

Don't Keep It to Yourself

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the urgent need for Christians to share the good news of Jesus rather than keeping it to themselves.

Duration: 17:50

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1, Isaiah 55:11, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 13:4, 2 Corinthians 9:7

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Symbola encourages believers to be bold in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the importance of not keeping the message to ourselves but actively proclaiming it to others. The pastor urges the congregation to be alert and ready to share the gospel at all times, asking God to bring verses to their minds as they speak. He uses the story of four lepers who discovered abundance in a besieged city to illustrate the urgency of sharing the good news. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer for breakthroughs in people's lives and for the raising up of laborers filled with the Holy Spirit to spread the message of Jesus.

Transcript

And they said to each other, why should we wait here until we die? It's no use going into the city because we would starve to death in there, but if we stay here, we'll die also, so let's go to the Syrian camp. The worst they can do is kill us, but maybe they will spare our lives. As it began to get dark, they went to the Syrian camp, but when they reached it, no one was there.

The Lord had made the Syrians hear what sounded like the advance of a large army with horses and chariots, and the Syrians thought that the king of Israel had hired Hittite and Egyptian kings and their armies to attack them. So that evening, the Syrians had fled for their lives, abandoning their tents, horses, and donkeys, and leaving the camp just as it was. And when the four men reached the edge of the camp, they went into a tent, ate, and drank, and they were starving to death.

What was there, they grabbed the silver, the gold, the clothing they found, and went off and hid them. And then they returned, entered another tent, and did the same thing. But then they said to each other, we shouldn't be doing this.

We have good news, and we shouldn't keep it to ourselves. If we wait until morning to tell it, we're sure to be punished. Let's go right now and tell the king's officers.

Now, one of the ways that you killed people back in that day, or you won battles, was something called not face-to-face fighting, but siege. And siege, S-I-E-G-E, was when you surrounded a place and you cut it off from food and water so that you didn't wanna lose a lot of troops because there were walls, and to attack meant they could shoot down at you. And all the way through war, including the most recent wars, civil war especially, battles were won by whoever had the high position.

So in that day, they would put people up high, and then you're shooting down on the people coming up. So the army said, why lose all these people? Let's just lay siege. Surround it, don't let anything in, anything out.

Then they ran out of food. Then they ran out of water. Now people are dying.

The Syrians attacked the capital of Israel, the northern kingdom of Samaria, and even though they were not serving God properly and had mostly wicked kings, God continued in his mercy to show grace toward these people. But now it was looking bad. They were surrounded by the Syrians, and it got so bad that they turned to cannibalism.

They were paying huge amounts of money for any kind of food. They were eating human waste. They were eating horrible things.

And then one day, the king heard two women lamenting the fact that they had killed their own babies and eaten them, which is not unheard of in history. When intense starvation comes, humans do horrific things. The king got mad, and he looked for the prophet Elisha.

But Elisha began to prophesy and said, no, the Lord is gonna deliver you out of his mercy, and soon the food that you can't get from anybody and that you're paying so much for for nothing, there'll be plentiful food. And one of the assistants to the king said, that will never happen. And then the prophet turned and said, you know what? Because you didn't have faith, it won't happen for you.

And it never did happen for him. So while this was going on, there are these men who have leprosy, and they're outside the camp because they're lepers. So they can't go in the city, and the Syrians are out there, and they're dying themselves, no food.

So they say to each other, listen, what are we gonna do? One of them says, I have an idea. Let's go to the Syrian camp where they are. They're just waiting there to attack.

They've laid siege. They know we're getting weaker and weaker. We can't go in the city because they have no food.

They don't want us. We're lepers, and we'll die there. But maybe if we go to the Syrian camp, they won't kill us.

If they kill us, we're gonna die anyway. This is how desperate things were. Well, they go to the Syrian camp, and they're amazed because nobody's in the Syrian camp.

The tents are there. The food is there. The cheese is there.

The dates, the figs, the fruit, the meat, everything's there, but no Syrian army. Because during the night, God, to deliver his people who are rebellious, but he's still showing mercy, he sends a sound that sounds like army with chariots and horses, and they think, oh, no. The King of Israel has gotten reinforcements

from the Hittites and the Egyptians.

We're gonna be overrun. Let's get out of here, and they just jump on their horses, and they ride away and leave everything the way it is. Panic in the camp.

God is amazing, amen? These guys get there, and they go, yo, yo, can you believe this? Well, they didn't say yo, but some of them were from Brooklyn, but just a few. There were two from Brooklyn. The rest were from the Middle East.

And they went, can you believe this? And they started eating the food. They were famished. Then they saw gold and silver and precious things, and they buried it.

You know, when you're a hoarder, you just bury stuff. Then they went to another tent, and there was more food there, and they started eating that food, and then one of them said, wait a minute. This is not right.

Our people are dying in Samaria, in the city. They don't know the Syrians have fled. They don't know God has given the victory, and are we gonna eat this good food and keep it all for ourselves? And here's the sentence they said.

We have good news. How can we keep it to ourselves? What, are we gonna sit here and just eat the food ourselves, be gluttons? What, are we just gonna hold all the silver and gold for ourselves? So they went back to the town, to the city, and they told them, listen, the Syrians have fled. And at first, the king didn't believe it.

He thought it was a trap, because a lot of times when you have good news and people are negative, they won't even believe the good news. And that's what I wanna say to you. We know the good news about Jesus.

How many have tasted and seen that the Lord is good? Lift your hand up high. How many know what it is to have all your sins forgiven? Wave it at me. And you've had the peace of God.

That came through the good news of Jesus Christ. But how about all these people in New York? How about the people that you're gonna run into tomorrow? What, are we just gonna circle the wagons and have a good time and say, the Lord is good all the time, all the time. Lord is good.

I got that. And we should praise him. But in the day we live, with things happening around the world they are, are we gonna keep this good news to ourselves? Christian churches are in massive decline because they don't practice evangelism.

They don't wanna share the good news. Oh, those people are against it. They'll laugh at me, they'll reject me, but some will listen.

Don't worry about those who reject you. They rejected Jesus. What's new about that? They rejected Paul.

I read that he ended up in prison sometime. So the idea that when God is with you, everybody falls down and gets saved, that's a crazy idea. That's a crazy idea.

Not found in scripture. But what a horrible sin for us. We're gonna sit here at the Brooklyn Tabernacle and keep it to ourselves.

That's what I like about Brother Samer. You know, there's a fatwa against him. A death sentence.

Because right in Lebanon, it happened in Lebanon, didn't it? He got up and started having street meetings. I saw it on YouTube. I saw it on some video.

And he's telling the Muslims, no, no, it's not Mohammed, it's Jesus. You know what courage that takes? He got on TV, he got on radio, whatever he was on, and he gave such a bold testimony, and he was so outrageously forward in sharing the good news, they say, that guy's gotta go. So he lost contact with his family.

He's gone through a lot because he was sharing the good news. But what are you and I gonna do? We're gonna walk tomorrow and not tell anybody the good news you learned about? Haven't you gone into the camp and seen that God has given the victory? Haven't you eaten some good cheese and some good bread? Haven't you been fed? Don't you have peace and joy in your heart tonight? Don't you know your sins are forgiven? Don't I know that? So what am I gonna do? Circle the wagons and have church and say, praise God, he's on the throne. We got that part.

And I'm all for praising God. You know that. I love to sing as much as all of you.

But is that why he has us on planet Earth? But Pastor Simba, I need a breakthrough in my life. Hey, listen, let's pray about your breakthrough. But how about people who don't have a break, much less a breakthrough? They don't even know what you're talking about.

They don't even know Jesus. Did you know that someone came to our church months and months ago, I was told, by somebody in security, and he was up listening to me preach? And this is like the people are today. So I was preaching.

I was preaching something from the gospel. And then I threw in, wrongly, assuming everybody could follow what I'm saying. So, you know, and then Paul said this to back up that.

And Paul said that. So, you know, like I do to you. You know, Paul said this.

It's more blessed to give, he quoted Jesus, more blessed to give. Paul said, love is patient, love is kind. You know, like that.

So at the end of the meeting, he talked to someone and said, what a meeting. I loved it here. First time here.

The choir that we were swaying, and the man preaching. I felt love and all of that. You know, like I gotta ask you one question before I leave.

Where's that guy, Paul, in the church? You know, this is a heavy dude. He said some heavy things. Pastor quoted him a few times.

He said, Paul said this, Paul. Which one's Paul? No, don't laugh. He said, which one's Paul? And I didn't have the wisdom to say there was once a man who was a leader in the Christian church named the Apostle Paul.

Then he would've known. That's how different it is today. People don't have a clue.

And we have the good news. Are we gonna be like those lepers who at the beginning just said, isn't this great? This is good. Pass that bread, please.

I want more. Let's just eat and be happy. Is that what we're supposed to do? How about the people starving? How about those mothers who were eating their own babies back in Samaria? They said, no, we gotta go.

This is not right. Lepers are not. We gotta go back.

We gotta tell them the good news. This is the great downfall of so many Christian churches now. They get into praise and worship.

I'm all for that. Some get into prayer. I'm down for that.

Let's study the Bible. Let's study the Bible. I'm all for that.

But what's the main reason why Sylvia Glover's alive today? What's the reason that God hasn't brought her to heaven? It must be to share the good news that she got. Someone shared it with you, didn't they? Am I right, Sylvia? Didn't somebody tell you that Jesus would help you and invited you to church? Otherwise, who knows where she would be? Rastafarian, hanging out with drug dealers and all of that. Someone told her, what are we gonna do here? We gotta get bold.

That's why the early church didn't pray for bigger houses, bigger cars. You know what they prayed for? God, grant your servants boldness that we might speak the good news in the name of Christ. And while we're speaking it, stretch out your hand.

Do you know when the Holy Spirit works? When you're sharing Jesus. Many people wanna circle the wagons. I grew up in a denomination like that.

Circle the wagons and let's see what the Holy Ghost will do tonight. Where would you find that in the Bible? Jesus said, and you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be witnesses.

The power isn't just for when we gather together as Christians. The power is when you open your mouth and you're bold and you say, I gotta tell you the good news that happened in my life. Then the power comes.

Come on, let's say amen to that. Then the power comes. So I want us to be bolder.

I got two men. I got Pastor Delene and some other pastors who will pray for you. But that's what we're gonna do now to close.

You know, some of you, you know what your calling is. You're called to be evangelist, but you have this idea that evangelist is Billy Graham and you hold meetings in large venues. No, there's evangelist in the local church.

There's evangelist in the local church. They evangelize, they gather people, they do all kinds of great things and God is with them. But you never see the hand of God like you'll see when you open up Suboca, when you open up your mouth and you start to share the good news.

And the leper said, we have good news to share. How dare we stay in the camp of the Syrians and keep it to ourselves. How many want the Brooklyn Tabernacle to shine a light that's brighter? Come on.

Well, wait a minute. Who makes up the Brooklyn Tabernacle? Us. It's us.

Let's close our eyes. If you want God to anoint you with the Holy Ghost and power so that you can witness, not that you can say, I have the Holy Ghost and power, but no, God, I wanna be used by you so I want more of your spirit so I can be bold and when I speak or pray for people, there'll be a new anointing on my life, there'll be a new blessing on my life, but I'm not gonna sit here. No, I want someone to pray for me.

That's how you can spend five minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, it's early. What's more important than this? In the light of eternity, one billion years from now, when we're in heaven, someone could run up to you and say, I'm here because of you. I'm here because of Jesus, but you're the one who told me about Jesus.

Anybody wanna be prayed for? Come out of your seat. I'll lay my hands on you. These men will, women will lay their hands on you.

Pastor, I wanna be used by God. Come on, come on, run up here. We're not gonna do anything else.

You can sit in your seat and pray. You can come forward to be prayed for. Just lift up your hands, lift up your voice and begin to pray.

We'll lay hands on you. Everybody just pray wherever you are. Pray, talk to the Lord.

God, I gotta share the good news. I can't keep it to myself. Help us to do the work of an evangelist.

Help me to be a better pastor, God. Raise up laborers full of the Holy Spirit, Lord, to share the good news of Jesus. Now, Father God, there's a time for everything under the sun.

Your word says that. But we don't have to convince you to help us. You wanna help us more than we wanna be helped.

Now the time has come for us to open our mouths and be bold. For did you not say that when we open our mouths, words would be given us? Did you not say that when we would do your work, your power would accompany us? So even let someone be used before they even lay down at night to go to sleep, on a subway, on a bus, going home, a telephone call, cell call, whatever. Make us bold tomorrow.

Make us bold all this week to share the good news, not keep it to ourselves. We have the good news of Jesus, crucified, risen, died for the sins of the world, but seated now at the right hand of the Father, alive. We have our testimony of what you've done in our life.

That's all we need to start with. Bring verses to our minds so that when we're talking, we'll get verses coming into our head that we can share with people. But you're gonna do it through us, but we're gonna open our mouths and be alert and keep awake and be ready at all times to share the good news.

Help us, the shy ones, to open their mouths, Lord, and be bold, be strong, for the Lord, our God, is with us. Get us all home safely. Thank you for this prayer meeting.

Thank you for Dr. Hassan. Thank you for our prayers for the Central African Republic. Now help us to love each other more, because by this shall everyone know that we're your disciples, because we love each other.

Those of you near Dr. Hassan, if you see him and Samar, give him a hug. Say shalom to them, salam, shalom, something. The rest of you just hug each other.

Come on, everybody give a hug to someone. God bless you.

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