

2014, Lent Wednesday 2
John 4:5-15

Last week Pastor Alison talked about the “what” of the language of faith. What do you say when your neighbor has questions? I am sure you all now have your confessions of faith written out and memorized so you will be able to share your faith at a moment’s notice, either in a 3 minute elevator speech or a 30 minute speech.

Today we will be talking about the “where”. Where do we share our faith? Where should we? Is there any place we should not share our faith?

Tonight’s gospel has a Jewish man talking about faith with a Samaritan woman in the noon day sun at a well. There are a whole lot of things “wrong” with that picture.
Jews don’t have anything to do with Samaritans
Men don’t usually hang out talking to women alone
Men don’t talk to women about matters of faith

A few weeks ago Cheryl and I went to listen to Brian McLaren talk about his book, “Why did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?” – He talked about our need to have a strong faith, and be willing to share that faith while still respecting the faith of our neighbors. We don’t need an aggressive faith that we use as a club, abuse our neighbor for the sake of the gospel, or discriminate against them in the name of Christ. On the other extreme, we also should not have a passive faith and be so afraid of offending our neighbor that we don’t share what we believe. By sharing our faith with our neighbors of other faiths we can learn from each other.

There are four general areas where we think about speaking the language of faith: church, home, work/school, community. Where ever it is I hope to avoid thinking that we are taking Jesus to the streets, or the poor, or the rich, or the... No matter where we go, Jesus is already there.

Psalm 139:7-10

Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence: If I climb up to heaven, you are there; if I make the grave my bed, you are there also. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand will lead me and your right hand will hold me fast.

Church – this one is easy right? Inside the walls of the church is the place you are supposed to talk about God, right? This is where he lives so it is safe to talk about him. We are surrounded by images of God and people of God that understand our language of faith. It is good to practice speaking faith here. That is what we do whenever we gather here. Sunday’s are for hearing and speaking the language of faith. Splash Mondays are for engaging with each other around matters of faith and learning from each other. We explore what we believe here so we can share it out there.

Home – Home should also be an easy place to talk about our faith. Sunday afternoons is a great time to gather the family around the lunch table with toasted cheese sandwiches and

talk about what you experienced in church that morning. Martin Luther wrote the small catechism to help parents speak the language of faith at home. Morning prayer at the start, evening prayer at the end and in between all kinds of great stuff. Home is where faith should begin, and really should be the primary place of faith formation.

Deut 6:4-9

Sometimes speaking about faith is not easy at home. If you were raised in different traditions, or religions, or no religion, those discussions can be tricky. In those times an aggressive faith is definitely not recommended.

Work/School---Now we are moving a bit outside of any perceived comfort zone we might have. Can I share my faith at work or at school? Will my co-workers be offended if I talk about Jesus? Will the other students laugh at me if I pray before lunch or before taking a test? If people know you are a Christian will they wonder why you don't talk about your faith? Some workplaces do prohibit or at least discourage faith talk, others encourage it. Some even require it. Sometimes sharing your faith requires you to stand up and profess what you believe, to say what Jesus has done in your life. Sometimes the language of faith has nothing to do with spoken words. Many times it is just reaching out to our neighbor and lending a hand, being kind, or standing up for someone who is being bullied. Or laying down and donating a pint of blood.

Community—Now some of you might be getting scared. You want me to share my faith with strangers? On the street corner? Knock on doors and ask people if they know Jesus? Maybe. Maybe not. If that is what you feel called to do that is great, if not, that is great too. Faith filled conversations at the coffee shop or morning ferry ride can allow others to listen in or even join the conversation. You could start a theological discussion on social media, or who knows, you could do something crazy like start a bible study in a tavern...

Jesus started a discussion on faith and worship at the local watering hole, where will you share your faith?