

# The Church Unleashed as Herald

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Preacher: Rev. Suzy Kirkham

[ 0 : 0 0 ] these days if we're trying to publicize an event we'll do it over social media and we'll send emails out and we'll probably go into town and maybe put posters up and hand out flyers but not too long ago when people couldn't read very well if you were running an event and you were maybe leading the town and you wanted people to find out about things you would actually employ somebody like this a town crier to announce any special event events he'd come into the center of town and he'd stand there ringing a large bell and getting everybody's attention and he'd give the information out to everybody so why am i telling you this well today we're continuing our series on the church unleashed and the church unleashed as herald but what is a herald well just like that time crier we've also got a message that we need to get out there not by going and shouting in people's faces but we need to be clear so that people can hear and understand the good news of jesus we need to tell them about god we need to tell them about god's salvation and we can celebrate the good news that he loves us that he forgives us and that he accepts us into his family now i'm sure that most of us know what's an important part we play as a church as being herald but knowing this is simple but sometimes actually doing it can be difficult we can find it quite easy to talk about things like um getting a job or a promotion or a new car with our unchurched friends and family but why do we find it so difficult to celebrate with non-christians about who god is who jesus was and what he did for us and what he does for us today some people find it really easy and if you're one of them that's fantastic please keep going and share your stories with the rest of us because this is the church unleashed as herald the church together we've all got our individual responsibilities but actually as a body we're called to celebrate and support each other and if one of you one or two of you sorry have got struggles with this then please share that with your close friends or with your small group leaders we've all got our unique ways of sharing god's love not just the eloquent among us or the evangelists among us but all of us but actually we all do have a few stumbling blocks as well they're different for each of us but i had a look on google to see what the top points are the top reasons why people struggle to share their faith and i'm going to talk about them this morning and maybe if you've got a pen and paper handy you could write them down and maybe think about if some of those kind of resonate with you and then just think about maybe talking to your small group about it or close friend and maybe working through some of it and see whether actually we can help each other to be better heralds so the first reason is a lot of people think that if they share what's going on in their innermost life and the fact that they love jesus that actually that may ruin their relationships with their non-christian friends and family and also we can worry that we might come across as being a bit arrogant by sharing it we can feel it's pushy now i don't know about you but when i look at my really close friends and friendships and relationships being vulnerable and honest and authentic are the top priorities for my friendships so maybe sharing our faith actually would help our relationships and not hinder them and we are taught in conversations that we should be good listeners and that we shouldn't be kind of engineering the conversation to make it go where we want it to go but actually being humble is about being vulnerable and honest about who we are and who we love with other people and i think to put jesus at the center of our life and to share that is actually quite humble it shows

humility the second reason is the mistaken belief that the way we live our lives on its own is enough to point people to jesus we don't need to tell them because they know that i go to church they know that i'm quite a nice person and that i'm nice to people and i try not to swear that can be enough you know i don't need to tell anybody now don't get me wrong walking the walk is as important as talking the talk and we do want our lives to be a good example and we should always try to be more christ-like but just like me you're not perfect i'm definitely not perfect and actually if i'm having a bad day relying on someone like myself to be able to point the way to jesus just on its own it's not going

to really do the trick it's not going to work there needs to be words behind our lives there needs to be opportunities to give the glory to god for the things that he's helped us battle through and actually give thanks to him and celebrate the amazing things that he's done in our lives my friends and families aren't mine readers and neither are yours the third reason is a common one i don't know what to say we can often worry that we're going to trip over our words that we haven't got the right words to say and that we're going to be sounding foolish if we look at the passage though that we've just had read to us and we talk about paul you know one of the most eloquent christians of his time when he was trying to stop the jews from worshipping foreign idols it says though that he had to reason he reasoned in the synagogue with the jews and the greek the god-fearing greeks and also a little bit earlier on in that passage it talks about paul going into the synagogue on over three days reasoning and persuading them it says some of the jews were persuaded and joined paul and silas as did a large number of god-fearing greeks and quite a few prominent women so from there it sounds like paul yeah he did know what he was doing and he got the right words to say he reasoned and persuaded but he did that over three days that wasn't just a one-off conversation he was talking to strangers for three days and that takes a lot of courage but also for us it's the same sort of thing we don't have just a one-off conversation about oh yeah i love god you know god's great guy we actually reason and we persuade we're doing life with people we're on a journey with them we're not bible bashing them but we're actually sharing our stories and we're reasoning and persuading them gently but sometimes just as for paul and for us it doesn't go well so if you look at verse five and through to verse eight it says other jews were jealous and they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace they formed a mob and started a riot in the city and when the crowd uh when the city officials heard what was going on the crowd was thrown into turmoil so paul this wonderful christian guy started a riot and threw the crowd into turmoil so it wasn't straightforward for him either he had the right words to say definitely but for some of the people that were there they didn't want to hear what he got to say and so they caused a riot so he could have just thought well i'm rubbish at this but actually he knew that it wasn't his clever words it was the fact that god was using what he was doing and we need to know that as well we can trip over our words but actually you god uses our conversation and it's him that does the business number four church left lets us off the hook now this can be sound a bit funny but actually we can let each other off the hook in church we can get really comfortable in the roles that we've got in church we can think well i do the finance or i do the welcoming or i do the coffee it's not my my job to be an evangelist but actually we've all been called to share the good news of jesus and to go out and make disciples so it is for everyone to share that news

we can also let each other off the hook because we can keep our innermost lives secret we may not share the bad stuff with people in our congregation and we may not share the good stuff about what god's doing in our lives and actually current testimony is really important it encourages other people but also it helps us to feel bolder in sharing our stories and sharing our life and sharing what god's going on at the moment with us number five we don't understand what grace is now i think a lot of people struggle with this we feel that deep down we're not good enough we're not good enough christians our lives aren't good enough and actually why would god use somebody like me to share the good news also we can miss opportunities we can bottle out sometimes of opportunities that we know that are there but remember you're the most precious thing in his life and if you make mistakes if you stumble if you trip up over your words and if you're sometimes guilty like myself of missing opportunities that god's given you to talk about him then it's okay he loves you the way you are but it doesn't mean that he wants you to stay like that and it doesn't mean that he's going to ask more of you and number six we might mess up and we don't have enough experience this goes back to not having the right words to say paul could have thought well i definitely didn't have the right words to say because because i caused a riot but he knew that not everybody was actually going to like what he got to say but he said it anyway now it can be hard when we mess up and it can be really painful and uncomfortable but that's part of love and it's about putting god and others first and not worrying too much about where if we look a bit stupid maybe we don't have lots of experience we might not have 25 stories of all the different people that we had a little conversation with and they all became christians and we may not ever see the um the fruit of the seed that we've planted and that's okay just do it anyway however we may not see the fruit that we that uh we meant something we may not see the fruit because we haven't actually pushed the boat out and stepped out in faith and shared the good news so again like i said personal testimony and sharing good news is really important and it's really great to do it we want to be able to grow and develop

and celebrate together and number seven we don't know what god's will is for our lives now along with a few of these ones that i've said before i can be guilty of this and especially as evangelicals we can we can spend so long looking for a sign for god to tell us you know exactly what he wants us to do or what he wants for our for our future that we can actually miss what he's pulling in front of our noses and we can just get stuck looking for signs and directions and not actually do anything so it's really important sometimes to just actually ask god to show us what he wants us to do and just actually push push the boat out push the door and have a go and finally number eight god hasn't shown me specifically who to talk to now we can use this as a bit of an excuse and it can be really awkward and not a great idea to sort of leave the house in the morning and shoehorn god into every single conversation that we have but what it is good to do is to maybe pray in the morning before we start our day god please give me opportunities today give me your eyes show me some people i can be nice to and show me some people that i can actually share my life with and talk to them about you this isn't unspiritual and it's not pushy for us to be talking about something that matters so much to us and it's so important to us and as i was saying in the beginning if we can celebrate you know the new car we've got or the new house we've got or the you know the job promotion we should be able to celebrate even more about who god is what he's doing in our lives at the moment what he's done in our lives before and put that into words now i really hope this morning that something i've spoken to you about has resonated with you i really hope that one of these eight points may be something that you can work on with somebody else and be open and honest about it or actually some of these eight points might be some things that you did have a problem with but actually god's helped you to to work on it and to be really good heralds and if that's the case please share that you know with other people because it's through learning and experience that we all grow and develop together so i'm going to really pray that over the next week for all of us that we can take opportunities to share god and the good news with our friends and our family and our neighbours and actually that if we are struggling that we can also share that too and let's all go together and be unleashed as a church as a herald and we can move forward together one step at a time you