

The Invitation - Part 2 of 2

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[0 : 00] I won't get as far as the night of 1 Corinthians as I would like, but I would like to share some of the very personal in regards to sharing the gospel. So me and Brother John meet on Wednesday morning.

We're the Bacon Brothers. We have bacon at Midway quite often. And by the way, one time, Ms. Wilson, I went with Sam, and he got pancakes and toast. And the lady said, are you sure you're supposed to have this?

And he said, yes, because my wife isn't here, and I'm telling on him. All right. And so Midway is where a lot of good conversations happen. And we talk about the gospel and its implications upon our lives and different things.

And I feel very comfortable speaking to him about the Bible and the gospel. I feel talking in those terms. But last week, I had Ben Cherry here sitting with me.

And when I did, I had intention to take the New Testament that I have here that was marked and give a simple, clear gospel presentation.

[1 : 03] That's what I had. And that's what I stated that I was going to do. That's what I put down on my notes that I was going to do. But in sitting here in a room full of other believers in this setting, I just felt like I wasn't doing that.

I wasn't speaking in terms that if Ben did not already know what I was talking about, he would understand what I was saying. And it's a real challenge to get there.

It's a challenge to get to that place. It takes doing it often. It takes prayer. And it takes intentionality to get to a place where you can share the gospel in a way that people who don't already know the gospel would understand.

And I'm thankful the night that it was scheduled that Katie would give our missions update when we would get back to this. Because I think I speak Pidget, actually.

When I heard you reading Pidget, I'm like, I think I can speak that. I think I already speak that. All right? There's like enough words in there that you knew what she was saying, but not completely.

[2 : 07] But all that effort that she would put forth to get to a place in a language and in a mindset where she would speak about the gospel so that they would understand.

That's a conversation that missionaries have all the time about sharing the gospel. And it's one that I think of in regards to our missionaries, but it's not one that we, as a church in America, I think, have often enough.

It's not one that I have often enough. It's like how do we communicate in a way that is true to God's word, but it's in a way that is being understood.

And so, as I said last week, I really struggled. And I walked away saying, I want to become more intentional. So, in missions, there's a slide, those in the back answer.

In missions, this is called contextualization. Contextualization. And if you've heard it, maybe you heard good teaching on it, or maybe you heard wrong teaching on it.

[3 : 11] Oftentimes, it's something that is used to allow for people to bring in things into a church or into a ministry that is more adaptive to the culture than it is true to the gospel.

I'm going to give you a big definition first. So, this church allows me to take classes at Truett McConnell on Monday night, and I'm studying how I'm taking a missions class right now, and I'm really loving it.

And I'm speaking about cross-cultural leadership. And this week, this came up. So, if you can bring the slide that says TMU on it. And it's a big definition, but I'm going to focus on the last one.

It's just this statement right here. It says, Therefore, engaging any culture, even our own, we should structure our analysis to ensure that Scripture critiques culture, and never that culture critiques Scripture.

And I love that. And I wrote to Dean afterwards, and I said, If there's any class on a college where the teacher might get away from this being a Bible teacher and be a servant to the culture, it would be in a class like this.

[4 : 22] And I'm so grateful that this teacher said, First and foremost, we must be people of Scripture. And that must be said, and that's something that has to be said when you bring up a word like contextualization, which simply means it's the process of considering something in its context.

All right? And so, that's how it happens. Andrew, would you come here? If I saw Andrew, good to see you, man. Good to see you. I love you so much, Andrew. All right? This is my friend, Andrew.

If I saw him at the baseball field, you could be seated. Or if I saw Andrew, I would greet him a certain way here.

And then Catherine said, Please don't come to me. I ain't going to you, Catherine. I'm going to go to a designated Sam Wilson. Would you stand up? Good to see you, Brother Sam. Sam, how's the weather? It's great. It's great, isn't it?

It is great. All right. Thank you, Brother Sam. And so that even if I had the same message to deliver to my friend Andrew on the baseball field, and I have the same thing that I want to ask my friend Sam Wilson in the church, there's a different way in which I might communicate it, but the message must remain the same.

[5 : 31] The message is Jesus, and the contextualization or how I talk would be the means of delivering that message. But it can't change, right? Everybody on board here with me?

All right. I hope I didn't throw you off with the slide. Or just maybe you can't say I'm on board with you because I don't know what you're going to say yet. But you're on board with the fact that you know that we're not talking about changing a message. We're talking about working harder or being more intentional so that we can help people understand the gospel when we share it.

It's called, in the Bible, we have all kinds of different themes that you could talk to somebody about when it comes to the gospel. Some call this an atonement grammar, meaning like there's a language of a battlefield.

Christ fought against the power of sin and death. He defeated the power of evil for us. Or the language of the marketplace. Christ paid the ransom price, the purchase price, the bias out of our indebtedness that free us from enslavement.

Or the language of an exile. Christ was exiled and cast out of the community so we who deserve to be banished can be brought in. He brings us home. Or the language of the temple. Christ is the sacrifice that purifies us and makes us acceptable to draw near.

[6 : 40] Or the language of the law court. Christ stands before the judge, takes our punishment that we deserve. He removes our guilt and makes us righteous. You know those different stories.

You know those different themes. And in the Bible, when it addresses different people, it will do that accordingly. My wife and I met a family the other day. And they came here. I imagine they were on some kind of political asylum.

Is that how you say that word, right? Is that the right word? Political asylum? When they have to leave a country for political reasons. I want to talk to them about the gospel. They do not attend church with us every Sunday.

They don't come from the same tradition that we do. When I'm going to talk to them about the gospel, I should take into consideration what they currently know. Or what aspects of the Bible that might lead to a conversation that would make sense to them.

Or that would interest them. So that I could start that Bible study with them. And so 1 Corinthians chapter number 9. I'll just read this verse to you.

[7 : 46] I know our time is short. But as you're turning to 1 Corinthians chapter number 9, I want to take you back to what I said earlier about last week. I'm sitting here with Ben Cherry. And I want to give him a simple gospel presentation.

Which means that I can't speak in terms that he would have to already understand the gospel for him to understand what I was saying. Which means that I have to make sure that if I'm going to talk about sin, that I describe what sin is.

That I show him what sin is in the Bible. That I show him what the consequences of sin are. And all those different things. And it requires slowing down. It requires asking questions.

It requires listening. Which were three things that I didn't allow for last week in my analogy with Ben. Is how am I going to talk to a person that I've never listened to.

And that I don't know where he's coming from. And I don't know what he knows about the gospel. And what he doesn't know about the gospel. 1 Corinthians chapter number 9 and verse 12 says this.

[8 : 53] And I won't give. I have four points. I'll speak more about the first one and just read to you the other four. 1 Corinthians 9 and 12. If others be partakers of this power over you and not we rather.

Nevertheless we have not used this power. But suffer all things lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. First thing that I see here. When the apostle Paul is teaching on the topic.

In which I am speaking about right now to you. Is this. Is that Paul would give up his valid rights to share the gospel. Paul was willing to endure any inconvenience or personal hardship.

That might enable the gospel to spread more effectively. Including choosing not to make use of some of his legitimate rights. He had a right to things that he said that he was not going to take.

For the sake of the gospel. You know I struggle with this as an American. I was taught all the way through public school system. That we are the best nation in the world. And that we have rights.

[9 : 53] And we should demand our rights. And if anybody wants to take them from them. We should fight them to the death. Alright. Anybody else taught this? Alright. And so I understand that.

Where they were coming from. But as a believer I am told that I can have rights. That I can set aside for something else. For somebody else. And that's the place in which we would see a missionary.

You don't have to take your shoes off when you enter a house. You don't have to leave a... You don't have to stay around late into the night after you've had a meal with somebody. You can get right to the point in a conversation.

You can expect people to be punctual and not understanding. You can come into a room and not greet everyone that is in there.

And at the same time you don't have a biblical command to do any of those things. Which means you can choose not to do them for the sake of the gospel.

[10 : 53] And so first of all Paul gave up valid rights. And another time we'll look at how he became a servant for others for the sake of the gospel. How he was intentional about identifying with the people that he was trying to reach.

And how he was joyfully bound to the scriptures. But tonight I just want to leave you with this thought and consideration. We saw a young lady who moved to the other side of the world.

Who ate different foods. Who put herself through different circumstances for the sake of getting the gospel to some kids in a village. She learned a language.

She studied people. She listened. And that's still happening today. We have even in Nigeria. Grandma and Olivia are continuing there. Even in South Africa and other parts of the world. And every one of us in here say, I love that.

But we also have where I don't have to do that. I can continue just speaking to other Christians about the gospel. But I left last Sunday night thinking, I want with everything in me to work at learning to share the gospel with other people who do not know it.

[11 : 59] In a way that they hear God's word when it's spoken. And that's why I want to ask that we pray for the night men as we come forward. Is that we would take on that. We would realize that we can set, just like our missionary friends, we can set aside our rights as well for the sake of the gospel.

We can give of our time the share of the gospel. We can be listening to people. We can help speak in a way in which they understand the gospel.

And not just speak as I so often do at a level that would require somebody to know large portions of the Bible to understand what I am saying.

And so I leave you this verse. If others be partakers of this power over you and not we rather, nevertheless have we not used this power but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

What is it in our lives that we might be holding on to that hinders the gospel of Christ? And would we be willing to say, I will be a servant to all so that they can hear the gospel.