

True Church (9): Heralds with a Message

I. Introduction

- A. In *The Worldly Church*, Leonard Allen tells of a missionary raising support
1. Missions is occupation where you are hired and then must find own salary
 - a. So missionary travels around meeting with elders in large, rich churches
 - b. An elder says, “*There isn’t much of a market for missions in the C of C?*”
 - c. Stunned, he asks, “*So what is marketable?*” He was told “*Body life.*”
 2. About 89% of people surveyed see church role as “*meeting my needs*”
 - a. Thing like youth groups, church camp, children classes, small groups...
 - 1) These are benefit our members—missions is focused “*out there*”
 - 2) So guess what usually is the first thing cut when in budget crunch?
 - b. It’s easy to forget Jesus never told us to church buildings or programs
 - c. What he told us was to go into all the worlds and preach the gospel
 3. Much of what we do at church can be simply “navel gazing” introspection
 - a. **Fellowship**: We spend together but never think to share that with others
 - b. **Worship**: We focus on God but never go out of our way to invite others
 - c. **Teaching**: We study together in class, but never really share with others
 - d. **Ministry**: Have plenty of programs for us that never minister to others
 4. All of those things are important, and all of them can be **outreach** as well
- B. We have been looking at the characteristics that make up a true church
1. I used to see these as institutional—the right church has all right markers
 - a. Stress on right name, right theology, right worship, right organization, etc.
 - b. But we have seen these markers as being relational—the right Lord
 - c. So we stressed several things that come from our relationship with Christ
 2. Today, we add one more marker—true church is a herald with a message
 - a. Faithfulness doesn’t mean we must believe we are the only true church
 - b. Faithfulness does mean that we really believe that the gospel is true
 - 1) That means a true church will share the gospel with those outside
 - 2) True church takes Christ message OUT—to world & community

II. Preaching the Gospel: The Evangelism Texts

- A. The early church grew because there was something appealing ([Acts 2:47](#))
 1. Maybe it was the fellowship, belonging, sharing, unity ([Acts 2:44](#))
 - a. Maybe it was the way that the church cared for the poor ([Acts 4:32](#))
 - b. Maybe it was the powerful teaching of the word by apostles ([Acts 4:33](#))
 - c. Maybe is powerful proof of the presence of God among them ([Acts 5:12](#))
 2. **Result:** Many drawn to the message, but **not** to assembly! ([Acts 5:12b-13](#))
 - a. People had good things to say, but they didn't join church meetings
 - b. After [Acts 3](#), there were no mass meetings or mass conversion stories
 - 1) There was worship and preaching, but not many outsiders joined in
 - 2) So how did church grow? Private conversations by private members
- B. **Question:** Where are the texts in the NT that command witnessing?
 1. The texts we use to encourage evangelism are very general commands
 - a. OK, there is the GREAT COMMISSION to the apostles ([Matt 28:19](#))
 - b. And there was the very similar LIMITED commission ([Luke 10:2](#))
 - c. There are EXAMPLES of church taking the word with them ([Acts 8:4](#))
 2. But to get more personal commands to share faith, we torture the text
 - a. **Example:** The "*Parable of the Sower*" in [Matthew 13](#) is often the text
 - 1) We have to get out there and sow the seen just like Jesus commands
 - 2) **Problem:** Point of the parable is about the soils, not about the sower
 - 3) Point is how different people hear the gospel, not how we spread it
 - b. Back in the days of bus ministry, the proof text was [Matthew 22:9](#)
 - 1) We are to drive those busses into the highways and byways
 - 2) The point is the rejection by the Jews and inclusion of Gentiles
 3. Why aren't there more "*get out there and do personal work*" texts in NT?
 - a. Maybe because the early church didn't need such a command!
 - b. The gospel was the **PASSION** of early believers, not just a **PROGRAM**
 - c. Michael Green suggests that these early disciples "*gossiped the gospel*"
 - 1) What we call "*personal work*" was done in private conversations
 - 2) Those captured by the good news shared it as a matter of course.

- C. Maybe that is what we need to somehow recapture in the modern context
 - 1. Maybe what we need is less a program and more passion, a conversation
 - a. We begin with excitement about what we have found in Jesus Christ
 - b. That leads to a desire to share what we have in our faith, church, Lord.
 - c. What we need is the context where conversation can take place on faith
 - 2. That is why we're about to launch an effort called FriendSpeak ([VIDEO](#))
- D. *Let's Start Talking* is a mission effort that uses English to teach the Bible
 - 1. People in many countries want to learn English— many reasons for that
 - a. *LST* found that people would read the Bible as way to learn English
 - 1) It was also found that this works at home as on mission field
 - 2) We have a growing population those wanting to better their English
 - b. *FriendSpeak* is a *LST* mission effort we can do right here at Denbigh
 - 2. The program is based on us building a 1-to1 relationship with the reader
 - a. Luke is the learning text, and so conversations tend to be about Jesus
 - 1) You reader will already know enough English to begin reading
 - 2) The Bible version used is Easy-to-Read Version (*4th grade level*)
 - b. The emphasis isn't on teaching—it's on relationships and conversation
 - 1) *FriendSpeak* motto is “Bible is the teacher and we are illustration”
 - 2) Give what they want (*English*) with what they need (*friendship & faith*)
 - 3. We want 30-50 of YOU to participate in *FriendSpeak*. What do you need?
 - a. You need a heart for Jesus and for people (Hence name *FriendSpeak*)
 - 1) You need 1 hour or so a week (*maybe during a regular church times*)
 - 2) You need to be able read English on 5th grade level... and LISTEN
 - 3) You need to attend a training seminar on September 19 (8:00-noon)
 - b. What you won't have to do is recruit people to read with you
 - 1) We'll put up a banner, “Free English Lesson” and phone number
 - 2) That may be all we will have to do to create a waiting list
 - c. What we need is an army of trained volunteers ready to work with people
 - 4. By helping people learn English, you may start an eternal conversation!
- E. [VIDEO](#): Sharing faith may save your life... it's always about saving a life!