

April 2001: High Stakes (Part Two)

by Aaron Greenway

This is the second part in a three part series that I am addressing to you. Because my heart runs deep for the lost, for those who don't know Jesus, it then becomes my heart to convey that to all of you in hopes that God will stir within you an even deeper desire to share Jesus with others.

As we talked about last month, prayer is the battleground where we engage the enemy on behalf of the hearts of people. Our enemy is not the sinner. Our enemy is Satan himself who blinds the eyes of people. As Charles Spurgeon had said, "The soul-winner must be a master of the art

of prayer." We cannot hope to 'get through' to them without spending time standing in the gap for them. Now, for the next part: I have been taking an Evangelism class this semester and it has really

encouraged me to see the spiritual needs that are out there. And

something that Dr. Cecil said today struck me, "It really doesn't matter if you take another Evangelism class because it will not suffice for whatever it is that is keeping you from loving others." In fact, as believers, we were made to be conduits of the message of God's grace and mercy. We MUST have a love for people and this means going to them and telling them the good news of Jesus Christ. So what is keeping us?

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Some people feel it is the pastor's job to win people to Christ. After all, that is what we pay him for, right? Others think that people with the gift of "Evangelism" should do the soul-winning. The unfortunate truth is that we have made a habit of passing the buck. Regardless of our spiritual-gifting, we are all commanded to tell others about sin and the Savior (Matthew 28:19-20). We are all to reach out, to love, to encourage and to lead the lost to the arms of our Lord. And yet so many of us do not.... Why is that?

Well, I can say for myself that a lot of it has been fear, fear of man, fear of what man (or woman) might think. The last thing we would want to do is to offend someone or receive ridicule, so we

keep silent. No one likes to ‘rock the boat,’ especially among family members! But what we have ended up doing is sent them on into a torturous eternity where their entire spiritual existence will be ROCKED!

The second reason why believers don’t share their faith is because they don’t know how. There are programs like “Evangelism Explosion” or “Campus Crusade” that have helped to direct Christians toward a system, but I would suggest, even more, hanging around other believers who have the fire and the experience. And before long, you will be on fire and have experience too.

The last reason why believers stay hushed is because they have allowed their relationship with God to be harmed in some way. And if they do share their faith, they do it out of ulterior motives. Those of us who get paid to come share Jesus with others are in greater danger and it is very important that we don’t allow money to dictate who hears about Jesus and who doesn’t.

But many Christians don’t talk because they have been overtaken by the cares and concerns of their own lives. This creates apathy many times. Someone might say, “Who really cares about Bob across the street when my son is in Intensive Care after an almost-fatal-car accident.” But our lives are on display every moment of everyday and when tragedy strikes, pressures arise and when it is the most difficult to love those around us, that is when we need to be doing it. These kinds of situations speak volumes about our lives.

I am putting a lot of pressure on God when I say it is God’s responsibility to provide His people with the resources by which we give His Word out to people. We cannot manufacture love. We cannot manufacture concern. That kind of compassion must come from the heart of God Himself. And this is why we must keep ourselves before Him and then carry what He gives us to others. After all, what can one give that he doesn’t have. If our cups are empty, we have no “Living Water” to give to anyone else.

The clock is ticking down. We are in an urgent situation and many of us act as if we have all the time in the world. With the entrance of Israel (as a nation) now in the chronicles of history, we are faced with the stark possibility that Jesus will return in our lifetimes. If Jesus came back

tomorrow, would you and I be satisfied with the number of people we had talked to about Him.

What is stopping you and me from sharing Jesus with that person at our job or at school or next door? Let's invite them over for dinner. Let's find ways to be kind to them. Let's love them from the heart. Do they need food or clothing? If they do, what an opportunity! And for "Heaven's Sakes," let's not forget the most important thing we could ever give them, the gift of eternal life.