

Simple Evangelism Series #11
Make The Bible Real
By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. Illustration

THE BIBLE is a peculiar book. Words crafted in another language. Deeds done in a distant era. Events recorded in a far-off land. Counsel offered to a foreign people.

This is a peculiar book.

It's surprising that anyone reads it. It's too old. Some of its writings date back five thousand years. It's too bizarre. The book speaks of incredible floods, fires, earthquakes, and people with supernatural abilities. It's too radical. The Bible calls for undying devotion to a Carpenter who called Himself God's Son.

Logic says this book shouldn't survive. Too old, too bizarre, too radical.

The Bible has been banned, burned, scoffed, and ridiculed. Scholars have mocked it as foolish. Kings have branded it as illegal. A thousand times over the grave has been dug and the dirge has begun, but somehow the Bible never stays in the grave.

Not only has it survived, it has thrived. It is the single most popular book in all of history. It has been the best-selling book in the world for three hundred years!

There is no way on earth to explain it. Which perhaps is the only explanation.

The answer? The Bible's durability is not found on earth; it is found in heaven.

For the millions who have tested its claims and claimed its promises there is but one answer—the Bible is God's book and God's voice. -- Max Lucado

B. That is a wonderful introduction as we continue the series, "Simple Evangelism"

1. I've tried to focus on ideas and concepts that take the responsibility for evangelism out of the hands of professionals and put it into the hands of the church
2. I've tried to show you how simple things can help us open doors, make people feel comfortable, and engage them in discussions on spiritual matters
3. I can't think of many things we do that cannot or should not be geared in some way to reaching people who are not Christians

C. Tonight I want to talk about the Bible and to urge you to see that by making the Bible real, we have one more tool to simplify evangelism

1. We say we believe some things about God's word, but what we do with it doesn't always reflect what we believe
2. The Bible is our single greatest means of communicating spiritual truths to unbelievers and believers alike – but it won't happen unless we make it real

I. HOW WE MAKE THE BIBLE UN-REAL

A. By buying into philosophies that deny the divine source of the Bible

1. There is an energetic movement to force the Bible onto a level playing field with all other spiritual source books
 - a. that's a fancy way of saying there are people who deny the idea of objective truth – something the Bible insists upon
 - b. some deny the concept of inspiration, and want the Bible to be a totally human-created book
2. If we make other books the equal of the Bible, we deny the real nature of it
 - a. anything we teach from it then becomes unreal, impotent
 - b. we must not fall for this short-sighted approach
3. John 8:32 -- and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
NASU
 - a. if there is no objective truth, Jesus was wrong
 - b. if Jesus was wrong then there is not truth to make us free
 - c. we're in trouble unless there is truth

B. By believing the nonsense that the Bible is old, out-dated, and incapable of addressing modern life and human needs

1. The truths of the Bible are timeless, eternal, and always fresh
2. Isaiah 40:8 -- 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever. NASU
3. We love the parade of modern experts, but can't bear to admit that none resolve the most common of all human problems
 - a. talk shows, books, magazines, and all sorts of professional experts churn out an amazing amount of information, but we are in as much human turmoil as ever
 - b. only the Bible promises to resolve our personal and corporate issues because the truths are as up-to-date as ever and provide real solutions

C. By using the Bible in ways God never intended

1. This is probably my harshest criticism of modern Christians, but the fact is that we often use the Bible to beat up on other people
 - a. we beat up on people who believe differently from ourselves
 - b. we beat up on sinners who can be proven to violate God's will
 - c. we beat up on people sometimes just because we like to argue
 - d. this may irritate some, but it's a truth the modern church must deal with
2. Ephesians 4:14-15 -- 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

- a. there's a wonderful contrast here
 - 1) people being tossed here and there by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming
 - 2) speaking the truth in love
 - 3) we've had enough of the first and far too little of the second
- 3. When we stop using the Bible as a weapon, we'll finally get around to treating like God meant it to be – real, and something to help us not hurt us

II. HOW WE CAN MAKE THE BIBLE REAL

A. Ask God for help

- 1. Matthew 7:7-8
 - 7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. NASU.
 - a. what does that sound like to you – an invitation to ask God for that which we need – I think you're correct!!
 - b. why don't we apply it to our desire to know and understand the Bible?
- 2. Is it because we're afraid God will actually do something that goes outside our traditions or the fears that others have put into our minds?
 - a. John 14:16 -- "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; NASU
 - b. John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. NASU
 - c. there is, and always has been a role of the Holy Spirit in helping people open their minds to God's word
 - d. you don't have to get weird about it, just accept that there's help, so ask for it, and accept it

B. We've got to treat the Bible like it is true

- 1. 2 Peter 1:16-21
 - 16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" — 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. NASU

2. What Peter said here is vitally important
 - a. the Bible isn't just a bunch of clever tales
 - b. actually, the Bible is, for the most part, history – and even the parts that aren't so much an historical record, are based in history
 - c. when we teach the Bible, we're teaching about people, places, events, and more that actually lived and happened
 - d. teach the Bible this way and it is real

C. Spend more time figuring out how it applies to you than how it applies to others

1. This is the biggest problem of a lot of Bible students
 - a. the only reason they study is to fix or straighten out others
 - b. never mind their faults and sins

2. Matthew 7:1-5

7 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. NASU

 - a. you will be far more effective in teaching others if you relate to them and share the same need for God's instruction
 - b. operate from a judgmental position and you'll get it returned, and justifiably so
 - c. but if you teach others out of a position of sympathy and identification, then you will be much more effective

D. Read and study the Bible like it was a message straight from God

1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. NASU

2. Since scripture originates with God, be prepared for some things
 - a. penetrating truth that reveals the content and state of your heart
 - b. amazing insight that helps you understand life like nothing else
 - c. powerful truths that teach you how to live a full and joy filled life
 - d. honest truth that reveals your deepest problems and secrets so that you can know how to correct things that hurt and destroy

CONCLUSION

A. If you want to simplify evangelism, make the Bible real for yourself and others

B. Invitation