Pass the Salt

Matthew 5:13-16 Kimby Young

Acts 1:1-9 February 2, 2025

Acts 8:26-39

I have been teaching the book of Acts since September. For the month of February, I thought I would share a few things I have learned. That’s one thing I love about teaching the Bible. I learn so much any time I teach. Even if I have read a passage several times, I always learn something new. God is alive in scripture and speaks to us in new and miraculous ways, any time we are open and listen for God’s Word.

The first thing I learned about the book of Acts is that it is all about sharing your faith and telling people about God’s love in Jesus Christ. The theme of the entire book of Acts is in today’s reading in chapter 1 verse 8 – “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The entire book of Acts is about how ordinary people receive God’s power through the Holy Spirit, and about how these ordinary believers witness – or share what they believe about Jesus. And about how God uses that ordinary faith sharing to spread the love of God throughout the entire world.

The message for us today is exactly the same as it was for the first disciples. God calls you to witness – to share God’s love in the world wherever you go. You and I have received the very same power of God as the first disciples. The Holy Spirit moves among us and gives us everything we need, everything we will ever need, to share God’s love. A witness is someone who sees something or experiences something, and tells about it. If you witness a crime – the witness tells people what they saw. If you witness God’s love – well, then – tell people what you have experienced. Plain and simple and straightforward. Show people God’s love. Tell people about Jesus. The good news will spread. The love of God will grow.

That’s what the reading from Matthew is about – the spreading of the gospel, the sharing of God’s love. It’s like turning on a lamp to share the light. It’s like adding salt and then stirring it around. The salt spreads and the flavor grows. So it is with God’s love. A little bit will go a long way. A little love will just grow and grow. Show God’s love. Share how Jesus has touched your life. Then the Holy Spirit will take it from there and stir the salt around. God will create something beautiful and miraculous, every time we share the good news about Jesus.

Sometimes we find it hard to talk about God. It’s hard to bring up the topic. We don’t know exactly what to say. We don’t want to offend anyone or step on anybody’s toes. We don’t want anyone to think we are weird. We imagine strangers preaching on the street, or going door to door leaving pamphlets or asking awkward questions. That kind of faith sharing is not what the book of Acts is talking about. Sharing your faith should be natural. It should grow out of your own experience and be a part of every day life. If you see someone sad or hurting, you talk to them about God’s love, and you see if you can help them. If you find yourself facing a challenge, you lean on God’s grace and guidance. Maybe you tell someone what gives you strength, what makes you happy, what gifts you are able to share. I know, we find it hard to talk about ourselves or to talk about really important personal subjects like faith, but remember, you aren’t really talking about yourself, you are talking about God and how God has loved you. Keep the focus on God in Jesus Christ, and let the Holy Spirit inspire you. That’s what happens throughout the Bible in story after story.

The story from Acts 8 for today is a bit of a “how to witness primer.” It’s an example of what to do to be faithful and appropriate in sharing your faith. Now it is not likely that any of you will have an angel visit to tell you to go to a certain road in the wilderness, and stand there for the Spirit to move. But when you find yourself along a road, or sitting at work or school or the ballgame, notice what Philip does. First He makes himself available to God – He goes where he believes God has sent him. Then he listens. He observes. He doesn’t just jump in. He doesn’t impose his own story. He takes time to pay attention. When Philip sees what the Ethiopian is doing – reading scripture – then he knows the man is seeking. He knows the Ethiopian is open to God. Now most of the time we don’t see people reading scripture. It’s not so obvious. But sometimes we can tell that people are looking for something, needing something, open to help or hope or a kind gesture. Maybe something has happened in their lives and you know about it. Like a death or an illness or a job change or some other stress. Maybe they seem to be looking for change. Maybe they are sad or hurting. Maybe they are joyful and thankful and wanting to serve. When the door opens – take it. When you see that someone might be open for a good word – speak up. Be brave. Share a little salt and light. Initiate the conversation. Remember you have something wonderful to share – God’s love. You might just be that messenger of God – that angel that is needed at that moment. And if they don’t want to hear it – they will tell you quickly.

So in the scripture, after listening, after observing the person and paying attention, and after starting the conversation, Philip lets the servant speak first. Philip asks a question or two. What are you reading? What are you thinking about? The Ethiopian servant is the one who asks for more. He wants to understand. He wants to know God. He wants to be baptized – that is - he wants to belong to God. He wants to feel the presence of God’s Holy Spirit. He wants to receive the gifts of God’s grace.

In real life, maybe it’s not that easy. And maybe it doesn’t happen in one conversation. But always it starts where the seeker is, where the person meets God. It’s not about where I am or where you are or what I want. It’s not about telling the person where they have to be, what they have to believe or do. It’s about listening to them and pointing out that God is right there with them. It’s pointing to the scripture or the signs along the way where God has interacted and reached out in love. It’s telling them or showing them how God has acted in your life and throughout history. It’s sharing the love we have received – the grace, the forgiveness, the hope, the healing, the redemption – that we have received from God through Jesus Christ. It’s a personal relationship, not an abstract analysis. It’s a living love, not a long ago event. It is an experience of God in your life – a witness to what you have known and seen and felt and lived.

You know Jesus. Tell people what you know. Tell God’s story as it touches your life, or the life of those around you. Be Christ’s witness of love and salvation – as scripture says, in Jerusalem and Judea – or rather in Gardner, and Johnson County, and Kansas and wherever you find yourself to the ends of the earth. Be God’s witness of love and salvation. And be blessed as you share God’s grace.