

WE COME HERE TO WITNESS FOR CHRIST

Acts 4:1-8

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. OUR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY, PURPOSE AND MISSION

1. **Who** we are: body of Christ and children of God
2. **Why** we exist: to love God and our neighbor
3. **What** we do: make disciples

B. OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT (GSBC)

We exist to glorify God and make disciples by loving and serving people in all situations of life. “

C. WHAT WE DO TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION

- Worship
- Give
- Teach
- Serve
- Witness

D. KEY FOUNDATIONS

- a. Worship—**all** we do flows from our **devotion** to God
- b. Giving—good **stewardship** of what God gives us—**glorifies** Him and **serves** others
- c. Teaching—**how we do** our mission depends on **how effectively we teach** the body
- d. Serving—**serving others** is how we show God we **love** Him
- e. Witnessing—giving **testimony** in all we do to glorify God and love others—in order to **make disciples**

II. TWO KEY PASSAGES

A. THE COMMISSION—Mt 28:18-20

*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All **authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

- Their **identity** = **disciples**—**verse 16**—“eleven **disciples**” [not called ‘apostles’ here] in Galilee with Jesus
- Their **confidence** (and dependence) = **Christ’s authority (power)**—the kingdom foundation

- Their **goal** = make disciples—not just ‘converts’—but ‘followers’ and ‘learners’

B. THE PLAN—Acts 1:4-8

*Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” he said, “you heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will **receive power** when the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you; and you shall be My **witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*

- **Enabling** = the (presence and) **power of the Holy Spirit**
- **Identity** = one who gives a **witness** = μαρτυς—martyr!
- **Equation**—disciples = witnesses—who make disciples—who witness—to ever expanding circles

III. FIRST—*BE A TRUE DISCIPLE*

[THE ‘**IDENTITY**’ PRINCIPLE—WE ARE **DISCIPLES**—WHO GIVE **WITNESS**]

A. **AUTHORITY** (the **foundation** and power of our witness)—**sources**:

1. *First* : **Christ’s authority**

- **Not** our own reputation/strength—we **rely on Christ** alone
- Christ’s authority—gives us confidence

2. *Second*: **our authenticity**—being a *genuine* Christian

- We really **know Christ**
- And are **filled** with His **Holy Spirit**

B. **TESTIMONY** (the **message** to which we testify)—**substance**

1. We have a *personal* testimony

- Jesus is *real* to us
- We have encountered Him—met Him personally
- Our *personal* message: He has changed my life—saved me—given me eternal life

2. We give up everything to follow Him—become *martyrs*

- ‘witness’ = μαρτυς [martyr] [give witness = μαρτυρεω]
- We already have **died** to self—we *will* risk all for Him—**Lk 9:23**

C. LEGITIMACY

1. We *live* consistently with the message we proclaim
2. People watch us—they test whether our claim is true and genuine

IV. SECOND—PREPARE YOURSELF

A. BE MOTIVATED—renewed and rekindled by:

1. **COMPASSION** for the lost—Christ’s love *compels* us

II Cor 5:14—*For the love of Christ **compels** us, having concluded this, that one died **for all**, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again **on their behalf**.*

EX: Look at the grocery store on Sunday morning

2. **URGENCY**

- We are dealing with *eternal* matters
- The Kingdom is at hand—there is little time
- **Now**—the fields are white for harvest (**Jn 4:35**)—not “four months from now”

3. **PASSION**

- Excitement about ultimate things—and victory in Christ

EX: compare excitement about sporting event—or great personal achievement

B. BE EQUIPPED

1. **Know**—the **gospel**—study the Bible—grow in knowledge of God’s Word
2. **Learn** a simple gospel **presentation**
3. **Prepare** a personal **testimony**—adapt it to your presentation
4. **Pray**—for **opportunities** to share—and for **wisdom** to see them
5. **Understand** **human nature**—observe people—tune into them *personally*

Examples from Jesus' Ministry:

- **Some disciples**—**ready**—**willing**—responded immediately

- ❖ James, John, Peter, Andrew—**Mt 4:18-22**
- ❖ Levi (Matthew)—**Mt 9:9**

1. Some people are just *waiting* for you to tell them!
2. The seed has already been planted and watered

- **Other disciples**—were **skeptical**—but open to proof

- ❖ Nathanael—**Jn 1:45-49**
- ❖ [Thomas—after resurrection]

1. Some people are dismissive, arrogant, condescending
2. Don't take it personally—ask God to change their heart

NOTE: most people have a problem—barrier between them and God—that must be overcome

- **Nicodemus**—**Jn 3:1-17**—**problems** were intellectual and social/cultural

1. Worried about reputation—peer pressure—came at night
2. Bound to rabbinical rules—'Ruler of the Jews' and a 'Teacher of Israel'
3. Trusted in his heritage and tradition—**born** a Jew
4. Did not understand "born of water and the Spirit"

- **Another ruler**—the 'rich young ruler'—**Lk 18:18-23**

His **problem** = wealth

- **A lawyer** who wanted to trap Jesus—**Lk 10:25-29**

Problems: pride—arrogance—knowledge [but not wisdom]

- **Samaritan woman**—**John 4**—**four problems**

1. Problem 1—**v 7-10**—**self-image**—woman and non-Jew
2. Problem 2—**v 11-15**—spiritual **ignorance**—living water?
3. Problem 3—**v 16-18**—**moral**—five husbands plus one

4. Problem 4—v 19-24—**cultural**/denominational—where she worshiped

But Jesus persisted and broke through!—v 25-26

- **His own brothers—Jn 7:1-5**

[Names—James Joseph, Judas, Simon]

1. **Problem**—familiarity bred contempt—**Mk 6:1-4**
2. Sometimes the hardest to reach are family!

APPLICATIONS

1. All people have ‘**problems**’—barrier between them and God—usually the key to reach them!
2. Jesus was **flexible**—did not use a ‘one size fits all’ *plan*—no programmed approach
3. He **studied** people—saw their **needs**—and met them
4. He used **everyday examples** they understood to communicate His message
5. He built on **relationships**
6. His was **patient** and **persistent**—but never pushed
7. His **message** [and ours]—was simple—and direct
 - He preached the coming Kingdom
 - He called people *to follow Him*
8. Jesus *too* was a witness—follower/disciple—Who watched—listened—followed His Father’s will

Jn 17:6-8—*I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from you; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that you sent me.*

V. THIRD, CULTIVATE OPPORTUNITIES

A. NURTURE—relationships

- Usually *not* ‘cold-turkey’ evangelism

EX: EE requirement to witness to strangers—in laundry mat

- Instead—build on existing relationships

EX: Concentric circles of concern

B. EARN—the right to be heard

1. Develop **mutual trust** with them
2. Identify their **needs**
3. Show we **care** for them—by helping to *take* care of them

C. BUILD BRIDGES of communication

Talk about what matters to them

EX: **F**amily—**O**ccupation—**R**eligion—**M**essage of the Gospel

VI. FOURTH, TAKE ACTION—JUST DO IT!

1. RESPOND—TO THE HOLY SPIRIT’S LEADERSHIP

- a. **Pray**—before—during—after encounter
- b. **Speak**—when God commands it
 - Explicitly *share* the Gospel when He commands it
 - Don’t just set an example—actually speak the words
- c. **Awareness/caution**—go only as far as God directs
- d. **Stay in our lane**
 - Recognize what God is calling us to do—in that instance
 - Some plant—some water—some harvest

2. DON’T BE INTIMIDATED BY:

- a. Feelings of **inadequacy**—we go with **Christ’s authority!!!**
- b. Awareness of our own **sinfulness**—ask forgiveness—and move on
- c. **Popular opinions** or peer pressure—we serve God, not men—don’t be people-pleasers

3. DON’T BE ANXIOUS

- Depend on God to persuade them

- Don't be compulsive—don't always push to “close the deal”—leave that to God

4. WATCH OUR ATTITUDE—AND APPROACH

- Don't* argue—coerce—manipulate
- Do*—speak the truth in love

5. STAY FOCUSED—AND FINISH STRONG

- Don't be deterred by excuses—yours or theirs
- Stay on message—on mission—on the Way—always bore-sighted on Christ
- Do move *toward* the point of decision

6. FOLLOW-UP

- With prayer
- With encouragement
- By setting the example—i.e. showing how to become disciples/learners/followers

VII. FINALLY—ASK GOD TO CALL FORTH MORE HARVESTERS

Mt 9:35-38—*Jesus was going through all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. **Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.**”*

THE PURPOSE OF GSBC

We exist to glorify God and make disciples by loving and serving people in all situations of life.

A RADICAL HYPOTHESIS—A HISTORICAL REALITY

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE GOT SERIOUS AND MADE DISCIPLES LIKE CHRIST DID?

1. JESUS' EXAMPLE

- Jesus ministered to the multitudes.
- But He spent **three** years investing Himself in a smaller circle

- ❖ Finally, there were 120 who waited in Jerusalem.
- ❖ He had developed 70 whom he sent out—[Lk 10:1](#)
- ❖ He worked closely with 12 (disciples)
- ❖ He became especially close with 3—Peter, James, John
- ❖ But He disciple them **one-on-one**

2. IF JUST 120 OF US DISCIPLED ONE PERSON EVERY 3 YEARS . . . FOR A FULL GENERATION?

Now—120 disciples—equippers who disciple others

In 3 years—240

In 6 years—480

In 9 years—960

In 12 years—1920

In 15 years—3840

In 18 years—7680

In 21 years—15,360

In 24 years—30,720

3. **IMPACT IS NOT JUST IN NUMBERS—BUT INFLUENCE**

THESE WOULD NOT BE JUST PEW—SITTERS

BUT **TRUE DISCIPLES**—WHO COULD **EQUIP OTHER** GENUINE DISCIPLES!