

## **Personal Evangelism in Biblical Perspective: iShare–What?**

**I Corinthians 15**

**By [Dr. Harry Reeder III](#)**

*February 5, 2012 – Morning Sermon*

I want to read the opening verses of I Corinthians 15 as we continue in our iShare series. This is God's Word. It's the truth. I Corinthians 15:1-11 says

[1] Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. [3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. [9] For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. [10] But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. [11] Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may this His Word be preached for you.

Our series is iShare this year because our focus is personal evangelism. I share Christ and the Gospel with others. We have covered a couple of things and I just want to remind you briefly of what we've covered. There was iShare – Who? Who is supposed to share? Very clearly in the Bible every believer was sharing, was called and is a missionary for Jesus Christ. You are either a mission field or a missionary. If you have been brought to Christ now you're a missionary and He has sent us all. As they were scattered they took the Gospel and the Gospel began to spread. So who is iShare? It is me and you. It's not just the preacher or the gifted people. Some are gifted at evangelism but all of us have been called to share Christ with others.

The second thing we looked at is iShare – Why? In this study I talked about how in evangelism there are multiple motivations in sharing the Gospel. Sometimes we share because we have been moved by compassion for the helpless, the hopeless, and they need to know Christ. Sometimes we share because when people come to Christ a whole city and nation can change and we want to see that transforming grace of God through changed people. We share with others because we want to hasten the coming of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us the only thing remaining for Jesus to come back is the last of His people to be brought to them. So when we're sharing Christ and people are coming to Christ then we're bringing those and one day that last one will be brought and Jesus will come back. Another reason we're motivated to share is we want the praise of God to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea until they're brought to saving grace in Jesus Christ when He changes their heart from self absorption and self idolatry to the praise and glory of God in Spirit and in truth.

So there are multiple motivations but there was one motivation that penetrated all motivations that undergirded all the motivations and wrapped them all up. Why is the praise of God important? Why is the salvation of sinners important? Why is it that I sense the hopelessness and irrevocable torments of hell and I want people to know the joys of heaven where they will be with the Lord? Why is it we are moved to these multiple motivations? It is because of the motivation of all motivations which is the love of Christ compels us. It is the love of Christ that compels us to share Christ. That's why new Christians are the most effective evangelists because they haven't gotten used to the love of Jesus yet. They are still overwhelmed about it and so they are sharing Christ with others anywhere and everywhere they can. They haven't learned yet you're supposed to be afraid or embarrassed or rejected, they just go share.

The third thing we looked at is how God has built sharing right into the church worship with the communion which is proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes. So iShare through the very worship and sacraments of the church which is what we looked at in our last study.

In this study we'll look at iShare – What? What is it that we share? I think this is crucial. The Bible says that it is through the foolishness of the message preached that we are being saved but it's not preaching that saves. Proclaiming Christ, sharing Christ, is the mechanism. It is through THE Message preached that we're being saved. We have to get the Gospel right. We have to be clear about it. In this text we just read the Apostle Paul is writing back to Corinth and he had been with them 18 months and in chapter one he said "When I was with you I determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified. I proclaimed to you constantly the Word of the cross, the Gospel." Then when he gets to this chapter he says "I remind you brethren I preached to you the Gospel of what was of first importance." Paul knows that everything in the Bible is important but he knows that some things are the first of the first things. That is the Gospel.

That is why Paul said, "I didn't come to baptize but I came to preach the Gospel." Paul isn't belittling baptism because he knows baptism is in the Great Commission. He knows baptism is a sign and seal of the New Covenant and of its importance but he knows that baptism is downstream (pardon the pun) from the proclaiming of the Gospel. If you get the Gospel wrong then baptism is absolutely meaningless. We have to get the Gospel right. It is of first importance and everything else is flowing from it. How can a man be right with God? Who is God? Who am I and how can I be right with God? That's the question. We don't have to make the Gospel relevant. We might make it irrelevant if we mess it up but we can't make it relevant. There is nothing more relevant in life than how men and women can be right with God starting out all wrong with God and no hope to be right with God unless God by His grace and mercy does something to us and for us.

This is not a prosperity Gospel where Jesus died on the cross so I can get a lot of things in this world. It's not about my self esteem. In fact I get to die when I come to Jesus. Then I find out what it really means to live. It's not about any of those things. It's about a very specific message of what Jesus Christ does as the Redeemer of sinners.

So what is the Gospel? The Gospel is this glorious message that God's grace has, is and will save us and deliver us from our sins through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to eternal life with the God of grace and glory from my sins to be with Him through Jesus Christ. He has delivered me. He is delivering me.

He will deliver me. I want you to understand something. It's important that we get it right but I also want you to know this.

Here is a great encouragement for you. When you share the Gospel with people you are sharing something that is absolutely unique. There are multiple religions invented by men throughout the world as substitutes for the glorious truth of who God is and what God does. All of them will tell you how their religion and what you must do with their religion to get to God. You bring a message that is absolutely unique. Your message is that I'm not bringing you a religion that gives you a relationship with God but I'm bringing to you Good News of a relationship with God that then gives you a "sacred" way of life, a religion. Our sacred way of living, the way we live our life in reverence and joy in Christ is the result of the relationship that we have with God through His Son Jesus Christ and that began with God not with us. We came to Him because He first came to us. We love Him because He first loved us.

It is absolutely unique. Everybody you talk to will say "Well, I'm not interested in your religion." I say "I'm not here to give you religion. I'm here to tell you about Jesus. I'm here to tell you about what God sent His Son to do." For God so loved

the world that He didn't send a religion and His Son is the One that brings you to life. I have some bad news I have to slip in. That's unique. I really have some Good News. The Good News is what you couldn't do God loved so much that He gave His Son to do and by His grace it's now a free gift, not because it's cheap but because the price was paid.

That is great news to gives but now I have some bad news for you. They don't want to hear it and there are two reasons why they don't want to hear it. One they are dead. Have you ever had a conversation with someone who is dead? If you've ever had one please see me and our counseling ministry will be wide open for you afterwards. Secondly, people are born dead in their sins and that's why when you go sharing you also go praying saying, "Lord, give eyes to see and ears to hear." There is none who seek God, no not one. That's why God called you and me to seek them. Periodically you'll find someone He has already worked in who will come seeking but here is where you start. People are dead in their sins and God has called you to share with them. He didn't call you simply to respond to the seekers, but He called us to seek the lost and bring them to the Savior.

The problem is the very message that is unique, a glorious message of salvation by grace through Jesus Christ is a scandal. Do you know why it's a scandal? It's a scandal for two reasons. One it says you have to have a Savior and nobody wants to hear that they need a Savior. They would rather buy a book that says "I'm okay and you're okay." Number two, the message that says there is a Savior also says that you can't save yourself. You're religion can't save you. You're baptism can't save you. You're good intentions can't save you. In fact, you're righteousness is like filthy rags and no one wants to hear those things. They don't want to hear that they can't save themselves or that there religion can't save them.

The tough thing you have to get to in sharing the Gospel we'll cover more in a couple of weeks is how you have to unmask the idols that are empty because everyone has a false hope in these idols. When you bring the Good News you are bringing something very unique – Jesus saves by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. It's a very unique message. Here's the message. God has saved, He is saving and He will save.

I had the privilege to go to Covenant College and then after that I went part time to a little independent seminary while I was a student pastor in a church. There were a number of Christian colleges and schools in Chattanooga, Tennessee. One of them was a Bible college that taught evangelism. If you took this evangelism class you had an assignment to go share the Gospel with three people everyday on the streets. The reason I know that is because one day I was the target. I was walking down Broad Street and one of the young men came walking up to me and I could tell two things. One he was checking the box

because he had to get his assignment done and number two he wasn't too sure about how to get this done.

This young man said to me "Are you saved?" I have to confess to you that in my life I have some bent toward what I like to call dry wit but my wife likes to call it sarcasm. Hopefully it has somewhat sanctified over the years but it took over right then and I could not help myself. When he said "Are you saved" I said "From what?" He said "From your sins and from hell." I can't even believe I took pleasure in this but I looked at him and said "Well, yes I have been saved from my sins." He said "Oh you have?" I said "Yes I have but I also want you to know that I am being saved from my sins." By the way, I will be saved, has, is, will. Do you see how the Apostle Paul says it in the text? He says "those who are being saved." I have been saved. I am being saved and I will be saved from my sins." When I told the young man this he said "Say that again." I said "I have been saved, I am being saved and I will be saved from my sins." He said "Are you a preacher?" I said "I'm on my way." I had to bring that out to show how God by the Gospel saves us from our sins, has saved us, the Gospel says He is saving us and the Gospel says He will save us from our sins.

I want to draw out some things from this text. First of all the text tells me that the Gospel is definitive. There is something called the Gospel. Notice it's not Briarwood's Gospel. It's not Harry Reeder's Gospel. It's not your Gospel. Basically Paul said "I gave you what was of first importance, the first of the first. Everything else comes from getting this right. I'm going to remind you and I'm going to keep coming back to it. I kept preaching it. I determined to know nothing among you but Christ crucified because I want you to know **the** Gospels." Did you notice the article? It is not "a" Gospel but "the" Gospel. There is something definitive called the Gospel that we can and should get right.

Gospel is an interesting word. The word that translates to Gospel in the Greek is *euangelion*. Do you notice a word in our English language in that Greek word? It looks like evangelism. It's interesting that the word for Gospel became the word that we use for sharing the Gospel – evangelism. But why did we translate *euangelion* as Gospel? I'm going to tell you something that you would never hear in any other church. This is just a special blessing for you reading this today. Do you see another word in that Greek word *euangelion*? It is the word angel. The word *euangel* is usually transliterated in your Bible as angel but sometimes your Bibles don't transliterate *euangel*, they actually translate *euangel* and the Bibles that translate *euangel* don't put angel but they put messenger. Angels are called messengers. They are Divinely created beings for being messengers of God.

So if an *euangel* is a messenger what is an *euangelion*? It is a message. The only problem is when the Bible was translated from Greek into English in the 15<sup>th</sup> century they didn't have the word message but the Germans had sent a word over to England that they

use for the word message and it was the word *spiel*. For instance you're listening to my *spiel* right now. Give me you're *spiel*. Give me your narrative. Give me your story. Give me your message. No Englishman is going to speak German so they changed *spiel* to *spell*. The Englishmen used *spell* for story and we still use that today. When he told the story I was *spellbound*. So under *euangelion* just write the word *spell*. The letters "eu" is Greek for well or good. The Germans gave the Englishmen that word too but they called it "gut" (pronounced goot). The Englishmen decided to use the word good for gut. So we have good *spell*.

Here is something you'll probably only hear at Briarwood. On the first translation team in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was someone from Alabama. Being from the South we realize it takes a lot of energy to talk and it's hot and humid so we like to cut down our words. So when someone comes up to us we say 'ya'll'. If you came to my house at 6 in the evening you might hear me say "Degeet?" And what did I say? I said "Did you eat?" Some of you are probably thinking what in the world is he saying. This Alabama translator basically thought we'll be talking about this good *spell* all the time so he knocked the "l" off the end and the "od" and you have "gospel." See you would have not found that out anywhere else but here.

What is really important is not the etymology but the theology of Gospel. How can a man be right with God? There is something called *the* Gospel. So not only is the Gospel definitive but the second thing from the text is the Gospel is Christ centered. In the text it said "Christ" died for our sins and that "Christ" rose again. Five times "Christ" appeared. It is Christ who died, rose again, appeared, was buried and it is Christ who has done the work of the Gospel. Jesus Christ was 100 percent God and 100 percent man. If He is not God having come in the flesh He cannot save me. If He is not God having come in the flesh then He had to come from Adam and He would have had His own sin nature to deal with but this is God having come in the flesh. This is Jesus Christ that has come. He is fully man. He is 100 percent God and 100 percent man so He has come and now this God who has come upon this world, into this broken world, can take my sin because by a Man came death and by a Man comes the resurrection of the dead. So here is my Savior Jesus Christ. I come to Christ.

We talk about personal evangelism and its people sharing Christ with people so that people come to Christ. What did Paul say when he was dying? He said "I know whom I believe." He didn't say 'what I believe'. The 'what' brought him to the Whom. He didn't say "I know that I believe." He didn't put his faith in faith. He said "I know whom." He didn't say "I know when I believe." Paul didn't have a bad conversion experience and He said "I know whom I believe and He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him." It is a person to person relationship with Christ. It is Christ who saves us. It was Christ who was on the cross. If it had been anyone else you could not have been saved. They might have died a model death but they could not have died an atoning death. It was the One who knew no sin that went to the cross to take our sin.

Thirdly, the Gospel is not only definitive and Christ centered but it's Biblical. In other words, the Old Testament is anticipating this and the New Testament is explaining this. That's why we'll study the book of Daniel tonight and why we looked at Lamentations, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the previous books of the Old Testament. Jesus said "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets He explained Himself in all the Scriptures." The Old Testament is there to point us to Jesus Christ. It is there to tell us we're sinners, we need a Savior and praise the Lord God has promised to send that Savior. Jesus said "You search the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life but they bear witness of Me." All of the Scriptures is pointing to Christ. He is the center, the sum, the substance and the circumference. He is everything. The Gospel is Christ centered and it is the Bible that is constantly telling you to come to Christ.

Paul says to Timothy right before he dies in II Timothy 3:14-15, *[14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* What sacred writing would Timothy had known in his childhood? It would have been the Old Testament. The Old Testament is pointing to Him and the New Testament expounds Him. What did it say in I Corinthians 15:4? It said He died according to the Scriptures. He was buried according to the Scriptures. He was raised according to the Scriptures.

The Scriptures tell us God was going to send His Son to the cross. The Scriptures tell us that when Jesus went to the cross God would smite Him. God would strike Him. God would pour out His wrath on His Son at the cross and by His death we are saved. With His righteousness we are accepted. The Scriptures have declared it and explained it. The Gospel is Biblical. It wasn't thought up by philosophers or invented by religionists. It was revealed by God in His Word. This is so important. This isn't something the Presbyterian Church in America figured up. This isn't something Harry Reeder thought up or Dr. Frank Barker thought up. This isn't something people a long time ago decided to put together. This is what God revealed in His Word of who we are, what we need, who He is and how He saves sinners.

The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ His Son (Romans 6:23). The Bible is declaring it from beginning to end. That's why it says these things have I written that you might know that you have eternal life, you who believe in His Son Jesus Christ. The Gospel is Biblical. To believe there is no Creator when you look at the creation is utterly foolishness. I'm not just going to go through life believing here is everything and it came from nothing. No, I see the creation and I know there's a Creator. I see its order and know there's an order.

If I walk through a field and see a fence post with a turtle on top of the fence post, guess what? Someone got here before me. That doesn't take a rocket scientist to

figure that one out. I'm not the first one in this field. Yet I would have never know He was Father, Son and Holy Spirit or that the Father loved me so much that He would send His Son to the cross or that all the hell due to me and all of His people would go upon His Son and would pay that penalty fully and completely, declare it is finished and then say to me "Come and I will give you life. Turn and trust in Me." I would never know that. All the other philosophies and religions of the world would tell you what you have to do. This is the revelation from God of what God has done to save you. It is Biblical. It is consistently Biblical and revealed in over 1400 years with 40 plus human authors with one message; the preeminence of God in the saving work of Christ.

Fourthly, the Gospel is historical and verifiable. Two thousand years ago there was a Jesus Christ that came into this world, the Son of God, born of a virgin, Mary, at a place called Bethlehem and went to a cross at a place called Mount Calvary. These are historical events. This is not myth and metaphor about how we might think about God and how we might have therapy to get through life. This is historical fact. God loved.

God sent His Son. His Son came. Here is where He lived. He was born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, baptized at the River Jordan, went to the wilderness and was tempted, taught in Galilee, went to Jerusalem, went to the cross and died there. He was put into a borrowed tomb, raised from that tomb and all of this was according to Scripture.

He then went for days among people and here are all the witnesses. Go talk to His brothers. Go talk to James. Look at the Apostles. They're here and they'll tell you. Look at these women. They'll tell you. Look Paul says there are 500 people back at the Sea of Galilee and not all of them are dead yet. Go ask them for they will tell you. This is historical and verifiable. This is not a fanciful story to get you through the difficulties of life. This is the truth which is historical and verifiable.

Fifthly, He tells us also that the Gospel saves and delivers. God willing, I'd like to be able to preach a whole series on this but I want to give you this very briefly. Jesus has saved you from your sins. He is saving you from your sins and He will save you from your sins. That's the Gospel. How has He saved you from your sins? God has sent the Gospel message to you and it came to me. I had a grandfather, grandmother, a dad, a mom, churches and a Sunday school teacher who all kept externally calling me to Christ. The Holy Spirit moved them to share Christ with me. Then one day when I was 21 years old God brought everything together and that day the dead one came to life and I received eyes to see and ears to hear. Faithful is He who calls you and He will bring it to pass. He has saved you from the persuasion of sin by calling you with His Holy Spirit.

Secondly, He has saved you from the power of sin. You have been born again. You not only have a new perspective because He has called you, but you have a new heart because He has cut the old heart out. If any man be in Christ He is a



new creation. You have been born again. Being born again is not God's reward for coming to Jesus. Being born again is God's work that sets you free to come to Jesus. So I have been saved from the persuasion of sin – calling, and I have been saved from the power of sin – regeneration.

Thirdly, I have been saved from the penalty of sin which is justification. Jesus went to the cross and He who knew no sin became sin. It's not paper shuffle. He became like ink on a piece of paper. He became my sin on the cross and He paid for all of it. For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV). So God is now just and justifier because the penalty has been paid but more than that I am not just forgiven. I not only hear for there is therefore now no condemnation when Jesus took my condemnation but I hear Jesus say "Come in righteous one." My righteousness is like filthy rags, so where did I get that righteousness? I received a new record for my old record was done away with by the blood of Jesus. Again, for our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV). His blood cleansed me from my sins. His righteousness clothes me. Every time God looks at this falter, failing every single day, short coming sinner saved by grace, He sees the perfect righteousness of His Son and says not forgive but "innocent, justified, clothed with the righteousness of My Son."

Fourthly, I have been saved from the position of sin. I was taken from the family of Satan where I did the work of my father in the kingdom of darkness, transferred to the Kingdom of Light and now I'm in the family of God. I can now call His thrice Holy God, Father. I can even cry out "Daddy, Abba Father." I have been saved from the persuasion of sin. I've been called. I have been saved from the power of sin. I've been regenerated. I have been saved from the penalty of sin. I've been justified. I have been saved from the position of sin. I've been adopted into the family of God.

Now I am being saved from the practice of sin. I'm not sinless but I am wanting to sin less. I'm not being saved from the practice of sin as the result of what God has done back there. By the way, nothing that I do now is going to make that more effective. Harry, you're growing in grace so now you're really born again. No, it's not like that. No matter how well you live your Christian life you won't get more born again or more justified or more called but because this is true, now I want to follow Jesus. I want to put off the old man and put on the new. What does Paul say? I want to work hard at it. It's not I'm working hard to get to heaven because Jesus did that work. I want to honor Him. I want to lift Him up. I want to assassinate sin. I want to embrace Jesus Christ. When I falter He is ready to forgive me because He paid for it. He is ready to renew me and ready to grow me by the grace of God. I am being saved from the practice of sin and we call that sanctification.

Finally I will be saved from the presence of sin. There will be no pain, no sorrow, none of it. There will not even be the ability to sin and that's a Gospel promise. Where I am there you will be also. Faithful is He who calls you and He'll bring it to pass. Whom He foreknew He predestined, whom He predestined He called, whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, then who can be against us. That's what God does. He delivers us from the persuasion of sin, the power of sin, the penalty of sin, the position of sin, He is delivering us from the practice of sin and then He will bring us to glory where He will deliver us from the very presence of sin.

Number six, this Gospel is transformational and powerful. These men that Jesus was appealing to, these Apostles, where were they when Jesus was dying? They were running. What will happen to them now? Every one of them as far as we know, but one, will die a martyr's death. The same men that ran at the cross will run and die for Jesus for the rest of their lives. What changed them from self preservation to laying down their life? It was the Gospel. It was the power of God and the Gospel that changed them. What is it that took a religious terrorist, the Osama Bin Laden of his day, Paul, the killer of Christians and the persecutor of His Church to the greatest evangelist and church planter that ever lived? It is the powerful work of the Gospel.

If you had been around me when I was young you would probably have not wanted your wife, your children or you personally would have not wanted to be around me, for nothing else but because of the utter blasphemy and profanity that was constantly, minute after minute coming out of my mouth. I didn't care who was there and the same mouth now teaches the Bible. Isn't God gracious? He takes murderers, adulterers, self righteous Pharisees and saves anybody and everybody who says "I repent of my sin and my righteousness and I put my trust in Jesus." Then He takes you right where you but then He'll never leave you. He'll start growing you. Behold the old is passed away and the new has come.

Number seven, the Gospel is motivational and inspirational. Let's look back at I Corinthians 15 and how He closes it out. I just love this. I Corinthians 15:10-11 says *[10] But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. [11] Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.* He is saying I worked hard.

I read something the other day that said when Christians don't do well then think "Try harder." So does that mean I'm going to try less? The point is you don't try hard to be saved. The heavy lifting has been done at the cross. Jesus did it all. Now that Jesus has done it all I want to love Him with all of my heart, strength and soul. I want to pour myself out not to be saved. That's done! Because that is done does not cause me to embrace the Christian life with sloppy agape or apathy or lethargy. Paul says "I worked hard at preaching and teaching. I went

here and there not to be saved but I wanted my Savior to get to the world so I went sharing and you believed.”

Here is the takeaway. The Gospel is the foundation. I have been saved from the persuasion of sin. I have been saved from the power of sin. I have been saved from the penalty of sin. I have been saved from the position of sin. It is the formation. I am being saved from the practice of sin which is sanctification. It is the motivation. I will be saved from the presence of sin and until then I want to serve my Savior. I love Him because He first loved me. So please know the Gospel. You can't share what you don't know. Know the Gospel. I know whom I have believed. These things are written that you might know that you have eternal life. Believe and embrace the Gospel. Verily, verily he who believes in Me has eternal life. Know the Gospel. Believe the Gospel. Live the Gospel.

I love Galatians 2:20. Here is the Gospel life. *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me* (Galatians 2:20 ESV). Okay Paul are you living or not living? He says it's both. I'm not living but Christ is living in me. Because Christ is living in me I now live out what He is living in and it's about Him. God has done much to save not to make much of me but to set me free that I can make much of Him so that I can pour myself out to Him. There is nothing more joyful than when He allows me to serve Him and to see others come to Him. So not only would we live but we would share Christ. Seek the lost. We preached, you believed.

Somebody shared with you. My guess is that more than one shared with you. So it won't stop with us. We sung this earlier. Let the earth hear His voice. You are His voice and when you share Christ, His sheep know His voice and they will come follow Him. So share Him. Take Him out to the world.

You sent me to share in Charlotte, North Carolina. I shared this in 1996 when I came back and I had no idea I'd be back here in 1999. I shared how you sent me over there with this great challenge of planting a church that would plant a Presbytery and all of that. There we are in our modular unit with 38 people. God began to work so wonderfully but I'll never forget one little thread of it. It was a couple that came to me and she said "I've had to divorce my husband because of his serial unfaithfulness. I have four boys can the church help and minister to me?" I said "Absolutely." We reached out and ministered to her and I said "Can I have permission to go after your husband?" She said, "Go for it. I don't think it's going to work." But we went for it. Praise the Lord he came to Christ and there were two of us pastors who were working with him. He got on our softball team and our softball team went after him too. I have permission to use their names.

Steve then came to me and said "I'd like to remarry Marnie." I said "You forfeited that right but why don't you court her while you're being disciple." So he did and they were remarried. He was kind of up there in the financial world and by that

time we were out of the modular unit and in a gymnasium. We are all meeting in the chairs we call the 'widow makers' because when I'd be preaching people would just disappear after sitting in those chairs. We kind of knew what weight caused the chairs to go down. The first time it happened I thought people were getting slain in the Spirit and I realized then it was just the chairs. They wanted to get remarried there in the gym. All these people come to this wedding from the upper crust of the financial world in the gym and it was so hot that day. I just knew something was going to happen when we used those chairs but that couple shared their testimony with those four boys up there and it was just a great day.

A man called me the next day whose name was Harvey who had attended and said "Are you preacher Reeder? I work with Steve and he has been sharing with me about Jesus. I went to their wedding and had never seen a wedding like that. Can I talk to you about what he has been sharing?" I said "Sure meet me at the Chateau Restaurant." We met there and I asked him two questions and wrote down three things – your situation, God's solution and salvation. I talked with him for a while and said "Do you understand?" He said "Yes." I said "Is there any reason why you shouldn't surrender to Jesus as your Lord and Savior?" He said "I can't think of any." He became a Christian, took the napkin, stuck it in his Bible and off he went.

He went back to his apartment where he had a relationship that we called 'living without the benefit of clergy.' He told her "I'm a Christian so you have to move out." She said "I'm not moving out. What kind of cult are you in?" He said "The cult is meeting over here in this gymnasium." She came to the gymnasium. She had red hair, red face and mad the whole time but there was only one way out of that gymnasium. She had to come out by me. I shook hands, introduced her to this older lady who shared Christ with her and she became a Christian. So then they started dating, then courting and then they got married. So Harvey and Beth had their wedding in that gym. All these CEOs, COOs, CFOs and UFOs are all right back in that gym. There is another testimony and I shared the Gospel. We had the wedding.

Then I got another phone call. His name was Dan. Dan said to me "I work with Harvey and Steve and they have been sharing with me about Jesus. I have never seen weddings like that. Can I talk to you about that?" I said "Absolutely, meet me at the Chateau Restaurant." I pulled out a napkin, asked two questions, wrote three things and asked "Any reason why you shouldn't receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior." He said "I can't think of any." Dan became a Christian. His wife had left him but God gave him another wife by the name of Kris and they adopted four children from Russia. It was just amazing.

I got another phone call from a guy named Joe who said "I work with Steve, Harvey and Dan and they have been sharing with me about Jesus. I went to those weddings and I've never seen weddings like that. Can I talk to you about that?" I said, "Absolutely, I'll meet you at the Chateau Restaurant." So we shared

the Gospel and he became a believer. Then Joe went home and shared with his wife Betty. Betty became the president of the women's ministry of the church. Joe became the president of the men of the church. Harvey became an elder in the church and he and Beth guided the shepherding of our church and the evangelism ministry of our church. Kris and Dan helped us plant one of the new churches and in our sanctity of life ministry they helped bring in Bethany Adoption Agency to care for the children in the adoption ministry. Steve is now the Vice President of Reformed Theological Seminary and his wife is the Head Master of Covenant Day School. Their son is now the President of Providence College, a Christian Liberal Arts college in California. Their other son is now the youngest tenured professor in the history department at Princeton bearing witness for Jesus Christ. Do you get the idea here? Just share the Gospel. The power is not in us. It's in the Gospel. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the privilege we have to share that Gospel with others. I know Father that even that I have shared this it's not only been represented in Charlotte multiple ways in multiple times but here in Birmingham. Father, we don't want to stop now. There is a desperate need of people coming to Christ. There is eternity before us. There is the coming of all things together and the return of Christ. There is the need of a nation. The need is the power of the Gospel, preached from pulpits, yes, but shared by Your people everywhere they go so help us share the Gospel. Today you have heard the Message that Jesus came to save you. By God's grace you may be reading this seeking because He sought you to read this. Now just come to Christ who came for you. The glory of a Savior has been manifested that you might humble yourself. Trust Him and He'll take you to glory to be with Him, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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