

– Continued from page 1 –

souls presume they would never take an interest in the gospel, but it was precisely those worldly ones whom Christ died for. When asked why He associated with sinners, Jesus replied, *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance”* (Luke 5:31-32). Paul put it this way: *“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”* (1st Timothy 1:15). Sometimes, sinners just need to be shown the Way and they will tune in. Sometimes, they already know they’re lost and are desperately waiting for someone to love them enough to confront them about it.

Ignorance hinders evangelism. Christians might hesitate to share the gospel because they just don’t have the knowledge of Scripture needed to impart knowledge to others. The solution is hard work. Where knowledge is lacking, study is needed. *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2nd Timothy 2:15). A little less time watching TV, a little less time playing games, a little less time working out, a little less time napping, a little less time hiking or fishing or hunting, a little less time on arts or crafts, or a little less time with, literally, any other activity is a little more time a disciple can spend memorizing key verses that will be useful when answering questions from unbelievers.

Hypocrisy hinders evangelism. Sometimes, a Christian who attends every assembly and arrives promptly, who volunteers for every work the church needs, who contributes generously, who calls on the sick when they are absent, who appears, in every regard, to be the most faithful saint there is conducts himself differently in the presence of neighbors, colleagues, or classmates. These hypocrites are fully aware of the dichotomy between their Sunday/Wednesday selves and their every-other-day selves and they are not ready to introduce their worldly friends to their brethren in the church. They do not want to hear their friends respond in shock, “You’re a Christian?!” or “You go to church?!” They are content to compartmentalize their lives, thereby keeping their friends ignorant of salvation. All that worship and church attendance is pointless, though, because they cannot say honestly, *“Christ lives in me”* (Galatians 2:20). They are not shining the light by good works which glorify God (Matthew 5:16). Christians of this sort need to repent.

Of all the hindrances there are to evangelism, none are worthy excuses, just problems to overcome.

NESTING IN THE CHIMNEY

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Dad and I spent Friday morning disassembling my chimney because a bird had nested in it last year. My family did not enjoy the use of our wood stove for more than half the winter because this obstruction smoked us out and I waited until warmer weather to climb the roof and make repairs. When we had the whole chimney apart, we discovered ash where it should never be: behind the damper. Along with that ash were the remains of a young bird and one or two unburnt twigs from the nest. Besides cleaning out the stove and chimney, I also put chicken wire over the top of the chimney to prevent a recurrence.

A mother bird thought she was protecting her young by building a nest where predators could not reach them, but did not calculate the risk of smoke and fire within a chimney. She meant well, of course, but the results were disastrous.

There are human parents who mean well, too. They intend to protect their children from various threats to their physical, emotional, and spiritual safety, but fail to recognize the danger when the children are so sheltered.

One major risk of a sheltered upbringing is a lack of preparation against threats to their faith. If they grow up in an echo chamber where everyone believes and says the same thing, then exposure to another worldview may very well obliterate their convictions. It is useful to learn why other people believe as they do, even though they are wrong, especially when they are wrong, so that we don’t fall for the same.

Another serious danger is the propensity toward rebellion. The child who is never allowed out of his parents’ sight, who is never trusted to be alone, who is never permitted to make his own decisions, who is never free to get hurt or mess up will not have opportunity to learn from his pains and his mistakes until he is an adult and very suddenly totally accountable for his faults. All the screw-ups he couldn’t learn from over his developing years may stack up very quickly in early adulthood.

It is important for parents to protect their children while understanding the risks of excessive protection.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Ladies' Study @ 6:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"A gem cannot be polished
without friction, nor can a
person perfected without trials."

– Lucas Seneca

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 23

JUNE 9TH, 2024

HINDRANCES TO EVANGELISM

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Despite Jesus' straightforward command to the apostles to preach the gospel everywhere and to instruct their converts to do likewise (Matthew 28:18-20), the inspired commendation of soul winners (Proverbs 11:30), the focus of the parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23), and the example of the earliest Christians who all went out preaching (Acts 8:4), many disciples remain reluctant to invite friends or strangers to church or to offer studies in Scripture. There are a few reasons for that.

Shyness hinders evangelism. Plenty of folks have a bashful nature that makes them feel awkward when they need to approach strangers or make offers, even to friends, that could be declined. This might be harmless in many situations, but in evangelism it cripples disciples from fulfilling their divine mission. The fact is that *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind"* (2nd Timothy 1:7). Timidity must not be a character trait of a disciple; rather, where it exists, it must be perceived as an obstacle to overcome. Paul asked for the brethren in Ephesus to pray for him *"that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel"* (Ephesians 6:19). It is always worthwhile to pray for boldness in sharing the gospel.

Prejudice hinders evangelism. Many souls are so immoral that moral – Continued on page 2 –

RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

505-864-0282

rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belén, NM 87002

www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist