



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Reach Out”

Ps James Lowe – April 6, 2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Did your family ever do any community service when you grew up?
- Did you attend church or another religious organization as a child? If so, did you ever serve in it?
- What non-profit organization do you especially admire, and why?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

We reach out to others because God reached down through Jesus Christ to save us from our sins.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21 ESV)

Approximately two billion people on the planet are identified as Christians, but their impact seems quite small given their numbers. The twelve apostles and the small band of disciples, on the other hand, were able to "turn the world upside down." What then are Christians doing today? Are many or most on strike?! In America only 3% of churches grow through evangelism, as per Dr. Brooks' doctoral research, which has also been confirmed in other studies. We need to accept God's charge and commission

In reaching out to others we need to aim for the following:

1. Communication: We need to pray for and talk to others about the Gospel.
2. Conviction: We need to pray for and talk to people long enough for conviction to settle in their hearts.
3. Compulsion: We need to pray for and talk to people until their conviction turns into a compulsion to take action to follow Jesus.

John 4:1-42 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well

Communication

Jesus initiated a conversation with a Samaritan woman. Given the historical-cultural context, this is astounding. Rabbis were known to not even speak to their spouses in public. To this day Orthodox Jews separate the genders when praying at the Wailing Wall of the ancient Second Temple in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Jews viewed Samaritans negatively. They were descended from other ethnicities who had intermarried with the northern Israelite tribes, and they had engaged in religious practices and embraced

religious doctrines that were in serious violation of God's revelation given in the Jewish Scriptures. In spite of these two barriers (female, Samaritan), Jesus wanted to talk to her.

Conviction

Through his conversation with her, Jesus kept turning the subject to spiritual things. This piqued her interest, even if she was still somewhat argumentative. Then God revealed that she had been married multiple times and was now living with a man who was not her husband. Jesus did not speak harshly to her, but engaged her in deeper conversation that addressed these important issues in her life. He didn't shrink from talking to her about her sin, but did it in such a way that showed genuine interest and concern. As a consequence she was convicted concerning her sin and concerning Jesus being a prophet. As the conversation continued she grew in conviction that Jesus is the Messiah.

Compulsion

When conviction had done its full work, she left and went into town, so that she might go and bring others to meet Jesus. She was compelled to action. Although the Bible doesn't explicitly state it, it is implicit that the woman responded to Jesus in such a dramatic way that her own life was transformed, including her sinful lifestyle. Scripture tells us that she influenced the entire town, and that many people came to believe that Jesus is the Christ.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What are the main obstacles that keep you from sharing your faith? What practical steps can you take to overcome them?
- Ps James asked everyone at church to write down the names of ten people they want to pray for and either invite to an Easter church service or share the Gospel with. Did you or will you compose such a list? How do you hope to approach them with the Gospel or a church invitation?
- Was it easy to come up with ten names? If not, how can you intentionally meet more unchurched people? If it was easy, how many other names would you like to add to the list?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- That God would bring unchurched or backslidden people to mind that we can pray for and invite to church or share the Gospel with.
- That God would help us to be aware of any evangelistic opportunities in our sphere of relationships and to make the most of them.
- That God would draw many people to his Son and grant them repentance and faith this Easter.