



January 2010

The Lighthouse Keeper

THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

When we think of evangelism, when we think of sharing our faith, I am sure there are several of your favorite verses that come to mind. Maybe one of these selected verses below would be your choice when speaking of evangelism.

Philemon 1:6 NIV – I pray you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

John 1:7 NIV – He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

Acts 10:42 NIV – He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

Acts 10:43 NIV – All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

2 Timothy 1:8 NIV – So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.

1 John 4:14 NIV – And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

But there is a section of scripture that you may have never considered to be an excellent tool for teaching on evangelism. It is in the book of Ecclesiastes and more

Hello everyone! As you have read in the last issue, Rev. Les Cool decided to step down from his duties as editor, researcher and writer of the “**Lighthouse Keeper**” Newsletter. Les has moved on to new ventures. And as I understand he is taking part in a new church plant! Please keep Les in your prayers.

In lieu of Les’ departure, I have answered the call to take over as editor, researcher and writer. So, at this point I believe introductions are in order. My name is **Bill Master** and I am a member of Trinity E.C. Church in Boyertown. I have had the pleasure of having Bishop Kevin Leibensperger as senior pastor before he was appointed Bishop and also in having Dr. Ken Miller, professor at Evangelical Theological Seminary as our interim pastor.

I was saved on November 8, 1991 in Trenton, NJ, baptized on December 29, 2009 at Pennridge Full Gospel Tabernacle in Blooming Glenn, PA and served there for thirteen years in many areas including young single adults group leader, cell group leader & worship leader. I started and ran a Men’s Bible study for two years (at the time in a small efficiency apartment), which grew to 25 men who regularly attended. For two years, I organized and lead a music outreach, which ministered to the unsaved at a Christian coffeehouse in Pottstown, PA Also while at PFGT, I had taken courses on Homiletics, Discipleship and Evangelism and had the opportunity to go on several short-term mission trips.

Currently, at Trinity EC in Boyertown, I serve as one of three worship leaders, coordinator/teacher of our adult Sunday school class (which

specifically in chapter 3. I know, you are saying that those verses have nothing to do with evangelism!

But I want to challenge you to read the following explanation and just maybe, you might change your mind. While I was asking the Lord what He wanted to speak through this newsletter, I began to have several thoughts go through my mind, one of which was, "There is time for everything." God has a plan and a time for everything; a purpose for everything under heaven. As I read through Ecclesiastes 3:11, seven of those verses stood out to me in regards to evangelism. Below is an explanation of how they relate to being witnesses for Christ and evangelizing the lost.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

- **V1.** *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:*
There is a time, a season for everything. Just because something worked last year, doesn't mean that's the way you will always do things. It may have worked for that moment in time but just as Bob Dylan wrote years ago, "The times they are a changing" and so are people. The way they think about religion, church, God, and Jesus Christ is much different now than people thought 20, 30, 40 and 50 years ago.
- **V2.** *A time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,*
A time to birth new ideas (born), a time to get rid of old ones (die); a time to implement those new ideas (plant) and change the "old way" of doing things (uproot)
- **V3.** *A time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,*
A time to put to sleep our defeats (kill) and to recover from them (heal); a time to change the way we "Do" evangelism and church (tear down) and develop new methods (build)
- **V5.** *A time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain*
A time to send out evangelism teams (scatter stones) and a time to bring them back together to discuss how things are going. (gather them) There is a time to embrace as a team, brainstorming new ideas and a time to refrain from embracing and to go out into our Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth to share our faith. (Acts 1:8 NIV)

originally had only three teachers and is now currently taught by eight teacher/facilitators), am involved in what we refer to as a Triad (Men mentoring Men) and every fifth Sunday, at a local assisted living residence in Sanatoga, I minister the gospel through worship and sermon. This group, which started with about six regular attendees, has reached as many as 25 people at a service with regular attendance of 12-15 residents. That may not sound like a lot but when you come to hold a church service right after their lunch (their regular time for their afternoon nap) that is pretty awesome!

Finally, as the new editor, researcher and writer of the "**Lighthouse Keeper**" newsletter, I am excited at the prospect of sharing what God's word has to say about evangelism, through quarterly devotionals, inquiring of you (pastors and church members) as what the Lord is doing in your lives and churches in the area of local evangelism and searching for those who are already reaching out to their communities around them and to find out what it is that you are doing and how it is impacting your community for Christ!

It is my desire that a hunger and desire burn in the heart of every Christian for the unsaved, especially in these last days and that we would encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today! (Hebrews 3:13 NIV)



- **V6** *a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away*
A time to search for places and ways to evangelize and when to move on; a time to decide what is working (keep) and what is not (throw away)
- **V7** *a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak.*
A time to go out beyond our comfort zone (tear) and a time to spend with the Lord to refresh our spirits (mend); a time to know when to listen and when to speak
- **V11** *He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

Everything is in God's timing, not ours. The times that are most successful and beautiful are those that the Lord ordains. Remember that not everyone understands scripture the way you do. They need to be taught.

Just as Philip learned from the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:31 NIV when Philip asked if he understood what he was reading, "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

DO YOU SWEAR TO TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH...



I was watching a Three Stooges Marathon on New Year's Eve and this one episode in particular got me thinking about how we share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

It started with Curly being sworn in before the court as Curly was asked the usual question before being seated: "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" After the usual Curly antics he replied, "Soitenly Judgey Wudgey!"

Today, I began to think, "What if we were sworn in every morning before we left our homes?" Imagine, Jesus standing before you and asking you "Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" Of course, we would probably answer, "Yes Lord!" and head on out the door. But I want to pose these questions: When living out our faith before an unsaved world, do we really tell the whole truth? Do our lives bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? When we share the Good News, do we share it wholly and completely?

There are many ways the Gospel is being shared today, but is every one of them the right way? Some preach like the old time evangelists hail, fire and brimstone – "Repent or spend eternity in Hell". Others, with a little more candy coating – "God has a plan for your life – a good and prosperous life." And yet others –

a prosperity gospel – "God will give you the desires of your heart – possessions, wealth, etc."

I've been reading several books lately on evangelism and discipleship that have caused me to rethink how I share the Gospel when I talk to people, teach or preach a sermon. If we examine the scriptures closely we will see clearly what it is the Lord wants us to share. Too many have become disillusioned by false or misguided teachings about what the scriptures say in regards to sharing our faith. Let's take a quick look at just a few scriptures and see what the Lord says.

2 Timothy 4:2 NIV – Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.

Matthew 12:36 NIV – But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

1 Peter 3:15 NIV – But in your heart set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Preach the Word, Be Ready, Be Prepared to give a reason for the hope that you have.

John 16:33 NIV – "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

2 Corinthians 6:3 NIV – [Paul’s Hardships] We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

Romans 8:35-39 NIV – Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither heights nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is certainly not a prosperity gospel! This is not a promise of the good life with no more struggles or hardships. It is a promise of facing trouble but also of promise that nothing can separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus. It is a Word of encouragement to preach the Gospel truthfully and to not put a stumbling block in anyone’s path so that you will not be discredited. If we preach the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, that will never be a concern.

Matthew 4:17 NIV – From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

Luke 19:10 NIV – For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

Matthew 9:12-13 NIV – On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘ I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Revelation 3:19 NIV – Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

Acts 4:12 NIV – Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

As we all know, the scriptures are very clear, we need to repent in order to be saved and that there is only one name by which we must be saved. And that name is Jesus Christ. Each writer wrote and spoke with boldness of the importance of repentance and of the people’s need of a Savior. It is our job to help people realize that they are the lost, the sick, and the sinners.

How have you been sharing your faith? I would like to offer some good reading.

I know some may not totally agree with what each of these books have to say or their methods of evangelism, but, pray with an open heart for the Lord to reveal to you what He wants you to glean from these books.

- 1) **BREAKING THE DISCIPLESHIP CODE (Becoming a Missional Follower of Jesus)** by David Putman
- 2) **THE WAY OF THE MASTER** by Ray Comfort
- 3) **FINDING COMMON GROUND** by Tim Downs

Each of these books is causing me to re-evaluate the way I share my faith. May the Lord stir up boldness in each of you and your churches in 2010 in evangelizing in a whole new way!



Thoughts and Experiences

I want to invite you to share your thoughts and experiences on Local Community Evangelism. I would enjoy spending time with you via email, phone or even in person, if possible, to find out What the Lord is doing in your church and in your community. Remember, we are “to encourage one another on toward love and good deeds – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25b) Send me an email at william.master@comcast.net or call me at (267)923-1009. Let’s encourage and build up one another with what we have experienced and accomplished for the sake of the call. May the Lord richly bless you, your church and your community in 2010!

In the next issue we will be hearing from our EC pastors in regards to the Local Evangelism efforts of 2009 and the plans for 2010. If I have not already sent an email to you please send me one so that I can send my questions to you.