

Personal Evangelism

Howard Hendricks

I. The Sensitivity of Christ in contrast to the callousness of my own heart.

A. Biblical Example One - Mark 5:25-34

1. Jesus Christ could distinguish between the touch of faith and the indiscriminate press of a mob.
2. The greatest blight on your ministry will be the blight of a barren professionalism.

B. Biblical Example Two - Acts 8:5-35

1. Philip in Samaria was not such a big time operator that when the Lord said, "Go to a desert place," that he was not eager to run.
2. Your greatest asset can become your greatest liability.

II. The Serenity of Christ in contrast to the feverishness of my own life.

A. Biblical Example - Mark 1

1. The busiest recorded day in the life of our Lord.
2. Have you learned the barrenness of business?
 - a. We are infected with the idea that Jesus Christ is impressed by what we do rather than by what we are.

III. The Satisfaction of Christ in contrast to the selfishness of my own heart.

A. Biblical Example - Mark 2:14-17

1. Jesus Christ found all of His delight in doing the Father's will.
 - a. He was primarily concerned about His responsibility, not His reputation.
 - b. Does the Father find delight in you?
2. Most are more concerned about our reputation than our responsibility.
 - a. The self-centered individual is always concerned about his reputation.
 - b. We want to win them, but the last thing in the world we want to do is go across the street and befriend them.

B. Contemporary Example - The Gospel Blimp by Joe Bayly.

APPENDIX

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Peter Marshall describes 20th Century Christians in these words: *They are like deep sea divers; encased in suits for many fathoms deep marching bravely forth to pull plugs out of bathtubs.*

- The Challenge
- The Cost
- The Conflict

Those identifying hallmarks of First Century Christianity are often conspicuous by their absence today. When you read the pages of New Testament and relate what you read to what you see today in the church you are forced to conclude that the relationship is one of contrast, not comparison. This has forced two questions in my mind:

1. What is a New Testament Church? I've never found a church that doesn't claim to be one. But what are the distinguishing characteristics of a New Testament Church?

2. What is the life of Christ? If the Christian life is the life of Christ reproduced by the Holy Spirit in me, then what is the life of Christ?

I believe every believer ought to drench his heart and mind with a study of the gospels. The gospels don't present Jesus Christ alone [as to] what He did when He was here. They present what Jesus Christ is doing now that He is here. And if the life of Christ is to be reproduced in me then it seems to me that I must study with intensity and with the direction of the Spirit of God precisely what that life involves.

Here are principles designed to provoke, not paralyze, your thinking. They will have many loose ends. I hope they have some live ones.

1. The Sensitivity of Christ impresses me when I study the gospels in contrast to the callousness of my own heart.

Mark 5 - Part of the miracle segment of Mark; Mark's coronation hymn. Four miracles are cited which are calculated to produce belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Mark 5:35 - The woman had an issue of blood for 12 years.

This lady had the *many, many, all, nothing, worse* disease. A hopeless case.

Jesus Christ could distinguish between the touch of faith and the indiscriminate press of a mob. Can you? The greatest blight on your ministry will be the blight of a barren professionalism.

Even in the process of Christian service we lose the growing edges of a sensitive life of a heart that beats for people.

What do people do to you? Do they bother you?

Ever go to a football stadium and see it packed with 60,000, 70,000 spectators in the stands? What's this do to you?

My Scriptures say that when Jesus Christ saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion on them because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep – now notice – having no shepherds.

That's the scariest thing in all the world. We got specialists in every field in the church today except shepherds. Plenty of preachers. An overdose of teachers. We've got people who are professionally competent in everything. But you'll go a long way to find a heart that is broken for people; a crucified heart.

The heart of Jesus Christ.

Are you willing to take time to meet an individual need?

Acts 8. Example: Philip in Samaria. The Billy Graham of his day. The whole city of Samaria came out to meet him. But he was not such a big time operator that when the Lord said, "Go to a desert place," that he was not eager to run. Leave the big city campaign to talk to one individual (who, incidentally, may have opened the continent of Africa to the gospel).

He got on the chariot, turns to the man and he says, "Do you understand what your reading?" There must be something about the graciousness, the heart winsomeness of this individual that when he said, "Do you understand what you're reading?" Immediately he responds, "How can I except someone guide me." He had just been to the temple. He had just heard the expositions. But he needed someone to sit down and to guide him.

Your greatest asset can become your greatest liability.

As an outsider, to me, one of the greatest contributions the Navigators have made to me in areas where I have been has been a man-to-man ministry.

"But we only had 17 show up tonight for the meeting." It might be the greatest meeting you've had. In fact, you might wish you had only five to really get next to some people.

2. The Serenity of Christ in contrast to the feverishness of my own life.

Mark 1. The busiest recorded day in the life of our Lord. There are only 52 recorded days in the life of our Lord in the gospels. [It was] crowded with the performance of miracles, with teaching, with ministry to others.

No one except he who has stayed a public ministry understands the drain of people on an individual; that if you minister to people it will take something out of you. It's a lot harder than physical work. Remember our Lord was human. He grew weary. But in verse 35 I read a verse that stands me away.

Read Mark 1:

The morning after the busiest day recorded in the life of our Lord. If there ever was a time when our Lord would have been tempted to sleep in—and what a rationalization! "Father, I was busy yesterday in Your

service.” But so high on His priority list was getting alone in fellowship with His Lord that the morning after that day He retires to spend time in the presence of God.

I have studied the gospels. I have never found once when Christ was in a hurry, yet He always had time to do the Father’s will. I’m always in a hurry and seldom seem to have time to do the Father’s will.

The problem is we have confused activity with accomplishment. Have you learned the barrenness of business?

The average person is so busy is that it is an anesthetic to deaden the pain of an empty life. It’s a cover. So you keep going, because if you stop you’re liable to think. We are infected with the idea that Jesus Christ is impressed by what we do rather than by what we are.

What you do will never impress an infinite God. If it is done for the glory of God it will be done by His power that the glory might be His, now yours. But He’s impressed by what you are because this will determine what you do. Remember that Christ chose His disciples first, that they might be with Him, then that they might be sent forth.

I am coming to appreciate that the greatest leveler is time. It’s the one thing we have in common; we are not all created equal. There are differing gifts, no two of us have the same gifts precisely the same measure. Some men have 12 cylinders on which to operate and another one has one. At the seminary I find that the man who has 12 cylinders is invariably comparing himself to the man who has one. He’s operating on four so he’s four times as sharp as the other individual but he’s far below what God called him to be.

The only thing God calls on you to do, is to be what you are. Not Billy Graham, if that’s not your gift. Not to be a brilliant genius, if that’s not your gift. And to be that, with faithfulness. This will be determined by how you use your time.

President Kennedy has no more time than you do. The man of God who is getting the job done has no more time than you do. Jesus Christ on earth had no more time than you do. In fact, He only had 3 ½ years of public ministry, completely sufficient to get God’s will done. So that at the end of 3 ½ years of ministry He could say, “I have finished the work.”

3. The Satisfaction of Christ in contrast to the selfishness of my own heart.

Of Christ it could be said, “I do always those things which are pleasing to Thee.” On three occasions a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here is the One in whom I find all of My delight. (And this is the secret!) Jesus Christ found all of His delight in doing the Father’s will. And the Father found all of His delight in the Son who did His will. Does He find delight in you?

I think the reason why the Lord was completely satisfied in doing the Father’s will was that He was primarily concerned about His responsibility, not His reputation. The self-centered individual is always concerned about his reputation. “Well, what will they think? What are they saying?” What difference does it make? Do you expect an unregenerate mind to appraise your life with a Biblical perspective? Do you expect a carnal pigmy to evaluate your life as significant when his is trivial?

Mark 2:13-17

We have the most beautiful portrait in all the Word of God. He found Levi, and He called him, and he

followed Him. Out of appreciation for his new found faith Levi throws a feast. Now this is very interesting. Who's he going to invite? Pharisees? They wouldn't walk down the same side of the street with a publican. The only people he could invite were his old cronies, the publicans and sinners. This is the most beautiful scene in all of the Scriptures. Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel, sitting and eating in the midst of publicans and sinners. And if that's not attractive to you that's a proof of how far you are removed from Christ. The only thing that blurs the picture is the Pharisees.

Mark 2:16

Their superficial conclusion was that He mixed with sinners, therefore he was a sinner. He says, "No sir, I'm a physician, and physicians go where sick people are, not because they enjoy the company of the sick but because that's their mission."

The greatest weakness in the church today is a failure to penetrate a lost world with the gospel, because most of us are more concerned about our reputation than our responsibility.

Joe Bailey's book, *The Gospel Blimp*. It should be on the required reading list. I require everyone of my students to read this. The story of this is a lulu. You'll wince, you'll cry, you'll scream. Be careful where you read it. It's so close to home you'll think he's talking about you, and he may be. The whole thesis of the book is: personal evangelism without personal involvement.

We want to win them, but the last thing in the world we want to do is go across the street and befriend them. You/We cannot reach a world across a chasm. Christ was known as the friend of publicans and sinners. That's distinguished company in which to move.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will light some fires in your heart that will never go out.

We thank You, Father, that Jesus Christ stooped and took the form of a man, became obedient unto death, even the death of a cross, was willing to forfeit His reputation in order to fulfill His responsibility.

We thank Thee for the life of Christ recorded in the gospels.

We pray that Thou would make us more diligent students of that Word and then see the Spirit of God that loves to reproduce Christ in us develop the same characteristics...

And we ask, each one in our respective places, for the greater glory of God.

We ask in Jesus name.

Amen.