

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 3
How 2 Tell
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 12.03-04.11

With that being said let's take our bibles now and let's turn to Acts, chapter 1. We've been there before. It's been part of our iGo series. We're in part 3 and over the past two weeks I've been trying to shift your emotional reaction when you hear the word evangelism. Instead of that sensation of fear when you hear that word or the emotion of anxiety or maybe the feeling of guilt I want you start realizing that evangelism is not something you do but something that you are. And you need to start seeing yourself as Jesus sees you. You say, well, how does Jesus see me. That's clear in Acts, chapter 1, verse 8. If you remember what I've taught you about this verse in the past these are some of the last words of Jesus before He hands over the mantle, hands over the torch to his disciples to continue the earthly ministry. He's about ready to ascend to be with the father and look what He says in verse 8 then. He says, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Now, stop right there. You need to think of this as a concentric circles that Jesus is saying to them. He's saying you're going to be a representative of mine in your own backyard; in Jerusalem. That's where it's going to start. Before you think beyond that you have to be concerned about the people around you. So, He says think about Jerusalem, your own back door. That would be for us like Richland County. He says, then you go out and you go beyond that. You go into Judea. That would be like, think about the state of Ohio. Then you go out. You keep moving out. Then to Samaria. Think of it in our terms like all of the United States. Then you go across the borders of your own country; across the oceans. And He says to the end of the earth. That's what you should be thinking. And what are we to be in all of these circles of influence? Go back to that word. It's that word witness. Do you see that? He says that's what you are. You are a witness and I told you over the last couple of weeks. What is a witness? A witness is simple. A witness is someone that simply tells what they know or tells what they've experienced. That's just a simple understanding of a witness. But that's also, I think a strategic word that Jesus uses to describe what we're talking about here in our iGo series that really, evangelism, not something to be fearful about; not something that creates anxiety or guilt but really the best term is that you are a witness. And what is a witness? A witness is simply somebody who shares their personal experience. That's why I think this is the best description for the concept of evangelism. It's simply telling your story. So that means it's not a sales pitch. It's not some notch in your evangelistic belt that you're trying to achieve. It's not something you have to. It's not some transaction. It's not some crusade. It's a persona experience.

Let me illustrate it this way...

DRAMA: The Skinny on Evangelism

Evangelist - Richard: Evangelism is not for the weak alright?? I should know I wrote a whole book about it. Self published. Most Christians, they are just good for bake sales and potluck dinners. But I am telling you this right now, it takes a lot of moxie to grab a nonbeliever by the shirt collar and throw 'em in the front doors of a church and say, "Hey try livin' out your heathen life in front of a holy God that way!" It is like holy water and a vampire. That's divine intervention my friend.

The Amplified - Jimmie: Repent for the kingdom of the Lord is nigh. Come to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 3
How 2 Tell
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 12.03-04.11

Question: Well, sir, it sounds like you're really passionate about Jesus.

The Amplified – Jimmie: I am.

Question: Um...

The Amplified – Jimmie: And you should also be.

Question: Okay...

The Amplified – Jimmie: Passionate about the Lord.

Question: Sir, if there's...

The Amplified – Jimmie: You need to get sanctified or chicken fried.

Question: Evangelist: Can we...

The Amplified – Jimmie: You need to get with Lord or... drive a Ford.

Question: Sir... We...

The Amplified – Jimmie: Get right or get left.

The Liar - Maureen: I share my faith. Okay, that's a lie, people don't even know I'm a Christian. I want to, again, another lie. I hardly share it, much less have the will to do anything else. Mmm, okay, now if there was pizza and ice cream every time there was faith sharing, I'd do it! That's a lie, I'm lactose intolerant. Again, another lie, I'm just too cheep to buy dairy. Bottom line, sharing my faith makes me sweaty.

Evangelist - Richard: Um, tip number 95: Um, use big church words like transubstantiation. Heathens get confused easily. And, the more confused they are the more ashamed they are. The more ashamed they are, the more apt they are to make a salvation decision.

The Banner Person - Stephanie: I believe it's a responsibility. No, the privilege. No, the glorious privilege of every believer to share their faith with others. That's why I share my faith with everyone I come in contact with.

Question: Everyone? Really?

The Banner Person – Stephanie: Yeah, everyone.

Question: How do you do that?

The Banner Person – Stephanie: Uh, check out my shirt. Can't read it? Try this glove. Not working for you? How 'bout this bracelet. No comprendo? Asa de estos. Driving behind me? Read my bumper

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 3
How 2 Tell
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 12.03-04.11

stickers. Says “It’s okay if you follow close, I’m going to heaven!” Haha. Oh, you’re my waiter or waitress, I got a tip for you! Surprise! It’s the gospel. I mean what do you want, money or eternity? I also use these tracks.

Question: So what about talking to people about your faith?

The Banner Person – Stephanie: Uh, I- I don’t really like people. But, I love Jesus. Scripture mint?

Blackout

What I love about this form that we have in our mind is that evangelism is something that we do. It's something that we push onto people but the idea if a witness is involved with simply telling what actually has happened in your life. It's involved in a relationship with someone and you have the opportunity to share what's going on and some dramatic change has taken place. So it's not something that you do. It goes back to the idea that it's something that you are. It's a personal experience.

Today I want to help you through the process of simple steps to evangelism. Just simple steps to being a witness and I want to give you three. How is it? We're at that practical part in our series. We've looked on why to tell and what to tell. Now we really have to work through the block of how to tell. How is it that we can, in a way that is natural for us tell what has happened, what has happened in our own lives to be a witness for the cause of Christ. Let me give you three steps.

First step: simple intercession. This is where it starts. You might be asking yourself, all right, how do I start the process? My heart is willing. How do I start the process? You start the process with a simple intercession. You start it with prayer. You just simply tell God - God, I want you to create open doors of opportunities for me. Now, remember, last week what did I do? I sent you out with some homework, right? I said I want you to examine your heart. Do you have a willing heart? Have you ever said to God, use me? If you've said that, if you've said to God use me what's the next thing you're asking God? God, I'm ready. Open doors. What do you think He's going to do? He's going to open doors for your. Jesus said in John chapter 16 ask and you will receive so that your joy may be full. Ask and you're going to receive. Now, how do I know He's going to answer your prayers to open doors; open your doors to those who work next to you; open doors with family members; open doors with neighbors? How do I know He's going to do that?

Listen to this passage in 1 Timothy. It says God, our savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. What does that tell you? It tells you about the heart of God. Write this down. Luke, 19:10. Luke 19:10 is the mission statement of the entire life of Jesus Christ. Jesus said this – I came to seek that which was lost. What do you think is the heart of God? The heart of God is those who are far from Him and so when you come to God and you say God, my heart is willing. Use me. When you come to God and you say open doors of open opportunities for me to be a witness what do you think God is going to do? He's going to do that. Why? Because your heart is now in parallel to God's heart. So, where does it start? If you have a willing heart and you say, yes. That's what I want out of my life. Then just start making that a part of your simple intercession. Make that a part of your prayer. Say, God. This is

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 3
How 2 Tell
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 12.03-04.11

what I want. Give me opportunities. Don't let me walk through the day without considering that today might be a day that you want to use me. Open doors around me.

And then it goes from a simple intercession to the next step and that's an easy step. It's simple invitation. You say an invitation to what? It's an invitation to what you experience every week. An invitation here. Many times what we think of when we think of church we think of church as something that we do. We just naturally do it. We come in. We go through the doors. We kind of know the routine. We come in. We sit down. It's about us. It's about us experience the music; us experiencing the message; us experiencing the worship. But what we have here is we have this micro-culture that goes on within culture and there's all kinds of people on the outside in that culture that doesn't understand anything about this culture and there's a bit of fear coming through those front doors and I don't know how long you've been doing this but you've probably forgotten that initial fear that you had because you're not sure what's to be expected of you or from you in this surrounding. So, you come in with a bit of trepidation. Are they going to ask me my name? Are they going to ask me to stand? Are they going to ask me to give my story? What are they going to ask me? Are they going to ask me to give something? What are they going to ask of me? See, you have an opportunity to open a door for them; to invite them to come along with you and to give them that sense of listen, I will walk this journey with you and you will introduce them to a culture that they know nothing about. That might be the very first steps that God uses.

You know, you might not be very adept, at least yet at telling the story of the Gospel but we can all do simple invitations where we invite them to come along with us and I meet those you who take that up; who understand that's the philosophy of this church. I meet you out in, what we call Town Square. It's our lobby area. Everything kind of flows into that central area. You'll be waiting for people and believe me we take creating an atmosphere very seriously. We don't want the atmosphere of the church or just the concept of just going to church to be a hurdle for someone and so our leaders, our ministry teams take it very seriously about thinking about what does it feel like to walk into this building, this space for the very first time. We try to take the fear out of your unchurched friends that particular experience. But not only that we also try to take the fear out of your own life of inviting your unchurched friends here so that you know that this is an environment that is welcoming to them and many of you have picked up on that over the years. And you'll wait for them out in Town Square. I meet you. I've invited my boss. He's coming to church today. I'm very excited. Or you say I finally got my dad to come to church. I'm waiting for him. Or it's a friend, it's someone and you're very excited. Usually somewhere in the conversation you'll lean in and stand close to me and say now don't screw it up. And I understand what you're saying. I know what you mean. You're heart's there. You've investing something of yourself. You've put yourself on the line. You've made a simple invitation. Believe me, when you do that I think that's a step that the Holy Spirit will use many times in the process of taking someone who is far from God and introducing them to the very elements of God.

And so, for some of you, the next step, because your heart's already there and it's already part of the prayer process in your life. The next step for you is a simple invitation but you need to understand this. There is a third step. When that invitation happens and they come here many times some spiritual things will start to interact with their own lives and they'll have questions. Sometimes the things that go on here

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 3
How 2 Tell
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 12.03-04.11

and when we're sitting and we're listening to a message are far deeper than what we understand. God might pick a word, a paragraph, a passage and start to change and move a life. Sometimes change takes place right here and we love that. Other times change takes place through relationships or it continues through relationships. Either way if you're the one who invited them here you're likely going to be the one who is involved in their next steps. So, you have to be ready with a simple explanation. And that's what I want to focus on this morning is how to explain the Gospel. You see, I've been talking about your own personal stories. Certainly that's a part that you need to weave into this but at some juncture you have to take your story and you have to help them understand a greater story - the story of the Gospel. So what I want to do for the rest of our time this morning is I just want to teach you a very simple approach. It's actually an approach I use. There's many different illustrations to tell the Gospel. There's the bridge illustration. There's the Roman Road. There's the four spiritual laws. None of them are bad. This is just a method I tend to use because it seems to fit my style. It's called a One Verse Evangelism approach. I love this because all you have to do is remember 1 verse. In fact, if you can't remember it many times if you flip through some of the bibles I've carried around you'll find this verse written on the inside flap or at least the reference. The passage that I want you to turn to is Romans chapter 6, verse 23. Romans 6:23. That's the one verse that you're going to be using. And let me just read it as you turn there once you have it opened on your lap it will be fine because we're not going to stray too far from it.

But Romans 6:23 says, for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Straight forward. It tells the whole story of the Gospel in one verse. In fact, the words themselves tell the story. Now, let me teach you how to use it. Let me teach you how to use it as a story. Let's go back to what we were doing last week. It was a scenario. Remember the scenario? If you weren't here that's ok. I'll catch you up real quick. The scenario is this - you're out to lunch or out to coffee with a friend and the opportunity comes. The door opens for you to share your faith. Suddenly your mind is filled. You say, ok. I have to get the theological blocks in order. Well, I think the best way to do that is to just let the scriptures speak for themselves and so what I do is I take this passage - Romans 6:23 and say I pull a napkin out from the table and I write Romans 6:23 across the top. That's where I start. So it's visible. It's right there in front of them. And then I take two brackets and I draw two brackets on the lower half of the napkin and inside this bracket is where I'm going to tell the story of the Gospel. I just let the words of the text tell the story for me and I start with the very first word. It just goes in order. I take the word wages. And I want you to do this on your outline this morning. Just box in the word wages. Now, I want you to drop it down in the lower left-hand side of those brackets. And usually if I'm sitting across the table with someone I'll say something like how would you define wages? And they'll usually say something like it's like a pay check, payment. Exactly. That's what a wage is. It's a payment. Then I say how would you feel if you're employer, after a whole week of work, if after a week of coming in faithfully they said you know what? I'm not going to pay you this week. I'm not going to give you your wages. You wouldn't be very happy about it, why? Because wages are something you deserve, right? Well, that's the same way the scriptures take the same approach that a wage is something that you've earned. You've earned wages from God on how you have lived. I said, just look at the passage. The wages of what? Well, these are the wages - the wages of sin. So, I take that word sin. I draw a box around the word sin and I drop it below the word wages. Remember, this is continuing the story. Now, I'll usually

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 3
How 2 Tell
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 12.03-04.11

ask them another question. What do you think of when you hear the word sin because we all think of something when we hear the word sin and usually this is the point where we have to help them understand that sin is really a big deal to God. Sin is not like an oopsss or a mistake or an error or a simple wrong. We like to confuse that don't we? We like to soft sell it. No. We have to help them understand that a sin is actually causes damage in the relationship that we can have with God. It causes a degree on damage that we in and of ourselves, we can not bridge the gap. Why? Because God is a holy God and that sin has caused us to be anything but holy so we no longer can have a relationship with God. We actually stand in contrast to God. And the result is the next word.

Look at the word in your text. For the wages of sin is what? Death. And so I'll put a box around the word death and I'll drop that below the word sin. See this is the result. It will not only be physical death but spiritual death. You will be eternally separated from God because of the wages of sin. And I'll say look at this. Look at the left hand side. This is bad news. But this is where we live. According to the scriptures this is where we live. This is where we reside. We reside in the bad news. However, there's a transitional word in the text that changes everything. It's the word but. See it there? Put a box around that particular word. Drop that down. I put that right down in the lower middle between the brackets. Now see this is a transitional word for us. This is a word that tells us good news is coming. We understand the bad news. But scripture doesn't leave us in the bad news. There's good news and this is the good news. And just go right in line. What's the next word that is in line? Free gift. So I'll put a box around free gift. Instead of putting it on the left hand side I'll put it on the right hand side because now we're a contrast and I'll say look across the page. What's the difference between wages and a gift, especially a free gift? See, a gift is not something that we earn right? Unlike wages. Wages are something that we've earned, we deserve. A gift is not something that we deserve and I love how the scriptures put this in here. Freely. In fact, if you try to pay for a gift that someone gives you what is it? It's offensive, isn't it? Because they want to give it to you. They want to give it to you freely. And so I help them understand that this is a gift that who wants to gift you? Well, look at the text. God wants to give you. It's a free gift of God. So, guess what I do? You're in swing with it now right? I put a box around of God. And I put that under on the right hand side free gift.

Now the story is starting to roll. Where does this free gift come from? It comes from God. This is starting to become a form of good news that is presented right before them. 3-D. But something usually blocks the path right here and it's natural because we all think of it. You can see it in their minds. The wheels are turning. Why would God want to give me a free gift? Then they start thinking about all the things that are over on the left hand column, especially that sin word and you know what? You don't normally have to convince people of about the whole concept of sin. They get that. They carry around this sense of guilt anyway. They understand it in their own personal lives. They feel separated and far from God. And so usually what I have to do is I have to help them understand why God wants to give them a free gift. Rather than convince them of the sin I usually have to help them over the sin. And they'll say well why would God, of all the things that I have done in my life, why would God want to give me a free gift?

I don't normally like to add another verse because it kind of destroys the whole one verse evangelism concept but if there was ever a verse, and you're right in Romans. If there was ever a verse you could take

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 3

How 2 Tell

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 12.03-04.11

them to it's just back one chapter to Romans chapter 5. And in Romans 5 we read some of the most beautiful words. Look at verse 8. But God shows His love. You ever wonder, someone asks you where does it say in the bible that God loves? God loves me? Right here. Romans 5:8. But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, still in that state Christ died for us. God gave us a gift. You know what this says? It says look. You don't have to get cleaned up to come to God. You don't have to make things all right. You don't have to level out the playing field. So many times I hear this. Well, I'll do this when I get things right in my life. You will never get things right in your life. I've been following Christ for over twenty years. I don't get things right in my life. Neither do you. It's grace. We have to help them see grace. We have to help them pass the threshold of Grace. You will not get your life right. So it's while you are a sinner; while you're stuck in the bad news that God wants to give you this free gift and what does this free gift lead to? Well, look. Not eternal death but eternal life. So I draw a box around eternal life. I put this below God. This is the gift that God wants to give you. He wants to give you eternal life. It's not separation from God. It's eternally with God.

Now, the question is how do you receive it? And this is where you start the lightbulbs come on because usually at this point I'll draw some rudimentary cross between the brackets and I'll put the word Christ Jesus in the cross. I'll say see. There's nothing you could have done when you were in the bad news in and of yourself to get to the good news. You could not bridge that chasm no matter how good you lived, no matter what you did, no matter how repentant you were, no matter how much penance you tried to do in and of this life you could not bridge that gap because we're talking about a holy God. And so what gift has God given you? He has given you His Son. That's the cross and usually this is the lightbulb because most people, admittedly in America they understand the cross. They get it. They just don't know how to apply it to their personal lives and when you start laying it out in simple language suddenly the cross was just not some symbol that launched Christianity. The cross is personal. God gave me a personal gift in Jesus Christ. Why? So that I could move from the bad news into the good news.

Now, it's a gift right? The question is how do you receive this gift? This is where I'll stray outside of this passage and I write the word trust at the top of the cross. But you know if you forget the word trust you could use any word. You could use the word confess. You could use the word repentance. You could use the word lordship because if God is drawing the heart then God understands the heart and if this person sitting beside you says well, how do I receive this gift that you're telling me? You trust in Christ Jesus. You invite Him to now be the Lord of your life. You begin following Him. Now usually at this point I ask two final questions. I usually ask the question when you look at a diagram like this which side of the brackets do you think you're on right now? Are you on the bad news side? Or are you on the good news side. You say if you find yourself on the bad news side is there any reason that right now you wouldn't want to bridge the distance to the cross and come over on the good news side. And I'm telling you you're there. Your heart is beating. Your adrenalin is running. Why? Because you're now being used by God to talk about eternal things for people's lives and I have to tell you there is nothing better than this moment. I mean, up to this moment you might be thinking I'm just going through life and I'm doing my to do list. I'm doing my bucket list. All that suddenly does not matter because when you get in step with the heart of God and you sense the God of the universe is using you I tell you there is nothing better than to help people understand the move from spiritual darkness, the bad news to spiritual light - the good news. And

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 3
How 2 Tell
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 12.03-04.11

you just invite them would you like to make that move? How do you do that? It's simple. You just tell God. Receive the gift. I want to receive the gift. Don't make it complicated here. Prayer at this point does not need to be complicated. There's no incantation. There's no magical words. There's no specific prayer. It's just the heart of that person crying out to their God. Saying I want to receive this gift. You can lead them to confess their sins. You can lead them and help them understand their own unworthiness or you could lead them just at that particular moment of simply saying I don't know what I'm getting into but Jesus I want to follow you. And the God of the universe hears the heart of a sinner and they walk across that bridge of the cross. Nothing better.

I have to tell you. The first time I tried this, first time I tried to tell my faith it was a train wreck, literally. I was not that far from knowing Christ myself and I was new to all of Christianity but my heart was there. My heart was willing to be used by God and I was at work in a conversation with this woman and she was starting to see the transition that was going on in my life. So we got into a conversation one day about the Gospel and I tried my best to explain the Gospel. To be honest with you I was so confused. I couldn't get it out. I couldn't get the pieces. I had that theological block issue and I couldn't get all the things together. I wish I would have known a passage like this but I tried my best and I could tell she was confused. She could tell I was confused and she had to go and she said I tell you what. We'll talk about this again some other time. That's some other time never came again. And I vowed I would never let that happen. We have a message people need to hear. That means we need to know how to tell it.

Father, I thank you for the message that is so clear in scripture. I pray that you would use us. Use us to tell the message that we have experienced ourselves, this message of grace. Open the doors of people that are all around us - our neighbors, those people that we would with, our friends, these people that we've known for years but have never, never even gave a simple invitation to. Break our hearts for them. Align our hearts with yours so that we see the world as you see it and then use us for the glorious message of Jesus Christ. We pray these things in His name. Amen.