

Sharing Our Faith

Evangelism is one of the eight core competencies identified by Richland Creek Community Church and essential for every church member to practice as we seek to love God. If we really believe the gospel, if we truly declare Jesus as Savior and Lord of our lives, we will do whatever is necessary to love God by sharing the gospel to those around us. The church is God's agent of change in a lost and dying world. God has entrusted us, His children, with this great news. The elder body longs to see the congregation of Richland Creek faithfully steward the gospel message as an act of love and obedience to God. We long to see our church body rise up and participate together in the mission of God—declaring His glory to the nations.

While this article focuses on evangelism, do not lose sight of the big picture. Pastor Robby Gallaty wisely reminds us, *“Evangelism and discipleship are two oars on the same boat....If there is discipleship without evangelism a time will come when there are no more people to disciple. And if a church emphasizes evangelism without discipleship there will come a time when evangelizing dies.”* It is our hope that as we share the gospel, we will see beyond conversion, beyond decisions for Christ, and lay our eyes on the path of maturity that lay ahead for any new converts. How can we partner with those we share the gospel with to grow and mature into a fully functional disciples of Christ?

The following article is offered to aid you in your journey of growth in evangelism. It is our prayer that as you obey the commands of Scripture out of love for God, you embark on a life long journey of growth and maturity in sharing your faith. Our first step is to consider, exactly what is the gospel?

The gospel is the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ. The Bible depicts human beings, all human beings (Romans 3:23), as in revolt against God, and therefore under His judgment. The Bible calls this revolt sin. Sin is rejecting or ignoring God. All people sin in their words, deeds, and motivations (1 John 1:10). Sin separates mankind from God because it breaks fellowship with our creator God. Despite our efforts to restore fellowship with God on our own, we cannot (Ephesians 2:8–9).

The Bible tells us the punishment for sin is death. Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death...” But although God stands against us in judgment because of our sin, God also offers us forgiveness and eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23). Christ bore our sin on the cross—in our place. What God requires, as payment for sin, God provides in His Son Jesus. Moreover, Jesus is raised from the dead on the third day and has conquered sin and death.

What must we do to be saved from sin, death, and eternal separation from God? Jesus' offer of salvation is received by faith as we repent of our sins and turn to Jesus. 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” When we repent and trust in Christ, relationship with God is reestablished. This free gift of salvation is available to all who will call upon the name of Jesus. Do you believe Christ is who the Bible says He is (Mark 16:16)? Have you trusted in Christ's life, death, and

resurrection as the payment for your sin? If you would like to know more about this great news of salvation, contact a pastor today by calling the church office. We would love to talk with you.

So, what are we doing when we share the gospel? Simply testifying to the truth of the gospel. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:1, we were “dead in the trespasses and sins.” But now God has “made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:5). Our witness centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

One example of a witness is found in John chapter 9. It is the story of a blind man healed by Jesus. To be sure, there is more here to the story than just physical healing. Physical blindness is representative of spiritual blindness. Thus, the blind man was not only physically blind, but spiritually blind as well. Moreover, the miracle here is not limited to Jesus restoring only the man’s physical sight but also his spiritual sight (understanding who Christ is). He initially calls Jesus “the man called Jesus,” then “a prophet,” later he refers to Jesus as being “of God,” and finally “Lord.” We’re literally watching the birth of this man’s faith and salvation.

In the midst of the narrative is this man’s simple witness: “One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25). Indeed, the blind man knows what many do not: Jesus is God (John 9:38). And what He does is to declare or profess what He knows to be true about the One who has healed him. This is what a witness is—sharing the truth of the gospel that we now can see but once could not. We, who have declared Jesus as Lord and Savior, bear witness to the One who has saved us from sin and death. Are you cultivating a relationship with anyone in order to be a witness to the gospel truth?

As you can see, our goal is simply to *share the gospel*—not only with our words but also with our actions in how we live our lives each day. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, our eyes have been opened to testify to this work personally in our lives.

1 Peter 2:9 tells us that we are set apart, chosen by God as His very own, to reflect Him in our witness as we tell others. Stay here for a moment—meditate on these words. You were set apart and chosen by GOD to reflect Him to a lost and dying world. *You*. The power of this statement should drive us to great conviction in our Christian witness. Our holy, almighty God is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise in our witness!

But sharing our faith can be intimidating. Either we have no experience and training or we are just plain scared to do so. A straw poll reveals the number one reason Christians do not share their faith is FEAR. While there are other compelling reasons, most Christians state they are afraid to open their mouths to proclaim the good news of Christ. Fear springs from various forms: fear of ‘what to say,’ fear of rejection, fear they will ‘mess-up’ and fear of sending someone to hell. All of these, along with any other reason for lack of evangelism, must be put to rest.

In all of the fear excuses, the focus is on either the hearer or the speaker. In order to overcome obstacles in our witness, we must focus on the gospel. Focus on the message, not the messenger—nor the recipient. The power for salvation is in the good news that Jesus Christ died

for our sins according to the Scriptures; he was buried and he rose on the third day according to the Scriptures; and all who place their faith in Jesus will be saved.

How can one overcome any and all obstacles in their witness? Learn a simple gospel presentation, practice it, and share it with someone who is living in constant fear due to Covid19, or illness, or loss. Share with someone in great need of a relationship with the One who brings life, healing, and hope in the midst of crisis. Focus on the gospel to overcome any obstacle of sharing your faith.

So where do we start in our desire to be obedient in sharing our faith? Prayer. The very first thing we should do is pray. In our daily prayer time, we should focus on several topics concerning our witness and alleviating or minimizing our fears. First, we should pray for wisdom. James 1:5 tells us, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” Next, we should pray for boldness and clarity when sharing the gospel. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:19 when he’s asking others for prayers for his witness “and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.” Lastly, we should pray for opportunities to share the gospel. This can look a little different during a pandemic. We can certainly pray that the Holy Spirit will convict non-believers and give them a yearning to know God. Pray bold prayers! We can also take advantage of opportunities to reach out to friends and acquaintances who are not saved and offer encouragement and prayer. Drop a note in the mail with some Scripture on it. Share the Sunday morning worship service on social media. There are endless opportunities to share the gospel if we just look for them. Most importantly, just get on your knees and pray for the lost. Bill Bright, the co-founder of Campus Crusade for Christ states, “Prayer is really the place that people are won to Christ; sharing the Good News is just gathering in the fruit.” Leave the results to God.

Now we are ready to start telling others about Christ. Here is a good lead question, “*May I share with you where I find hope?*” Then, imagine a road map of the gospel. The starting point and destination are God. The path includes knowledge that all have sinned and are separated from God. The only road to God is faith in Jesus’ virgin birth, perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection.

[Equipping Evangelism](#), a resource provided by our church, provides a road map of truth.

- We believe the Bible is true.
- The Bible says there is one true living God who has created everything, including us.
- He created us in His image to have a relationship with Him forever.
- The Bible says that because of our thoughts, motivations, and deeds, which are against God, we have broken our relationship with Him.
- Because we are the ones who broke the relationship, we cannot fix it; we have no hope in a relationship with God by our deeds. We need someone to pay for our sin.
- Because God loves us so much, He made a way for us to have a relationship with Him.
- He sent His Son who was all God and all man, who was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died an atoning death, and three days later He rose again in a faithful resurrection; and offers us salvation as a free gift.

- The Bible says that if we place our trust in Jesus to pay for our sin, we can be reconciled to God forever.

After sharing the above ask, *“Has anything like that ever happened to you? What prevents you from receiving this free gift right now?”*

Other gospel resources to help you share your faith: [Four Spiritual Laws](#); [Romans Road](#), Apps: [The Story](#), [God Tools](#). Check out several resources and use the one with which you are most comfortable. Remember to share with *gentleness and respect*.

Peter’s instructions are also very helpful to us as we consider how to share our faith. 1 Peter 3:15, *“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect”* Those are great words of wisdom. We should **prepare** just as Peter instructed. Here are some suggestions for doing that.

First, as stated earlier, we need to spend time in prayer. Confess to God your fears about sharing. Ask Him for wisdom in what to say. Thank Him for His redeeming work on the cross. Also, meditate on Scriptures that offer the hope of salvation. Here are just a few: John 3:16; Romans 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4.

Next, write out what you would like to say and read it over and over. Include the gospel truths from Pastor Jim’s *Equipping Evangelism: The Road Map of Truth*. This can be found on our church website <https://richlandcreek.com/article/equipping-evangelism/>. Finally, **practice**. Practice is one element of preparing. Practice saying it out loud with and without your notes. The more you practice saying what you’ve written, the more natural it will become and the more prepared you will be to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

A great way to actually practice sharing the gospel is to enlist the help of family members. Children especially are willing to help. Have them be the person you are sharing the gospel with. If they hear you practice it enough, they will also begin to share. This is the beginning of disciples making disciples. Another means of practicing is to ask co-workers, neighbors or friends to listen to you. Tell them you are practicing and need an audience. This is a great way for them to feel like they are helping you but also for them to hear the gospel. Lastly, try recording yourself on your phone and then listen to this recording over and over. It will help with remembering your presentation.

Now that you are prepared and you have practiced sharing the gospel, it’s time to make a **plan**. If you are like most people, things don’t happen without a plan. You need to put feet to what you have learned.

Here are some ways to develop that plan and begin to be obedient to what God has called us to do.

1. Pray. Admit to God your fears about sharing. Ask Him to make you a bold witness. Tell Him that you are not ashamed of the gospel, and you are willing to proclaim it. Ask Him to begin giving you opportunities to share.
2. Make a list of family, friends, co-workers, etc. that you know need to hear the good news about Jesus. Reach out to them and begin a dialogue about the gospel. Because of the technology we have available, even with the pandemic, there are so many ways to connect with people.
3. As you are walking around your neighborhood, plan to speak to your neighbors who are out.
4. As we anticipate the re-opening of the church, plan to attend events where you will have the opportunity to share. The first time I ever shared the gospel I was manning a bounce house at one of our festivals. Pair up with a member of the church who is already sharing the gospel and learn from them. Call the church office or talk to Pastor Jim, and they will get you plugged in with someone.

Friends, God has given us the supreme privilege of declaring His name, glory and salvation to the nations. Let us be a people devoted to prayer, defined by the Word and dependent on the Holy Spirit as we faithfully steward God's plan of redemption to those near and far.