

'Do Over – The Call to Share the Gospel'

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 4:18-22

April 7, 2024

- Simple set up
 - o It dawned on me that I've been doing this for 15 years now.
 - o I've made my fair share of mistakes in ministry and I thought it would be fun to go back and look at them now.
 - o But I've also seen the church of Jesus Christ historically get things wrong from time to time.
 - And it always comes when a group of people like me, gets something wrong about Jesus.
- Because what the Bible gets right about Jesus, it also gets something right about the church.
 - o Acts 2 – The Church in its earliest form was a jubilant group of Jesus followers.
 - People saw them, saw what they were doing and they wanted to join.
 - We still see some outbreaks of this, but they're actually getting to be few and far between.
- We want to get back to that, so let's figure it out.

My Mistake

- I took the kids to their sports practices early on.
- One season, the kids' basketball practices were at the same gym sequentially.
 - o This was a great blessing!
- Well, this one time I got to chatting with this guy.
 - o And eventually we got to talking about church.
 - o I started out talking about all the good stuff.
 - At the time, we had tons of stuff for kids, there was a young adults' class to join, it was a happening place.
- And you could tell, the guy was interested, he started asking questions about what time we worshipped how to get involved.
 - o IF ONLY I HAD STOPPED WHILE I WAS AHEAD, Y'ALL.
 - But I didn't.
- At the time, we had this one out of control Elder.
 - o She had decided that she was just going to take over a renovation project and she did. Spending, no kidding, 100k more than the Session had approved.
 - But you see, I started talking about that. DRAMA
 - The dude tuned out.
 - Never came to our church.

Evangelism

- It's a shame because I was doing a pretty good job of evangelizing that dude.
 - o There it is, there's that nasty "E" word.
 - o You know, the word that as soon as the pastor mentions it, we immediately think he's going to send us out door-to-door.
- I won't send you out door to do because of another mistake I made.
 - o Evangelism party
 - o Baptist Church story
 - We left a dude feeling dead on the inside to come back and celebrate that he was suddenly found.

Jesus is concerned with the outcast, the downtrodden, the poor, the sick.

And when it comes to the appropriate evangelistic practices, it's fair to say that we have a pretty shameful history in the church of Jesus Christ.

In 1251, the Pope at the time issued a decree. It probably didn't seem like a huge deal at the time but it surely did over time. It was called "Ad Extirpanda" and it allowed for torture in converting non-Christians.

- That's right, the church of Jesus Christ suddenly allowed people to be tortured to bring them to Jesus Christ.
- The Inquisition reached its full terrible bloom under the Spaniards,
 - o There, under Ferdinand and Isabella authorized by Pope Sixtus.
 - The church has hidden much of the data but we know that at least 5000 people were killed with estimates into the tens of thousands of people tortured.

This is quite a far way off from our reading this morning.

There, Jesus comes and sits with people and they begin following Him.

In short, it shouldn't take too much to get people to Jesus.

- **Matthew 28:19-20** – *"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."*
- **1 Peter 3:15** – *"...But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect..."*
- **1 Corinthians 2:1-5** – *"And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."*
 - o Do you see, presentations of the Gospel should always be gentle and aiming to connect with people?
 - o Remember the early church, it connected with people.

Number one Reason Why People Don't Come to Church

- The abandonment of religion.
- Lack of school prayer?
- Nope – the people in the pews.
 - o We can't be perfect.
 - o But we can be more loving, more attuned to people's problems.

Kindness

- Find ways to be kind to people.

Let the Holy Spirit convict people of their sins.

- You don't have to.