

Go & Share

God Uses Small Acts To Do Great Things



GOSPEL IN LIFE

The Great Commission calls each of us who are Christian to actively look for where God is providing opportunities for us to share the message of the gospel with people who don't know Jesus as savior. When we've experienced what his love has done for us, how can we not share it with the people we know?

The spiritual disciplines of reading God's Word and spending time in prayer are important ways that we open ourselves to God's transformative work within us—and as the gospel transforms us, we can reflect on how to graciously and thoughtfully share Christ's love with others. This five-day devotional series is one way that we at Gospel in Life hope to help you in this endeavour.

These devotionals have been lightly edited and updated from an exclusive sampling taken from a longer series, originally offered to attendees of Redeemer Presbyterian Church during the 2005 Redeemer Vision Campaign.

We hope this devotional encourages you to be confident in the idea that God can use the smallest act of faith to change lives.



Witness and Worship



READ

I have never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise. ... The world rings with praise—lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising their countryside. ... I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? ... The psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. ... I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly ... upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch.

— C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*

But as for me, I will always have hope;
I will praise you more and more.

My mouth will tell of your righteousness,
of your salvation all day long,
though I know not its measure.

I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign LORD;
I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone.

Since my youth, O God, you have taught me,
and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.

Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, O God,
till I declare your power to the next generation,
your might to all who are to come.

Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God,
you who have done great things.
Who, O God, is like you?

Though you have made me see troubles,
many and bitter,
you will restore my life again;
from the depths of the earth
you will again bring me up.

You will increase my honor
and comfort me once again.

I will praise you with the harp
for your faithfulness, O my God;
I will sing praise to you with the lyre,
O Holy One of Israel.

— Psalm 71:14-22



REFLECT

Witness flows from worship. Telling others about God should never feel like a mechanical duty, but should be an overflow of your own enjoyment of him. It should be as natural as pointing out a beautiful sunset or telling a friend about a great new author. As you reflect on God's beauty, glory, majesty, love, holiness and mercy in your own life, you will naturally want to tell, proclaim and declare God's greatness to others. Read through Psalm 71 slowly. Praise God for the hope he has given you in Christ's life, death and resurrection.



PRAY

Confess the way you have neglected worship in your life and ask God to reveal himself to you as you meditate and reflect on his word. Pray for a friend or family member who has yet to experience the righteousness, salvation, comfort and hope of Christ expressed in this Psalm.



Witness and Jesus



READ

The incarnation means that for whatever reason God chose to let us fall into a condition of being limited, to suffer, to be subject to sorrows and death—he has nonetheless had the honesty and the courage to take his own medicine. ... He himself has gone through the whole of human experience—from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death. ... He was born in poverty and ... suffered infinite pain—all for us—and thought it well worth his while.

— Dorothy Sayers, “The Greatest Drama Ever Staged” in *Creed or Chaos?*

What was the good news that Paul preached? It was the news about Jesus of Nazareth. It was the news of the incarnation, the atonement, and the kingdom—the cradle, the cross, and the crown—of the Son of God. It was the news of how God glorified his servant Jesus (Acts 3:13) by making him Christ, the world’s long awaited Prince and ... Savior (Acts 5:31). ... In short, the good news was just this: that God has executed his eternal intention of glorifying his Son by exalting him as a great Savior for great sinners.

— John Stott, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*

When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

— Acts 17:1-4

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

— Galatians 6:14



REFLECT

When talking to others about Christianity, many objections are likely to surface: for example, how to reconcile the evil and suffering in the world with the Bible’s pronouncement that God is good, or how any one faith system can claim to have the exclusive path to God and eternity. As important as these questions are, the most important thing in your conversations with others is to point to Jesus Christ. HE is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). It is his life, death and resurrection that are the cornerstones of belief. And it is only in relationship with him that anyone will find ultimate comfort and rest (Matthew 11:29-31).



PRAY

Praise God for his great love for us, demonstrated by sending his son to die for us (John 3:16). Meditate on Christ’s suffering for you (Sayers’ quote), praising him for his loving sacrifice and forgiveness (Stott’s quote). Pray for a friend who doesn’t know Jesus, and ask that God would give you an opportunity this week to speak to him or her about Christ.



Witness and Justice



READ

The New Testament church does not escape the obligations of doing justly for evangelism. We are marked as those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt 5:6). And that righteousness ... is the kingly justice that God has promised for the salvation of the oppressed and the outcasts. It is the kingly justice that God has promised for the salvation the Messiah would bring. We live in a new day, the day of the promised King. And his coming was to be a coming on behalf of justice for all, fairness for the afflicted on the earth. The Old Testament promise of the Messiah's jubilee year meant justice and freedom for the oppressed, the broken (Isaiah 61:1-2). In Christ the jubilee year of restoration for society had begun (Luke 4:17-21).

— Harvie Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace*

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn

— Isaiah 61:1-2

The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

— Luke 4:17-20



REFLECT

Evangelism is the communication of the good news about Jesus. This communication would be incomplete without the component of justice. Justice is love in action and is that which we owe our neighbor. According to Jesus, our neighbor is anyone we come in contact with who lacks resources, regardless of their belief (Luke 10:25-37). In the Luke passage above, Jesus reminds us that God is a God of justice, and anyone who has a relationship with him will be concerned for justice as well (Luke 18:1-8). This sharing of resources (doing justice) is one way in which we share the good news of Jesus.



PRAY

Pray that God will give you a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and compassion towards those who struggle with limited resources. Pray that the churches in your area would be communities of hope, reaching out to our neighbors and bringing renewal through a passion for mercy and justice. Pray for the men and women of your church who volunteer with various ministries to bring hope and assistance to those in need, that they would bear witness to the love and mercy of Christ as they seek to serve him. Consider how you might participate in reflecting God's mercy and justice to your neighbors.



Witness and Community



READ

If the Church is to be effective and advocate a new [kingdom] order ... it must itself be a new social order. ... The local congregation ... stands not primarily as the promoter of programs for social change (although it will be that) but primarily as itself the foretaste of a different social order. Its actions for justice and peace will be, and will be seen to be, the overflow of a life in Christ, where God's justice and God's peace are already an experienced treasure.

— Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*

The political novelty which God brings into the world is a community of those who serve instead of ruling, who suffer instead of inflicting suffering, whose fellowship crosses social lines instead of reinforcing them. This new Christian community ... is not only a vehicle of the gospel or fruit of the gospel; it is the good news.

— Jess Moody, *A Drink at Joel's Place*

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

— John 13:34-35

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

— 1 Peter 2:9



REFLECT

The church is the spirit-filled (John 15:26) body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27) that has been commissioned (Matthew 28:19) to continue the work begun by Jesus during his earthly ministry. Jesus's salvation is not just to save individuals but to form a new, alternate society that is a sign that Jesus is Lord of the world and is going to redeem all of creation. We will not know God, nor win the world, nor change deeply, apart from community. Those outside the church are watching to see whether Christians live up to their rhetoric, whether we are more generous with our money and time, whether we use our authority and power to serve rather than exploit. And the work to make God's kingdom visible on earth as it is in heaven means that all Christians must invest their time, money and abilities to the mission of Jesus our King.



PRAY

Reflect on 1 Peter 2:9: Praise and thank God for calling you into his family, the church. Pray for the work of those planting churches and for those who volunteer and serve in leadership in your church. Pray for God to show you how he might be calling you to serve and to live out the gospel in your neighborhood, workplace, and relationships.



Witness and Prayer



READ

When you pray for unconverted people, you do so on the assumption that it is in God’s power to bring them to faith. You entreat him to do that very thing, and your confidence in asking rests upon the certainty that he is able to do what you ask. And so indeed he is: this conviction, which animates your intercessions, is God’s own truth, written on your heart by the Holy Spirit. In prayer, then (and the Christian is at his sanest and wisest when he prays), you know that it is God who saves [a person]; you know that what makes [them] turn to God is God’s own gracious work of drawing them to himself; and the content of your prayers is determined by this knowledge.

— J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God

— Colossians 1:9-10

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength

— Ephesians 1:17-19



REFLECT

The task of bearing witness to the love, grace and glory of Jesus Christ falls on all believers. Yet many times we fail to communicate the good news of Jesus to our friends, co-workers and family members. Why? Perhaps we are fearful or anxious about our ability to get the message right; or we are concerned how we might be perceived by those who disagree with us; or perhaps the warmth of our love for our friends has cooled. In all of these cases, our failure can often be traced to one deficiency: a lack of prayer. For as we pray for those who don’t yet know Christ, our love for them is rekindled, and our anxiety and fears melt away as we remember that it is God’s power and presence, through the Holy Spirit, that will draw them into a relationship with Jesus.



PRAY

Pray through the verses listed above—specifically seeking a greater sense of Christ’s presence and power in your life. Rejoice that you have been called to be part of God’s glorious inheritance in the saints.

Thank God for those who have prayed for you over the years.

Pray specifically for a friend, neighbor, co-worker, or family member who has yet to experience a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.