

## MISSIONS POSSIBLE - "Come and See"

So many believers that I know feel like they are somehow excused from the Great Commission. Either they have believed it was a command that was only intended for the apostles or that it is directed to a specific few in the here and now. Either way, they don't see it as their personal responsibility to spread the gospel.

I believe a major part of the problem is that we think "*the work of evangelism*" is done by preaching from a pulpit in a church on Sunday or from a soapbox in a park. Yet, in actuality "*to evangelize*" is "*to announce*" good news anywhere, anytime. It may surprise you to know that one of the best examples of this principle is found in **Psalm 66**.

**<sup>1</sup> Shout with joy to God, all the earth! <sup>2</sup> Sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious! <sup>3</sup> Say to God, "How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before you. <sup>4</sup> All the earth bows down to You; they sing praise to You, they sing praise to Your name." Selah. ("Pause and listen\_ think on that.")**

Talk about announcing good news! This is a general *declaration of the goodness and the mighty power of God*, and a call for others to acknowledge it. Maybe you don't realize how natural this can be. A modern equivalent might be responding to a good report with: "**God is good\_ all the time.**" The opportunities to do this are endless. Think about it. Someone says, "*The doctor says it isn't serious.*" / "*My cancer is in remission.*" / "*I passed my test.*" / "*It's a beautiful day.*" We can say "**Praise the Lord.**" In **Jeremiah 5:24** we are told that we should '**Revere the LORD our God, who gives autumn and spring rains in season, who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.**' Even when what we hear is devastating: "**I know God is grieved.**" / "**He'll sort it out in time.**" / "**God is just\_ and though I don't know when or how, He will repay.**" / "**He is my strength in times of trouble.**" I can do that. You can too. Read on...

**<sup>5</sup> "Come and see what God has done, how awesome His works in man's behalf! <sup>6</sup> He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot-- come, let us rejoice in Him. <sup>7</sup> He rules forever by His power, His eyes watch the nations-- let not the rebellious rise up against Him." Selah**

Okay, not so many natural openings for this kind of talk\_ but there are more than we might think. Point to the heavens\_ whether that harvest moon, or the brilliant sunset, or the vibrant colors along the banks of a river\_ the handiwork of God is all around us. **Point to His providence** in the past. Maybe you won't have much of a chance to speak articulately to your neighbor about the way He parted the Red Sea for the Israelites to escape into Egypt or the drying up of the Jordan for them to cross over into Canaan\_ but you can tell the story to your kids and your grandkids. You don't even have to know all the minute details\_ just tell them the highlights. God will be praised. And it may be a good time to remind them He's still providing for us. "**He Himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.**" (**Acts 17:25**) Pick up now in **verse 8**:

**<sup>8</sup> Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of His praise be heard; <sup>9</sup> He's preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. <sup>10</sup> For You, O God, tested us; You refined us like silver. <sup>11</sup> You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. <sup>12</sup> You let men ride over our heads; we went thru fire and water, but You brought us to a place of abundance.**

Here we go. Can you relate any of *how the Lord has intervened in your lifetime?* What has He done for your church or for your family? Has He not healed and helped? It would be foolish to suggest life has always been easy\_ especially when we have rejected God and His instruction. In fact, it's worthwhile to tell others how our selfish decisions sometimes brought misery rather than peace. But, could we not also

tell a friend or a neighbor about how God answered prayers? Could we tell them how He has brought us through difficult times? That when we called out to Him in repentance, He saved us?

In **Psalm 138:3** David says: **“On the day I called on You, Lord, You answered me.”** Listen closely to this next part.

**<sup>13</sup> I will come to Your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to You-- <sup>14</sup> vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble. <sup>15</sup> I will sacrifice fat animals to You and an offering of rams; I will offer bulls and goats.” Selah**

Here, the Psalmist *promises to serve God and to fulfill the vows he had made* to Him. Who hasn't called out to God at some time or another\_ offering a bargaining chip? Oh, we don't view it that way. But we ask Him to rescue us or deliver us or restore something to us\_ saying that if He does, we'll never forget it. We'll praise Him forever. We'll serve Him with all we got. Yet, we often lack the follow through. So our testimony seems empty. Think a moment. Can people see that we are truly grateful for what God has done? Do they see us devoting our time, talent, and treasure to Him? Can they see that we are more than talk? In **Psalm 51:12ff** David declared that if God would forgive him and restore to him the joy of his salvation that he would make greater sacrifices to God and teach other transgressors. It seems that he may be doing that now. Read on...

**<sup>16</sup> “Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what He has done for me. <sup>17</sup> I cried out to Him with my mouth; His praise was on my tongue. <sup>18</sup> If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; <sup>19</sup> but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. <sup>20</sup> Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld His love from me!”**

This is personal. And it should be. Too often we talk in generalities. We tell people *“God so loved the world,”* but we fail to be moved by *how much He loved us*. He knew us and loved us before we knew Him. He put a plan into place before we were even born to send His one and only son to save us from ourselves. And in the fullness of time, that's exactly what He did.

In **Romans 5** the Apostle Paul writes: **<sup>4</sup> God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. <sup>6</sup> You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Talking with a young woman the other week, I stressed that whenever I begin to feel discouraged by present circumstances or overwhelmed with worry or fear, I look to the cross. When I do, I remember the incredible love that God has for me. Though I may not understand why things are going the way they are, I know that He will not abandon me in my distress. He will bring me through it.

My daughter in Michigan sometimes gets overwrought with concern about things in her life. It can be a health issue, a concern at work, or a problem at home. Many times her heart is hurting. When she calls me I can rarely change her circumstances. But I listen and I pray for her. I assure her of my love and remind her of God's love. It seems to help. That's often the way it is for me when I call on my heavenly Father. He answers\_ and He listens. Though He can change things when it's for the best, He does not always give me what I want. Having said that, He always gives me the love that I need. In fact, through His Spirit, He pours His love into my heart. He can do that for you, too.

There should not be a one of us here who cannot tell a neighbor or a friend of God's great love for us – and how He blesses us again and again. He has done great things.