

Sermon for Sunday, September 18, 1977, by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Senior Pastor  
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"SHOW AND TELL FOR GROWN CHILDREN"

Text: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. It is the saving power of God  
for everyone..."

Our text for this morning says two things. First, St. Paul says that he is not  
ashamed of the Gospel. Second, St. Paul says that the reason he isn't ashamed  
is because it is the saving power of God for everyone.

If there is anything our world needs today it is saving power for everyone. Imagine  
this scene: it is July 16. The year is 1945. The place is New Mexico, the desert  
sands. The time is 5:30 a.m. Suddenly the whole area is illuminated by a light  
brighter than a thousand suns. A scientist watching begins to weep. "My God,"  
he cries, "we have created hell." Thus our world passed into a new era as mankind  
entered the atomic age. We had produced DDT to kill bugs, 2-4-D to kill weeds,  
formula 1080 to kill rats, and now we had produced  $E=MC^2$  to kill people. Yes,  
the gospel is the saving power of God for everyone.

Do you realize what is happening to the population of the world? By the end of  
this century, the world's population will exceed six and a half billion and after  
that the statistics go berserk. In six generations, at the current rate of  
increase, in America alone we will have nine billion people, three times the  
present population of the whole world. Yes, the gospel is the saving power of  
God for everyone.

Are you aware of the racial conflicts going on in the world today? Africa is  
just the tip of the iceberg. Chou En-lai once said, "The colored people of the  
world outnumber the white 12 to 1. Let's wipe them out." We may think the  
racial problems are under control, but recent outbreaks in such unlikely places as  
London and Holland warn us that this struggle may have begun. Yes, the gospel  
is the saving power of God for everyone.

Have you seen the statistics on crime and lawlessness? Crime costs us more than  
all of our educational and welfare programs combined. Today it is dangerous to  
walk the streets at night in our large cities which have become jungles of terror,  
mugging, rape and murder. It is as though some evil, sinister force has been let  
loose in our country as people live often in fear and terror. The blight of  
crime and its staggering cost is strangling the nation. But the Bible says that  
the gospel is the saving power of God for everyone.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that the answers to the sort of problems  
that face our world today are really found in the Bible? Some people don't. The  
economists say the problem is in the inequities of the good of the world. If we  
redistribute the wealth, in ten years the balance would be what it is today. Maybe  
the gospel is the saving power of God for everyone.

Some say education is the answer to our problems. They say education and  
knowledge will bring peace to troubled mankind. Yet the most educated nation  
in the history of the world prior to World War II was Germany--and it produced a  
Hitler, a Himmler, and a Joseph Goebbels with a Doctor of Philosophy Degree.  
Maybe the answer really is the gospel with its saving power.

Then the sociologists contend that bad environment such as urban slums and rural  
poverty areas are the breeding grounds of evil and trouble. Yet, when we have  
wiped out those slums and those poverty areas, nothing changes. You see, when we  
clean up skid row, we still haven't cleaned up the people and they just create a  
new skid row. Maybe the saving power of God is the answer.

Did you know that one out of ten babies born today will spend some of its life-time in a hospital as a mental patient? Did you know that three out of five marriages is ending in divorce today? Did you know that immorality, pornography, drug abuse--all are on the rise? Can the saving power of God for everyone change that?

What do you think is the hope of our world today? As you meet people with all sorts of needs and problems--what do you think can help them? Is the only real solution for their lives the saving power of God? If you really think that, let me ask you this question: "are you ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus?"

The fact is, most of us want the other fellow to do all the witnessing about Jesus. We are a little like the mother who sent her son Irving off to summer camp with a note to the counselor. The note read, "Dear Counselor, If Irving does something wrong, please do not slap him. Irving is very sensitive. Instead, slap the boy next to him and that will scare Irving." Most of us don't want to be slapped with the responsibility of sharing our faith. Instead we want God to slap the guy next to us!

About the last thing Jesus ever said to his disciples was this: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." And do you know who he was talking to? He was talking to everybody who believed in him.

Now, there are a number of ways we can share our faith. One way is to get people involved in Bible study with you. A lot of people have been brought to Jesus just by reading Scripture. Back in April of 1943, when Doolittle's raiders struck Japan, one of the pilots, Jacob de Shazer was captured. During the long months of his imprisonment he began to wonder why he hated the Japanese and why they hated him. He asked for a Bible and finally was given one by a guard who said, "Three weeks. Then I take it away." True to his word, the guard took it away three weeks later and de Shazer never saw it again. But God, using the Bible, had done his work. In 1948 Jacob de Shazer and his family returned to Japan as missionaries. Those three weeks with God's word had changed his life. God uses the Bible as a powerful instrument to bring men to Christ.

A second way we can share our faith is through preaching. God has always used preaching as a powerful means of salvation. Remember how, on the day of Pentecost, as Peter preached about Jesus, God cut the listeners to the heart and that day three thousand people came to Jesus. So, one way you can share your faith is to bring your friends and neighbors to church. There, during the preaching of the gospel, in some way that I confess I do not fully understand, God reaches out to cut the hearts of people and brings them to Jesus.

A third way we can share our faith is through prayer. If you are truly interested in someone coming to know Jesus, start to pray for them. Again I must confess I do not fully understand how this works, except I know that it does. For example, a moment ago I mentioned what happened when Peter preached on Pentecost and three thousand were saved. But do you know what the Bible says about the believers before Peter preached? It reads, "All these were constantly at prayer together..." (Acts 1:14).

Corrie ten Boom was a Jewish Christian from Holland who lived through one of Hitler concentration camps. Once a lady came to her and complained of the sad life she lived, what poor health she had, and what a tiny room she was forced to live in. She did not want to hear about the Bible, but suddenly a change came over her and Miss Boom began to quote promise after promise from the Bible to her. After she left, Miss Boom greeted her next visitor, a gentleman who had been waiting an

hour to see her. He informed Miss Boom that he could overhear snatches of her conversation with the other woman and had begun to pray for her. "When did you start to pray," asked Miss Boom. "About thirty minutes ago," he replied. It was exactly at the moment he had begun to pray that the woman began to open her heart to God. The man went on to explain that he was not there for himself, but for a woman in town for whom a number of Christians were concerned about and for whom they has been praying. When he mentioned her name, Miss Boom exclaimed, "why that was the very woman who was here a few minutes ago! You will be able to reach her now, for she is longing to know more about Jesus. You have prayed for her, and now you may thank God." Yes, the strange and wonderful power of prayer in leading people to Jesus. If you truly want to help someone find Jesus, start praying for them.

That's some of the ways you can witness to a person--get them into the Bible, get them under the ministry of preaching, pray for them. But the best way of all is to share with them what Jesus means to you. If you have something that is truly meaningful to you, worthwhile to you, others will want it. We ought to be like the farmer who had a very mean mule. One day his mother-in-law went into the barn and was kicked to death. At her funeral an amazing number of farmers showed up. The minister was very surprised and said, "your mother-in-law must have been very popular." "No," replied the farmer, "They are all here trying to buy the mule!"

Now, there are two basic ways we share with others what Jesus means to us. One of those ways is the life we live. Jesus once said, "And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellows, so that, when they see the good you do, they may give praise to your Father in Heaven." (St. Matt. 5:16) I think most of us are going to be surprised when we stand before God and discover the things he holds us responsible for. He is going to hold us responsible for the way we have lived, for how we show to the world what we are by our conduct. Is your life what it ought to be--would you like for the person you love the most to follow your example?

The second way we share Jesus is by telling others what Jesus means to us. Dr. Trueblood has said that ultimately the most important thing we can every say to another is this, "let me tell you what Jesus means to me." Have you ever told another person how much Jesus means to you? At our house we have a little eight year old who is in the third grade. Once a week she gets to take a favorite toy or doll to school to show it to the other children and tell them about it. They call it show and tell day. Well, that's what God wants his grown children to do: he wants them to show the world what it means to belong to Jesus by the way they live and he wants them to tell others about the Savior.

During the next twelve months we are going to have a special campaign here at Central. We are calling it the Burning Heart Crusade because we want our hearts to burn for Jesus. Two parts of that campaign are going to be show and tell for grown children of God. First, we want to show the world what it means to be a Christian by the lives we live. But second, we want to tell the world about Jesus, like one beggar telling another where he can find bread. Our goal will be to help at least 225 persons find a new relationship to Jesus. Wouldn't that be exciting if in the next twelve months you and I together could bring 225 people into a saving relationship to Jesus Christ. To reach a goal like that all of us are going to have to be involved in sharing, in telling others about Jesus. Do you know how to do that? Do you know how in a winsome, loving, simple, effective way to share your faith? When you go to work tomorrow, if the person working next to you says, "you know I hear you are a Christian. Can you tell me how to become a Christian?" Could you do it? If you went to a party and as you were standing around talking somebody said to you, "you know, I want to know how to be a Christian", could you tell them what to do?

We want to be able at home, at work, at social events, as God gives us opportunities to tell other people about Jesus. I want hundreds of our members to be here Thursday night, Friday night and all day Saturday, to be involved in learning how to share our faith. What would it do to this community if all of us together were out sharing with our friends and neighbors what it means to belong to Jesus?

When I get to heaven what will it be like if some friend, some neighbor, some loved one is not there because I failed to share Jesus with him? A seminary professor of times past tells a wonderful story I want to share with you. He came from a rural community and he went off to college, but every summer he came back. One summer he came back and ran into a childhood friend, a farmer boy named Sandy Jones. Sandy was a big, red-headed fellow, with great hands--a kind of clumsy, awkward fellow. When he shared with him what it meant to belong to Jesus, Sandy Jones gave his heart to Jesus. For years every summer he went back to his community where he had been raised. Every year at church Sandy Jones would see him and he would come stalking across the church and stick out his big hand and grasped the hand of the professor and say to him, "I thank you, I thank you." The professor said, "the sweetest sound in all of heaven will be when I get there and across heaven's hall will come old Sandy Jones and grab my hand and say, 'I thank you, I thank you.'" Are there people you know who may need just a word from you to come to a saving faith in Jesus. Will there be those when you get to heaven who will come stalking across heaven's hall and take you by the hand and say, "I thank you, I thank you."

Does it matter to you that people don't know Jesus? Is there some person right now who needs only a word from you to find his Savior? I plead with you, do not fail him. Will you pray, "Lord, lay some soul upon my heart, and love that soul through me; and may I nobly do my part to win that soul for thee?" You have a card in your bulletin this morning. I'm going to ask as many of you who will to sign that card and commit yourself to learning how to show and tell. As you leave there will be Deacons at all the doors to take your cards.