

Prestonwood Connection 2005

#2 everyday EVANGELISM

Would God Use Me?

Mark 2:1-12

Wednesday, February 2, 2005 • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message #2 everyday EVANGELISM] <312>

I just love those 2 people and thank God for their heart for God, their heart for a world and a..., their heart for this great church and Chris and Diane we love you and thank you for reminding us tonight that we've got to live life with a sense of eternal perspective and that what we do day in and day out, living for the hope of the coming of Christ is not only to be done with our survival in mind, but it's to be done with the purpose and the mission of God and that is to see as many come to know Jesus as possible and you did a wonderful job of singing that to our hearts tonight.

Well, Mark Rylander was up here a few minutes ago and he was a..., suggesting and encouraging you to check out everydayevangelism.com and I hope you've done that, in fact I hope many of you signed up to a..., become a daily subscriber. You'll receive 5 days a week, an e-mail, none on the weekends, but 5 days a week. You can even go back and pick up the ones that are there and a..., so we've just started this on Monday of this week and we're gonna do this thro...at least throughout the course of this series of messages a..., that we're doing on Wednesday night. Now how many of you've been to or have received the e-mail? How many of you've done that? Okay, that's great and then I hope that beyond the e-mail that you know that you just click and it links you over to the site and you get a daily reading, a *Daily Fish Report* and it's intended to encourage you and to help you and a..., I know that many of you've been doin this. In fact I think that accountability's important, don't you? Yes! Well, thank you, I have at least one who agrees with me. Now, I know that's not the word everybody wants to talk about but accountability's important and I brought a little accountability sheet with me tonight. We sent out 369 *everyday EVANGELISM* e-mails on Monday and 314 of them were opened; 85% of you looked at and responded to that on the first day. I'm very proud of you that great. Now today, we sent out 376 and we had about 118 opened, so that means we're down to 31% today. We were at 85%, 31% today; that's accountability folks, that's kinda the real numbers telling us what we're doing a..., and while we don't ever want this to be something that's in your way I pray that it's something that's an encouragement in the course of each day to help you to get you mind, your life, your heart focused on winning people to Christ and it's just good to keep records and to challenge each other and to encourage each other. Actually we've had over

749 visits to the site just this week alone; that's been great and what we're tryin to do is to get a movement in our hearts of thinking and praying and preparing for the sake of evangelism and stirring each other up to love and to good deeds in the process of doing that and a..., I wanna do everything that I can to challenge you and encourage you to do that every single day.

Well, when you go to that web-site, you get a *Fish Report* and I thought maybe it'd be good for us to hear a live fish story tonight and so I've invited John Jones to come up here and to a..., be with me for just a minute. John Jones is one of our deacons. He recently a..., accompanied a group of a..., a team just after Christmas who went down to the Amazon and while John was there he was able to have an opportunity to be a part of some *everyday EVANGELISM*. You don't have to go on a mission trip to do that, we talked about that last week. But a..., when you do take trips and you do them for eternal purposes you have the opportunity to share and I love the story that I heard a..., John share with our deacons last Wednesday evening after this service and so I invited him to come and to share that with you. So John, take a minute and tell up a little bit about somethin that happened in the Amazon.

JOHN JONES:

Right. [clears throat] Maybe first let me say a..., thank you so much for havin this series on evangelism. There's nothin that's closer to my heart and a..., I would encourage each one of you to get involved in some type of evangelism every day a..., because it's one of the greatest a..., things that you can do in terms of spiritual growth. But we did just come back from the Amazon. [clears throat] and a..., we were in a little village right off of the the Amazon a..., on about the 3rd or 4th day that we were there and the village was si...on a...on a lake and around the lake were little huts, a..., grass huts and some with clapboard sides and a grass roof a..., but we were in a little small boat and we'd go around to the...each one of these little huts a..., if you will, in the boat. This one we approached and a..., there was a lady and her 2 children there, she was cooking a..., outside on a open fire and she had 3 fish on the fire. This is a fish story. She had 3 fish a..., on an open fire; 2 of em were about this long [small], and one of em was about this long [large]. Now the one that was about this long [large] was obviously rotten; I mean you could just look at it and see it was kinda bubbly looking and smelled and it was obviously a rotten fish. We didn't say much about it a..., but we went ahead and...and shared the gospel with her and she did pray and ask Jesus to come into her heart. Well that was a tremendous vi...victory. Well, about that time, her husband a..., walked up and she had told us that her husband read the Bible to her because she couldn't read, but he wasn't a Christian. Somebody...he had gotten a Bible somewhere a..., and he'd been readin it...readin it to her and so [clears throat] he came up and we started to share the gospel with him. We got all the way through a gospel presentation and...and I ask him if he would like to pray to receive Christ and he kinda looked down a little bit and said, "Well, not yet." Through the translator of course, I can't speak Portuguese and he couldn't speak English so we had a translator that...that helped us, but [clears throat] he said not yet and I just kinda sensed

that the reason he was sayin not yet is he didn't feel good about himself. Well, just about that time, just almost at the instant that he said not yet it started to rain. Now it's the rainy season in the Amazon this time of year but we had not been rained on one time and the boat, the main boat that a..., we were on down there was about oh, 2000 feet away, a quarter of a mile or somethin like that away. It was not rainin over at the main boat, but right on top of us it started raining [clears throat] and so this...this guy went in this...to his little hut and invited us to come into his hut and we sat down around a little table and we shared a..., some more about Christ with him and...and what it meant to become a Christian a..., and he ended up accepting Christ which was just a...a tremendous blessing in itself, but as we were about to leave I just sensed in my heart that we needed to pray for he and his family. I thought about the...the rotten fish out on the...the grill out there and that's all that they had to eat. In the Amazon they don't have any a..., electricity and so there's no cooling, refrigeration or anything so what you kill today or catch today that's what you eat today and so a..., I asked our translator if we couldn't just pray for his family that...that God would bless them, that He would meet all their needs out of His riches and glory and a..., and you know, protect them and give em good health and those kind of things and so a..., we prayed and the translator translated and a..., we...we left. Well, the next morning this fellow shows up in the village where we were working with the doctors and dentists and he looks up our translator and he says to the translator, he said, "You know when you guys left my house I went immediately back out to fish because we...we couldn't eat a..., the big fish that we had, we only had the 2 little fish and my kids were hungry and I went back out to fish again." Which is basically what they do every day anyway. But he said, "The first time that I through my line in the water," and all they have is a string with a hook on it, they don't have a pole or anything like that, they just throw a string out, he said the first time he threw his...his line in the water he caught a pink eyed bass that weighted 25 pounds. That's a huge fish, believe me! Well, he got the fish and brought it back a..., to his house, he cut it in half and gave half of it to his neighbor and he told our translator he said, "God answered your prayer for me!" It was the most amazing thing. When you go out and share Christ with people it's just amazing how you will see God work, absolutely like you have never seen God work before. You don't have to go to the Amazon to do that, you can do that with your neighbor next door and see God work. I'd encourage you to do that. [applause]

Dr. McKinley:

Well, how's that for a real fish story? Huh? And the fact that this man would go out after praying to receive Christ and would catch this fish and he'd put all that together in his mind and heart and say, wow, God answers prayer, God's meeting needs for my family and God did that and worked that through the lives of these men and women who went down to the Amazon. But as we were just saying, that's just one example of things though that can happen every single day in the pathway of life as you get about the business of sharing your faith with other people and so tonight I want us to a..., look at the second of the questions that I want to purpose to us out of the Gospel of Mark and a..., last week we basically asked and

answered the question, *Why Should I Think About Evangelism Everyday?* Why should it matter to me every single day? And we addressed that and talked about that in light of Jesus' call of his disciples in ~~Matthew 1...or excuse me~~ in Mark 1 where He said:

... *"Follow Me and I'll make you fishers of men."*

But tonight I want us to ask the question and I want us to explore it together, *Would God Use Me?* God used John Jones. God used the team of people that went down to the Amazon. You hear stories from time to time and a..., in your course of life and ministry here at our church of people that God has used, but sometimes maybe you have to stop and ask the question, ***WOULD GOD REALLY USE ME?*** Well, lets read together Mark chapter 2 because we see something here of some people that God used and God uses. In fact one of the most fascinating things in all of the Bible is to read the Scripture and to discover the kinds of people that God uses. They're not the people you might expect God to use and if you feel like maybe you're one of the least likely for God to use, you may be one of the best examples of who God can use. Let's read together beginning in Mark chapter 2 in verse 1:

¹And He again entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. ²And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. ³Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. ⁴And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, and He said to the paralytic, *"Son, your sins are forgiven you."* ⁶And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they had reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, *"Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"* ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? ¹⁰But that you may know that the son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic. ¹¹"I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." ¹²And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this before!"

Can you imagine what happened that day as they were in that house and that place? Now, all this took place in a place called Capernaum. I've actually had the privilege in leading trips to Israel to go to the remains of the city of Capernaum. There's a synagogue there, there's a small community there and just the foundations, as it were, that have been excavated of some small little block houses. But it would seem that on a particular day that this **SCENE** unfolded and in fact that's what I wanna talk to you about is I...I wanna give you just a few little observations here at the beginning to sorta set the stage, the scene was unfolding that they were in this

place in Capernaum, Jesus was in the house, crowds of people came to the house, there was no room for anybody else to get there and when these 4 men showed up they came with their friend, couldn't get in the door so they went to the roof. And I want you just to imagine for a moment in your minds eye sitting in a place like this, now we're not all crowded, we got a lot of space in here tonight, but I want you to imagine crowded in that place and all the sudden some debris starts to fall from the roof and suddenly you notice something's goin on and there's a commotion and...and suddenly not only is there debris, there's dust and then suddenly there's daylight and you see 8 hands and suddenly you see 4 faces and you see this big bed comin down and you see 8 sets of eyes all looking right down to the middle and there's Jesus and suddenly this man ends up at the feet of Jesus. It's an incredible picture of people bringing a friend to Christ. If you want a picture of personal evangelism, people like you and me being involved in bringing someone else to Christ, here's a great picture of it. But not only is it that scene that is the picture of personal evan...vangelism there was something very significant that happened in this scene and what was significant was the **SOLUTION** that Jesus gave for this man's problem. The man obviously could not walk, he was bound to the bed, he was limited in his ability to have any mobility in life. His friends brought him, but the solution was that when Jesus saw this man, what did He say to this man? He said:

... *"Son, your..."*

What?

"...sins be forgiven."

"...your sins be forgiven."

Now nobody said anything about sin. They were talking about a man who couldn't walk, who was bound to a bed and who could only get there because of his friends, but you see Jesus quickly pointed to the greatest of all human problems and the greatest of all human needs and that is that man has a sin problem and the greatest need that he has is to be remedied by the fall that he has received from his father Adam, all men are crippled by a fall. We're all crippled. We are all unable to walk as we were intended to walk. Now men walk in a variety of different ways, in fact the Bible uses this picture of walking and...and a..., in the impact of the fall to describe the problem of the human condition. Listen to what Paul said in the book of Ephesians. He said: (Ephesians 2:1)

¹And you He made alive, who were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience.

The Bible says that all of mankind is walking in a way that he was not intended to walk. Now, this man, his problem was that he had **WEAK FEET**, he had had the impact of something happened in his life. We don't know if it

was congenital, we don't know if there had been an accident, we just know that he couldn't walk and his friends were trying to get him to Jesus. But, there are people around us who are like this man, who are weak, who can't walk, who are needy and who need somebody to see their need, their real need and to get them to Jesus. But not only are there people that have weak feet, because of the fall of Adam and the crippling impact of that fall there are many people that have **WANDERING FEET**. Heh! They're not yet on a bed, they're wandering. They're not walking with God, they're just wandering through life and in many ways what they're doing in their life is they're wandering, they're living, they're having fun, living in sin, but they're putting it all on credit. You see sin, when we are not right with God is just like a big account in which we are getting deeper and deeper and deeper in debt to God and the reality is...is that while it's fun to live in the world of sin and to wander according to your instincts the problem with sin is that all wandering ultimately takes us to a destination and while sin is like having fun on credit, just as many of us know when credit comes due it's not much fun. You see in America today we are living in a day and a time where there is an enormous amount...or a...an enormous amount of debt going on in people's lives and it's fun you can have a great time. You can go out and have wonderful dinners and you can buy cloths and you can buy all kinds of things on credit, but when the bill comes due that's when the impact comes and there are a lot of people and though they may not in this step of life be like this man who is crippled and weak and has weak feet laying on a bed, they have wandering feet and they're wandering away in this world and they're living in sin, but one day it's gonna come due.

It was W. T. Purkister who said:

"Sin would have... < turn tape > ...if it's consequences occurred immediately."

And so a lot of people have weak feet, other people have wandering feet and then the Bible describes some as having what I would call **WICKED FEET**. In the book of Proverbs, the writer of Proverbs says: (Proverbs 1:16)

...they're feet run to do evil...

There are people who just are living in open rebellion against God and that's how they are in the world and so when this man looked at this man with weak feet, he could have been talking to people with wandering feet or with wicked feet, he was talking about the crippling power that is destroying mankind and it's the power of sin and there's only one answer to sin. What is it? Forgiveness through the power of Jesus Christ and so that was the whole issue that came to bear here. There was a whole discussion about Jesus saying to this man:

"Son, your sins be forgiven..."

And a group of religious a..., a...a..., religious critiquers who were there and who began to dis...to dispute what Jesus said and Jesus said in verse 10:

"...that you may know that the Son of Man has the power to forgive sins on earth"—He said...

"... 'Arise, take up your bed and walk.'"

And so the solution in this scene on that day was ultimately a miraculous solution, a means by which this man's sin would be dealt with and that he would be able to leave in a different way in which he came. He came down on a bed but he walked out the door and he went on a walk with God and that's what salvation does in people's lives. So there was a scene, there was a solution and it's the solution that we're talking about in evangelism, it's men and women coming to Christ that they may be forgiven of their sins and that they may walk in a different way.

But there's one other observation I wanna make at the outset and that is the **SYMBOLISM**, the symbolism of what we see in this passage. A..., I believe in...in many ways there...there's a symbol to be identified with each of the people who make up this scene. Certainly there's the **CRIPPLED MAN** who is there and we've already talked about him being a picture of a lost world and people who've been crippled by the fall and...and there's that man who was in need and the only way that this man or any man gets to Christ is somebody brings him to Christ and so we need to see the world and people who are crippled in it. But not only is there the man who was crippled there's also something else that I want you to see in symbol in this scene and that is the **CROWD**. There were a house full of people and when we talk about the issue of evangelism we have to come to terms with the fact that one of the things that causes many people to struggle with ever getting to Christ is they can't get past the crowd that's gathered around Jesus. In other words, even we can trip people up. We can get in the way of people getting to Christ. I mean you'd think these 4 guys came down the street and they're carrying this man and somebody woulda looked out the door and said hey we need to get this guy in the door, everybody move back, let's help, let's pull out, let's pull back in, let's get him in, but nobody did that. It kind of reminds me of what happens in some churches, lost people come, nobody ever says hello, nobody ever says here take my seat, nobody ever makes room. It's not that they're bad people or mean people they're just there, they got their place, they're havin their time doin their fun and they're absorbed in the moment for themselves, but they're not seeing the need of people and continuing to make room for others to come to Christ. So there's the crippled man, there's the crowd and then of course there're the **CRITICS**. Always got the critics. It doesn't take much size in life to criticize and here we have the critics. And there were a group of religious critics who were there and who began to appose Jesus and what Jesus had to say and began to dispute with Him over what he said to the man and what he said to this man's friends and so they were there and they're always there. They're even there in the best places, in the right atmosphere, talkin about Jesus, but they're just caught up in being critical.

Many years ago D. L. Moody, a wonderful evangelist that God used to lead

hundreds and thousands to Christ in America was preaching and when he finished preaching a man came up to him, handed him a piece of paper and said, "I took notes on your sermon today and you made 38 grammatical mistakes when you spoke this morning." Mr. Moody who was 19 years old had dropped out of high school and was a shoe salesman when he was saved looked at what that man handed him and simply said, "Sir, I probably made more than that." But then he stood there for a moment in humility but he looked up and he said, "Sir, all I can tell you is I'm doin the best I can with my limited education." He said, "What are you doin with your education for Jesus?" You see every one of us needs to find a way to step back from criticism and to get on with the business of the work of the ministry of Christ.

I also heard about another lady who many years ago who went up to a preacher, he was preaching, she said, "Sir, you said something very ineloquent in your sermon this morning." You'd be amazed what people say to you after you've finished preaching. You pour your heart out and people come up. Now don't get me wrong a lot of people say wonderful things, I'm...I'm so grateful for encouragement, but you'd be surprised sometimes what people'll come up and start talkin to you about. This lady walked up to this man and said, "Sir, in what you said you were inappropriate." She said, "Several times, this morning, in your sermon you talked about pants...pants." She said, "You should have said trousers." [pause for slight congregation laughter] He stood there for a moment and he said, "Well..." he said, "Maybe you're right." He said, "What else did I say?" She said, "I don't know." [more laughter] He said, "Well, if I hadn't said pants you wouldn't have gotten anything out of my sermon today." [more laughter] De...we get distracted by the littlest things and we loose sight of the picture. Here was a crippled man who couldn't get through a crowd, who had to deal with the critics, but thank God there were the **CARRIERS**; there were the 4 men who would do whatever they had to do to get their friend to Jesus and they one by one took part in getting this man to a place where he got right in the presence of Christ and Jesus healed him. In a very real sense they're a picture of what everyone of us need to be in life and that is we're to be stretcher bearers to bring people to Jesus and not just those who are weak and defeated, have fallen, but those who are wandering and even to be out there to meet and to speak to those who are wicked that they may hear and know the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So the question that I put before us tonight, a simple question is this, **WOULD GOD USE ME?** Well let me just answer that question. Yes! God would use you and God wants to use you. Just as God used 4 men to get a friend to Christ, God wants to use you to get your friends to Christ and it's not would He, He wants to use you, He desires to use you, it is His plan, His purpose day after day and that's not me standing up here telling you that, that's what Jesus said. Listen to what Jesus said in John chapter 15 in verse 16:

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, and that whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."

Jesus said to His disciples I want you to go and bear fruit. Some of you say well that's right, that's what Jesus said to His disciples, those men that walked around on earth with Him, that's right. But let me tell you, let's take it one step further. In John 17, two chapters later, listen to what Jesus said, He said:

"I do not pray for these alone, but for those who will believe in Me through their word;

Jesus said I'm not only prayin for these guys, I'm prayin for everybody who's gonna believe because of their testimony. Did you know you're here tonight because of the testimony of the disciples of Jesus Christ? Because they lived and died to spread the gospel of Christ, because they believed in the reality of Christ, you and I have become believers here these 2000 years later and Jesus prayed for us that what He prayed for the disciples would be true for us. God wants to use you and God wants to use me. The question is, do you believe it? Do you believe that God would and wants to use you? Well, let me just wrap our time tonight by just suggesting several ways that you and I can be a person that God uses. Just as God used these men in this setting, on that day, to bring that man to Christ, how can God use you and God use me to bring our friends to Christ? You might just wanna jot these things down on your note page there and reflect on them.

1. **SURRENDER**, surrender, a..., don't fight God, don't argue, don't debate, just surrender. Every one of these men had to surrender something to carry that man there. I don't know whether they took a day off of work. I don't know whether they canceled something else in their schedule, but what I do know is that they made a choice to surrender other things that they might give of themselves to lead their friend to Christ and I just wanna start at the simplest and the most obvious point of all and that is that for you and I to be people who God uses we have to surrender. We have to believe that God wants to use us and therefore we have to surrender and say Lord that's what You say You wanna do in my life, here I am. Lord I'm gonna believe it, I don't know how You can use me, I don't know why You would use me, but Lord here I am and that's the first step of taking up you cross daily to follow Christ. Surrender...and you know when we don't, can I just be honest, we're the losers. We're the losers when we don't surrender to Christ. We're the losers because we never know the joy of seeing someone transformed by the power of the gospel of Christ and I'm tellin you there is no joy like that joy when that joy happens in your life. Surrender!
2. **EXPECT** God to use you. Not only surrender the fact that He wants to use you, expect God to use you. You know what's wrong with most of us is that we don't expect God to use us. We don't ever think about that in the course of the day, we're afraid He might try to use us, but we don't ever live life thinking, hey, I expect God to use me today. He told me He wanted to, I'm availing myself to Him and therefore I'm

gonna live my life expecting God to use me. I love the fact that these men carried their friend to Jesus and they expected Jesus to do something. Well, you've gotta expect God to do something through you every day. Pete Rose, not exactly know to be a disciple, on one occasion in his life was entering spring training with the possibility and the potential in that season of breaking the Ty Cobb record for all hits, all time hits and as Pete Rose was in training camp that year, of course, many of the reporters came and gathered around him and they made it a big media hype and a big media story about what was going to happen and one the reporters blurted out and said, "Pete, you only need 78 hits to break the record. How many at bats do you think you'll need to get 78 hits?" And Pete Rose stood for a moment and he looked and he said, "78!" Everybody sorta was aghast, I mean, this was to break Ty Cobb's record, this was to be a...a legendary moment in baseball and...and that reporter came back and said, "Pete Rose do you really think that you're gonna get 78 hits in 78 at bats?" Pete Rose said, "Please don't get me wrong," it actually was a very humble moment for him, he said, "I want you to know I'm not saying to you that it's just...that I'm going to do it," he said, "But I expect to hit every time I'm at bat." He said, "I don't ever go up to the plate and say I hope I'm gonna hit, I hope I'm gonna hit, I hope I'm gonna hit." He said, "Every time I step in that box I expect to hit." And it was that expectation that gave him an incredible ability to accomplish much in his life. Now let me ask you something. If a baseball player can do that in order to try to break a record, do you think you and I could do that believing that God can use us and wants to use us? You see the problem is we don't expect God to do anything through us. It is a faith issue. Surrender, expect God to use you!

3. **PRAY** for a heart of compassion and concern. No where in this text does it say that these men prayed, but I have to tell you every thing that I see in this text is a picture of intercessory prayer. It is laying hold of God on behalf of someone else and that's exactly what these men did, they interceded for their friend with Jesus and they wouldn't let anything stop the concern and the compassion of their heart in getting him to Christ, not even a roof that was over a building full of people. You see there was concern, there was compassion in their hearts and God has got to do a work of deepening the compassion of my heart. I want you to know I'm convinced one of the reasons I don't witness more is I'm not broken enough and every day I have to get before the Lord and say Lord make me tender, make me sensitive, break my heart O God for a lost world and I'm convinced one of the reasons that the church is not effective is that we're willing to depend on anything and everything but prayer and brokenness and we need God to move in our hearts for a private personal breaking that we may lay hold of the power of God and the greatness of God in the lives of those who are lost around us. Pray for God to give you heart of compassion. Pray for God to give you a heart of concern and a spiritual sensitivity. Next...

4. **RECOGNIZE** that you're not alone. This is such an important point. You may be one instrument that God is using, but hear me, you're not the only instrument that God may be using in someone's life. Yes, you are an instrument and God will use you, but you may not be the only person that He's using, because God works in mysterious ways and God works through many people. Let me ask you something, when those 4 men left that man down before Jesus and Jesus looked at Him and said:

"Son your sins are forgiven, rise, take up your bed and walk."

Who led that man to Christ? Who led that man to Christ? Well of course Jesus performed the miracle, the only One who can save, but if you're lookin at those men, all 4 of those men led that man to Christ. We don't know any of their names, but what we know is all 4 of em got their friend to Jesus and all 4 of them were a part of leading that man to Christ. It's not just me, it's not just you, we're not God's sales force a..., out there on a quota system tryin to figure out who can write up the...the most tickets to heaven. We all wanna be a part of writin as many as we can, but we're not competing with each other, we're competing with sin and hell and the devil and therefore what we've gotta do is all be a part of it and let God let us have a part. You see it took all 4 of those men to get that man to Christ, to balance that bed and they all did different things. They were all different people from different backgrounds, but they all shared in one thing and that's what God does through His church He uses you and He uses me. Paul was so frustrated with the church in Corinth when he looked at them one day and said one of you says I'm of Paul and another says I'm of Apollos and you've broken into all sorts of little groups as to who is your leader? And listen to what Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, he simply said: [verse 5]

For who is Paul, and who is Apollos,

Let me find my place here, I know the Scripture...there it is, it's right there in front of me, it's right there in front of you.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase.

That's it! You see, recognize that when you share Christ you're not alone. You may be the first voice, you may be a middle voice, you may be the last voice, but God is using many people. The question is are you gonna let him use you? Next...

5. Take some **RISK**...take some risk! Getting people to Christ means that sometimes we gotta step out of our comfort zone and I don't wanna be at all bashful about telling you you're never gonna be comfortable leading people to Christ. You're not ever gonna get comfortable doin it. Sometimes you're gonna have to do something as radical and risky as takin the roof off, but hey, whenever we are obedient we never

fail. If I'm obedient to God I don't fail. Oh, I don't mean that I always see the results I want in that time and that moment, but I'm telling you between the Lord and me I'm able to be right with Him when I'm obedient and then the last thing is to...

6. **BELIEVE** in the transforming power of the living Christ. Believe in the transforming power. Do you believe that Jesus saves? Well if you do then tell somebody about it and let's see what Jesus will do. The guy comes down on a pallet and he gets up and he walks out the door. What a moment that must have been, walkin out the door. I don't know how long he'd been layin down. I don't know how many people had seen him, but I'm telling you nobody could believe the fact that he walked out the door and when people that you share Christ with get saved, people all around them are gonna be in shock that they came to know Jesus. How grateful I am that God uses people just like you and just like me. We just have to be willing to let Him use us. What do we have to do?

We have to surrender, we have to expect God to use us, we have to pray for a heart of compassion and concern, we have to recognize we're not alone, we have to take some risk and we have to believe in the transforming power of Jesus Christ. I believe God wants to do something fresh and new starting tonight in your life and God wants to do something with your friends by doing something in you and so I'm gonna ask us as just a final exercise tonight to take our worship guide and to take those prayer cards that are there and I want us just to have a few moments of prayer.