

Please welcome...

Preaching for us today is **Jack Wright** from Brawley. He has continued to be available to help us! Be sure to welcome him back and thank him.

Evangelism...Important!

“The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.” - Hudson Taylor -

“Someone asked, ‘Will the heathen who have never heard the Gospel be saved?’ It is more a question with me whether we -- who have the Gospel and fail to give it to those who have not -- can be saved.” - Charles Spurgeon -

November Birthdays

6 Ashley Tanner 10 Daniel Brown
17 Maureen Nichols 30 Karen Nichols

(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 1

By Allen Webster

Benjamin Franklin said, “If you want to be remembered after you’re dead, write something worth reading, or do something worth writing about.” Are you currently doing something worth writing about? Marcus Aurelius Antoninus said, “The true worth of a man is to be measured by the objects he pursues.” What object will we pursue this day—a paycheck, a win, a pleasure, an accolade, or a pat on the back? Perhaps all of these and others. But isn’t there something more exciting, more important, more significant, and more permanent?

Yes, we can pursue a soul today! In Jesus’ view, one of the most important pursuits in the world is a soul (Mark 8:36).

Seizing

The word gospel begins with “go.” It ends with “el,” which could stand for “everlasting life” (cf. John 3:16). What stands between the “go” and the “el”? “SP”. What stands between a sinner and heaven? Some Person. Will you be that person?

- If so, you will be one of God’s “stars.” Daniel wrote, *“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever”* (Daniel 12:3).
- If so, you will be counted a wise man (Proverbs 11:30).
- If so, you will be like Jesus (Luke 19:10), for Jesus loved to tell the story. Study His life and follow His footsteps as He traveled throughout all Galilee, *“teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom”* (Matthew 4:23). According to Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, at the time that Christ lived on the earth, there were about 240 villages in Galilee, so reaching every location there was no small undertaking.

Watch Him cover that same territory a second time (Luke 8:1). Read again as He made a third journey throughout all Galilee (Matthew 9:35).

- If so, you will bring great joy into someone's life (Acts 8:39).
- If so, you will start a celebration in heaven (Luke 15:4-7).
- If so, you will lay up for yourself great treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). Who is going to receive a warmer welcome in heaven than one who has sent another ahead?

What characteristics are needed to be successful in seizing opportunities to teach strangers?

We must be watchful (John 4:35).

Jesus said, *"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear"* (Matthew 13:16). Knowledge that there is a God in heaven whose providence is at work on earth makes the Christian's life exceedingly interesting (Romans 8:28; Esther 4:14). God knows what is going on in the hearts of earthlings (Proverbs 15:11; John 2:25; Hebrews 4:13). *"The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men"* (Psalm 11:4). He can arrange meetings between sinners interested in knowing the truth and Christians interested in teaching it. God brought Onesimus and Paul together (Philemon 1:15). God brought Philip and Candace's treasurer together (Acts 8:26, Acts 8:30).

Expectant might be a better word than watchful. If we pray at the beginning of the day for God to give us an opportunity to teach someone the gospel, we should expect an answer to that prayer. Jesus said, *"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"* (Matthew 21:22). Yet if we do not have our spiritual eyes open, we might miss the answer to prayer. An English proverb says, "Some men go through a forest and see no firewood." Like this, some Christians go through the day and see no prospects. They might let the person God arranged for them to meet pass by without even giving him or her a glance or greeting.

A management axiom illustrates this point:

- To look is one thing.
- To see what you look at is another.
- To understand what you see is a third.
- To learn from what you understand is something else.
- But to act on what you learn is all that really matters.

We must be flexible.

Most of us have full schedules—agendas, to-do lists, and appointments. Many of our opportunities to teach others will come at inopportune times. We have to be flexible enough to say whenever possible, "This is my priority right now. I'll make time for this conversation, study, and soul." One man said, "I have a sign on my mirror that I see every morning when I first wake up. It reads, 'What have you got going today, God? I'd like to be a part of it. Thanks for loving me.'"

Philip closed down a successful gospel meeting to go teach one man from Ethiopia (Acts 8:12, Acts 8:26-27). The Samaritan in Jesus' parable delayed his trip to help a man in need (Luke 10:33-35). This Samaritan stopped to help, and dirtied his hands by dressing the man's wounds. He put the man on his own beast, which meant that he had to walk. He took him to an inn, stayed the night, and left money to care for him in the days to come. He was flexible; he was unselfish (Matthew 16:24; Galatians 2:20).

For contrast, consider the priest and the Levite. The robbed man would have died just as much from their neglect as from the robber's wounds. They were not flexible. They did not want to get involved. Perhaps they had good excuses.

- "If I touch a dead man, I will be unclean and can't lead in worship."
- "I left late and I'm in a big hurry."
- "There are important matters which require my immediate attention."
- "My family is expecting me home soon."
- "There is nothing I can do; he'll probably die anyway."

We might call these characters the passing priest, the looking Levite, and the sympathizing Samaritan. Which do we want to be?