

There may not be anything as deeply gratifying as seeing souls saved. Watching someone, with full knowledge of their sin, confess the glory of Jesus, and give themselves over to be buried in the waters of baptism, washing away their sins. Then, seeing them smile as they realize they are clean in Christ.

Most of us have taken that journey to the water. Do you remember it. I'd imagine you didn't take it alone, did you? Were others there along the way to enlighten, teach, listen, love? I'll bet so. That's crucial.

We need to reach more people. I want to see so many more make that journey into Christ this year, more than ever before, but if they are going to make the journey, they are going to need our help.

I want to talk with you about Roles we each can play, roles we **MUST** play, to help more people find Christ. We don't save souls. God saves souls. Souls save themselves by coming to God. But the efforts of Christians along the way could very much determine whether that soul and God come together.

So let's explore some of the roles we can play to connect people to God and maybe issue some energizing and difference making challenging to us all for this year.

(I Cor. 3:5-9 – not about us – but God's work through us to bring about souls for His heavenly home)

II Kings 5:1-14 – The story of Naaman being cleansed of Leprosy

Naaman – "I have a problem and I need a solution" (**v1,5,14**)

- There were many things Naaman did not know:
 - o Who would heal him exactly.
 - o How he would be healed.
- But this man understood and accepted he had a deadly disease.
- He was willing to take a chance to find a solution.
- He was willing to pay a great price to be healed
- He got over himself late in the story and found cleansing with God.

Listen, this is not a role you play in helping someone else be saved. This is the role they must play. They must understand that sin is a problem. They must accept that they will die without finding the grace of God. They must be willing to step out of their comfort zone. They must be willing to pay a price. They must be willing to get past their past, and their bias, and their ideas to find salvation.

You cannot do this for them. You cannot make people see their condition and understand their distance from God and determine to go all in to make it right with Him. You cannot save people who do not accept that they have a problem and need a solution.

John 9:39-41 – *If they realized they were blind (spiritually) He could have easily recovered their sight. But they believe they see, that they don't need the Light of the Gospel and Jesus efforts didn't change them.*

Acts 27:28-29 – So, before we talk about roles you and I can play interacting with lost people, let's do this first: **PRAY FOR THEM**. Pray that they will understand their condition and seek healing in God.

The Servant Girl – "I know where you can go to find help"

- There is much this little girl didn't know
 - o Maybe the identity of the prophet
 - o The specific means by which Naaman could be saved
- But this little girl made this whole story possible
- She saw a man, a man she had no reason to love (she'd been taken captive)
- And she expressed that there was someone in Samaria who could help him.
- She isn't named here, but she is a hero in Naaman's life

The Lindale church needs little servant girls. Maybe you are someone who isn't confident teaching the Gospel to someone yet. Maybe the idea of sitting down with them in a study is too difficult. But you know

a place where they can come, you know a preacher or elder with whom they can meet, wherein they can find help from Jesus. Will you tell them?

Maybe it is handing our cards or sharing our sermons. Maybe it is telling them: “would you be willing to let my preacher sit down with you and your family for one hour.” Be the CONNECTION. Be the one who cares enough to send them in the right direction.

John 4:27-29 – The girl reminds me of the woman at the well. There was much she didn’t know, but one thing she knew – something amazing was there at that well. And she told them to come and see.

- Go and See / Come and See – say it however you want: just be sure and say something.

Elisha – “Listen to me. I know God’s Way for you.” (5:8-10)

- At some point, somebody has got to know the answers and be bold enough to share them.
- Elisha didn’t shy away from even this dangerous man. He knew the truth and shared it.
- Elisha was not silenced by FEAR, and he was not motivated by GREED (5:15-16).
- He just spoke for God. He told Naaman God’s will to save him.

You know, people who say, “you really need to visit our church” or “you’ve got to meet our preacher” or “check out our website.” “Go and See” “Come and See” --- these are very important people. But that is not everyone’s role. We also need Elisha’s in our midst. People who are willing to say, “I can see you have a yearning for the Truth, let me show it to you.” Maybe it is the 4 Lesson book or sending verses from Romans 6 or just a sit down study through Acts. This is what the Bible says.

The old adage is that the scariest 7 words a Christian can utter is: “Will you study the bible with me?” You know, for fear that they will say YES! We have plenty of people here who have nothing to fear and are not motivated by pride. They just want to see souls saved. It’s time to share what you know.

Acts 9:10-11,13-15; 22:12-16 – What boldness by Ananias! I mean, yeah he was scared at first, but God said He would be with him and work through him, and God did!

Naaman’s Servants – “Don’t get in your own way. Obey the truth.” (v.13-14)

- Boy, saving somebody takes a lot of people!
- Naaman came all this way but he didn’t understand and got frustrated.
- Remember, all Naaman knew was he had a problem. The solution surprised him.
- The servants were close with Naaman, they knew him.
- They just settled him down and convinced him to move forward in faith.
- Were they Israelites! Who knew what God could do?!

Oh how important are the servant friends in our church? Most of the people who are baptized into Christ have close relationships in that church. So maybe someone invites them, or recommends our church (servant girl). And then they meet with the preacher or elder or a family and learn the truth. And then they just aren’t sure about the action of baptism or the commitment. And then, the servants, likely plural, the people around them help them process the message, talk through it, and encourage them to do it. You don’t have to be a preacher to do that. Just care and talk and listen.

Acts 18:24-27 – Like when Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside, a man who had been taught the truth but was missing some things. They talked with him, clarified, and he moved forward. How many souls are still lost, even though they know the truth, because they need someone to take them aside and help them get over their own issues and just follow the King?

Conclusion: The story wasn’t: a leprous man was told by God to wash in a river and he did it. Well I guess actually it was! But it was not quite that simple. It took PEOPLE. Naaman realizing he needed to search for help. A girl to point him in the right direction. A prophet to reveal God’s will. Companions to help him commit to it. .. I think this year will be a great one for evangelism in our community. The story is: sinners are told by God to be baptized and they do. But it won’t be quite that simple. It requires... us. You and me. Our parts matter. Let’s embrace our roles in saving souls.