

## Be about People

In *Dwell With Jesus*, I asked if we have what it takes to stand and be effective for the kingdom every moment we're here, be it one more week or several more years. Admittedly, I don't have what it takes. And I'm sure you'll agree that you don't either. Only in dwelling with Jesus do we have any hope of withstanding all that will be required of us as evil rises and the world grows only darker. We see the end is near, so close that the rapture could come at any moment or on any given day. We are quite possibly the generation who will see the rapture and with that comes the responsibility of to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48).

Last time as we considered dwelling with Jesus, we examined how Jesus knew the Word, obeyed the Word, and lived out the Word, and that we must do the same. Today we'll see that in order for us to dwell with Jesus, we must also be where He is, among people. He created people. He came for people. He taught people. He died for people. Jesus loves and is about people.

With Jesus' heart in mind, we each must ask ourself: Am I about people?

My honest answer: I'm often more about people than I should be and am called a micromanager at times. I'm about my people, my family and friends. I'm also about the people I teach and reach through online ministry, which makes sense considering I'm a discipler. The found are typically who the Lord places within my reach. But what about lost people; how "about them" am I considering I'm not among them as often? Honest again: Not enough and rarely comfortably.

What I notice is that being about people comes easily when I'm working in my area of natural giftedness, discipleship. Yet when it comes to evangelism, I struggle. The fact that I'm an introvert, someone who's at her best behind a computer screen, only makes conversations with the lost all the harder for me. You may feel the same if you are a discipler at heart or an introvert or both. Sharing the Gospel may make you feel inadequate.

The opposite may be said of you. You may have the heart of an evangelist who thrives on unexpected conversations with the lost and finds helping to grow up the body to be tedious work. For you to be teaching, contained within the walls of a church and not being able to "go," is draining for you.

There's nothing wrong and everything right with our primary service being focused where God enables and equips us. The Great Commission has two components, spreading the Gospel and discipling believers, not one or the other. As a general practice, we each do our part; some evangelize, and some teach.

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."  
(Colossians 3:23-24)

Whatever our natural leaning and spiritual giftedness, whether as a discipler or evangelist, that's where we will best be about people, the place where we shine. Thing is, we can't be about people and only operate in our area of giftedness. Family and friends and strangers who God brings across our paths and places on our plates necessitate that we step outside of our comfort zone at times and

operate in the Spirit's power and not our own. Sometimes we disciplers must evangelize, and sometimes you evangelists must teach.

This isn't about *doing* more, finding yet another way to serve. It's about *being* involved in the lives of people as you go about your daily life. Whatever the case and whatever the need, as you're able, *be* available for ministry inside and outside the church. *Be* there for the brokenhearted. *Be* there with those who rejoice. Simply put, join life as it's already in progress. You won't even have to go out searching for opportunities. They will invade your world. You may need to view interruptions to your day differently since they are technically what life is all about, moments when you have opportunities to be about people, whether they be lost or found.

Buckle up for a rather long story... One recent invasion in my life and the lives of my family was my brother's devastating, early-onset dementia diagnosis and his subsequent move to a memory-care facility in June. Suddenly, I was visiting each week and peopling in person rather than my usual online outreach. One such "people" was Nurse Kelly, a precious woman who would come in at noon to give Sam his medication hidden in chocolate pudding. We would have brief conversations, then she was off to assist another resident. I talked about Jesus often, how He loves us and sustains us, especially in the midst of tragedy and heartbreak. I would mention Sam's faith since I knew he often told the staff and residents that Jesus loves them. (What a demonstration of God's power perfected in our weakness, as Sam's mind was jumbled yet the Spirit within would speak through his lips!)

Just before Christmas, I woke early on a Wednesday morning, my usual day to visit Sam. Nurse Kelly was on my mind and the fact that, even though she seemed open to the mention of Jesus, I didn't know if she was saved. I knew I was supposed to say something more pointed, a fact that made my heart race since I often feel ill-equipped when it comes to having one-on-one conversations with the lost. I don't find myself energized by those moments and usually walk away feeling defeated. I really don't understand it. I know all about the Gospel and salvation and Who they desperately need. Still, I'm just not eloquent when sharing with an unbeliever compared to how I can talk to a believer. No matter my doubts over my abilities, I knew I needed to follow the Spirit's leading and be about people, Nurse Kelly in particular.

Before I even got out of bed that morning, I had in mind to write some critical questions on a card to send off with her since I knew her patient schedule wouldn't allow for us to have a long and meaningful conversation (see link below). Just as I had planned, when Nurse Kelly was finished giving Sam his pudding, I followed her out into the hallway. I told her she really must be on God's heart since He had her on my mind all morning. ;) She liked that. I extended the envelope with the card and could have died when she assumed it was a Christmas gift. Well, it was really, considering you can't give to people any better gift for Christmas than telling them about its Star.

I told her I didn't know if she knew Jesus or not, but I would sure appreciate it if she would ask herself a few questions. I talked some about the questions, about believing Jesus is the Son of God and asking Him to forgive sins, and I shared how the craziness happening in our world indicates that Jesus will come back for His church someday. I warned that some people, those who don't belong to Jesus, will be left behind.

The result: She told me she couldn't have gotten through the past few years without God after losing her live-in boyfriend. She showed me a video of her grandson telling the Christmas story. She

told me that her son-in-law is a pastor. Some things she never mentioned were, “Yes, I know Jesus,” or “I’m forgiven and saved by Jesus,” or “Jesus is my Savior,” you know, all the things you and I would say to someone who was hoping to get us to Jesus. The conversation only grew more awkward, and finally I told her that I had put my contact info in the envelope in case she had any questions or wanted to talk. She smiled an obligatory smile and went back to work.

My next visit was different. Sam wasn’t in his room, and I only saw Nurse Kelly in passing in the dining room. She was cool, more distant than usual. That was the Wednesday before Christmas. I went back Christmas Eve, but Nurse Kelly was off. That next week, Sam and many other patients contracted Covid, so the floor was quarantined, and the family wasn’t allowed to visit for ten days. Sam made it past the virus, but he was so weak afterward that he never actually bounced back. A fall finally took him down and before we knew it, he was on hospice care and went home to be with Jesus on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Nurse Kelly was off during Sam’s last days, so I never saw her again.

That one Wednesday morning, I had no way of knowing I wouldn’t see that sweet woman again or that I would only ever have that one opportunity. No, I didn’t do a great job. No, she didn’t sing hallelujah and ask Jesus to save her. But I did talk to her about Jesus and salvation. I even sent her away with something more than my fumbled words. On the other side of my questions card, I provided verses combating lies people believe about getting to heaven, so the Word was able to do the speaking and fill in the gaps of my awkward attempt. Another thing I gave to Nurse Kelly was an additional card with a warning of what’s coming, the rapture and tribulation, with the ABCs for responding to the Gospel printed on the other side. That one small envelope provided what she needs to ask herself questions about her salvation and come to Jesus if she never has.

At first glance, my story would suggest that my attempt to step outside of discipling and reach a lost soul for Jesus was a failure. I know better; I didn’t fail. My success was in my obedience to the Spirit who placed her on my mind that day, the Spirit who knew what I didn’t, that I wouldn’t have another chance with her. After the fact, I trust the Spirit to work within Nurse Kelly, and I pray that Christian family members of other patients will be about people and will pick up where I left off with her. Or, since God is so much bigger than I comprehend at times, I can hope that a believing patient, even in their deteriorating state of mind, will speak the words that Nurse Kelly needs to hear that might prompt her to give her life to Jesus.

If nothing else, I hope this story helps you see that if you struggle with evangelism, you’re not alone. For some of us, the words don’t roll off our tongues easily. We stammer and stutter and make a mess of our presentation. Thank God the work of salvation isn’t on our shoulders! Who could withstand such a burden? I have to believe, though, that our willingness is an open invitation for God’s power to be perfected in our weakness.

For you evangelists out there, the offer of God’s power in your weakness invites you to step outside of your comfort zone and sign up for VBS or join the children’s ministry. Work with the youth or in women’s ministry. Whatever and whoever the Lord brings into your life, those who need to be grown up in Jesus, trust Him with the enabling. You just need to be about people.

“Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days. Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.” (Ecclesiastes 11:1-2)

I do know what misfortune will occur on the earth soon, so I cast what I had to Nurse Kelly, the Bread of Life. I don't know how long until the trumpet sounds. It could be a day, a year, or several years. I just know the clock is ticking, and I'm supposed to be about the Father's business as Jesus was by being about people as He still is. I pray you'll do the same.

Blessings,  
Lisa

\*\*\*Gathering assignment note: The two links below will be active soon. I'll email when they are available for download.

### **Evangelism made easy(ier)**

If you're like me and feel inadequate when it comes to evangelism and find you're more tongue-tied than articulate when sharing the Gospel, maybe [this card](#) will come in handy as something to mail or use as a conversation starter about Jesus. I'm sure as time passes and I use them more, I'll find even more ways to utilize them. Next on my list are my two stepbrothers, both of whom were at my brother's funeral and felt the impact of a life ending too soon for our understanding. Sam's death has opened the door for me to give them each a card with the questions and remind them how none of us are promised tomorrow. Sam would be pleased over that since his heart was for people, and he understood the significance of being about people.

If you're interested, the additional card I use (Rapture/ABCs) can be found [here](#). It's one I shared in a previous Rapture Ready article, [For Those Who Tune Us Out](#), where I explained how limited my contact with the lost actually is since I work from home and have little interaction with the world. I post that card in airports, grocery stores, restaurant bathroom stalls, etc... It may be helpful for you or give you an idea of something similar you might want to share.