

Simple Evangelism #5
Loving The Lost
By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. Our series on simple evangelism is an attempt to focus on some of the easy, almost no-brainer things that help us reach the lost

1. We need to think about these things because the modern church is largely convinced it either isn't responsible to reach the lost, or that it's a job that can't be done
 - a. our mission is still the same as the mission of Jesus – to seek and to save that which is lost
 - b. it is a job that can be done, but we must learn how to do it
2. The interesting thing is that so many different kinds of things can work together to help us accomplish our mission

B. Tonight I want to talk about loving the lost

1. The temptation is to assume that this is a topic we shouldn't have to talk about – after all, we know we should love the lost
 - a. but I think we would be mistaken to think this way
 - b. the truth is that loving the lost has always been hard to do
2. In our own day, I have heard some unloving sentiments expressed about efforts to save the lost
 - a. some betray our own prejudices by rejecting people of other races or nationalities
 - b. some betray our social distinctions by rejecting people of a different social or economic class
 - c. some betray a lack of understanding of the comprehensive nature of God's plan to save people
 - d. anytime we suggest that we don't want "those" people in the church, we hold an attitude foreign to God's

C. In fact, lack of love for the lost might be one of the major reasons we don't do more to reach out to them

1. Think with me tonight and face the challenges of loving the lost
2. Then let's determine that we're going to work on this area so that we have a better chance at accomplishing our mission in the world

I. BEWARE THE ATTITUDE OF THE PHARISEES

A. Luke 12:1

Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first *of all*, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. NASB95

1. Jesus knew that the attitude, beliefs and teachings of the Pharisees were dangerous to true spiritual understanding
2. You don't have to personally associate with a Pharisees to borrow from their approach to the lost

B. Matthew 9:9-11

As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he got up and followed Him. Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining *at the table* in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” NASB95

1. Pharisees had questions for Jesus, but we might ask questions of them
 - a. “Why does it bother you who Jesus ate with?”
 - b. it is because they never would have associated with people like sinners or tax collectors
 - 1) these people were unrighteous, lived a lifestyle and engaged in acts totally unacceptable
 - 2) to associate with such rabble would be unthinkable
2. Note how Jesus answered them
 - a. Matthew 9:12-13 But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, “*It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. ‘But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’*” NASB95
 - b. he was simply stating the need for sinners and tax collectors to be loved
 - c. instead, the Pharisees gave them anything but love, and then had the audacity to question Jesus
3. Do I really have to show you any more for you to know that we have the same problem today that existed among the Pharisees?

II. IT'S A FACT THAT GOD LOVES SINNERS

A. John 3:16-17 -- God loves the whole world (meaning the people in it)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. NASB95

B. Luke 19:9-10 – the tax collector, Zaccheus, was someone to be saved

And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” NASB95

C. Romans 5:8 – think about who Jesus died for

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. NASB95

D. Mark 16:15-16 – who did the Lord send us on a mission to?

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. NASB95

III. BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF LOVE FOR THE LOST

A. Romans 9:1-5

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. NASB95

1. We get a glimpse into Paul’s heart for his people – he loved them
2. If he could have saved them by sacrificing himself, he would have offered himself
3. That’ the kind of thing that drove him to reach not just Jews, but also Gentiles

B. Luke 15:20-24

“So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ “But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe

and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate. NASB95

1. It would have been easy to write of that young man, to hate him, and to carry around the wounds he inflicted on his family
2. Instead, his father loved him desperately

CONCLUSION

A. I don't want you to misunderstand

1. I'm not saying it's easy to love the lost
2. I'm saying we must love the lost

B. God loved you when you were lost

1. Jesus died for you when you were lost
2. Somebody cared enough about you to teach you the gospel while you were still lost

C. There is no other choice for the disciples of Jesus

D. Invitation