



Reflecting On A New Compassion For The Lost

Monday, February 11, 2008

Play The Music With Your LIFE... Sing The Words With Your LIPS

"I love this place!" No, not McDonald's...I'm talking about Northwest Bible Church! I love entering into the courts of the Lord with you on Sundays as we seek to give unto Him the glory that is due His name (Ps. 96:8; 29:2). Really, it is just a thrill for me!

And don't you sense it? Don't you sense that the Spirit of God has hijacked our church right now through this New Beginnings series? And, I'll just tell you, if we're ever going to get hijacked, I'd just as soon it be the Holy Spirit, as any person that I can possibly think of! In fact, I can't think of anything that would be more thrilling in life, than knowing you were being hijacked by the very Spirit of God Himself, being taken to the destination of His choosing! And that's where I feel that we are right now. How awesome is that?

Now, let's see if we can contextualize where we are...

The New Beginnings series was designed to address the five areas that encompass and touch each of the relationships of our lives. Namely...

Our relationship with God..."A New Passion For God"

Our relationship with our Family..."A New Priority Concerning The Family"

Our relationships at Work..."A New Attitude At Work"

Our relationships with the Lost..."A New Compassion For The Lost"

Our relationships in the Body of Christ..."A New Connection To The Body"

I think it's important for you to realize, however, that these are not just some random subjects that the pastors sat down and talked about including in this series because we thought they might be relevant to peoples lives. I wish we could claim that we had some stroke of "genius" that came over us that caused us to have the insight to know just how relevant these subjects actually were, and that not only did they need to be addressed, but that they needed to be addressed in this very order!

Again, I wish we could claim that we were actually that brilliant, but the cold hard facts are—we just aren't! In fact, to be absolutely honest with you, we didn't actually come up with any of this. We copied every bit of it from another ministry. This has been such a powerful series, and so used of God in our church, I just felt that we needed to set the record straight, and come clean about how this series actually came to fruition in our church. I hope this won't disappoint you, but, yeah, we copied this series straight from another ministry...the ministry of the Apostle Paul! The subject matter for this series was lifted right out of what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to the church of Colossae about what God intends for the life of every believer once they've been saved (Colossians 3 and 4). If we had any

stroke of "genius" at all, it was simply in the fact that we thought that since God used these very subjects, in this very order, in the local church in Colossae in the 1st century, that maybe He would use it in our local church in the 21st century! And my, oh, my—He certainly has!

And I say all of that, to get you to realize that that is the reason Pastor Harrell's message yesterday dealt with the subject of God's desire to use us to reach the lost people in our world with the gospel! It is very simply the next subject that God deals with in this letter that we are using to guide us through this series. Reaching people with the gospel was the subject of yesterday's message because reaching people with the gospel is the next thing that flows out of a very obvious progression of how God intended the RISEN LIFE of Christ to actually operate in the life of a believer, and in the life of a church. God shows us that it flows like this...

Our relationship with Christ, that He talks about in 3:1-17, is to be so PASSIONATE and so INTIMATE, that it dictates what we seek (3:1-4); what we do with our bodies, and how we deal with our bodies (3:5-7); how we don't think, and don't act, and don't react (3:8-9); and how we do think, and do act, and do react (3:10-14). And, not only that, but it dictates the ruling of peace in our hearts (3:15); and the dwelling of the Word of Christ in us (3:16), so that now, the Spirit and the Word of Christ controls every word that comes out of our mouths (3:17a), and every deed we do in, and through, and with our bodies (3:17b).

You see, you take a man or a woman who is relating to their Savior on that level of intimacy, and with that kind of passion, and the impact that has on how they relate to their spouse and their children is monumental! Men in the home fulfill their role of picturing the real "husband" in their relationship with their "bride" (Col. 3:19; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25). They fulfill their role of picturing the real "father" in their relationship with their "children" (Col. 3:21; 2 Cor. 6:18). Women in the home fulfill their role of picturing the church (the Bride), as they lovingly, willingly, and willfully submit themselves to their husbands (Col. 3:18), just as the church submits itself to Christ (Eph. 5:22-23).

And then, take the man or woman who has that kind of relationship with Christ, and has allowed it to permeate every aspect of what life is like in their home, and thrust them into the "real world" of their workplace, and immediately, the world is impacted! I mean, it has to be! They became "light" in a world that is not only dark (Acts 26:18), but is growing darker by the minute (2 Tim. 3:13). They become "salt" in a world that is, likewise, decaying at an unbelievable pace (2 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 4:1). And all of a sudden, the power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16) is unleashed, as it bursts forth out of the four walls of our church building, and out of the four walls of our homes, out into a vast sea of souls that desperately need someone to communicate to them the message of the gospel. And that man or woman becomes effective, because the message of the gospel is communicated, first and foremost, through their LIVES... and then, through their LIPS, as they actually proclaim the gospel.

I think that's what the psalmist was talking about in Psalm 40:3, when he said...

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God:
many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.

Did you catch that? He put a song in my "mouth"—and many shall "see" it. Say what? How do you "see" a song? I think the point is this...There is a message God wants to give to the people of the world. The message is the gospel...and it is "good news"—something the world desperately needs! But, God has chosen to communicate the message in song...a "new song." And through our LIVES, we play the beautiful music of that "new song". And though the tune comes out different in all of us, it is so melodious and captivating, it causes those around us to want to listen to the words of the song. And then, through our LIPS, the message becomes clear, and it's almost as if the world hears us singing it!

The psalmist says that the result is, "many...shall trust in the Lord." Wow! What an incredible way to get the message to the world!

And I think that's the overarching message God is presenting to us in Colossians 3 and 4. The reason the Holy Spirit of God inspired Paul to write what he did in this next section of Colossians 4 (4:2-6), is because reaching people with the gospel is the natural outgrowth of a life that is so surrendered to the lordship of Christ (3:1-17), that they have allowed it to revolutionize what takes place in their HOME (3:18-21) and what takes place at WORK (3:22-4:1). It's almost as if God is saying, "Okay now, when your life is playing that music (3:1-4:1), here's how to open your mouth and actually sing the words to the song" (4:2-6).

Now, tomorrow we'll begin allowing God to give us "voice lessons", as it were, out of Colossians 4:2-6. But, for our hearts to be prepared to absorb it, I think we need to be sure that we've absorbed what God gave to us yesterday morning through Pastor Harrell's message.

Remember, our goal today is to do two things relative to the message that was preached yesterday. First of all, it is to REFLECT. WE want to take out our notes from yesterday's message, and allow the Spirit of God to take us back to the things He was using to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" us (2Tim. 4:2). And then, secondly, our goal is to RECALIBRATE. In other words, we want to submit ourselves to Christ's lordship in our lives, and the authority of His Word, by allowing the Spirit of God to make the adjustments necessary to line our life up with the standard of His holy Word.

Perhaps the following questions could help you as you seek to both REFLECT on what God was saying to you, and how to RECALIBRATE your life based on those things.

1. If our purpose in still being on the earth is to be a part of the "HARVEST"...
 - a. What "grade" (i.e. A - F) would you give to yourself for how you've been fulfilling that purpose in the last year?
 - b. What would you say are the top two things that have kept you from totally fulfilling that purpose?
2. Pastor Harrell talked about how that in Christ's coming to earth, "The Son of God voluntarily became the servant of man."
 - a. Would the people in your HOME think of you as a "servant"?
 - b. Would the people you WORK with think of you as a "servant"?

**If you are unsure about the answer, a great way to find out, is to ask them!*

3. We learned yesterday, that in terms of our witness, there are two types of Christians—Those who talk ABOUT the lost—Those who talk TO the lost.
 - a. In the last year, have you done more talking ABOUT the lost, or more talking TO the lost?
 - b. What would you say is the place that would seem the most obvious for God to "provisionally" give you the opportunity to actually talk TO lost people?

**If there is not an "obvious" place in your life right now for God to give you the opportunity to actually talk "TO" lost people, what COULD BECOME that place in your life?*

4. Pastor Harrell talked about becoming "INTENTIONAL" in terms of building relationships with lost people.
 - a. Who are three people that come to your mind when you think about becoming "INTENTIONAL" in developing relationships with those in your circle of influence?
 - b. Spend time praying that God will "open doors" for you to become "intentional" with them today.

Let me also challenge you with the words to another song that God has consistently used in my life through the years. This is an "oldie", but definitely a "goodie" ...Looking Through Your Eyes...

Let me see this world, dear Lord
As though I were looking through Your eyes.
A world of men, who don't want You Lord,
But a world for which You died.

Let me kneel with You in the Garden
Blur my eyes with tears of agony
For if once I could see this world the way You see
I just know, I'd serve You more faithfully.

Let me see this world, dear Lord
Through Your eyes, when men mocked Your holy Name
When they beat You, and spat upon You, Lord
Let me love them, as You loved them, just the same.

Let me stand, high above my petty problems
And grieve for men, Hell bound eternally
For if once I could see this world the way You see
I just know, I'd serve You more faithfully.