

Please welcome...

Preaching for us today is **Mark Perkins** from the North Clairemont church. Be sure to welcome him and thank him.

Evangelism...Important!

"...You shall love your neighbor as yourself..." Mark 12:31

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you..." Luke 6:27

"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you..." Matthew 7:12

"Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification." Romans 15:2

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 2

By Allen Webster

We must be bold.

When dealing with passing opportunities, we do not have time to work up our courage and go over exactly what we will say. It is usually a now-or-never, use-it-or-lose it, hit-the-ground-running adventure. Evangelizing strangers is not for the faint of heart. It is a good thing, then, that *"the righteous are bold as a lion"* (Proverbs 28:1). Peter and John were bold (Acts 4:13). The early saints prayed for boldness to preach the word (Acts 4:29); their prayer was answered (Acts 4:31). Paul and Barnabas *"waxed bold"* and determined to carry the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). Paul did not allow shameful treatment to stop him; he remained bold in the midst of suffering (1 Thessalonians 2:2; cf. Philippians 1:20). Paul rejoiced when brethren showed backbone (Philippians 1:14), even when from the wrong motives (Philippians 1:15-18). Deacons are bold (1 Timothy 3:13). In Christ, we all *"have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him"* (Ephesians 3:12).

It seems that Paul was fearful when evangelizing in the wicked city of Corinth, so the Lord spoke to him in the night by a vision, saying, *"Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city"* (Acts 18:9-10). Paul continued there for eighteen months with great success.

What can make us bold?

- Spending time with Jesus (Acts 4:13) in reading and mediating on Him from the Scriptures.
- Studying the Bible's teaching on fear. Jeff Clark observed that the phrase *"fear not"* (or the equivalent) is found 365 times in the Scriptures—one for every day of

the year. Among those Scriptures is this gem from Jesus: *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”* (Luke 12:32). God wants us to succeed in building up His kingdom!

- Remember the gravity of our work: *“We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace”* (2 Kings 7:9). Christians have news too good to keep! We must not be like shy teenagers sitting across the room afraid to ask for a date. We must summon our courage and just do it. Frederick Wilcox said: “Progress always involves risk. You can’t steal second with your foot on first.”
- Remember God’s promise to be with us (Matthew 28:20). *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Romans 8:31). J. Hudson Taylor said, “All God’s giants have been weak men who did great things for God, because they reckoned on God’s being with them.”
- Pray (Acts 4:29).

We must be knowledgeable (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18).

With stranger evangelism, we do not usually get a second opportunity. There is no time to go home to look up a scripture or find our notes from last Sunday’s sermon. We must be ready to give an answer in the moment of the question (1 Peter 3:15). This requires careful study on many topics, for we do not know where the door into the discussion will take us. It may lead us to discuss the moral decline of the country, or some political hot potato. We may meet someone that is struggling with marriage problems. Or we may need to discuss a doctrinal issue or just a Bible question on some fact or character. Therefore, the broader our knowledge, the better equipped we will be to be helpful and gain the confidence of others.

We must be personable.

A smile, a fit word (Proverbs 25:11), and a pleasing personality are useful tools in stranger evangelism. A man that hath friends must show himself friendly (Proverbs 18:24), and so must a man who wins a soul.

Opportunities

Opportunity is a wonderful word. Paul used it: *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men”* (Galatians 6:10). When we are constantly looking for opportunities to share

the good news, we find potential prospects all around. Paul saw the Lord’s hand in opening doors for evangelism:

- *“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries”* (1 Corinthians 16:9);
- *“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 2:12);
- *“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds”* (Colossians 4:3).

Opportunities must be seized because time is limited: *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest”* (Ecclesiastes 9:10). We must work while it is day for *“the night cometh when no man can work”* (John 9:4). We must redeem the time (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5). We must be *“zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:14). *“So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you”* (Romans 1:15).

Sometimes we lack opportunity, as the Philippians did who wanted to assist Paul (Philippians 4:10). Yet we may be able to increase our opportunities with thought and planning. Milton Berle said, “If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.” Like the friends of the crippled man (Mark 2:4), evangelistic Christians find a way to get the gospel into difficult places.

“If there be first a willing mind” (2 Corinthians 8:12; cf. 2 Corinthians 8:3; 1 Chronicles 28:2; Psalm 110:3), then amazing things can happen. The devil cannot keep the gospel from the lost—when we are willing to fight him (1 John 4:4). The average person who lives to be seventy years old spends his time in the following fashion (cf. Ephesians 5:16):

- 23 years sleeping;
- 19 years working;
- 9 years playing;
- 6 years traveling;
- 4 years unaccounted;
- 2 years dressing; and
- 1 year in church activities.

Church activities—including winning souls—is the only thing that will last. **“Lord, lead me to some soul today.”**