

Please welcome...

Preaching for us again today is **Chuck Harris** from Calimesa. Be sure to welcome him back and thank him...again!

Evangelism...What did Jesus say?

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.’” Matthew 9:37-38

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation’.” Mark 16:15

Evangelism...What did Paul say?

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16

December Birthdays

4 Clint Oster	17 Bill Brown	27 Sue Tanner
28 Jim Nichols	30 Richard Karns	31 Bob Pescador

(Note: if anyone is “missed” here, let Jim know)

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
 Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
 Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
 Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
(Vacant)

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Seizing Opportunities to Shine the Light to Strangers: Part 3

By Allen Webster

When this world’s houses, cathedrals, monuments, businesses, and stadiums have crumbled down, been burned to ashes, or been destroyed in storms, the souls we lead to Christ will be as valuable as ever.

Strangers

God has always looked out for strangers. Moses said, *“For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt”* (Deuteronomy 10:17-19). He commanded Israel, *“Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt”* (Exodus 22:21). *“Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt”* (Exodus 23:9). Moses named his firstborn son Gershom, which means “refugee” *“for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land”* (Exodus 2:22).

Not only were they to do no harm to strangers, they were to take steps to help them: *“And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God”* (Leviticus 19:10). *“When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow”* (Deuteronomy 24:20). The stranger that *“dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God”* (Leviticus 19:34).

One of the things that distinguished Abraham and Job as great servants of Jehovah was their attitude toward strangers. Abraham was gracious to the angels who passed his way before he knew they were anything but passing strangers (Genesis 18). Job said, *“The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveler”* (Job 31:32).

In the New Testament, blessings are pronounced upon those who are considerate of strangers: *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in”* (Matthew 25:34-35).

The Spirit commanded, *“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body”* (Hebrews 13:1-3). Gaius was approved of John with these words: *“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers which have borne witness of thy charity before the church”* (3 John 1:5-6).

Why does God place so much emphasis on strangers? Each stranger has a soul made in His image (Genesis 1:26). Each stranger is loved by God more than he can comprehend (John 3:16). Each stranger was purchased by the precious blood of God’s only Son (1 Peter 1:18-19). Each stranger needs to know about the most wonderful person who ever lived—Jesus (Isaiah 9:6; John 7:46; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 3:11). Each stranger needs to know that Jesus is coming back (Matthew 24:36 - 25:46). Each stranger will one day stand before God to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

God places emphasis on strangers, too, because we can never get the gospel to the whole world by teaching only those we know personally. There are presently about 2.1 million New Testament Christians in the United States, and there are 307,901,825 citizens. In order for each lost American to have an opportunity to be saved, each Christian must personally reach 147 on average. If American

Christians are to reach the whole world (6.8 billion people), then each of us has to reach 3238 people. Further, untold millions are dying untold. The death rate is at the highest it has been in the history of the world:

- 57.9 million people die each year
- 158,857 people die each day (66,000 people of these die having had no access to the gospel in their lifetime)
- 6,619 people die each hour
- 110 people die each minute
- 1.64 people die each second.

The Good Samaritan teaches us the lesson of tragedy benevolence and evangelism (Luke 10). Jesus’ parable was used to illustrate that our neighbor is anyone in need. Though it does not speak directly of evangelism, it demonstrates the principle that we should be ready to help all victims, any time. We should help them physically—getting them treatment for wounds and disease. We should help them financially—meeting their need for food, clothing, and shelter. We should help them mentally and emotionally—providing them counseling and professional attention for their inner wounds.

But most of all we should help them spiritually—saving the soul is infinitely more important than saving their bodies and minds. Redeeming them for God is far more meaningful than reclaiming them for society. This reminds us that the goal of all physical assistance should be to lead the person to Jesus for spiritual assistance. The applications from this example include reaching out to the victims of society (abused/abandoned children, battered women, sexually abused). We should not shy away from helping those who have been given up as unsalvageable by society.

Lydia is an example of stranger evangelism (Acts 16:14-15). She must have had to overcome her fear of a strange man who came up to talk to her. This teaches us that we should go where the people are. We should go where people are in the mood or frame of mind for religion and spiritual discussions (the Internet for instance). Lydia shows that professional and wealthy people also make prospects for conversion.