

## Sharing Christ with the Unbeliever – Isaiah 43:1-11

### I. Introduction:

- A. Your neighbor – the one who has lived beside you for fifteen years has moved away, and now you have new neighbors.
1. Of course you immediately introduce yourself and share with them some home-baked cookies.
  2. But when you invite them to church, you are surprised – shocked – to learn they are practicing Muslims.
  3. They seem cool towards you – cold – so you find an excuse to excuse yourself, and you go home.
    - a. But the Lord begins to burden you about those people.
    - b. Surprising even yourself, your heart begins to yearn for their salvation.
  4. What can you do to bring those people to the Lord?
  5. I am not going to share with you any magic formulas for you to follow.
- B. Over the centuries, Baptists have used many different means to share the gospel with people.
1. Some of them have had their place and have been used by God, while some of them haven't.
  2. We have had our **colporteurs** – people dedicated to traveling about sharing Bibles, good books and gospel tracts with people who could read but who didn't necessarily have much material to read.
    - a. Medieval Anabaptists were very successful in sharing Christ in this way.
  3. There have been periods in Christian history when **large evangelistic meetings** were used by God.
    - a. Large halls were secured and money was spent on various forms of advertizing.
    - b. In the days before television and Netflix, people looked for entertainment, and a well-known evangelist could provide that entertainment – even for the glory of the Lord.
  4. Despite what some people think they see in the scripture, **door-to-door, cold-calling**, has been a **RECENT** improvisation of evangelism.
    - a. **Luke 14:23** – *“And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”*
    - b. That is not, as I was taught, an illustration of door-to-door visitation, but it is often applied in that way.
    - c. There is certainly nothing wrong with this kind of work, but its results are limited.
  5. We have **printed** and **distributed fliers** to whole communities, inviting people to special church services.
  6. We have used **newspaper advertizing** in the days when nearly everyone read the daily paper.
  7. We have used **community welcoming services** – companies who invited newcomers on our behalf.
  8. Now, churches use **Twitter**, the **Internet** and other electronic means.
  9. To be honest, I have tried nearly all of them, and a few others besides.
- C. In limited ways these have been used by the Lord from time to time.
1. And we encourage ourselves reminding one another that if just one soul is saved the effort is worthwhile.
  2. But I guarantee that none of these methods will move your new Muslim neighbors to come to church to hear the gospel – and probably not the LGBT couple down the street either.
  3. Sadly, many Christians would not be happy to see either of these neighbors in their church services.
  4. And your Muslim neighbors already suspect that, adding to their reticence to accept to your invitation.
- D. There are many scriptures reminding us that we are supposed to be ambassadors for Christ to these people.
1. There are New Testament scriptures like **Acts 1:8** –
    - a. *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*
    - b. There is **Mark 16:15** and others – *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”*
  2. Borrowing and applying Old Testament scriptures, we see the universality of this kind of commission.
  3. God told Israel, in the scripture we read from **Isaiah**, that He **created & saved** them to be His **witnesses**.
    - a. He **called them** and **saved them** in a manner similar to us.
    - b. He **loved them** and made them **precious** to Himself, expecting them to be testimonies of His grace.
    - c. He carried them through rough waters and tough times in order to be more powerful witnesses for Him.
    - d. He will call them back again from the four corners of our circular globe for this purpose.

e. *“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.”*

## II. How can we carry out our commission & responsibility toward that Muslim family & homosexual couple?

- A. Of course, it must be with **absolute dependence** upon the **Holy Spirit** of God.
1. Only God can save the lost. No matter how much we may try, **we are not Saviours**.
  2. We may learn 3 dozen gospel verses, and we can memorize men’s ideas of *“The simple plan of salvation.”*
  3. But they are pointless without the blessing of the Lord.
  4. And in the real world, the Lord may act without any of the evangelists’ soul-winning plans and outlines.
  5. If we want to win those lost neighbors to the Lord, they need to be specific parts of our prayers and concern, as **we** yield ourselves to God’s control in their evangelism.
- B. In the last three pages of the book to which I referred last Sunday – *“More than a Prophet”* – the Caner brothers give suggestions on winning Muslims to Christ.
1. In slightly different ways, most of their points apply to our witness to the **Mormon** as well as the **Muslim**.
  2. These things apply to our evangelization of the **atheist**, the **Anglican**, the **Adventist** and the **agnostic**.
- C. I’m not saying that if you memorize and apply these points and you will become a great evangelist.
1. There is no six-point plan guaranteed to make you a successful soul-winner.
  2. I have books on my shelves which seem to imply such things, but they are wrong.
  3. In following those man-made plans, people usually fall into serving God in the flesh, rather than the Spirit.
  4. I am only saying, here are some things we should all consider and generally apply to our lives in order to be God’s witnesses.
  5. And the truth is, some of these things are ignored by some of the *“great”* Baptist evangelists I have heard.

## III. What should be our evangelistic style?

- A. **Begin** by **being** a **Christian**.
1. In order to be a part of God’s **MAKING Christians** we need to **BE Christians**.
  2. There are several places in the Epistles which describe generally the Christian way of life.
  3. I know that some of these are talking about relationships between God’s people, but most of these points are much more broad.
  4. **Romans 12** is just one of those scriptures. Please turn to **Romans 12:9**.
  5. *“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*
    - a. *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*
    - b. *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*
    - c. *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*
    - d. *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*
    - e. *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*
    - f. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”*
  6. If you live no differently from any other Christ-less American, no Muslim is going to listen to your witness.
  7. If you are not a Christian from the inside out, you are going to be useless as an evangelist.
  8. But if you consistently and honestly live the principles Paul outlines, then God may possibly use us.
  9. And if you treat interdenominational Christian neighbor on the other side of your house differently than you do your Muslim neighbor, you’ll probably never win either one to the Lord.

- B. We need to be **God's people GENERALLY** before we can be **God's evangelists SPECIFICALLY**.
1. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus – *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, & with all thy soul, & with all thy mind, & with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. & the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”*
  2. For the Christian, who is what he ought to be, there is a correlation between love for the Lord and love for our neighbor. Love for one without love for the other is a lop-sided, crippled Christianity.
  3. And don't mess around with the definition of *“neighbor,”* because the Lord dealt with that in the story of the Good Samaritan.
  4. Your neighbor, no matter who he is, may be surprised by the interest you have in him as another human being. But you will ruin that if you make him your religious target.
  5. When it comes to Muslims and many others, there are centuries of resentment and mistrust between us.
  6. It takes time, patience and open conversation to cut through the issues that we talked about Sunday.
  7. And it takes living the Christian life in a consistent fashion.
- C. Be a friend.
1. To build a bridge across a raging river takes time and material.
  2. And there is often a great gulf between where you are and where that lost man is.
  3. While never ignoring the fact you are a Bible-believing, church-going Christian, we need to be a friendly, helpful, non-confrontational neighbor.
  4. If the Lord is in it, there will come those moments when the neighbor will raise the religion question, and hopefully it will come in the context of friendliness and trust.
  5. In addition to all those public addresses and encounters with the leadership of the Jews, how often did the Lord Jesus sit down to eat a meal with a lost man?
  6. And which was usually the most effective or beneficial to the individual soul?
- D. I was taught in Bible school, that to win the lost, it is necessary to hit them over the head with a Bible.
1. I was taught to smother the target with scriptures, not letting him breathe until he was at the point of death.
    - a. It was like some sort of **evangelical water-boarding**.
    - b. I was taught to ask only questions which draw a positive answer:
      - c. *“Don't you want to go to Heaven?” “Sure you do.”*
      - d. *“Don't you want peace in your soul?” “Don't you want a solution to all your worldly problems?”*
  2. I was taught to show the sinner a picture of a blond, blue-eyed European Jesus hanging from a blood-soaked cross.
    - a. That is a false image and the Muslim is more aware it than most Americans.
    - b. Muslims are not stupid.
  3. While it is certainly important to talk about the sacrifice of Christ it is necessary to build a proper foundation or the bridge will fall into that river.
- E. Paul said in more than one letter, *“be gentle, not argumentative, not belligerent.”*
1. In talking to the average unchurched American, geo-political and historical implications rarely come up.
  2. But with Muslims and Jews, these things are at the forefront of their minds when talking about religion.
  3. It is difficult, I know, but we need to listen to **James 1:19** – *“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to HEAR, slow to SPEAK, slow to WRATH: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”*
  4. It does no good to incite your neighbor to wrath about politics – and it is sin on your part to get angry.
  5. Perhaps you can get a bit closer to his heart by sincerely listening to what he has to say about history and past injustices to his people, ignoring for a while his forefathers' injustices toward others.
  6. We live in today's world, with today's problems, which for that man is the foyer of eternity.
  7. The past is exactly that – past.

- F. I'm not going to tell you to do this for your personal enjoyment, or for something educational.
1. But if you really do have a Muslim family next door, or a Muslim coworker or shop-keeper who is willing to speak to you, buy a copy of the Quran, and read it.
  2. In talking to a Methodist, Lutheran or Catholic, we have a point of intersection in the Bible – despite the difference in our versions.
  3. But for Mormons and Muslims who have very different scriptures, we if we hope to have them listen to our gospel we need to listen to theirs – out of respect, not that we believe it to be true.
  4. Like us and our Bibles, some unbelievers regard their holy books as the source of life and hope.
  5. If we summarily dismiss those books without showing any interest in them, those lost people are going to do the same with our Bible.
- G. Incidentally, when it comes to the **followers of Islam**, carefully maintain their **gender distinctions** and other customs whenever possible.
1. Unless they show themselves to be particularly liberal, taking the initiative, you as a Christian man, should never try to have a conversation with a Muslim woman.
  2. If you are a Christian lady, you might be able to speak with that man's wife, but ordinarily it would be disastrous for you to talk to the Muslim husband.
  3. There are some exceptions to this rule within the Muslim community, but we are not a part of that community.
- H. Because you have been in earnest prayer for your neighbor, let's say the subject of Christ Jesus does eventually come up.
1. I suppose, as it should be in every evangelical opportunity – Muslim, Mormon Anglican or Atheist – focus on the mercy and grace which is extended to sinners through the finished work of Christ.
  2. Hopefully, because you have listened to him quote the Quran, he will at least listen while you quote the Bible – **John 3:16** and similar verses.
  3. **Romans 5:6-11** – *“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.  
a. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.  
b. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.  
c. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.  
d. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”*
  4. The Word of God is the Lord's sword, so **wield IT** – not the weapons of the intellectuals or professionals.
  5. And you might tell that person how you struggled trying to earn salvation through your efforts, but everything you tried was either quickly reversed or it left you feeling empty – because it was hopeless.
  6. All your righteousnesses proved to be nothing but filthy rags, even in your own eyes.
  7. But Christ Jesus has now done everything necessary for your deliverance from sin.
  8. It should always be the rule, no matter to whom you are witnessing, don't be distracted with side issues.
  9. That person needs to be born again, before he can understand the deeper things of God.
- I. I'll close with the last paragraph from the book **“More than a Prophet.”**
1. *“Most Muslims do not have caring, concerned Christian people that they can call a ‘close friend.’*
  2. *Like all people, they long for someone to care about them, & you may just be the person to break through.*
  3. *May God give you the opportunity to share the work our Saviour with a lost and dying world, which includes Muslims.*
  4. *Christ is more than a prophet. He is a Prophet, Priest and King.”*
  5. And I will add, **He is the Saviour** which that lost and dying world needs.