CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JULY102021

Scripture Story: Matthew 10; Mark 6:7-11; Luke 9:1-6.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 37.

can i get a witness?



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

flashlight

"All over the field of Christ's labor there were souls awakened to their need, and hungering and thirsting for the truth. The time had come to send the tidings of His love to these longing hearts. To all these the disciples were to go as His representatives. The believers would thus be led to look upon them as divinely appointed teachers, and when the Savior should be taken from them they would not be left without instructors" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 351).

keytext

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick."

(Luke 9:1, 2, NIV)

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what do you think?

Circle the top three reasons you think some Christian teenagers are hesitant to share Christ with their friends:

- They are afraid of rejection.
- They don't see it as important.
- They think Christianity is boring.
- They feel embarrassed.
- They don't want to offend anyone.
- They feel like hypocrites.
- They are too busy.
- They are too shy.
- They believe that evangelism is the work of pastors or evangelists.

Circle the top three ways you think represent the most effective means to share Christ with others.

- Hand out gospel tracts.
- Stand on a street corner and preach.
- Always carry a Bible.
- Live a good life.
- Talk to my friends about Jesus.
- Invite a friend to church.
- Show kindness to others.
- Wear clothes that display a Christian message.
- Hang out with nonreligious people.
- Bring a friend to a social activity where your church friends will be.

did you know?

Evangelism simply means telling people about the gospel. We evangelize when we tell someone the gospel. It is not sharing opinions, telling stories, sharing our testimony, singing songs, etc. We may tell the gospel through various means, such as these, but the main thing is the message, not the method" (Basic Christian Doctrines 39:4, Faith BibleChurch, faithbibleonline.net).

INTO THE STORY

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: 'Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.' So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere."

(Luke 9:1-6, NIV)

"These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.'" "'Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. . . .

"'Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. You will hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. . . .

"'Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven."

"'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. . . . And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'"

(Matthew 10:5-8, 17-33, 40-42, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the passages from *Into the Story,* then answer the following questions:

• Luke 9:1-6

Can we "drive out all demons and . . . cure diseases" today? Why or why not?

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_____
_____

How might Jesus' advice to "shake the dust off your feet" apply to us today?

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_____

Have you ever felt rejected for sharing your faith? If so, reflect on whether or not they were rejecting you or Jesus. How did Jesus handle rejection?

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• Matthew 10:5-42

Notice the message that the Twelve were to proclaim: "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Compare this with the gospel that Jesus came to proclaim (see Mark 1:14, 15). How is this same message of good news (or the "gospel") relevant today?

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Does this warning of persecution for those who proclaim the gospel mean the same today as it did back then? Explain.

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How might you share "a cup of cold water" with someone today?

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punch lines

"Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: 'God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age' " **(Matthew 28:18-20, *The Message*).**

"After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Message of God: 'Time's up! God's kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message' " **(Mark 1:14, 15, *The Message*).**

"The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern" **(Proverbs 29:7, NIV).**

"Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you' " **(John 20:21, NIV).**

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God" **(Psalm 20:7, NIV).**

further insight

"In the training of the disciples the example of the Savior's life was far more effective than any mere doctrinal instruction."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 349, 350.

"The love of Christ, manifested in unselfish ministry, will be more effective in reforming the evildoer than will the sword or the court of justice."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 350, 351.

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connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Philippians 3:17.

How can we make Paul's words our own to live in a way that honors God and uplifts others?

As a Christian, you too are called to play a unique role in the worldwide sharing of the gospel. In what ways can you be an example or a role model to inspire in others a love for Christ?

Sunday

Read Galatians 2:20.

Who is the best advertisement for Christianity that you know? What makes this person's witness so compelling?

Is there more to evangelism than just setting a good example? Why or why not?

Monday

Luke 9:1, 2.

Read the *Key Text* and reflect on the following questions:

- Why do you think Jesus empowered His disciples to perform miracles?

- To what end(s) did Jesus perform miracles in His ministry?

- Is it possible to access that same "power and authority" of Jesus today? If so, how?

Tuesday

Read Isaiah 6:8.

Quoted in the *Flashlight* section is this statement: "All over the field of Christ's labor there were souls awakened to their need, and hungering and thirsting for the truth." Spend time in prayer and ask God to reveal to you any friends or family members you may know who are "hungering and thirsting" for truth. Write their names on your prayer list.

Next, prayerfully consider how God might want to use you to share the gospel with the people on your list.

Wednesday

Read the two passages in the *Punch Lines* section that come from *The Message* paraphrase. Now choose one of the remaining verses from *Punch Lines* and translate it into contemporary language similar to what Eugene Peterson did with *The Message.*

Thursday

Read Philippians 1:20.

Consider this observation from Becky Pippert: "Christians and non-Christians have something in common. We're both uptight about evangelism. Christians are afraid of offending. Non-Christians are afraid of being assaulted!"[1]

Would you agree or disagree with Becky? Why? What is your biggest fear in sharing your faith? What is the worst thing that could happen if you took a risk and told someone about Jesus? Is the risk worth it?

Friday

Read Jeremiah 31:3.

In his award-winning book on evangelism, *Just Walk Across the Room*, Bill Hybels suggests that the single greatest gift Christ-followers can give to the people around them is an introduction to the God who created them, who loves them, and has a purpose for their lives. Hybels says: "This is what evangelism is—constantly looking for ways to give that gift to someone living far from God." In what ways can God use me to draw people to Him?

To think about: How can I be more intentional about sharing that gift of life with those who are far from God?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 37.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* entitled *Humble Hero,* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.

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