

Title: Tell it.

Scripture: John 1:35-51

September 26, 2021

Most of you have believed in the Good News of Christ. You've crossed that line already. Some of you haven't yet, but many of you have. Those of you who have, just think back. Can you identify at least one person God used to help you understand and believe the Good News? God uses people. There's no doubt about it.

Luke 4:18 says, "***Jesus said, 'He has appointed Me to preach Good News to the poor.'***" Jesus came to tell the Good News. I've noticed something about this thing of telling the Good News. If you tell the Good News, you're just doing what Jesus came to do and teaches us to do. But I've noticed something about it. When it comes to people who already believed the Good News, they're a little bit uncomfortable when you talk to them about telling somebody else about the Good News. "How is that going to work?" They're a little unsure what that's going to mean. When you talk to people who already have believed the Good News, they feel a little uncomfortable and uneasy. Also, when you talk to people who haven't yet believed the Good News, they feel a little awkward and unsure about hearing it too.

Why is that? It's the Good News! Shouldn't good news be enjoyable to tell and pleasant to hear? The good news is the good news of Jesus Christ. Jesus teaches us how to tell the good news in a way that keeps it as good as you're telling it. It's not a sales pitch. It's the good news of Jesus Christ. Jesus helps us understand how the good news makes its way into our life. In today's scripture, there are four different methods that God uses. There are more than that, but there are four methods in this passage that God uses to get the message through to us. We can learn it from this passage, and we can practice it.

1. Beginning with... a message.

A sermon. Something a preacher says. Something you hear in church. That's what happened for Andrew and John. "Look!" said a preacher by the name of John the Baptist. "***There is the Lamb of God!***" John the Baptist was a pretty good preacher. He dressed weird, which we're sort of use to as far as preachers, but he was a pretty good preacher. He says this very simple, very short, one-sentence sermon "Look! The Lamb of God! Follow Him." Some of you are thinking right now, "One-sentence sermon? That sounds pretty good." That's all it took. One sentence, and they responded.

By the way, if you ever get in a situation where you're asked to preach a sermon. Some of you are thinking, "What are you talking about? Don't even say that!" Who knows what God might do in your life? Who knows when you might be asked to stand up and say what God's done in your life? If you ever get in a situation where you're asked to share from the Bible what God has done in your life (that's what a sermon is). I'd follow the example of John the Baptist. There's no better example. His example is, Look at Jesus. Just say to people, Look at Jesus. That's what we're all trying to do together is look at Jesus Christ and how He lived His life and try to live the kind of life He taught us to live. That's what He did with these two guys. He said, "Look at Jesus." And they did. The preacher's message drew them to believe the Good News.

That's probably true of some of us. God uses that method, and it's one of the methods He uses to help us understand the Good News. The Bible calls this method "*the foolishness of preaching*," which is an excellent title for this, especially for me standing up here talking about this. The foolishness of preaching. Here's what happens. Some guy stands up and talks from the Bible about what God has to say. We all sit out there and listen. Somehow while listening, this thought hits you sometimes. "How did he know? How did he know exactly what I was going through? And talk about exactly what I'm facing in my life right now." How does that happen? No person could be brilliant enough to make that happen—no one person who could be bright enough to figure out thousands of different needs at once. But God can. God translates the message to be personal to every one of us.

Let me give you an illustration from **Star Trek**. In Star Trek, there's this thing called the universal translator. They go to another planet with a really ugly weird looking alien, but it speaks in perfect English with an English accent. How does that happen? They have a little translator that makes it all work. **The Holy Spirit is a spiritual translator**. When we hear a message from God's word, He taps us on the shoulder spiritually and says, "This is how this fits into your life. This is what this means for your life." That's how God uses a message. It's a very effective way. In a message, I can sit and think, How does this fit for me? What decision do I need to make? It gives me a chance to think about it.

2. There's another way to tell people the good news, and that's through a conversation, **a personal conversation**.

Andrew goes to his brother Peter and says to him, "We've found the Messiah." This is big! This is big. This is like me saying, "Mickle Jackson is alive and down at Target." It's even more significant than that. "Mickle is alive and singing and dancing again at Target." Huge stuff.

They'd been waiting hundreds and hundreds of years to hear about the Messiah, which means "promised one." The "promised one" has come. For everybody in that culture, this is the one phrase that was mostly full of hope. **We found the Messiah!** Andrew goes to Peter, and he tells him, *"We found the Messiah!"* They begin this spiritual conversation. **A conversation – one person telling another person about Jesus Christ:** that's true for some of you. That's how you came across the line to trust and believe in the Good News of Jesus Christ. God uses that, and He just uses regular ordinary conversation.

These were two guys talking – imagine these two brothers talking. These weren't holy kinds of men. These were fishermen. They were businessmen. It's not like Andrew went up and knocked on the door and said, "Peter, I'm out here." And Peter says, "Saint Andrew! Why callest thou?" That's not what happened. He probably said something like, "What do you want? I'm sleeping! Go away." But Andrew went in, and he talked to him. One brother told another brother about the Good News, and that Good News changed the other brother's life. It also changed all of human history. That's the power of just simply telling of the Good News.

I know a lot of you look at this and think, "I could never do that. I might be able to invite somebody to church, but I'd never been good at telling somebody else." Don't minimize what God can do. I'll never forget one of the first times I told a friend the good news about Christ. I was still in middle school—one of my friends who wasn't a believer. I was so nervous I didn't even look at him the whole time. I thought, "There's no way he's going to believe the Good News." I just shared what I experienced. I was not an effective witness. After I shared what I experienced, I asked him would you like to accept Jesus?" He said, "Yeah, I'd like to do that."

It was not an effective witness. I'm telling you right now! But it was powerful because God showed up. Most of the time, when you share the Good News, you're not going to feel that effective or powerful. You're going to feel sort of vulnerable because you're opening yourself up. You're saying, Here's something personal about me. If the person rejects that, you're going to feel a little rejected. You're going to feel a little bit vulnerable. That's when God shows up. So if you feel like, "I don't think I could ever do this," watch what God can do.

There's nobody better at sharing the Good News than Jesus Christ. What if you could take Jesus Christ, all who He is, His love, His power, and put Him into your life to give you the ability to share the good news? You can. That's who the Holy Spirit is. That's what Jesus promised He would do. "If you'll ask Me into your life," Jesus said, "I'll come in. I'll make a home in your life."

So, here's the practical action step with this one. Write down your story. Write down what God has done in your life. If you've never done this or it's been a long time since you've done this, I encourage you to do it next week. Sit down and write it out. Write out a short version, not a three-hour version. You might tell it to somebody else someday. No one wants to hear the three-hour version of your life. But some people would like to listen to the two or three-minute version. This is what God did in your life. You just tell your story, and God uses that in a personal conversation to get the Good News across. Sometimes He uses a message; sometimes, He uses a conversation. A third way that God sometimes uses is

3. A personal encounter.

The Bible says that He found Philip. Jesus found Philip, and Philip followed Him. Philip didn't find Jesus; Jesus found him. They had this personal encounter. I've found that with many people, that's how they decided to follow the Good News. Maybe some seeds were planted. They talked to a friend, or they heard something on the radio or in church. But it was all by themselves that they stepped across the line and believed the Good News. Maybe in your car, you're driving along and thinking. During that thinking, you say, I need to step across the line, and you say to Jesus Christ, I want to start a relationship with You. Or maybe you're in bed at night, and you get out of bed and get down on your knees beside the bed, and you start a relationship with Jesus Christ right there.

Don't be afraid of planting seeds. People don't always immediately respond to the Good News. It takes some time to think about it. People planted seeds in Philip's life, and some people planted seeds in your life. Because of that, you believe in the Good News. The action with this one is three numbers: **one – one – one**. One – one - one means you pray for one person you'd like to understand the Good News better and accept the Good News into their life. **You pray for them once a day. At one o'clock. You pray for one person at one o'clock for one minute.** One – one - one. **One person, one o'clock, one minute.** You can choose a.m. or p.m. That's up to you. Whatever you want to do. You might write their name down right now. I'd encourage you to do this next week—one o'clock, one minute, for one person. Watch what God does through that very brief time of prayer.

4. There's a fourth way that God uses to get the good news to our lives...A faithful friend.

Philip was this for Nathanael. He was a faithful friend. A faithful friend is someone who will not give up on you. In this case, Philip goes to his friend Nathanael and initially, he hears sarcasm. I think a lot of us would say, "He does

not want to believe in this. This is a bad day for Nathanael.” We might have walked away from him. But not Philip. He didn’t give up on his friend. He said to him, **“Come and see.”** They went, and they saw Jesus Christ, and Nathanael’s life was changed. Philip didn’t give up.

The action with this one is, **Don’t give up.** You may have prayed for years and years. God heard every prayer. He worked through every prayer in ways that you can’t even see. Maybe in ways, you don’t believe do anything for you. Don’t give up. You may have talked again and again, but God’s using those talks more than you realize. Don’t give up because God never gives upon us.