

Mark 1:15-20

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

KJV

- **The Kingdom of God is at hand.** This means the time is fulfilled. The time for the appearance of the Messiah has arrived. This is the way that Jesus introduced his message and his mission.
- **Repent ye and believe the gospel.** Be sorrowful for your sins and believe the good news. This is the way Jesus told the people to respond to his announcement.

Jesus then invited some to follow Him. The first mentioned in Mark's gospel are Simon Peter and Andrew. He then called Peter's partners James and John.

When we read this account it is important to acknowledge that all of these men were lost when Jesus called them into relationship with him.

- **They called him rabbi.** This was a position that others held in that society.

John 1:38

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

KJV

- **They had not heard the gospel.** They did not understand the role or mission of the messiah. They did not understand what it meant for Jesus to be the son of God. They did not fully understand the gospel until after the crucifixion and the resurrection. They were lost.

This is an example how Jesus did evangelism. He invited 12 lost men to have a unique relationship with Him.

Why would these men accept the invitation? Why would enter into such a personal relationship with Jesus?

- **Jesus was a rabbi.** Following a rabbi was an acceptable practice for the Jew. Parents wanted their children to be selected by a rabbi. It was an honor for the family. The father of James and John did not put up any resistance when Jesus extended this invitation. We could only compare it to a prestigious university extending an invitation to one of our children.

- [These men were acquainted with another rabbi named John the Baptist.](#) He told them about another rabbi who would come after him.
- [Jesus was famous.](#) The fame of Jesus had already spread by signs and wonders before he called these men. So these lost men said yes to his invitation.

Now you are not a rabbi or a master teacher. It would not honor a family if their son left home to live with you. They would be ashamed. No one has been telling others how great you are. You are not famous, at least most of you.

But Jesus wants you to what he did. He wants you to develop relationships with the lost and lead others to salvation. So what are you going to do? This will not be easy.

What makes things even more difficult is that we live in a Post Christian culture. There was a time in our society that Christianity was a respected religion. Lost people had a respect for Christians and they were curious. Most had at least a Christian grandfather or grandmother, aunt or uncle or a cousin that they respected. Lost people had a respect for Christian ethics. They believed in the sanctity of marriage, human life, sex, and modesty in dress. They were against divorce, abortion, all form of fornication, and nakedness. If they violated one of these social norms, they felt guilty and sought relief.

When a popular Christian speaker came to town, even the lost that you knew casually would respond to invitation to the meeting. General announcements posted in stores windows would create an excitement in the saved and stir a curiosity in the lost.

Within our nation, there has always been a corrupt place that were like Sodom and Gomorrah where tribes of people's hearts were hardened and there was little respect for Christian ethics and there was no light of the gospel. But this did not characterize our nation 50 years ago.

Times have changed. Our nation has changed. We have lost the cultural war. We live in a Post Christian society. Christians are not generally respected or admired by our culture. Our ethics are mocked and scorned by the media, political, and other social organizations. Plus, people are busy. They do not set at home every night with three TV channels. Their calendars are like yours and there are so many more interesting things to do than attend a church service. It is very difficult to get a lost person that is a stranger or that you only know casually to attend an evangelistic meeting or a revival service.

So what are you going to do to develop relationships with those who are lost? It is obvious that most believers have resigned themselves that it is not their responsibility. Ask your brother or sister in Christ for the names of their close friends that are lost. Instead of doing what Jesus did, we have accepted some false presuppositions and teachings about our responsibility.

- [We should isolate our self with others like our self to protect our Christian ethics and those of our family.](#) The more rigid you become in your Christian ethic the more you tend to isolate yourself not only from the lost but also from other

believers. This is especially true if you have developed standards of personal holiness for yourself and others that are not God's standards of holiness.

It is hard to maintain the balance of being Holy without becoming Holier than thou!

You are never going to fulfill your mission of reaching the lost with this strategy of isolating yourself.

You must change your paradigm and believe that developing close relationships with the lost is being Holy!

You can't benefit from the light of candle when it is hidden under a bushel.

- We should put our hope in raising a Godly generation of children. Christian parents are called to teach their children the gospel and model it for them. Parents should seek to lead their children to know the Lord and to follow him.

There is no place in the teaching of Jesus or the apostles that raising a Godly generation of children is advocated and promoted as the Lord's main strategy for advancing the Lord's kingdom on the earth.

If this is the case both Jesus and all the apostles would have married and had children. If we should learn anything from the teaching of Jesus it is that the next generation tends to reject the faith of the previous generation.

To have absolute confidence in this strategy you have to misinterpret the scripture to claim a false promise that if you are a Godly parent you will have Godly children.

To anyone who makes this claim I would say you not only misinterpreted the bible but you did not have enough children. I would also say the perfect parent had two children and they both rebelled. Who do you think you are? And even if you are successful God expects a lot more from you than reproducing a disciple every twenty years. And if you are successful, what kind of disciple of Jesus have you reproduced? Is their heart for the lost similar to yours? If you believe this is God's main plan for your life and your children than you have been deceived.

- We should not be concerned about the lost because of the doctrine of election. It is true that Christians are the elect and only the elect will be saved.

We all should be overwhelmed with the thought that we were chose before the foundation of the world and that our salvation is only the result of divine providence that proceeds from the mercy of God.

But as we have seen Jesus had a heart for all the lost and to be His disciple is to be like Him. To allow the doctrine of election to develop in us an attitude toward the

lost that is contrary to the attitude of Jesus is a violation of who Jesus is and who He has called us to be.

These teachings and others like these have caused us to develop theological Alzheimer's disease when it comes to lostness!

Among the 340 million people living in North America, three in four are estimated to be lost and perishing. 4 billion of the 6.8 billion people in the world have little to no access to the Gospel and 1.5 billion have never even had the possibility of hearing the name of Jesus. 90% of the entire world is lost without Jesus. The ability we have to keep certain things out of our mind is amazing. We can act like lostness does not exist and that there is really no hell. We certainly won't develop personal relationships with lost people if we believe these false teachings and develop theological Alzheimer's disease.

To follow the example of Jesus, we must repent of the false presuppositions and teachings that cause us to develop theological Alzheimer's disease about the lost and our responsibility to the lost.

How do we follow the example of Jesus? Jesus lived in a Pre Christian society. He lived in a society that was Anti-Jesus Christ. The most prominent form of religion was a reinvented version of the Law of Moses that did not respect the sanctity of marriage or other moral values that were important to Jesus. It was a hard mission field in which he only reached 120 converts in three years in spite of the fact that He could perform signs and wonders. The strategy that Jesus chose was to have a personal relationship with 12 lost men and he led eleven of them to salvation over a three year period. He then sent them out to reproduce in the same way.

This is the only divine strategy that will succeed in a pre Christian, post Christian or anti Christ society.

The sooner the church accepts this the sooner we will see a reverse in the trends in church growth in our society.

But since these men joined Jesus because he was a rabbi and He was famous, what are you going to do?

We have to earn the right to be heard by lost people in some other way.

What does this look like? Paul was not known as a rabbi. He was not famous. He was not a great public speaker.

He was a missionary to a gentile society and he explained his strategy this way.

1 Cor 9:19-23

19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;
21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.
22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.
23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.KJV

Paul joined the local synagogues to reach the Jews. He even had one of his companions circumcised to remove any offense for entering the temple in Jerusalem. Recently Tim Crawford told me that he attended worship with the Muslims at a local Muslim Mosque. Hudson Taylor changed his dress and his hair style to reach the Chinese people. Elizabeth Elliot took her young daughter went to live with and like the Indians who killed her husband. David Wilkerson moved into an area of New York City to live with the gangs of New York.

What change do you need to make to develop relationships with the lost? We will never be successful developing relationships with the lost without following the example of Jesus and walking with them. This is what it means to become a servant to all.

Paul learned this principle from Jesus. Jesus made himself a servant to all that He might gain the more.

He became like you and walked with you to gain you!

Jesus practiced...

Incarnational Evangelism!

There is no other way to reach the lost in our post Christian society. This is not an option. It is a mandate. We have to go walk with the lost and develop relationship with them to earn the right to be heard by them.

It is true that some of us are not mature enough to do this without falling. But what about you?

There is within this congregation unbelievable opportunity if we will gain the Lord's heart for the lost and embrace this vision. In spite of our current size, we have a strong nucleus of men who are very committed to the Lord and his will for their lives. Leadership starts with men. You have been called out to lead your families to Jesus and to disciple them and you have accepted that call. You are now being called out to lead the lost around you to Jesus and to disciple them. To do this, you must have the Lord's heart for the lost and be willing to make the sacrifices He made for you to reach out to them. This gives a whole new meaning to the words of Jesus, "take up your cross and follow me." Will you surrender to His call?

We need to surrender to the mission and the plan. There is nothing better we can do to provide leadership for our children. They need to see the purpose of the sacrifices we ask them to make to be Christians. We can tell them the sacrifice is for our testimony but testimony to whom? If we do not have the Lord's heart for the lost and if we are not following the plan of Jesus to reach the lost, it appears that the sacrifices we are making to be a Christian are for us and our own ego.

We need to see the lost from His perspective to gain His heart for the lost. We need to surrender to His plan for Incarnational Evangelism to reach them, no matter what it cost. Will you surrender to His call?