

OUTREACH AS A LIFESTYLE

The Key is Listening

Jesus on the road to Emmaus Luke 24:13-35

- v13 Two men traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus
 - v14 They talked as they walked
 - v15 Jesus drew near and started walking with them
- v17 They talked about current events that happened in Jerusalem
 - v19 They talked about the prophet Jesus who had just been crucified
 - v21 They talked about their shattered hopes
 - This was opening their hearts
 - v25 Jesus, who had been listening, used this opening to shift the conversation
 - v27 Jesus then talked about the Messiah from scripture
- v28 They arrived at Emmaus and invited Jesus to stay the night with them before He traveled on
 - v30 They prepared dinner and Jesus broke bread and gave it to them
 - v31 Then they knew Him - their eyes were opened
 - v35 They knew (recognized) Him in the breaking of bread

Outreach is as simple as walking beside someone and listening, listening to their conversation and concerns, waiting for an opportunity, a door that they open, and sharing scripture as it relates to their concerns - all very natural and not contrived (not planned or calculated, but rather spontaneous and natural, not labored). People are naturally private. But the more you let them talk about what's going on in their lives, and listen to what they are saying, at some point they may open a door, even just a crack, and you can then slip in the Word - the Seed! The seed is the Word of God. The seed is Jesus.

"Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak..."
James 1:19

"A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."
Proverbs 18:2

Conversation should be with every effort to “hear” what someone is saying, to “listen” to what they say. People tend to let down their guard when they believe you are really interested in what they are saying. And the door to their heart will open.

But, what seed?

“Decide now not to worry about what you will say. I (the Holy Spirit) will give you wisdom to know what to say.” Mark 13:11 ERV

“...do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”

“...in that hour...” Fresh! Not weeks ahead of time, worked over, smoothed out, and reworked. Messages that come from the Holy Spirit need to come from a person’s spirit, not his brain, education, or training, if they are to be life. Your brain, education and training can help you couch the message in language that is understandable and palatable, but the message itself is what the Holy Spirit gives you, in that moment.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. I give you peace, the kind of peace only I can give. It isn't like the peace this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid.” John 14:26-27.

And that’s how we are to walk, how we are to live, how we are to evangelize - in peace!
Not anxiousness.

This is being led by the Spirit! And while it is very spiritual, it is also very natural.

Evangelism happens best when it is an overflow of our Christian lives, within the regular rhythms of living.

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” 1 Corinthians 3:6

It is not our job to save thousands but to be willing to plant a seed in one or to water another as we go through life.

So, spread out!

You ARE salt.

You ARE light.

Don't hide it. Spread out!

"Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities. Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced." Isaiah 54:2-4

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Matt 25:35-40

Lord, when did we do this?

And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

These are all very natural, human efforts that reap bounties, the natural outflow of living life.

"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts." Zechariah 4:6

And you will doubtless come again rejoicing bringing a harvest with you. Psalms 126:6