



UPCOMING DATES ...

Choctoberfest – 4 & 5 October

GNI – 13 October

Young Families Birthday Bash – 22 October

Women's Encounter – 3-5 November

Man Church -7 November

Start In – Mondays 7.30pm & Sunday 4pm

Kids "Blast" (Kindy to Yr6) – Sundays Nights

Image Recovery – Every Thursday Night

2017 – CG Notes #25

STRONGER – Sharing Your Faith

Title: Share Your Faith

These notes are from Ps. Jack Hanes' book: Manifesto. If you would like a copy, it is available to purchase at the front desk on any Sunday.

2 Corinthians 5:19 NLT

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

God has entrusted us with this wonderful message of reconciliation – the amazing news that *if* we believe in Christ – place our trust in him, he will no longer count our sins against us. This

message is not just ours to receive but to also share with our family, friends – our world. This news is too good to keep to ourselves. We can't just confine it to the four walls of the church. This is our entrustment as Christ's Church in the earth today.

Isaiah 52:7 NLT

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns.

Who should we tell? Everyone.

Where should we go? Everywhere.

What should we tell them? That there is forgiveness of sin and eternal life for all who put their trust in Jesus.

Discuss:

The Gospel literally means “good news” and it truly is! To receive forgiveness of sin, right standing and a living, loving relationship with God is *definitely* good news. However, in today's world we are sometimes faced with actual, blatant opposition to Christianity and biblical truth. Much is wrongly presumed about Christians and Christianity.

- What can we as representatives of Jesus Christ *do* to break through false assumptions?

How can we proactively take the opportunity to shine as lights in darkness?
(2 Cor.4:6, Eph. 5:8)

Share Your Faith

Many Christians know that they have this responsibility but feel fearful about sharing their faith, and so they live with conflict. Many Christians want to make their faith known but don't feel confident or equipped.

Here are 5 keys to help you be an effective witness and an unashamed follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will use the letters of the word **S H A R E** to help us remember each one.

SINCERE

To be an effective witness you don't need to be perfect or brilliant but you do need to be sincere. You can be authentic, open, genuine and real. If it comes from the heart it will go to the heart. You don't have to know every answer to every possible question. You don't have to be a genius – you're not trying to share your brainpower – you're trying to share *your faith*.

You want to sincerely share your own personal experience with Jesus Christ. No need to embellish your story – you’re simply telling people what has happened to you. You’re telling about the good news that you have experienced for yourself - how Jesus Christ has forgiven *your sins* and what that means. You’re not just talking about something you have heard about – salvation is *something you know* and have experienced.

1 Timothy 1:5 NLT

The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience and genuine faith.

Discuss:

- Simply asked: what does knowing Jesus mean to you?
- How would you go about sincerely expressing this to someone who does not know Him?

HAVE a deep concern for souls

Romans 9:1-3 (MSG)

1-5 At the same time, you need to know that I carry with me at all times a huge sorrow. It’s an enormous pain deep within me, and I’m never free of it. I’m not exaggerating—Christ and the Holy Spirit are my witnesses. It’s the Israelites . . . If there were any way I could be cursed by the Messiah so they could be blessed by him, I’d do it in a minute.

Paul had a genuine concern for souls, for the people around him and in particular, for his fellow countrymen, the Jews. He described this concern as a sorrow, a deep pain, something that bound him. Paul understood clearly the value of a person and the eternal value of their soul.

It’s possible to become desensitized to people and not carry, like Paul a genuine concern for those who are lost. It’s easy to become comfortable in our own relationship with God and not be concerned for anyone else. Some have gone so far as to believe the lie of Universalism that says we all end up in the same place anyway.

Acts 4:12 NIV

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name in heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

John 14:6 NLT

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Romans 10:14 NLT

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

Seek to have a genuine concern for souls. We need to allow God to stir up in us a genuine passion for the eternal well-being of others – a passion that will see us break out of our personal comfort zones and anything else that would hold us back from sharing our faith.

Love versus fear

Fear is what holds some people back from sharing their faith. Fear limits us and sometimes incapacitates us. Fear is real but the love of God is greater. Love for God and the love that comes from God is able to cause us to overcome fear. Fear is strong but God's love is stronger. Paul took great risks and endured many hardships for the sake of bringing the Gospel to those who had never heard. Love can empower you to do something that fear says you cannot do.

Discuss:

- What kinds of things do people commonly fear when it comes to sharing the Gospel?
- Discuss your answers and how the love of God and love *for* God can help you overcome your fears.

ACTION

If we are going to share the Gospel effectively then we have to take action. We have to make a move. We have to step out. It's great to *pray*, and it's great to *prepare* but at some stage we need to step up and *proclaim*. We need to share the Gospel – to act on our faith – to put “legs” on our love. We must go and show people the love of Christ and tell them how to be saved.

Not much happens until we start to move – until we step out in faith. Of course, it's God's power and love that saves people but he uses *our feet* to get there and *our mouths* to proclaim His message.

Taking action by faith moves God. There's something about that action that causes God to move and create miraculous encounters. Are you waiting for God to move? Perhaps he is waiting for *you* to move!

Mark 16:20 NLT

And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.

Discuss:

You may currently be very active in sharing your faith or perhaps you need a bit of a push in the right direction?

- What suggestions do you have for one another to take action in sharing your faith?
- What could you do as a group? A project? A BBQ and invite friends? Invites to a church event?
- Discuss what you could do together to take action.

RELY on the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:14 (NKJV)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Colossians 4:5-6 (TLB)

⁵Make the most of your chances to tell others the Good News. Be wise in all your contacts with them. ⁶Let your conversation be gracious as well as sensible, for then you will have the right answer for everyone.

As children of God we have the privilege of being led by the Spirit of God. As the Holy Spirit works in our lives He also works through our lives and He will lead us to opportunities to share our faith.

Anytime we have a chance to spend time with an unbeliever we should make the most of it. We should speak wisely, graciously and sensibly. And we can rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us to say the right thing at the right time. The Holy Spirit can help us to quickly get to the heart of the matter so that the person is ministered to by Him and they, for a moment, encounter God.

We need to be aware of the opportunities that God gives us and we need to rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us and empower us. Even now, the Spirit of God is working in lives, preparing opportunities for you this week.

Discuss:

- Pray for one another that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to the opportunities He is creating for each one to share your faith. Pray that your heart will be alert to these opportunities and that the Holy Spirit will give you the words to speak in each situation.
- Pray for any significant events in your future, e.g. family events, etc. where you already know there could be an opportunity for you to share your faith.

EXPECT results

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV)

¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

When we share the good news of Jesus Christ we should expect results. God's Word is powerful. The Holy Spirit is powerful. The Gospel of grace changes people's lives. We should expect amazing things to happen when we share our faith.

God's Word is powerful to accomplish God's purpose! When you put God's Word into someone's heart you know that it won't fail. Every time you speak God's Word you sow a seed. And the seed promises a result, a harvest. God said that His Word will not return empty. It may not produce a harvest instantly, but it will accomplish its purpose. We may not see the results immediately but we can be sure that God will achieve His purpose through His Word.

Expect people to respond to the Gospel. Expect people to do what *you* did. You received Jesus. Expect them to receive Jesus too. It's quite reasonable to anticipate that people want their sins to be forgiven and to be free. People *do want* to receive good news; most have already had enough bad news. The Holy Spirit will work in their hearts as you sow the seed of the Word of God into their hearts. Expect to harvest souls. Jesus said that the harvest is ripe and plentiful. There just aren't enough workers expecting a harvest.

Jesus said that we should pray that the Lord would send the workers into the harvest. (Matt 9:37-38). The challenge is *not the harvest*, it's the workers to *bring in* the harvest.

Only a few Christians ever take the opportunity to share their faith. Let's change that! At ImagineNations Church let's be a church family excited about sharing their faith and expectant for a harvest.