

# Keep It Simple

**1 Corinthians 15:1-5** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you - unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

This message, Jesus' death for our sins and resurrection according to Scripture, was "of first importance" to Paul. Sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? "But didn't Jesus appear to Mary before Peter? Aren't there other contradictions in scripture?" Or maybe someone would respond, "You actually believe in that? What other evidence do you have outside of the biased Biblical narrative?"

Is this partially why you hesitate sharing the "good news?" Are you afraid of what others may ask or think? Are you afraid you don't know enough? Or do we simply struggle with the desire to share the news because we've become jaded or lukewarm?

Allow me to spend more time on the first obstacle: *fear*. At least for today, I'd prefer to encourage those who have a desire to share the good news. I say this all of the time for yours and my benefit. We have to harmonize the Bible. This is true with any subject, because if we don't, we risk painting an inaccurate or uncompleted picture of God's will in our lives. This is true regarding spreading God's word.

## For example:

- **2 Timothy 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
- **2 Timothy 4:1-5** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
  - Who is this written to and does it make a difference?
- **Ephesians 4:11-12** And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,
- **Colossians 1:28-29** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me.
  - Who's the apostle and does it make a difference?
- **Matthew 28:18-20** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Who was Jesus talking to at this point?
- **Acts 8:1,4** And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles . . . Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.
  - Now, who scattered and preached the word? Yes, so I do believe that we all have an important role to play. I also believe it can be tough and scary.

#### Other Examples:

- **John 1** - Jesus gathered His first disciples, who reached out to their loved ones.
- **John 4** - The woman at the well
- **Mark 5** - Demon possessed man. Go and tell them
- **Acts 2** - Message of Jesus' death proclaimed to those who killed Him.
- **Acts 8** - Philip preached the good news to the eunuch.
- **Acts 17** - Paul preaches to non-believers in Athens.
- **Acts 26** - Paul preaches to King Agrippa who should have believed the prophets.

What's the point? The point is that no one passage does it justice. Why? Because everyone is at a different place regarding their life choices and knowledge. There are only two universal truths: all have sinned and all need Jesus. Outside of that . . . you never know what you'll encounter. Some are ready to have meatier discussions than others. Some people are ready to receive the message while others are not. That's the reality. **You do your best and leave Him the rest.** We plant and water, but ultimately, God gives the increase. Sometimes it will be discouraging while other experiences will leave change your life. That's just how it goes. God wants to see us try because we love the message and believe in the help. Because we care about others and want the Lord to help them.

#### The Cards:

Today we're handing out some cards that our sisters, Bailey Armstrong and Kristal Ford put together. Many of you, like them, have had cards to hand out to others you come into contact with. Here's what they are and what they are not:

##### They are:

- Something to break the ice.
- A resource to more material.
- An invitation to visit.

##### They are not:

- Your main source of evangelism.
  - YOU are the one that peaked their curiosity. YOU are the one they have made a connection with because YOU are walking in Christ's footsteps.
  - Reminder: while it is true that non-believers and outsiders can hear the truth when we gather (**1 Corinthians 14:23-24** If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.), it is good to remember that our primary reason for assembling is for Christians to offer God acceptable worship, remember the Lord's death, and encourage one another.