

Speaking the Right Language

Dundee 6/24/2006

I. Great Commission - Mt. 28:

- A. It is not go... and make converts.
- B. We often use a language they don't know
 - We use worn out cliches, or broad statements.
 - Ask, "If I were an unbeliever, would this make sense."
 - "I was blessed" vs. I was happy and pleased.
 - Billy Graham -- successful by keeping the gospel simple
 - Phrases to avoid.
 - "I was born again" -- vs. I was given a fresh start in life (might be mistaken for reincarnation)
 - "I was saved" (Were you drowning) vs. My life changed at that moment.
 - "Jesus is my Lord (not a feudal system with Lords and ladies) vs. Jesus is my boss, life manager.
 - "I repented" vs. "I made a life change, a mental U-turn
 - "I was convicted" (Did you serve time) vs. I realized that...
 - "Holy Ghost" (Casper, Ghostbusters) vs. God's spirit.
 - "Hallelujah"

I. "They speak with Other Tongues" illustration.

II. The 99% problem

- A. Go into any Christian bookshop. Maybe 99% of the books and videos are written only for Christians, using Christian language, thought-forms and assumptions. Some Christians believe that "because it is Christian, it is evangelistic". But this is not usually true.
- B. The same thing applies to most Christian websites. 99% have been written with only a Christian reader in mind. Of course, some non-Christians will visit them too. And if they already have an interest, maybe they will stay to read. But this is like hoping that non-Christians will walk in off the street into our church services. Some do. But most will not. (And site visitors will usually leave in 5 seconds, if they cannot relate to a page.) So we often find that we are only touching the people who may have a Christian background or interest. We reach the 'once-churched', but we do not touch the 'never-churched'.
- C. The sad thing is that because some evangelism does happen successfully this way, Christians do not realize that we are not touching everyone in the society. And of course, some churches give evangelism and world mission a very low priority in their programs. Yet Wesley said, "You have nothing to do but to save souls."

III. Example of Jesus

- A. While everyone of Adam's race is just a sinner that needs God's love and forgiveness and salvation – the people we deal with must be approached on the terms they can understand. Was not Jesus the great example of this truth?
 - 1. When He was with fishermen – He talked about fish
 - 2. When He was with farmers – He talked about farming.
 - 3. When He met a woman of a different ethnic background (John 4). He talked about what she understood.
 - 4. When He encountered rich young ruler – talked about money.
 - 5. If they were thirsting – He talked about the water of life.
 - 6. If they were hungry – He talked about the bread of life.
 - 7. If they were guilty – He talked about forgiveness.
- B. **John 8** - Woman caught in adultery
 - 1. Jesus didn't rebuke, join in with the typical religious response, but valued her, gave her hope, and set her on a path of righteousness.
- C. **John 4** - woman at the well
 - 1. He reached out to talk to her
 - 2. He made her thirsty for more, not dumping a whole load of hay on her.
 - 3. He relied on the operation of the Holy Spirit
 - a) example: In Beijing.
 - 4. He didn't get sidetracked into the typical religious arguments

5. She led others to Jesus.
6. **Luke 7:36-50**, Woman who washed Jesus feet.
 - a) Jesus accepted her act of love and devotion.
 - b) The religious response was completely different
 - (1) Example: China Born Again movement thinking you needed to cry to get born again.
 - c) Her act of love to Jesus, and the faith that prompted that act of love caused Jesus to set her free from her sin.

IV. There is a language that the entire world understands.

A. Designed from the beginning

1. "The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a **blessing**. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'" Genesis 12:1-3, NIV.
 - a) **blessing** -- Berakah, blessing, prosperity, praise, gift, present, treaty of peace
 - b) **bless** - barak = to bless, to adore, kneel, praise, salute, congratulate, - to empower to prosper.
 - c) First God blesses... for a purpose... the the entire world may be blessed.
2. The World is hungry for words of affirmation, blessing. They just don't know where to look for it and their attempts with the church have often been far short of what it could be.

V. How we bless

- A. **James 3:9,10** -- with our mouth we bless and with our mouth we curse those made in the image of God
 1. **Eph. 4:29** -- that which builds up others to impart grace.
 2. **Gk.** blessing = to speak well of, to praise
 3. **Cursing** - to speak negatively, to devalue, to talk down one made in the image of God.
- B. **1 Cor. 13:7** -- Love looks for the best in people. We honor by looking for the best in people.
- C. **Heb. 10:24,25** -- "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but **exhorting one another**: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:24, 25, KJV.
- D. **Heb. 3:12,13** -- Encourage one another daily or else a heart is hardened and turns from God.
- E. ABC's of blessing
 1. Give **Attention** -- Consider one another for good... this needs to be intentional. Purposeful.
 - a) Hebrews 10:24, NIV. (Gk. consider, means to fix your eyes or mind upon something, to give attention to)
 2. Communicate -- tell them good qualities they see
 - a) **Heb. 10:25**, Gk. **exhorting**, parakaleo = to speak, encourage, strengthen through the words we speak
 - b) Your feelings - let them know how you feel about that
 3. Look with Faith: Visualize... see what they are becoming, eyes to see their potential
 4. Appreciate -- affection, smile, hug, share what you like about them from the heart.

VI. Cursing

- A. **Definition**: to speak a wish for evil, or misfortune upon a person, to treat someone in a way that devalues them, to cause damage to the identity and destiny of a person.
 1. James 3 -- says that we speak blessing and cursing.
- B. **Ro 12:14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not **curse**.
 1. to curse, doom, imprecate evil upon
- C. **Lu 6:28** bless those who **curse** you, pray for those who ill-treat you.
 1. to praise, celebrate with praises
 2. to invoke blessings
 3. to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers, to ask God's blessing on a thing, pray God to bless it to one's use, pronounce a consecratory blessing on
 4. to cause to prosper, to make happy, to bestow blessings on, favoured of God, blessed

5. oncedited, wicked, only came to watch.

VII. Conclusion

A. Commitment to repentance -- changing our mind about how we communicate and what we communicate

1. 70% of communication is non-verbal