

May 3, 2015
Sunday Evening Service
Series: Communion
Community Baptist Church
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Greer, SC 29650
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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as you prepare to hear from various texts about invitation.

1. What does Jesus know about you, and is it okay?
2. Are you willing to invite your friends to see Jesus who will discern all their secrets?
3. Why is it important to know what the Bible says about Jesus Christ?
3. How can you invite people to come and see the Christ of the Bible?
4. Why is Christ's resurrection important?

COME AND SEE

John 4:29; 1:45-46; Mark 16:6-7

As I read the news on various web sites, I have to content with those pesky side bars that shout for my attention. They all advertise some kind of news that I just have to know. For example: *Ten Best Confessions of All Time From Flight Attendants* (Good House Keeping); *How to Get Rid of Age Spots* (Livestrong); *Drop Extra Pounds Fast* (AARP); *Dr. Ron Paul Issues Major Warning for U.S. Seniors* (Stansberry Research). Actually, I am not interested in any of those things. So why do these companies insist on telling me what I am not interested in? In a word, they are motivated by "money." The

more people who read their articles, the more money they make. It is the simple rule of supply and demand. They supply and hope that I demand. I don't.

Now let's put the shoe on the other foot. I have a message that I believe I need to tell and want to tell. It is the good news that Jesus Christ was on earth as God in the flesh, that He lived perfectly under God's law, that He was crucified though innocent, that He died, rose from the grave and is now in heaven pleading the price of His blood to cover my sins. A lot of people feel toward my message the way I feel toward pushy news sources. If they want to hear my message, they will let me know.

So what motivates me to look for people who are willing to listen? First, I am driven because I know this message meets personal needs. I know firsthand about the assurance of sins forgiven. That assurance is gained only through faith in Jesus Christ's finished work. Second, I am driven to tell others because this is their only hope for eternal life. Third, I am driven to tell others because my Lord Jesus said I should. Therefore, unlike business enterprises, I am not trying to sell a product in order to gain money.

So what motivates you to invite others to listen? There are three examples in the New Testament of people who simplified their message about good news to the words, "Come and see." The woman at the well invited people to come and see the man who told her all her secrets. Philip invited Nathanael to come and see the Christ promised in the Scripture. The angel invited the women to come and see the empty tomb. Those are all very important truths that we need to invite others to come and see.

Come and See the Christ Who Knows Me.

A woman who lived in Samaria talked with Jesus. In response, she went into the town and said to everyone, "*Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?*" (John 4:29). She was well aware that Christ knows. Knows what? He knows everything about everyone. More directly, it is okay that He knows all our secrets. Although it seems pretty clear that this woman was not okay with exposing her secrets to Jesus.

In fact, from the outset of the conversation she acted like Jesus was out of line to ask her for a drink since she was a Samaritan

woman. *The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) (v.9).* This response was due partly to the never ending conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans. It was also due partly to the fact that it would have been questionable for a man to be conversing with this woman in public. Consider for example the disciples' response when they came back from McDonald's with the food. *Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" (v.27).*

Against the backdrop of these questionable situations, the woman was purposely vague when Jesus asked her to go get her husband. *The woman answered him, "I have no husband" (v.17a).* At that point, the all-knowing Jesus pulled back the curtain on her secrets. *Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true" (vv.17b-18).* Suddenly it is very obvious to us that this woman had issues with purity, with relationships, lust, deception, and all kinds of human weaknesses. It was a fact that she had committed much sin. But it was a fact no one else knew.

In kindness, Jesus lets us know that we have no secrets with Him. If our conscience is working, we know that He knows all about us. Sometimes He brings sins to public light. In the future, He will expose all sins that are not confessed. Jesus taught, *"For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light" (Luke 8:17).* The most common way that Jesus exposes our innermost secrets is by the written word. As we read it and hear it, Jesus the omniscient Lord puts a spiritual finger on peoples' secret sins.

It is not only okay that Jesus exposes our secrets, but it is also good that He knows them. This woman had to come face-to-face with her failure before she would ever have faith in Jesus Christ. She proved by her past lifestyle that she wasn't willing to deal with her failures. Now that the failure was on the table, she would have to admit that she needed help.

Human nature does not appreciate Christ's intimate knowledge about us. We prefer to keep our failures secret. In fact, we are a bit suspicious of people who take delight in letting everyone else know

what a loser they are. Therefore, when we are living out of fellowship with God, we prefer to stay out of fellowship. At times like that, we do not desire to be with God's people because they make us feel guilty. We tend to accuse them of being legalists and "holier than thou" because they enjoy a fellowship with God that our sin will not permit us to enjoy. We do not read the Bible, and we do not want to hear the Bible preached because it pokes sharply on our consciences.

But it is good for God to poke us about our sin. That is the purpose of God's laws, rules, commands. The imperatives of the Bible (and there are plenty of them) pull back the curtain on our secrets so that we have to look at them in all their nastiness. Therefore, no one will ever be saved from sin until he or she is first crushed by the law.

This is what makes the cheap grace movement that is so popular today a heresy. The cheap grace movement teaches sinners to come to Jesus "just as you are," because He will accept you "just as you are," and you can continue to live "just as you are" because God is gracious. But the sinner will never see grace as amazing until he sees himself as thoroughly condemned by God's law. It is good that Jesus reveals that He knows our secrets.

Observe this woman's response to Jesus uncovering her secrets. Come and see Him. The invitation requires a desire to be known. The woman whose sins were uncovered invited all the people to come and have their sins uncovered. Surely most of the people in the town were aware of this woman's reputation. It is easy for us to assume that some of the men of the town had sinned with this woman. Were they shocked at her invitation? Maybe we should stand amazed at the peoples' response: *They went out of the town and were coming to Him (John 4:30).*

We who have dealt with sin in our own lives should invite others to do the same. If Christ has exposed our sin through His law and we have refused to confess it and repent, we will never want to put other people under that kind of uncomfortable situation. If we have confessed our sins and found forgiveness in Jesus' blood, we sincerely desire for other sinners to find the same kind of forgiveness. We want other people to come to Christ, learn their need, and be reconciled with God their Creator. We strongly desire for others to find fellowship with God through Christ so that we can enjoy fellowship with them.

The woman's invitation was a great one. Our invitation to people who need the Savior is incomparable. But, it goes without saying that the invitation requires the object. The woman wondered aloud when she gave the invitation, "Can this be the Christ?" She didn't invite people to have a religious experience. She didn't invite people to come out to the well and be entertained by exciting music in a clean, family-oriented atmosphere. She invited people to come and see Christ who would tell them everything they ever did!

When you invite people to attend a church service with you, they ought to find Christ in this assembly. If we are truly born again, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter like Christ, who He sent to us. Therefore, when we meet together, Christ is in our midst. He promised that "*where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them*" (Matthew 18:20). On various occasions in the past, parents have told me that while they were driving past our church building their little children have quipped, "That's where God lives." Invite people to come here and see Christ who will tell them what they have done so that they may receive forgiveness.

Come and See the Christ of the Bible (John 1:45-46).

In this earlier story in John's Gospel account, *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."* Nathanael said to him, "*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*" Philip said to him, "*Come and see*" (vv.45-46).

The immediate question in Nathanael's mind when he heard Philip's invitation was, "How can Christ come from Nazareth?" This question acknowledged that the Christ Philip spoke of is the promised Messiah. About that man Jesus, Philip said, "*We have found Him*" (v.45b). Implied is the fact that like many of his peers, Philip was looking for Messiah. They had learned about God's promise as they studied the Scripture in their synagogue classes. They trusted God's promise that one day the Prophet like Moses, the Seed of the Woman, the Messiah would come. Philip and his peers didn't quite understand that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, came to be their Savior from sin first.

The interesting thing is that Philip didn't quite understand that Messiah found him. John wrote, *The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me"* (John 1:43).

This is the picture of Jesus the Good Shepherd who goes out to seek the lost sheep. The sheep He seeks and finds are the ones God has chosen to be born again. God the Father draws those sheep to the Shepherd. Jesus taught, "*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him*" (John 6:44). And then, when the lost sheep looks up and sees the Shepherd coming for him, he cries out, "I have found Him!" We who have found Jesus, or more accurately been found by Him, should invite everyone to come to Him whom we have found.

We hesitate to invite because we have experienced negative reactions in the past, haven't we? We hear people respond like Nathanael who chided Philip that nothing good comes from Nazareth. *Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"* (v.46). At the very least, we can conclude from this response that Nazareth was not famous for producing leaders. It was a small village out in the hills of Galilee. In modern terms, we might think of it as a small town tucked in the Appalachian mountains. We don't expect the next president to come from a place like that. The popular opinion in Nathanael's day was that Messiah would have to come from Jerusalem, the city of David, the city of God, the location of the temple.

In a similar way, it is very popular in our day for needy sinners to dismiss talk about Jesus Christ as legend or mythology. In human wisdom, Jesus is no more a Savior from sin than Mohammed or Buddha or Confucius is. Today humanism is the chief religion. Humanity is the measure of all things. Therefore, if you want to invite someone to a religious experience that is all about human wisdom, human emotions, and making humans feel good about themselves, it is likely you will have many takers. But if you invite a sinner to come to Christ who emphatically stated, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6), chances are pretty good that the person will tell you that he is not interested in backwoods, backwards, ancient superstitions to which his grandmother clung until her dying day.

How will you respond to that kind of reaction? The best response is the one Philip gave to Nathanael. He told him to come and see the truth. Whose truth? God has affirmed the truth about Christ in the Bible. Go back and read verse forty-five. *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in*

the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (v.45). The authority behind Philip’s invitation was the Scripture. Whether Messiah came from the hills of Galilee was not the issue. This was the Messiah described and promised by God Himself through the laws and ceremonies relayed through Moses and the promises of the prophets as they declared God’s messages. We learn from Matthew that if Nathanael would study the prophets somewhere, he would read that God promised that Messiah would be called a “Nazarene.” *And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matthew 2:23).*

This brings us to a very important question. Do you really believe the Bible? The Bible proves who Christ is. The Bible proves why sinners need Christ. Then, is the Bible the authority behind your invitation to people? If so, when they respond negatively, you can say with all the confidence of Philip, “Come and see.” Nathanael tried to dissuade the man with the invitation, but *Philip said to him, “Come and see” (v.46b).*

We need to act like Philip and invite everyone to come and see because we don’t know who God is drawing to Christ. We are not responsible to decide who God is going to draw to Christ. Christ commands us to invite everyone (Acts 1:8). We need to invite everyone with confidence that they will see Christ in the Bible. Invite them to a one-on-one Bible study and show them over and over who Christ is according to the Bible. You ought to be able to invite people to church services with full confidence that the pastor will prove from the Bible that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be—our Savior from sin.

Come and See the Risen Christ (Mark 16:6-7).

This story shows us that some people seek Jesus of Nazareth. Some women went to the tomb where they thought Jesus’ body was early on Sunday morning. The angel at the empty tomb told the women, *“Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him” (v.6).* In this case, it was friends who loved Him who were seeking the Christ—or at least His corpse. They expected to find the lifeless body at the tomb. They planned to do a kind deed. They were

pleasantly surprised to discover they were actually seeking a risen Savior.

Sometimes it is people we might call “seekers” who are seeking Christ in a general way. They know in their consciences that there has to be something more to life than endless pursuits of passing things. They have learned that all of humanity’s wisdom and inventions do not offer satisfaction. Maybe they have even discovered that manmade religion is not satisfying. These are our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers, people we meet in the store, and people we sit beside at the ball game.

Always the people seeking Christ will be people who God the Father is drawing to Christ to be saved. Every single person who God is drawing will sense a spiritual void in life and seek to fill it. These people cross our paths in life. What do we tell them? We tell them what the angel told the women. Christ was crucified and He has risen. Most people acknowledge that Jesus Christ was crucified. Many people have difficulty sincerely accepting that Jesus rose from the dead.

We must help these seekers understand the reason why Jesus rose from the grave. Tell them what Peter wrote. *Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God (1 Peter 1:18-21).* Paul taught the same thing when he wrote, *[Faith] will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Romans 4:24-25).* Wow! That is some pretty deep theology. Actually, that is the simple truth about why it is important that Jesus’ dead body is not in the grave. If it was, we would not be saved from sin. It is not and we are saved!

Go and tell. *But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you (v.7).* Tell His disciples. The women were instructed to tell the disciples first. They would want to know or at least needed to know that Jesus kept His promise to them. Too bad they did not remember

or ever understand what He promised. The reality of Christ's resurrection so altered the disciples' lives that they literally gave every ounce of life to tell everyone they could this good news. Likewise it is very important and encouraging for us to continually remind each other, fellow disciples, that Jesus is risen to be our Savior.

But we also need to tell those who need to be His disciples. There are multitudes of unchurched people who need to know that Christ is risen in order to offer them justification from the offense of their sins. There are multitudes of church people who have made meaningless religious decisions that do not result in making them like Christ. We should confidently invite these people to find Christ. Meet with them at your home, their home, or lunch to tell them. Bring them here and let us reaffirm what you tell them.

At the communion service, we declare the death of Christ until He comes again. Let's go outside the assembly and continue to do the same thing.