

ACT WISELY TOWARD OUTSIDERS

Colossians 3:5-6

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This morning I want to begin by reading a Bible story: **John 1:35-42**

35 The next day, John was standing with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

37 The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus turned and noticed them following him, he asked them, "What are you looking for?"

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39 "Come and you'll see," he replied. So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed him. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated "the Christ"), 42 and he brought Simon to Jesus.

When Jesus saw him, he said, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which is translated "Peter").

2. First, John the Baptist led his two disciples to Jesus. One of them became an apostle, Andrew, Andrew then brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus.
3. This is how Christianity is supposed to work. God is on a mission to save the lost. He sent Jesus to die for them, but people can't be saved unless they hear about Jesus and put their faith in Him. So, God uses His people to His witnesses – to bring people to Jesus. This is called evangelism, or soul-winning, or witnessing, or sharing your faith.
4. **Acts 1:8** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
5. You have been called by God to be His witness. To share the gospel with a lost world and to bring people to Jesus.
6. The purpose of your life is not just to know Christ, but to make Him known. It is not just to go to heaven, but to bring as many people to heaven with you.
7. Today I want to talk about being a better witness for Christ.

II. TEXT

1. **Colossians 4:5-6** "5 Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person."

III. FOUR WAYS TO IMPACT THE LOST

1. **Act wisely toward outsiders.**

- i. Outsiders = those outside the family of God.

- ii. This passage is about impacting the lost for Christ, and notice that it puts actions before words. It is important to remember that actions speak louder than words.
- iii. **William Barclay** “The Christian, therefore, must remember that it is not so much by his words as by his life that he will attract people to, or repel them from, Christianity. On the Christian there is laid the great responsibility of showing men Christ in his daily life.”
- iv. **MacArthur** “What believers are gives credibility to what they say.”
- v. Foolish living leads to derision; wise living is the best form of persuasion. If are living a healthy, happy, and holy life, then outsiders will want what you have.
- vi. **Matthew Henry** “Do not increase their prejudices against religion. Do not give them an occasion of dislike.”
- vii. Christians can act foolishly. How?
 - 1. Fitness neglect.
 - a. **Ephesians 5:29** “For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church”
 - b. Many Christians condemn smoking, but their lack of diet and exercise is just as deadly.
 - 2. Fiscal irresponsibility.
 - a. Not living on a budget. **Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)** “Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.”
 - b. Not saving up for the future. **Proverbs 21:20 (TLB)** “The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.”
 - c. Putting wants and desires before needs. **Proverbs 13:7** “One person pretends to be rich but has nothing; another pretends to be poor but has abundant wealth.”
 - 3. Fake devotion.
 - a. **Matthew 7:26** “But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.”
 - 4. Financial greed.
 - a. **1 Tim 6:9** “Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.”
 - 5. Family strife.
 - a. **Ephesians 4:3** “making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”
- viii. The early church was looked upon with disdain and suspicion. They were viewed as:
 - 1. Terrorists accused of starting the fire of Rome in AD 64.

2. Atheists because they did not worship the many Roman gods or the emperor.
 3. Traitors because it was believed that their refusal to worship the gods would result in judgment on the empire.
 4. Cannibals because of the rumors that they ate the body and the blood of Christ.
 5. Incestuous because they referred to each other as brother and sister.
- ix. It was essential for the early church to act wisely toward outsiders to win them to Christ.
- x. Today, Christians are accused of
1. Hating women; enemies of gender equality.
 2. Homophobia.
 3. Transphobia.
 4. Hate speech when we say that certain acts are sinful, or that Jesus is the only way to heaven.
 5. Ignorant; enemies of science because we reject Darwinian evolution and believe in a young earth.
 6. Abusing children because we believe in spanking, and teaching the Bible.
- xi. We too must be careful to act wisely to draw the lost to Christ.
- xii. What is wisdom? The ability to make really good decisions.
- xiii. How to grow in wisdom:
1. Worship: **Proverbs 9:10** “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”
 2. Prayer: **James 1:5** “Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him.”
 3. Bible Study: **Colossians 3:16** “Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another”
 4. Godly instruction: **Colossians 1:28** “We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”
- xiv. **MacArthur** “If those who say they are believers live as fools, outsiders or unbelievers will denigrate the faith and shun the gospel. Only if believers live wisely will the watching world see the power of God at work in them.”

2. Make the most of the time.

- i. Literally means “buy up the time,” or “redeeming the time.” **Barnes’** “to rescue or recover our time from waste; to improve it for great and important purposes.” In this context it means to make the most of your time with unbelievers.
- ii. Why should we make the most of our time?
 1. Because of its purpose – to prepare for eternity.
 2. Because of its brevity.
 3. Because much of our time has already been spent.

4. Because we don't know how much we have left.
 5. Because God has made eternity to depend on how we spend our time.
- iii. TPT: "make it your duty to make Him known"
 - iv. Make a personal commitment to use your life to win the lost. To be intentional, strategic, and careful about reaching the lost.
 - v. VOICE: "make the most of every moment and every encounter."
 - vi. In 2017 I heard a story in the news that stuck with me. A mother of six young kids, four little boys and two premature twin girls still the hospital, was on her way home from visiting the twins late Friday night when she was hit by a drunk driver and killed instantly.
 - vii. You don't know how much time you have left with a lost friend. Make the most of your time with them.
 - viii. **Psalm 90:12** "Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts."
 - ix. During the Civil War, Stonewall Jackson (a Confederate General), brought in evangelists to preach to his soldiers, and saw 150,000 confederate soldiers converted.

3. Let your speech always be gracious,

- i. In English, the word gracious means courteous, kind, and pleasant.
- ii. To make an impact on the lost, your speech must reflect a heart that is changed and controlled by the grace of God.
- iii. **MacArthur** "To speak with grace means to say what is spiritual, wholesome, fitting, kind, sensitive, purposeful, complementary, gentle, truthful, loving, and thoughtful."
- iv. A Christian's speech should be different. How?
 1. We don't gossip. **Proverbs 11:13** "A gossip goes around revealing a secret, but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence."
 2. We don't slander. **1 Peter 2:1** "Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander."
 3. We don't curse. **Ephesians 5:3** "Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks."
 4. We don't lie. **Colossians 3:9** "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices"
 5. We don't complain and argue. **Philippians 2:14 (NLT)** "Do everything without complaining and arguing."
 6. We don't insult. **1 Peter 3:9** "not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult, but on the contrary, giving a blessing"
 7. We don't yell or shout in anger. **Ephesians 4:31** "Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice."
- v. **Ephesians 4:29** "No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear."

- vi. Make it your goal to cultivate a “missionary mouth.” With every word you say, try to say in a way that would attract unbelievers to Christ, and encourage believers to keep growing.
- vii. **Matthew Henry** “Though it be not always of grace, it must be always with grace.”

4. Let your speech always be seasoned with salt.

- i. One of the uses of salt in those days was to preserve food. Before the days of refrigeration, salt was used to preserve food. It saved food from rot and decay.
- ii. Our speech is to be a preservative; not to preserve food, but to preserve life. Our speech is to be used to save people from eternal destruction. This can be done by sharing the gospel when we have the opportunity. It is the gospel that God uses to save people. We must seize opportunities to share the gospel with people; to share God’s word with people.
- iii. **Romans 1:16** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.”
- iv. This means you must know the gospel:
 - 1. Creation. God made you for a relationship with Him.
 - 2. Corruption. Our sin separates us from Him.
 - 3. Crucifixion. Jesus was punished in our place for our sins.
 - 4. Conversion. We can be reconciled to God through faith in Christ.
- v. **Colossians 4:6** “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.”
- vi. If your speech is gracious, and seasoned with salt (the gospel), then you will know how to answer each person’s spiritual questions.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Edward Campbell was a carpet salesman in Boston in the nineteenth century. He taught a Sunday school class (small group Bible study) at his church for high school boys. There was a young man in his class, 18 years old, who he was especially concerned about it. So, one day Mr. Campbell decided to visit the young man at his place of work – a shoe store. Mr. Campbell asked the young man if they could talk for a moment, so they went to a back room, and Mr. Campbell led the young man to Christ. That young man was Dwight L. Moody, who went on to become the Billy Graham of the nineteenth century – leading thousands upon thousands to Christ.
2. Edward Campbell was not a pastor. He was just an ordinary Christian. But he saw that it was his calling, his responsibility, to lead others to Jesus. Because of his faithfulness to God, not just one, but multitudes of souls are in heaven today.
3. You may not be a pastor, or a missionary, but you are called to lead others to Christ. Will you make a commitment to start serving God with your life; to being a soul-winner with your actions and words?