

In the Barn!

Barneys Newsletter



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Listening Well

of the word 'church'. Having 'no dog in the fight', I could see that they were using their own separate definitions for the same word. So even though what each was saying was both true and valid, they ended up locking heads and talking past each other. My reflection coming away was; listening is hard work.

Situations in the last couple of weeks have made me listen very hard to understand the views of others. I've needed to receive some feedback. I've had to give some feedback. And I've also had to listen to people get stuff off their minds in order to simply process what they were thinking and feeling. As I've reflected upon all these conversations the one thread that connects them all is the reminder that listening is hard work.

I recently witnessed a conversation between two Christians (no-one known to our local church) who were arguing with one another. The conversation broke down to the point that they both ended up calling the other a heretic. Being a third person totally separate to the conversation, and unable to interact with either party, all I could do was watch and reflect upon what was happening. The argument boiled down to the use

This week Elise has written an

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Reasons We Don't Evangelise

by Elise Brake

and why the Bible says we should

There are a lot of reasons why Christians can be reluctant to do evangelism. This week in my Bible study we discussed some of them, and what the Bible has to say:

1. "I don't have the 'gift' of evangelism"

The Bible does say there are certain people given the spiritual gift of evangelising or identified as being evangelists (Acts 21:8, Eph 4:11, 2 Tim 4:5). However, this does not mean we aren't ALL called to speak the gospel. Jesus last words to his disciples before he was raised to heaven were: 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name

of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you...' (Matt 28:10-20a). If we are disciples of Jesus, then this commission to share the gospel with people of all nations applies to us too! If this is not convincing enough, perhaps the question we should be asking ourselves is: why do I need a command from Jesus to share the gospel? If I have been saved by God's grace, should I not want to tell everyone I love about this good news, so they can know this grace too?

2. "I don't know what to say"

We may feel like, even if we want to share the gospel with people, we do not know what words to use to convince others of the truth we believe. Well, the Bible is clear that for people to be saved, they must hear and respond to

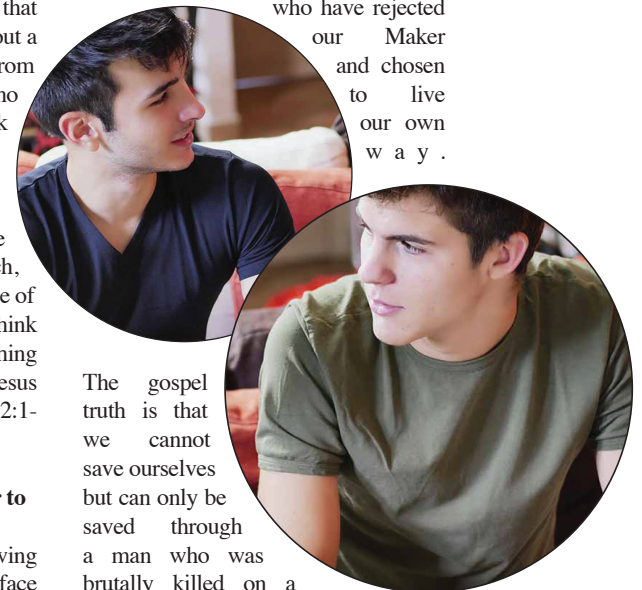
the gospel message. Both require us to actually use speech: the gospel must be spoken, and the hearer must declare that they believe. In Romans 10:8-10 it says: "If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." We need to remember that the gospel is a specific message about a specific person – that to be saved from our sin, we must believe in Jesus, who died in our place to bring us back into relationship with God. We do not need fancy words or convincing arguments to speak this gospel truth. Even Paul, when he shared the gospel with the Corinthian church, said he "did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. For [he] didn't think it was a good idea to know anything among [the Corinthians] except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (1 Cor 2:1-2).

3. "I don't want to be rejected or to offend"

Jesus told his disciples that following him meant that they would face persecution; he even went so far as to say that those who would be persecuted for their faith were 'blessed'! "You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me" (Matthew 5:11). Just as Jesus was rejected for teaching the truth about himself, we should also expect to be rejected for

expressing our faith. We need not fear this, because the last part of Jesus final words were: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20b). Furthermore, the gospel, at its core, is a deeply offensive message. It says that we are sinners

who have rejected our Maker and chosen to live our own way.



The gospel truth is that we cannot save ourselves but can only be saved through a man who was brutally killed on a cross, taking our punishment for sin on himself. Believing in the gospel means choosing to live in obedience to God, not according to our own wants and desires. It's a message that humbles us, requiring us to acknowledge our sin and our need for God. It's a message that will offend, but also the only message that can save.

excellent piece on evangelism, but I would like to add one thought to her article. As we evangelise our neighbours, family and friends, let us learn to listen well to them. The longer I have gone on as a Christian in evangelism, the more I have been reminded of the importance of listening well to the person hearing the gospel. When we communicate with those outside the Christian community, we need to remember that they do not necessarily understand the words we use. Listening and

understanding a person on their own terms is difficult, requiring a great deal of patience. But in evangelism it is also vital, so that when we communicate the gospel that they respond to an authentic gospel instead of a false construction built on misunderstood language.

Ultimately, learning to listen like this comes from patiently listening to God. A wiser Christian minister who had been in the ministry for some time once said, 'If the symbol of Christianity wasn't a cross, it would've been an ear!' His point was not to undermine the death and resurrection of Jesus,



but to reinforce that Christians are called to listen carefully and respond faithfully to God. This listening will then be reflected in the way we listen and communicate with others. Let us set our hearts and minds to listening well to others.

Find-A-Word - Listen

Apophatic	Evangelism	Justice	Renovate
Argument	Family	Listening	Spiritual
Bible	Gift	Minds	Words
Clear	Grace	Misunderstand	
Convince	Hearts	Offend	
Disciple	Heaven	Patience	

E P A T I E N C E U J E O A J
 L H V R O C R S A Y R R F F G
 P O I K E A L P D E J K Y M D
 I T F R E C O I N N Q G I N N
 C F S L B P A O S S I S O E E
 S I C D H H V R P T U M C V F
 I G E A R A F I G N E I A A F
 D Q T D T O R M D C T N N E O
 D I K E I I W E N S G E I H F
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 W O M U L S V J L S O F E B G
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 F D Y O A R G U M E N T S E W

PRAYER POINTS



Pray for James and the Wardens as they seek to finish the building project at Ingleburn. Pray that the final approval for the demolition of the old toilet block will come through, and demoition will begin. Pray that the project will go smoothly and as volunteers come together to serve the church, that God will keep them safe and working cohesively as one.