

“It is all about Jesus” Mark 1:14-20/ 2Tim 4:1-8 Oct.27, 2013

Little Johnny noticed that a lot of people who called themselves Jehovah’s Witnesses would come and knock on the families door. Mom was always polite to them as she said was not interested in talking to them. Then she would explain to Johnny that they did not believe the same things that his family believed. That summer as Johnny’s family was on vacation in a neighboring city, they passed a big building with a huge sign out front. Johnny read the sign out loud for all to hear: The Assembly Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Then Johnny said mom I found the place where they make all those Jehovah’s Witnesses.

What do you get when you cross a Jehovah’s Witness with an atheist? Someone who knocks on your door for no apparent reason.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses get picked on a lot, but there is one thing you must give them; they disciple their converts. Discipling young believers is very important in their Christian walk. Lee Iacocca said “you’ve got to have mentors along the way.”

The Harvard Business Review says “everyone who makes it has a mentor.” Dallas Willard said that the word disciple occurs 269 times in the New Testament. The word Christian is found only 3 times and each time it refers precisely to the disciples.

Just before the Reformation came to England, Thomas Bilney was a quite scholar at Cambridge University. As he studied the Greek New Testament he was given by Erasmus one verse stuck deep in his soul. *1Tim 1:15* Bilney dedicated his life to Christ and wanted to share his experience with others but the reformation was being attacked viciously in England. Hugh Latimer was the chief opponent to it. One day while listening to Latimer rail against the reformation, Bilney prayed an unusual prayer. He told God that he was just little Bilney and that he would never do anything great for God but if he could lead Latimer to Christ, what wonders Latimer could do for God. Then one day Bilney shared with Latimer his conversion verse and led him to a simple faith in Christ and the English Reformation was born.

Who knows what can happen if we Christians would just share our faith. If we would disciple others. If we would be someone’s mentor. Who is your mentor? Where would you be today without that person sharing their faith with you?

Who are we sharing our faith with? Who are we mentoring; discipling; teaching about Jesus? A successful life is all about Jesus. Paul helped Timothy become a successful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus helped Paul be a huge success. Jesus told us to go and make disciples; are we obeying this great commission? (pray)

Mark begins his gospel with the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He introduces us to John the Baptist. He tells us that Jesus came to John for baptism and then Jesus departed into the wilderness for a 40 day fast and to be tempted by Satan. In vs.14 Jesus returns from the wilderness to find that John has been put in prison. This is when Jesus starts His ministry. He uses the same message John did; repent the kingdom of God is at hand. John the Baptist said, speaking of Jesus, in John 3:30 that " God fulfilled this prophesy by allowing John the Baptist to be imprisoned and later executed for the cause of Christ.

As He begins His ministry, Jesus calls disciples. Mark tells us here how Jesus called His 1st 4: Peter, Andrew, James & John. They were all fishermen, going about their business. As Jesus walks by them He says "come & follow Me" which they all did. Then Jesus promises to make them fishers of men. What is a fisher of men? That is an evangelist. For the next 3 ½ years or so, these 4 men plus 8 others will eat, drink, and live day & night with Jesus. They will learn from Him & be His eye witnesses. After His death, burial and resurrection, they will be called to carry on His mission, bringing people to God.

The 1st thing a disciple is called to do is learn. The master trains them, educates them and prepares them to start a mission of their own. Jesus did this with His 12 disciples. Only Judas Iscariot betrayed Him and hanged himself, so Jesus chose Saul of Tarsus, whom we know as the Apostle Paul, to replace him. Paul was a Pharisees Pharisee. But Christ called him to become a disciple and he did. Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament. That is right at half of the New Testament; not bad for a substitute player is it? But Paul really wasn't a substitute anything. God had a plan for Paul, just like He has a plan for you and me. God has a plan for everyone and God's plans are based on His timing and His ways. Do we trust God and His ways?

Paul wrote 2 letters to Timothy. Timothy was Paul's son in the spirit. Paul was Timothy's mentor, his tutor, his teacher. Timothy was a man of mixed heritage. His father was a Greek, but his mother and grandmother were strong Jews who raised Timothy in their faith. They taught him the scriptures. And when they converted to Christianity they taught him about Jesus. Do we teach our children and grandchildren about Jesus? Who else are we teaching about Jesus? We teach others about Jesus with more than just our words. As Christians, people see us everywhere we go. They watch us and learn from us even if we don't say anything to them; you see our life is the only bible some people ever read. What lessons are our lives teaching?

Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:15 to *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* In the old King James we learned it this way *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* The word diligent means to be hardworking or industrious; to put care & effort into what you are doing. Do we diligently study God’s word? The Psalmist tells us in Ps119:4 *“You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently.”* He also tells us in Ps119:11 *“Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”* Is the word of God hidden in our hearts? Do we strive to keep God’s precepts & sin not? Are we studying to show our selves approved unto God? Are we not ashamed? Do we rightly divide the word of truth?

Here in chapter 4 Paul commands Timothy to preach the truth. “I charge you” means I command you. Paul being Timothy’s teacher is giving him an order; to always teach the truth and preach the word of God. Preachers are commanded by God to preach His word, the Bible. The bible is the inerrant word of God. There are no errors in the bible, the errors are found only in its interpretation. The bible is constantly warning us to be on the look out for false teachers. 2 Peter 2:1 “ While Peter warns of false teachers, John tells us how to spot them. 1John 4:2 *“By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”* Since there are so many false teachers in the world, we must know our bibles so that they won’t deceive us. One of Satan’s many tricks is that he distorts the word of God. He twists and turns it to make it say something it does not say. He did it to Eve in the garden and he did it to Jesus in the wilderness and he will do it to us. Are we ready for that attack? We are if we know our bible. That is why it is important that we each diligently study our bible.

The bible is the foundation to every ministry. Preaching God’s word is a sacred and demanding privilege. It does not belong only to those who are called into the set apart ministry. Every Christian is a minister for the Lord Jesus Christ. So this command to Timothy is not just to him and preachers, it is to all Christians. Notice Paul said “Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.” Paul is reminding us that we are all always in God’s presence; he sees everything we do & hears everything we say. More than that He knows our thoughts. Are our thoughts, words and deeds pleasing to God?

They need to be because Jesus is coming back. When he returns he will judge all people. For Christians, this will not be a judgment of condemnation because as Christians we have been forgiven and received the righteousness of Christ. For us it will be an evaluation of what we did with our talents and time Christ has given us. Are we using them to bring people to Christ?

Preaching the word in season and out of season means preaching not only when it is convenient or popular to do so, but also when it is unpopular and inconvenient. Christians must always

speaking God's word no matter the circumstance or hazards that they face. We are to "What does that mean? Convince and rebuke means that we use God's word to correct wrong behavior & false teaching. Exhort means to encourage right behavior & continual growth. Long suffering is patient love which is the attitude we need to have when teaching God's truths to the unbeliever and those who have been led astray.

Paul tells us that there will be times when no one will listen to us. People will choose to listen to false teachers who say what these people want to hear. That is what itching ears means. Paul commands us to continue anyway. "*But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*" Do we continue to speak the truth of God's word even when it seems that no one is listening?

After commanding, encouraging and exhorting Timothy to preach God's word no matter what, Paul shifts his focus to himself. He tells Timothy he is nearing the end of his life. He says he is being poured out as a drink offering. A drink offering is wine poured on the altar or the ground for the Lord. It was the final offering after the burnt offering and the grain offering. Paul's life had been poured out in service to Christ. Paul saw his death as his final offering to God. Are we living our lives for God?

By telling Timothy that he had "*fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith;*" he is saying that his life is now complete. He has persevered and served God to the end. Paul is ready to go home. He is ready for his reward. His life is finished but Timothy's is just beginning. Paul is encouraging him to run the race, fight the good fight and finish the course. Paul has disciplined and mentored Timothy; who have we, or who are we in the process of mentoring, disciplining, and tutoring? Are we running a good race? Are we fighting the good fight? Are we willing to finish the course?

At the finish line Paul tells us that there is a crown of righteousness waiting for us. This is a reward given to all those who faithfully serve God here on this earth. The phrase all who loved His Appearing are all those believers who faithfully serve Him while waiting patiently for Christ's return. Are we patiently awaiting Christ's return? Paul is looking forward to receiving his crown of righteousness, are we?

Now since we are still alive, serving God and watching for Christ's return, we need to be about our Father's business. God has a plan and a purpose for every living human. We are to work for Him as long as we are alive and able to do His will. Right now God is calling us to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workers who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Our congregation has entered the EFMS program. That is Education for Shared ministries. Patty, Jackie, Bonnie, Connie, Danny & I need your prayerful support as we go on this journey. We will be learning more about the Bible and how to live better Christian lives. We will share what we learn with you so that the whole congregation can grow. Our part is to read and study, your part is to pray and support. Together we will grow and learn. The Christian walk is a life long journey that we all take together. We support each other in prayer and love. We share each other's burdens and joys. And we remember one thing: that it is all about Jesus. He is the reason

we are taking this journey; He is the reason that we have life; He is the reason that we know love and show compassion. It is all about Jesus. That is what Christianity is all about; that is what life is all about; that is what this new adventure is all about so lets let the adventure begin! Amen, lets pray.