such an astounding thing had been done for the crippled beggar it seems much of the city was drawn to the scene. This created a phenomenal opportunity to not just witness to a few people but to preach the gospel to a large number of people and hundreds, even thousands, were saved.

Application When we were making preparations to go to Cuba for the first time, I grew concerned about our inability to communicate with the pastor in Cuba to know what they needed us to prepare for. I finally talked to a brother who had made

many mission trips to Cuba himself. His advice, “Just do whatever you prepare and they will come.” And they did! Why? We gained an audience, even though they didn’t know us, because they understood our sacrifice to come and serve them. They came, they listened and learned, and many were saved. Whether it’s in Cuba, Guatemala, or next door, when you and I meet needs, help people, serve them, and most of all love them, we win the right to be heard. They will be much more open to our message of Christ. All we have to do is start thinking of others and their needs, and meet some them, and they will want to know why we’re doing what we’re doing. No creative communication is even needed at this point. Just tell them about the reason for the hope that is in you. And we might even attract a crowd.