

Readiness to Witness- Before the Conversation

Part 1

So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

-Romans 1:15

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Rome, tells them that he is READY (emphasis added) to preach the gospel to them. One of the most important subjects we will talk about will not even have anything to do with witnessing, but with what we do before we witness. That is, our readiness to witness. By readiness I mean having the right condition of our heart before we speak to people of the condition of their heart. As someone has once said, "one cannot give what you do not have". Unfortunately, I have seen two extremes when speaking of "readiness". First extreme is that a person will take this subject too lightly and believe its ok to live in sin and serve the Lord at the same time. I remember when I came across a young man in high school who spoke about Jesus and whose shirt said, "Only God", only to later find out that he actually didn't believe in God but spoke of Him because he thought it sounded "cool". I also spoke with a young man who a few months ago went to a mission trip to a different country. However, this young man admitted that he didn't believe he was born again and that he has never accepted Jesus. Another extreme I have seen too often is that people believe they will never be ready to witness. I have met several people who year after year, when approached will tell me the same thing, "brother I'm still not ready to witness, but maybe later". I have asked one brother for almost 5 years straight and still received this answer. So how can we actually be ready to witness and have an assurance that God wants us to witness? Let's look into some Bible texts.

Questions 1-2. Please ready the following Bible passage and answer the questions here (you may write here or different paper). Luke. 8:27-40.

1. What happened to this man after he met Jesus?

2. What is the commandment that Jesus gave to this man?

A really important point here is that a person must be born again and have accepted Jesus before they can share the gospel. After they have accepted Jesus, they must immediately start sharing the gospel message. This doesn't necessary mean that a new convert must go on a mission trip or preach to a congregation; as a matter of fact, the Bible teaches against this. What it means is that a person who just accepted Christ must now go and confess Jesus before others (*if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9*). **For someone who has just accepted Jesus it is important to publicly confess Jesus.** This means sharing your testimony of how Jesus has saved you and changed your life just like the man in the passage above. Many people would tell a man this type to wait and just study the Bible and pray. Actually, that's what he wanted to do, was just to follow Jesus (physically be following him), but Jesus commanded him to stay and share what God has done to him. If this man had a right to share his testimony, I believe any person has a right to share theirs.

Before we discuss more on this topic, I want to share with you an article by Ray Comfort.

"How can we be sure our motive for witnessing is right, so we won't be ineffective?"

Ask God to search out your motives. However, even if your heart is not in the right place (I'm not talking about sin, but that you are going because of a sense of guilt or obligation), you should still go. If you were rescued from a burning building by a fireman who left the firehouse because he felt guilty not coming to the fire, as far as you are concerned, his motive for rescuing you is irrelevant. All that matters is that he did. So don't get hung up on why you reach out to the lost, just do it, while there is still time. The quality is in the seed, not in the sower. This gives great consolation to those of us who feel we lack ability.

However, some who are worried about motive may lack motivation themselves. **Love for God and love for the lost is all we need.** Jesus told us to go, and gave us the Holy Spirit to help us. So if you are waiting for the "prompting" of the Holy Spirit to witness, just ask yourself if the people you are waiting to witness to fit the category Jesus mentioned in [Mark 16:15](#): "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every [person]." The word "every" puts them in the "need to hear the gospel" category. If you were sitting in one of the *Titanic's* lifeboats, with plenty of room onboard, would you look to the captain for his approval before you reached out to each drowning person, when he has already commanded you to reach everyone you can? Of course not. A good rule of thumb is: if they are breathing, they need to hear the gospel. Regardless of motive, the important thing is that Christ is preached.¹

I really like how brother Ray points out that the prerequisite of witnessing is loving God and loving others (lost). If a person loves God, he or she will strive to fulfill the will of God. As Jesus has said, "*If you love me, keep my commands*" (John 14:15.). One of the commandments of Jesus, as brother Ray has pointed out (in Mark 16:15) is to go and preach the gospel.

Questions 3-5. Please read Luke 10:25-37.

3. What was the act of love in this parable of Jesus?
4. How can this parable apply to us today?
5. What did Jesus call the lawyer to do (verse 37)?

In the passage above, Jesus shows us how we must love not just with words or emotions, but with actions. One can be doing important things for God, such as the men in the parable, and still not love the people around them. Jesus in this shows that it is important to see others in need and help them with the best of our ability. So what is the greatest need people have and how can we, as Christians, help them? The greatest need people have is a need in a Savior. The Bible says that everyone has sinned and have went against God (Romans 3:23). People with their own strength cannot save themselves, no matter how hard they try. Because of sin people are enemies with God and deserve eternal punishment, as God is a Holy God and cannot stand a single sin in His Holy presence. However, *God so loved the world that He gave His Son* (John 3:16). This is the amazing news that people must hear today! Yes, its important to feed the hungry, heal the sick, help those in need, but all this must be done to share the good news of the gospel. Many people who are among us in our community don't have a physical need as much as they have a spiritual need. When I see these people do I stop and say something? Or do I keep on going on with my duties (even if spiritual). Let us examine ourselves and ask the Lord to guide us in this area. I want to add one more thing about loving God before we move on to the next subject. As much as I agree with brother Ray's article above, I also want to add something. Motivation will come as we come closer and closer to Jesus. Friends, if we seek Jesus on a regular basis and have fellowship (prayer, conversation) with Him, we will not be able to look at people the same way. I can assure you this. The closer I get to Christ the more I love people and want them to taste the goodness of God! This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us a burden (heavy heart) to talk to people and share the gospel with others. We will talk more about this next week but for now I want to note that even **above witnessing and sharing your faith, make your number one priority to talk to Jesus and be close with Him.**

References

- ¹ Comfort, Ray. (2020, November 03). "How can we be sure our witnessing motive is right?" Retrieved from <https://www.livingwaters.com/how-can-we-be-sure-our-witnessing-motive-is-right/>

