

How Do We Bring Others to Christ?

When we look at Jesus from the viewpoint of salvation we see two distinct characteristics. On the one hand we see Him as being very inclusive. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden..." Matthew 11:28. "I...will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Isaiah 45:22. "Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Timothy 2:4. But, on the other hand, Jesus is also very exclusive. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Matthew 16:24. "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Matthew 10:38. "Then Jesus said... One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." Mark 10:21. "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:27. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13, 14.

So, what do we make of this apparent tension as we minister for souls for God's kingdom? On the one hand we are to call all, while on the other hand, the standards are high and the majority will not respond positively. Are we to lower the standards? How do we share a Savior who on the one hand calls all to come to receive salvation, while on the other hand, only offers salvation to a very small group who meet His requirements?

I believe we sometimes have gotten caught up with doing what we have never been asked to do. Who is the one that is to draw individuals to Christ? "If I be lifted up from the earth, (I) will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. Who then does the work that prepares one for heaven? "Being confident of this very thing, that he (Jesus) which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" Philippians 1:6. "Now the God of peace...make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Hebrews 13:20, 21; 3:1 "O foolish Galatians...are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Galatians 3:1-3.

Who does the drawing? Jesus does, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Who does the work of changing characters? Jesus does, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Who produces the fruits of the Spirit in them? The Holy Spirit. So, you may be asking, what are we to do? "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:15, 16. What are we to do? We're to preach the Gospel, through the power of the Holy Spirit. We're to inform everyone of what Jesus has done for them and that He wants to save them. We are to exclude none. And as we see changed lives, evidence of new life in Christ, the fruit of the Spirit being displayed, then baptism follows. Naturally, soul winners will continue providing nurturing fellowship, continuing Bible study, and encouragement to new believers, as well. Please note the emphasis in the following text. The powerful Word of God changes lives, not our pushiness or controlling of people's conscience. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

The 'exclusiveness' is left to the Holy Spirit. He knows each heart, how and when to bring to the individual's attention the necessary refinement, sometimes taking the individual along more slowly, as needed. It is a process. He is in charge of the shaping and polishing. This is not our job and when we try to do it we are likely to mess up and turn people away from God. It is the sword of the Spirit that is to do the work of cutting away what needs to be cut away. That is the Spirit's job. We are not to judge and condemn others. God gave each one of us a conscience for the Holy Spirit to work on. He is the only one who has the right to condemn. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Romans 14:13. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Ephesians 4:2, 3 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Colossians 3:16.

Our job is to bring people to Christ and to pray for them that they make right choices. "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: 1. Samuel 12:23.