

We love because God first loved us. That is why we are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. God loved us so much that he gave us such a gift, His Son, Jesus Christ. As those here who have received that gift, our natural response should be to share it.

Why don't we then? Why do we hold our joy, that is our salvation to ourselves so often? Why are we ashamed to share our love for God with our neighbor?

Those are some serious questions that need to be asked. As we look at our vision of the church, we prayed as a vision team of who we would become. What we hoped to be was what we finally accepted and adopted as a church for our vision: *"A Community of believers, who are Biblically grounded and active in mission."*

God has commissioned us to "go therefore into all nations, making disciples." (Mt 28) Why then can we not even love our neighbor? It is reported that 72% of Americans do not know their neighbor? You say, "Come on, we're Pittsburghers! We talk to everyone!" In Florida, I am not sure I ever saw my neighbor!

Our neighbor (I am talking about not just the person next door, I am talking about the bigger picture - neighbor meaning the world) needs love. Why? Because they desire it.

A Gallup poll reported seven needs of the average American:

1. The need for shelter and food,
2. The need to believe life is meaningful and has a purpose,
3. The need for a sense of community and deeper relationships,
4. The need to be appreciated and respected,
5. The need to be listened to and be heard,
6. The need to feel one is growing in faith,
7. The need for practical help in developing a mature faith.

National and International Religion Report, 1991.

This is why we envision what God is doing and will continue to do: ground us Biblically and send us out in active mission.

We are coming close to the end of the GROW series here at the asbury @lternative. Throughout the month of January we have focused on our new program areas and the new structure of the church. We spent the first week celebrating the first lines of the church, the fellowship and the outreach of the church. Once our brothers and sisters are engaged in outreach and fellowship, then worship becomes a natural part of our faith journey. We focused on worship last Sunday.

Today we are going to see what happens once one is engaged in worship and then desires to GROW in their faith. That is through our last two program areas here at Baldwin Community, Discipleship and Evangelism.

(SHOW SLIDE OF FIVE PROGRAM AREA)

Romans 10:5-21 (New Living Translation)

Salvation Is for Everyone

5 For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. 6 But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven' (to bring Christ down to earth). 7 And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead' (to bring Christ back to life again)." 8 In fact, it says,

*"The message is very close at hand;
it is on your lips and in your heart."*

And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: 9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. 11 As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." 12 Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. 13 For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"

16 But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, "Lord, who has believed our message?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ. 18 But I ask, have the people of Israel actually heard the message?

Yes, they have:

*"The message has gone throughout the earth,
and the words to all the world."*

19 But I ask, did the people of Israel really understand? Yes, they did, for even in the time of Moses, God said,

*"I will rouse your jealousy through people who are not even a nation.
I will provoke your anger through the foolish Gentiles."*

20 And later Isaiah spoke boldly for God, saying,

*"I was found by people who were not looking for me.
I showed myself to those who were not asking for me."*

Pastor Jeff St. Clair

January 31, 2010

Romans 10:5-21

*21 But regarding Israel, God said,
"All day long I opened my arms to them,
but they were disobedient and rebellious."*

As we hear these words from Romans 10:5-21, we are going to focus on the last two areas in our series of our church programming: discipleship and evangelism.

In order to be in the mindful of discipleship and evangelism, we must go back to Romans 10:5-21.

When I was at Harrisville, I had a young man, early 20's come in from off the street one day. He stopped by my office and said, "Pastor, I want to be a Christian, how do I become one?" We talked for a little bit, then I said, "Jason, come on out to the sanctuary. Let's go sit out there and talk."

We went out to the sanctuary and when Jason accepted Christ as *his Lord and Savior*, I summarized Romans 10:8-12 for him. Romans 10:8-10 says, (NIV) *"But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*

Salvation is not complex. It's that simple. After I summarized these verses with him, we prayed and that day Jason accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. I told him after we prayed, "Jason, you are not done yet. You need to study this (Bible), live it out, and by faith, share it with everyone." He hugged me and after a brief conversation went out of the church and new person.

Why do we need discipleship and evangelism? It's because of these moments where we may need to share and live out our faith. We need to be prepared for these moments. If people know you are a believer, you will be sought out. People are yearning for hope. People need love. The love they need is God's love, and you are the one to show them.

That's why hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and practicing God's Word is so important.

We and the world needs to hear God's Word through our outreach and fellowship efforts!

We need to read God's Word through personal study and corporate worship!

We need to study God's Word in classes and on a personal level.

We need to memorize God's Word and be ready when a "Jason" comes up to you.

We need to practice God's Word in our daily living as we evangelize to our neighbor.

As we look in Romans 10, Paul was set on sharing the message of salvation with the Jews and the Gentiles. Salvation is for everyone! You don't have to be a pastor to share the message of salvation. Anyone can share the message of salvation!

Those of us who know that Jesus Christ is the Lord of our life, that nothing in this life or in death can separate us from the love of God through Jesus Christ, then our natural response should be to share the happiness we have from being in love with God!

This is an awesome task, one that the church is commanded to do! We got our work cut out for us though!

This year we have a newly designed Discipleship team and Evangelism team. I want to stress the importance of these two areas. These two areas truly prepare us for our mission as believers and as witnesses to our faith.

I ask that you pray for the following people as they take on these roles in our church to grow us as disciples and to equip our church to be evangelists.

Discipleship Team

Co-Chairs Nancy Theodore and Janellen Lombardi

Pastor Rep - Pastor Allan

Dir. of Christian Ed - Beth Lamb

Preschool Director - Carol Barringer

Director of Youth - Kirk Ferkett

Frank Theodore - Adult Sunday School

Wednesday AM Bible Study - Gerry Tinder

Wednesday Night Live Studies - Beth Lamb and Pastor Allan

Friday AM Breakfast - Andy Meshanko

Confirmation Class - Beth Lamb

Youth Group Stewards - Paul Billasano

Vacation Bible School Stewards - Laurie Meshanko and Jenn Pogany

Summer Camps Steward - Lisa Zirngibl

Library Steward - Holly Ferkett

Stewardship Team - Frank Theodore, Judy Kreger, Fred Gealey, Bonnie Katilius, Bernie Barry, Amy Ferkett

UMM Scholarship Program - Jeff Deal

Preschool Board - Debbie Gallagher, Beth Lamb, Michelle Ausman, Keith Brooks, Carol Barringer, Alisa Krapp, Kathi Boron.

Our Newly Formed **Evangelism Team** - Might be small, but are mighty!

Chair - Andy Meshanko

Pastor Rep - Pastor Jeff

New Member Coordinator - Bonnie Deal

Dream Team -

Debbie Tuskin

Chuck Connors

Ron Perallo

Joe Abraham

Cindy Wheeler

Webmaster - Helen Pomilio

House Churches - Pastor Jeff

Four House Churches in operation -

Andy and Laurie Meshanko

Jim and Janellen Lombardi

Kirk and Amy Ferkett

Fred and Arleen Gealey

These two teams are charged with the responsibility to make available through our church, the message of salvation, through learning and through sharing.

God is doing some amazing things already! Keep them and all of us in prayer!

As we close, I want you to listen to a testimony from a person in our congregation who, through the outreach, fellowship, worship, discipleship and evangelism of this church, has grown in his faith.

This person wrote this on Friday. Watch how the Holy Spirit prompted him to write what was on His heart.

(FROM RON PERALLO) Humbly I offer this,

my Faith walk with Jesus has grown by the guidance and instruction of God's infallible Word. I give all of this Glory to God! His Word which was like a seed planted in my heart during the BCUMC disciple classes of the O.T., N. T. and The Book of Romans.

A seed that took root and was nourished by the desire to understand more. By the encouragement and fellowship of the other fertile hearts among the class. Throughout this growth, many things have been learned and made clear. First, and foremost that God wants us to put Him first in our lives. Before, family, friends and worldly needs.

By putting Him first in our hearts, by seeking His Kingdom, we rely and place our Trust in Him. He already knows our needs. By placing Him first, the first part of your day, the first part of your week, the first part our Blessings, He in turn will provide.

By Trusting in Him, we can look beyond our daily trials, our daily storms, because we have the promise, His Promise that our salvation is secure. Knowing of His Promise,

Trusting in His Promise has given my heart the Peace and Joy that can only be revealed through His Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Paul wrote beautifully to the Romans.

Romans 10:

9That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

To all, please consider, opening your heart to this Peace and Joy, soften your hearts, seeking His Word through the disciple classes offered at BCUMC. God Bless!

Grow Series at the @lternative

Pastor Jeff St. Clair

January 31, 2010

Who We Will Be

Romans 10:5-21