

2022 Discipleship Series:

Sharing Jesus

If we were looking at one another over a cup of coffee at my kitchen table, I would ask you what you think is the hardest part of sharing Jesus with others. I think the answers might be different for each of us, though there would probably be some common threads: fear of rejection, opportunity, don't want to come off as weird, lack of courage to speak up, or not being sure what to say. I'm sure the list could go on. I think the hardest part of sharing Jesus is simply sharing Jesus, right?

A disciple of Christ is commanded to go and make disciples. How are you doing with that? There is no judgment or condemnation in that, only a heart-felt question to you. Perhaps we make too much of the whole process.

Perhaps we fail to realize the eternal importance of it. Perhaps we think someone else—anyone else—is better qualified. I'd like to open the conversation as part of our Discipleship series because we cannot really flourish in the Kingdom until we learn to share Jesus with others. And, it is not as hard as you might think.

Followers of Jesus can simply follow the example Jesus set for us in sharing Himself with others. Jesus met people where they were. He had ordinary conversations with people He met wherever He met. And Jesus told stories. Stories about the Kingdom of God.

I don't think Jesus had a program for encouraging other believers or an evangelism program for non-believers. I believe Scripture is clear. Jesus simply talked to people. He built relationships with people. He saw them at their point of need and spoke to that need.

Sharing Jesus with others can be as easy as just having a conversation. Do you talk to other believers about what God is teaching you or how you are seeing Him move in your life? If not, this is a good place to start. If you're not comfortable talking to other believers about Jesus, then the chances are pretty good that you won't ever jump into the unknown territory of talking with someone who doesn't know Jesus yet. It's just too risky.

So, how do you start a conversation with another believer about spiritual matters? How about this, "What has the Lord been teaching you lately?" or "What is your favorite Bible verse?" and then ask them why or simply "How is your walk with Christ these days?" "Is there any way that I can pray for you this week?" is another good conversation starter.

Do you have stories about how God has worked in your life? Simply ask the Holy Spirit to give you opportuni-

**"Therefore
go and
make
disciples
of all
nations..."**

Matthew 28:19a



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3 Questions to Ask Yourself

To Help You Share Jesus

By Julie Dibble

Each new day is an opportunity in His Kingdom. There are so many confused, lost, and rebellious people in our midst who have not received the greatest gift of all time, Jesus Christ Himself.

When I was brand new in my faith, I wanted to talk to everyone about this wonderful God who showed me this love I never knew. And prayer? I was so excited to talk to my Father in heaven. I had lost so much time not believing He was real.

Do I still have that same level of excitement? I know there are times when the Holy Spirit's fire in me is blazing, and I am sadly aware of the times when I am too far away to be abiding in His presence. However, as we grow in Christ, we learn how to surrender so that His power and glory manifest in our weak human selves. We know in our brains we are supposed to share the Good News. His faithfulness has proved true in our own lives. Yet, there is SO much more to living with and loving our Jesus. If you tend to think a lot, take a moment to breathe. Remember Holy Spirit dwells within you, release control to Him.

After you have allowed yourself to surrender, here are three questions to ponder with the Lord about this command to share Him with others:

1) Do I live my life differently than an unbeliever? Do oth-

ers see His light, hear His truth, and know that I know my God?

Oswald Chambers states plainly how we ought to be:

“As His disciples, our lives must be a holy example of our message. Even the natural heart of the unsaved will serve if called upon to do so, but it takes a heart broken by conviction of sin, baptized by the Holy Spirit, and crushed into submission to God’s purpose to make a person’s life a holy example of God’s message”

(March 10, My Utmost for His Highest).

Remember, messengers of God are not created overnight, BUT we cannot wait for perfection. For if we do, it will be too late to tell someone else about His love and forgiveness.

2) Am I truly open to how God wants to use me to share His Son?

Some of us are quick to justify why we are not good candidates to evangelize. *Someone else can do it better; I am an introvert; I tithe and work in the food pantry, isn't that enough?* A second related question in this section points us to the person of Jesus: Is Jesus enough reason/purpose/wisdom for me to go tell others about Him? Jesus did the most selfless and amazing thing on that Cross, not just for you, but for all. We must keep seeking Him until we say confidently, *Yes, Lord, I will speak Your name without shame or fear.* When you are surrendered, He will lead you, for He knows exactly who needs a hug, a Word, or a friend

to have coffee with. I have found that meeting people and talking with them is good, but it is not best for the Kingdom. Be alert for opportunities to carry a conversation in a spiritual direction. For instance, someone may have mentioned they went to church when they were young. Remember they said that. You have permission in the name of Jesus to bring it up again and ask a follow-up question. There is no requirement to quote Scripture, but you must be sincere in your right relationship with the Lord. Mario Murillo is an author/evangelist. He puts in bold,

“Be full of faith and vision:

The Holy Spirit can reignite the American spirit through everyday people who choose to shake off the rampant pessimism and negative talk and who build great things for the glory of God. ‘Going beyond’ means living outside the mundane”

(p.129, Do Not Leave Quietly).

3) In Luke 7:18-19 we learn how John’s disciples are quite chatty:

“John’s disciples told him [John] about all these things [Jesus raising a widow’s son to life]. Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’”

Not only were they excited to share the miracles they witnessed, but the job did not end with excitement. John instructed them to go back, and ask questions.

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3 Questions

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Here, ask yourself when I do share about Jesus, am I excited /passionate/ anticipatory, and am I asking questions? Think of the last blessing you received, the last prayer He answered in your favor, the last 'only God' occurrence in your life. Now, pray and ask with whom you shall share this.

As we read on in this Luke passage, Jesus answered the two who came asking:

"At that very time, Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, 'Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.'"

(Luke 7:21-23)

Jesus never leaves Himself without testimony. We will forever have important, life-giving truths to share about Jesus. His Word provides a tool, not only to equip us for sharing but to speak to those in our midst. More often now, when I am ministering one-on-one, I will ask the other person to read the Scripture. Last evening, I had a zoom call with a broken soul who is struggling in the darkness. Though the reading assignment was in Hosea, the Lord led me to Psalm 23. This person read it aloud, and it provided a springboard for the conversation.

Each and every heart is different. Some may refuse altogether any spiritual conversation, but that does not mean we stop sharing. Rather, it means the opposite.

Take these questions in this blog to your Lord, to His Word. With trust in Him, seek His direction for where, for whom, and for how He wants you to share.

"This is how we know that we live in Him, and He in us; He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them, and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us."

(1 John 4:13-16)



Julie Dibble is a servant of her Lord Jesus Christ. Together with her husband Jason, they have two sons, Braedon 17 and Jackson 15, and one rescued pup named Rocko. Julie preaches, writes, hikes, and prays for God to use her daily in this broken world. Currently, she is on staff at Newberrytown Church of God as Director of Outreach and Evangelism.



Sharing Jesus

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ties to share your stories and then pay attention as you go through your day. Ask for the courage to speak up. Start with people you feel really safe with. I am fairly certain that the more you bring the conversation to the Lord, the easier it will become.

Asking questions is a great way to

get a conversation started. Jesus did that all the time. It only takes a little forethought to ask other questions after "How are you?" or "How's the weather?"

Friends, I know how easy it is to keep silent or to think that you couldn't possibly share with anyone about your walk with the Lord. Believe it or not, at one time in my life, I was extremely shy. I didn't talk to most people about anything. I have learned to share with others one conversation at a time. Over the years it has become much easier for me. It won't happen overnight or even in a week, but over time you can take tiny steps of faith in the right direction.

I would like to challenge you this week to be mindful of opportunities to turn the conversation to the Lord with some of your closest friends or family. How I would love to meet back in a week to hear your stories!

Lord, teach us to have conversations that matter with people. Help us learn to talk to others about what You are doing in our lives and to ask them about what You are doing in theirs. Help us to have the courage to grow and the faith to believe our conversations can have eternal significance. We know you want us to share the Gospel with others, Lord. Please forgive us for not learning how and help us to begin this week by simply sharing with a trusted friend. Help us, Holy Spirit, to be able to encourage someone this week with our story. Help us to be willing and courageous enough to be salt and light as You have called us to be.

Living Boldly for Christ,

Kathy Faar
CGWM Director



Forgiveness, an Extension of Love

by Julie Dibble

The Pharisees were no friends of Jesus. They stayed close but with evil intentions. Jesus did not shun or avoid them. In His dealings with Pharisees, we have much to learn about how to stand firm when in the presence of a wolf in sheep's clothing. That is perhaps another blog.

In Luke 7, Jesus accepts the dinner invitation from a nameless Pharisee. The scene opens with Jesus reclining at the table. A native of this town, a woman crashes the party, not for herself but for Jesus. With her jar of alabaster, she adorns her Savior's feet with her tears, wipes them with her hair, and pours the perfume upon them. What a vivid picture of an intimate connection with our Lord!

Has any one of us slowed down enough to worship Him in the presence of enemies?

The Pharisee seizes the opportunity to belittle the woman and Jesus:

**When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is ... that she is a sinner."
(Luke 7:39).**

Let this be a reminder not to look at others' sin. We must take care of our own. The Pharisee not only neglected the customary welcome of Jesus into his home but outright joined with his religious counterparts to deny the Messiah to His holy face.

"You did not pour oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven ... as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." (Luke 7:46-47)

Jesus here is not suggesting there are gradations of forgiveness. His finished work on the Cross is just that ... finished.

However, here we hear our Lord calling to us to pour out love, not just prayers and petitions. Pure love and adoration to our Lord are welcome on an occasion, but especially when we sin. This woman walked unashamed into a place where she was immediately on everyone's radar. None of us know whether the whimpers of her heart were trepidation or even concealed shame.

If she felt any of the latter, the feelings did not have the victory.

Faith, trust, and worshipful love went before, strengthening her.

Jesus publicly forgave (v.48) and showered her with love.

Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

If Jesus had never said a word, this woman would still have left His presence full. Her Lord had received her

sacrifice of tears, purchased perfume, and time spent with Him.

Jesus affirmed her and blessed her with peace.

Forgiveness lives in us, we who believe. We shall not take it, or our Lord, for granted.

When we sin, even the slightest stray thought, the overspending on self, the prideful moment in our marriage, we shall fall at His feet and love Him.

Give unto Him who is worthy of the honor, time, and intimacy.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (Luke 6:38)

Let us pray:

Oh, we are in awe of how You revered this sinful woman. Your ways are not ours. Your love is deeper than we could ever imagine. Help us, Lord, to not allow sin to slip by as if it doesn't matter to You. You, Jesus, took the nails in Your hands and feet, where ours should have been. Lord, together we lift Your name on high. We praise Your holy name. We ask You to reignite our love for You

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Reflections on Discipleship

From Triennial Conference 2022

By Sally Green

DISCIPLESHIP is a word that has always caused me to grapple with its true meaning. Often, thinking about its meaning causes me to feel inadequate and somewhat guilty as if I just need to do more to qualify as a true disciple. Basically, discipleship means following one's example and teachings.

Following Jesus involves living our lives as closely to His example as we can possibly do. It is a life-long process as we keep His example before us as found in His Word and revealed to us through His Spirit.

Brad Brisco, our General Conference speaker this year, made some comments that caused me to approach the meaning of discipleship a bit differently than I had been used to seeing it. In defining discipleship, he seemed to focus more on what God was doing through me rather than what I was doing for God, a new concept for me to consider. As a disciple, I needed to discover what God is doing, how He wants me to participate, how I am to be obedient and discerning, and that I need to reflect on His will being done.

One of the takeaways from Brad's teaching was that one should not overlook the "little things" in which you are involved. Those "little things" may touch others' lives in ways that you will never be aware. For instance, sending cards, making meals, hosting small groups, and giving cookies are a few examples. Often, we feel that we are faithful disciples when we are doing "big" things, things that are recognized as "important." But God uses us most often in the everyday, mundane circumstances of our lives to work through us to affect the lives of others. Having the attitude of servant leadership rewards our actions as we choose to serve the Lord by serving others.

In the spirit of our General Conference theme, Reimagine, I suggest that we learn to reimagine our acts of discipleship in keeping with 1 Peter 4:10 which says "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." Also, we should follow the admonition of Colossians 3:17 "Whatever you do whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord

Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

One final takeaway from Brad Brisco is the idea that discipleship actually begins before the conversion experience. It is all a process of becoming a disciple or a follower of Jesus Christ. **A disciple makes other disciples.**

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."
1 Peter 4:10*



Sally Green has been involved with Women's Ministries for many years. She served faithfully on the leadership team and has written many articles for our CGWM Newsletter in recent years.



Forgiveness...

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like we had at the beginning—like this woman had with the alabaster jar. We need You now more than we did yesterday or even this morning. In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN



Julie Dibble is a servant of her Lord Jesus Christ. Together with her husband Jason, they have two sons, Braedon 17 and Jackson 15, and one rescued pup named Rocko. Julie preaches, writes, hikes, and prays for God to use her daily in this broken world. Currently, she is on staff at Newberytown Church of God as Director of Outreach and Evangelism.



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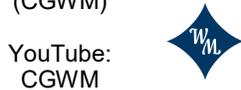
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If you or your women's group have not been a part of Thank Offering in the past and would like to, all you need to do is get a container and start thanking God for the many blessings he gives you each day. Look for our reminders to send in your offerings in April. We are better together! Thank Offering barrels may be obtained by contacting Kathy Foor or ordering online at [Berlin Packaging](#).

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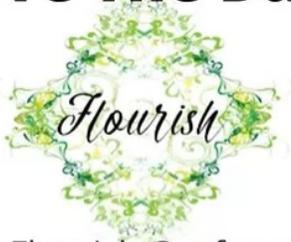
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