

2014 John 1, Micah 6
14-04-02 Lent Midweek #5

Micah 6:6-8

“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” ⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

John 1:35-46

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). ⁴²He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter). ⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

God's beloved people, grace and peace to you in the name of our crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ.....Amen.....

Tonight we are continuing our conversation about sharing our faith, or sharing the language of faith. Tonight's subject is "HOW?" How do we share our faith?

We have so far covered, **What** we share, **Where** we share, and **With whom** we share. In the "**what**" we asked, "What is my story of God?" Like the gospel writers and Paul each tell their story of Jesus for their people. In the "**where**" we talked about speaking the language of faith in the church, at home, at work/school/place where you spend a majority of your time each week whether compensated or not, and in your community... because as children of God, sharing God with people is what we do. In the "**with**

whom” we looked at people with whom we come into contact – placed them in concentric circles based on what kind of access we have to them – and then we really listen to people to be able to discern “who needs to hear ‘God loves them’ right now?”

So, HOW do we do it? What are some examples of how people share their faith? [wait for it – LISTEN for it.....] Street corners, door to door, radio stations, praying with our kids, offering to pray for a co-worker/friend/teammate/relative, doing it....

In some churches they talk about “evangelism strategies.” And they may enter into big programs for whatever reason. Next week we’ll get into exactly “Why” we share our faith.

But I would like to suggest that for us in this place, HOW we share our faith is by invitation. Like Jesus said to the disciples, and Philip said to

Nathanael, “Come and see.” Jesus where are you staying?... Can anything good come out of Nazareth?... Does Jesus really love me? What is worship like? Why do you go to worship? COME AND SEE!!

For the one asking, “come and see” is an invitation to enter into time with Jesus. “Come and See” is the perfect answer to a whole bunch of questions about Jesus, the church, and faith. Jesus and the disciples were people of invitation. **Q:** What would it look like for a church and for God’s people today to be people of invitation?

A: Getting outside our doors.... That’s why we spent time talking about the “**where.**” In order to invite, we need to be out there.

Now you might say, “Hey, wait a minute, we thought that God’s people were supposed to be ‘welcoming’?” And that’s true, we need to be that as well, and for the last 25 years or so, pastors and teachers in the

church have preached that we are to be welcoming, and many first time attenders at a church will remark, “They were so welcoming!” And that’s GREAT, we need to be that. But in order to “welcome,” someone has to come through the doors. And we could be the most welcoming place in town, but if no one comes in to welcome, then what....? *(but let me say this as an aside,... please, please, please be welcoming to folks who come – all kinds of folks, especially the noisy ones, and be willing to answer questions and show people around, and also please don’t be afraid to introduce yourself – you are nice, friendly, likeable people, let others see that!)*

All kinds of church companies have sprung up selling any manner of wares to attract visitors and then strategies to hold onto them once they walk in the door,... but what if....? What if.... A new person walked in with one of us to begin with, because we were out in the world sharing who Jesus is to

us, with whomever it is that needs to hear that Jesus loves them? What if that were the case?? What if we invited people to meet Jesus? The woman at the well went back to her village and invited them to “come and see” Jesus. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, invited JESUS to “come and see” the place where Lazarus lay. We can invite people to see Jesus, and Jesus to see people.

Q: Now you might say, but is the church the only place to meet Jesus?

A: What’s the answer....? Of course it isn’t the only place. But it is a place that we know well.... But, when you are inviting people to “come and see,” sometimes it means you offered to pray with them at the water cooler, or to read a piece of scripture with them on the front porch, or because they were hungry and you invited them to lunch, or you listened to them when they really needed an ear.

A lot of times, a friend will ask you “what do you think?” And you can give them a great answer about what you think, and then you can also be ready to offer to pray with them about it... Or to say, “Is it okay if I pray for you when I do my devotions tonight? Or when I say my prayers tonight?” Something like that.... and then drop them an email, or a text, or a phone call, or just mention it the next time you see them that you have been praying for them.

Since we have already thought a little about “WHAT” we believe, and thought a little about “WHERE” we can share our faith, and thought a little about “WITH WHOM” we might share,... it makes the “HOW” so much easier when the time comes.

One last thing... some of us might be scared for whatever reason to mention prayer or bible reading or coming with us to church, **Q:** HOW do we get past that?

A: I love St. Francis of Assisi on this one, St. Francis once said, “Preach the gospel (share your faith) at all times,... when necessary, use words.” HOW we share the faith is a matter of serving God and neighbor. We share in word and deed just as Jesus has shared with you. Sometimes, just showing up and being with people is enough. Jesus is always with you.

Amen.....