

# ***Altar, Table, Road; Part 4***

## ***Road: Reaching Our Neighborhoods***

***Hazen Stevens - Sunday, July 16, 2023***

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### I. Review

- A. In the last few messages we have introduced our vision to be a community of disciples who offers our fervent prayers and worship at the Altar, our open vulnerable hearts at the Table, and lay down our lives for the lost from our neighborhoods to the hardest and darkest places in the nations.

### II. Introduction

- A. Today we begin the first of three messages on “Road”, and we are going to specifically focus in today’s message on reaching our “Neighbourhoods” those that surround us at work, school, in our actual neighborhoods, our friends and family, or the person we pass by on the street. These are our “Neighbours” and they need the message that has transformed your life.
- B. We will break down this message into three parts; Firstly, why we don’t we often don’t express the Gospel message, Secondly, how we can begin to express it effectively, and lastly why we should.

### III. Why we don’t often express the Gospel message

#### A. Internal Barriers

1. Nervousness: “I am scared...”
2. Busyness: “I don’t have time...”
3. Uncertainty: “I just don’t know how...”
4. Procrastination: “Maybe next year...”

- B. I am confident that all of us can relate to one of the hangs up above, and though they may hold us back at times, none of them are too much for us to overcome. You can be the faith-filled man or woman of God you long to be. You don’t have to live letting excuses rob you of the joy of living boldly sharing your faith. We want to be people who overcoming these obstacles and share the message of eternal life that has transformed us.



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1. Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, **because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes:** first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.
2. Colossians 1:**6** This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.**7** You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker.

#### IV. How we can begin to share our faith effectively

##### A. Sharing with both heart and skill, we can do both!

1. A person with tons of heart, but little skill is often ineffective
2. A person with lots of skill, and no heart can be manipulative

##### B. Three simple ways to begin to share your faith, that all of us can do!

###### 1. Prayer

- a) We can pray for those in our lives that don't know Jesus in both the secret place and as we encounter them in our day to day lives.

- (1) Colossians 4:**2** Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.  
**3** And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.  
**4** Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

###### 2. Share

- a) We can start with sharing our personal testimonies, both boldly and skillfully. Your personal story of encounter and transformation has potential for impact. Even if it doesn't seem dramatic, it is still precious and powerful.



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- b) The simple truths of the Gospel such as Christ's sinless life, miraculous public ministry, and his death, resurrection, ascension, and ultimate judgment are all ideas we can learn to understand and share.
  - c) Further, we can also grow to articulate the more profound truths of the Gospel as we continue to equip ourselves to be effective witnesses. Ideas such as justification by faith, Christ's substitutionary atonement, and the events around Christ's second coming are all things we can learn to talk about.
  - d) We have been entrusted with the words that can lead people into eternal life.
    - (1) 1 John 1:2 This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us.
3. Care
- a) Lastly we can care for people, whether it be through simple acts of kindness or miraculous works.
    - (1) Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
    - (2) Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.
- V. Why we share!
- A. God's Deep Love
- 1. Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.



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2. 1Ti 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- B. God's heart is for lost and broken people, this is who Jesus pursued.
1. Matthew 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. **10** While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. **11** When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **12** On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. **13** But go and learn what this means: **'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'[a] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.**"
  2. **Luke 19** Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. **3** He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. **5** When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." **6** So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. **7** All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." **8** But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." **9** Jesus said to him, **"Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."**
- C. The God of the Big Party!
1. Luk 15:1 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." 3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying 4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
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6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' 7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. 8 "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' 10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

1. Leading people to Jesus, is how we make heaven happy!
  2. Our repentance releases joy and celebration in the heart of God.
  3. Consider what did the party look like the day you turned to the Lord?
  4. All three parables in luke 15 describe celebration over repentant sinners. He is the God of the big party!
2. Luke 15:20 "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. **21** "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' **22** "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23** Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. **24** For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. **25** "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. **27** 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' **28** "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. **29** But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' **31** "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. **32** But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

