


"The 5:14 Journey"
Take the Next Step
Week 5: "Love Witnesses"

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. *—Psalm 145:11*
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. *—Joshua 22:5*

Questions for Reflection

- Tell us about your experience in **receiving** witness regarding Christ's love and forgiveness. Who first began telling you about Christ? How old were you, and what were the circumstances?

How did you respond **initially**?

What negative perceptions (of the person who witnessed to you, or of the content of the message) did you have to overcome? **How** did you overcome those negative perceptions/obstacles?
- Read John 9:1-41. How was your response to the gospel similar to this man's? How was it different?

What negative repercussions did this man experience as a result of his witnessing to others (v. 13ff)?

Did he regret it? How do you think he would have reflected on his experience (see v. 35ff)?

What negative repercussions have **you** experienced as a result of witnessing? Do you regret it?
- Read Acts 1:8. Has the Holy Spirit come upon you? How do you know?
(Need help answering that question? Read Ephesians 1:13-14 & Romans 8:9. What do you learn?)

According to Acts 1:8, do you **possess** power to witness? How are you **using** that power?

Acts 1:8 says that we "shall/will" be Christ's witnesses. Discuss the significance of the fact that the Greek makes clear that Spirit-empowered witnessing is a **statement of reality** for all believers.

Application-Challenge

- **Bring** a neighbor—as your guest—to TCC's "Food Truck Rodeo" **tonight** at 6pm.
- At the Food Truck Rodeo, tell your "neighbor" a concrete way that God is meaningful to you. Listen for pain in their life story, and relate Christ to their need.
- With whom could you share the booklet, *Would You Like to Know God Personally?*

Take One Step: *"Yes~I'm in! This week I'll witness to a neighbor in some way."*

Signature: _____

Sermon Summary

For the past four weeks we have been in a series entitled "**The 514 Journey**", based upon Galatians 5:14 ("Love your neighbor as yourself.") True love is "others-centered." Our "neighbor" is anyone around us, our co-workers, cashiers, waiters or waitresses. Literally anyone with whom we come into contact is our "neighbor". Jesus says that it even includes our enemies, those whose intentions towards us are evil!

We've learned that love speaks, engaging others in conversation. Love not only speaks, it also prays. Love prays because we have neighbors who are lost, broken, and in need of the kind of miracles that only God can provide. Loving our neighbors means that we call on God on their behalf. We also learned that love welcomes. It extends an invitation to others into our social space. Last week we were reminded love also serves. Love sees a need in a neighbor's life and steps in to meet that need. Today I want to focus our attention on a fifth aspect of what it means to love our neighbor: love witnesses. God has called us to love people by building redemptive relationships with them (Acts 1:8). A redemptive relationship is one in which our ultimate goal is to share with them what Jesus did for us on the cross. That's the most loving gift we can offer anyone!

Jesus offers the world freedom from guilt. We are moral beings, created in the image of God, so we sense that there are certain things we ought to do and certain things we ought not do. We feel guilty because we **are** guilty. Truth is, we have all broken God's laws. But here is the good news: Jesus bore the guilt of our sin on the cross, and He offers forgiveness of sin to all who will place their trust in him. To be engrossed in our own selfish concerns and ambitions without regard either for the glory of God or the good of others is to be confined to the most cramped and unhealthy of prisons. Jesus, the great liberator, offers us freedom from guilt and freedom from self-centeredness. Jesus also offers us freedom from fear. We fear sickness, financial collapse, old age, and death. Face it, if we are in bondage to fear, we're not free! Jesus came to give us freedom from guilt, and freedom from self-centeredness, and freedom from fear.

Positively, Jesus came to give us a full and meaningful life—a life characterized by love for God and neighbor. This message of freedom to which we bear witness is called the gospel, which simply means "good news" (Romans 10:1, 13-15). As we think about sharing the gospel with our neighbors, keep in mind that evangelism is a process, not an event. First comes cultivation, then sowing, then harvesting. In the parable of the soils (Mark 4:3-9), God's Word is "seed" and the "soils" represent the condition of human hearts. How does the parable of the soils help us as we seek to introduce our friends and loved ones to the Savior? We recognize that people are at different places along the spiritual continuum. Our responsibility is to discern where people are along this continuum, and to help them take the next positive step towards God. For example, with an international student who has no awareness of God's existence, our first goal would be to introduce the concept of God as Creator. A second principle of witnessing is that God is responsible for the results. We are responsible (and capable) only to cultivate the soil and to sow the seed. God is responsible for the result (1 Corinthians 3:5-9).

I have found that using the booklet, "Would You Like to Know God Personally?" very helpful in witnessing. After building a bit of a relationship with someone, I ask: *"So John—just wondering—where are you in your spiritual journey? What role do you see God playing in your life, if any?"* And then I carefully listen. Later I'll say, *"I have a little booklet which briefly summarizes what the Bible teaches a person needs to know in order to enter into a personal relationship with God. Someone shared it with me many years ago and it made a lot of sense. Would you mind if I share it with you?"* I do this all the time. Most people are receptive because I have been building a redemptive relationship with them over time. All of us can do this—**because love witnesses!**

Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, *"What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?"*, how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to explore the ways that "love witnesses"...

Monday— Colossians 1:3-12

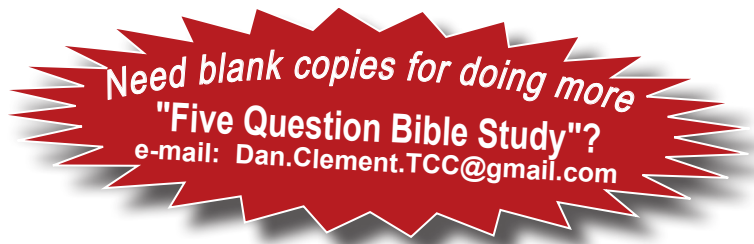
Tuesday— Colossians 2:5-7

Wednesday— 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3

Thursday— Ephesians 1:15-17

Friday— Acts 8:1-4 & 11:19-21

Saturday— ***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study Proverbs 1:1-10.



Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) is it found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text?