

Sermon – Saturday July 3, 2021

Rev. Randi

When Jesus sent his disciples out as missionaries, he delegated some of His authority and responsibility. He gave them the power to heal others and to cast out evil spirits in His Name. Jesus also gave them the responsibility to do this. In sending the disciples out, he gave them a trial run of what he expected of them after ascending into heaven.

Jesus expects the same of his modern-day followers -- us. Those who share in this faith in Jesus share in His authority -- that means us. Jesus exercises his kingly power by sharing it freely with people like us who come in faith. Jesus expects us, in turn, to go out and share that faith with others.

Now, I know we all get anxious when we think about having to share our faith. We see the sometimes coercive and manipulative methods that some evangelical ministers and their flock use to get people to “accept Jesus.” We don’t want any part of that.

Jesus calls us to a more gentle way of sharing that comes out of being in a relationship with God and other people. We just share Jesus with them in conversation and actions naturally and intentionally. And we are prepared for and look for opportunities to share Jesus when these opportunities come along.

I once heard a story about an Episcopalian laywoman who worked in a Christian bookstore. One day a Jewish person walked into the store. When she asked if he wanted help, he said, “Yes. I want to know about Jesus.”

She directed him to the place in the store where all the books about Jesus were kept, but he said, “No, don’t show me any more books. Tell me about what you believe.”

Being an Episcopalian, she shuddered a bit, thinking about what to say. Then, finally, she gulped and opened her mouth to tell him what she believed. (Lindvall, pg 216)

While this may seem like a unique occurrence, I don’t think it is. While the man asking outright is unusual, we have people watching and listening for us to tell them about Jesus more often than we think. So,

Suppose you were that woman. What would you say if someone asked you to tell them what you believe about Jesus?

I’ve asked the ushers to hand out some pencils. I invite us to take a few minutes and jot down one or two phrases or words that you’d say in response to a question of what you believe about Jesus. We’re not going to take these up at the end of the time -- this is for you. These are your notes. This exercise is a way for you to prepare yourself for the responsibility Jesus has given you to share in His ministry.

Perhaps you'll want to include notes on some things you've learned about Jesus from the Bible or sermons. I also urge you to include notes on your personal experiences of when Jesus was with you, guided you, and helped you. The Bible is essential because it informs our faith, but people have argued for centuries about interpreting the passages about Jesus in the Bible. No one can argue against your personal experience, however. Sharing your experience of who Jesus is a powerful way to tell others about who Jesus is.

I'll give us a few minutes to jot down some thoughts.

Hopefully, you've made some progress toward knowing what you would say if someone walked up to you and asked you to tell them about Jesus. I invite you to continue working on this throughout the week and update it from time to time as you experience more of Jesus. Being ready to share our stories of Jesus helps us to see more easily opportunities to do so. We don't have to wait until someone asks outright like the Jewish man in the bookstore. We can sense when someone needs to know Jesus and the best way to express the thoughts we've written on this paper.

Jesus's disciples have received the authority and responsibility from Him to go out and tell others about him and to spread His healing grace to everyone they meet. Some will accept what we tell and show them; not all will. Yet, that responsibility for sharing is ours. As disciples, we are to go out into the world, spreading Jesus all around.

Lindvall, M. L. *Feasting on the Word Yr B*. Edited by B.B. Taylor et al, KY ed., vol. 3, Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 2009. Accessed via *Logos*.