

LIFE TOGETHER IN THE SPIRIT

“The Power of the Gospel”

Reflections and Responses About the Gospel

Reflection: I hesitate to speak up about Jesus. It's hard to push past fear of ridicule or even loss of relationship.

Response: God understands our struggle, but wants to help us have the right values. Some will see the message of Christ as foolishness, but eternity is more important than image and acceptance. Ask God to help you see the greater issue.

1 Cor 1:20,21- *Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.*

2 Timothy 1:8- *So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God...* See also Matthew 10:37-39; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Reflection: The words of the Bible seem old and disconnected. I'm not sure it will even connect if I talk with my friends.

Response: The Lord promises He will be at work in the hearts of those who will hear the message of freedom from sin through Jesus. God's truth lives and is active. Ask Him to remind you of times He brought His truth to you in a difficult place, or verses that have been meaningful to you, or specifically how those verses drew you to belief.

Rom 1:16,17- *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

Jer 23:29- *"Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces..."*

See also Isaiah 55:11; Acts 12:24; 1 Peter 1:23

Reflection: I'm not wired to talk to about Jesus. I'd rather have those with the spiritual gift of evangelism do it.

Response: Some have spiritual giftedness to share Christ or equip others to share. However certain spiritual gifts do not exempt involvement by the entire church. (There is a gift of giving, yet all are called to give; gift of faith-but are all called to trust God etc.) In the same way, the gift of evangelism doesn't negate Jesus' call for all to "Go". Could it be your hesitance to speak is rooted in fear? What might help most: understanding how to share, seeing who God has brought in your life, maybe thinking of those who risked to speak up with you?

Mark 16:15- *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*

Luke 24:47-49- *"...and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."* See also Romans 10:15; Romans 15:16; 1 Cor 1:17; 1 Cor 9:16

Reflection: I know a lot of Christians who talk, but don't live it out. Isn't it better to show Christ in my life than to talk about Him with no fruit?

Response: The choice is not limited to words with no life or faithful living in silence. There is a third better option: fruit with a clear message. The early church demonstrated great spiritual power in their lives, but, like Peter and the eleven in Acts 2:14, they also stood up with clarity in a message.

James 2:14-18- *What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.* See also Matt 7:26; Luke 3:7-14; Gal 5:6