



Series Title: Stewardship – Making our Whole Lives Count for Jesus!

Weekly Title: Stewardship.....THE GOSPEL

Date: Sunday November 27

Bible Passage: Acts 1:8

Purpose of Preach: To encourage and challenge people to share the gospel.

Introduction:

In this final talk on Stewardship we are looking at how we are to steward the gospel in our lives. Jesus says in Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives He empowers us to be witnesses. The Greek word used here is “mar-tose” It was used in a legal sense for being a witness and being evidence, but what I find so challenging is that it where we get the English word “martyr” from. The Holy Spirit will come and empower us and fill us with so much love for this broken world that we will literally lay down our lives to tell others about Jesus. But then Jesus gives us the strategy for this Spirit empowered mission. Go into “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth.” Four focuses for this mission: i) LOCAL – into Jerusalem. Jerusalem represented the place where the disciples denied Jesus. Peter denied Him publicly, but at the cross only John was left with Jesus. Jesus is saying: “I want you to start in the place of your greatest failure. The place where people know you, you can’t fake it or spin it or act it.” If we are going to reach the whole world, each one of us has to reach our world. We start with those we are closest to, our family and friends. We start with those we spend much of our week with, so we start with our work colleagues. ii) REGIONAL/NATIONAL – into Judea. Judea represented the region or even the nation the disciples belonged in. We are called to not just have a heart for those we know but for our villages, towns and cities. iii) UNIVERSAL – into Samaria The disciples would have been deeply challenged by Jesus telling them to go into Samaria. There were huge historical cultural and religious tensions between the Jews and the Samaritans. Jesus is calling us to go to those we do not naturally click with, agree with or even like. This Spirit filled mission is universal, it is to love everyone regardless of lifestyle, background or nationality and to share the love of Jesus with them. There are no people groups off God’s radar when it comes to Grace. iv) GLOBAL – to the end of the earth. Our mission is not simply to the local, regional, national but it is to whole earth. This mission is to pray for the spread of the gospel across this planet. This is the strategy for the Spirit empowered mission and so how can every single one of us get involved and join this adventure? I want us to grasp three words that J John uses to teach us how to share the gospel; Pray, Care, Share.

#1: PRAY

We can all be on this Spirit empowered mission in prayer.

a) *We need to pray intentionally.* Intentional prayer is praying for everyone in our world that does not yet know Jesus. We need to be intentional, disciplined and commit to if

needed long term prayer. We pray that: Jesus would reveal Himself to them. That He would illuminate their minds and their hearts. That Jesus would speak to people in dreams. That Jesus will send Christians into their world at work and friendship groups. That Jesus would give us natural opportunities to share Him with them.

b) Maybe we need to write out prayer lists of people that we are going to commit to pray for each day. May sound too regimented but we have to be intentional and focused as we cry out to God for these people we love. Maybe you need to recommit to praying for people to be saved. Keep going, don't give up.

Application

- a) Why not write out a prayer list today and commit to praying over it each day.
 - b) Perhaps meet with one or two friends and pray together over each others lists.
 - c) Pick up an Open Doors Watchlist or Prayer resource and commit to praying over it each day.
 - d) Be encouraged afresh, keep going and don't give up praying.
- But when you pray you cannot stop there, because praying always leads to caring

#2: CARE

We can all be on this spirit empowered mission by praying but also by caring for people.

a) We are called to love people and live lives that demonstrate that love.

The Holy Spirit pours into us the love of the Father so that we can love others with His love. The greatest sermon anyone will ever preach is how they live their lives. Our actions speak far louder than our words. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

b) Could it be this morning we need to come and ask God to help us be people who care? Would your family say you witness to Jesus in how you love them? Would your neighbours see Jesus in how you treat them? Are we known as people of compassion who are generous and willing to be inconvenienced? Are we too busy to love people? As a church we want to love our communities and our world and care for people. Join a team, give into Make a Difference.

#3: SHARE

Finally, we can pray and care but we also need to share.

a) If people are going to come into a personal relationship with Jesus then we must share the gospel. We need to have the courage and love to share the message of sin and the cross and the hope of Grace. Every single Christian is called by God to be a missionary. Sometimes we say "I am going on a mission trip" but everyone of us should be going on a mission a trip, and to do this the majority of us just need to walk outside and go next door. It is a lot cheaper and you do not need to do a year of fundraising. We are building a bridge over which Jesus can walk into the lives of those around us. As J John says "A missionary is not someone who crosses the sea, it is someone who sees the cross."

b) When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? When was the last time you shared the need for forgiveness and glory of the cross? Are we even prepared to take an opportunity to share when it arises. Could you articulate the gospel clearly? Could you share the gospel in one minute? Could you share your testimony in one minute? (Why not give an example by sharing the gospel in one minute yourself?)

APPLICATION

Prepare little cards on which people could write out 10 people they are going to pray for. Encourage people to invite all ten to a Christmas service in your location.