



Why are we involved Foundation for His Ministry in Mexico? Because through its ministry Dorothy found Jesus and it has transformed her life. Eduardo found Jesus, his life has been transformed and now God is using their new empowered life to make a huge impact in the lives of so many other people. So it is an honour to stand with them, encourage them and support them as they help change the lives of those God has given them as their neighbours. The wonderful thing is that as we have gotten involved in the Lord's ministry and our young men and women have been used, encouraged and transformed as well.

Our theme has been, walking across the room to make a difference in the lives of our neighbours. Luke 10:27 says we are to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and our neighbour as ourselves. The call is a clear one; we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart and we are to love our neighbour as ourselves (to want for them what we would want for ourselves). Who is our neighbour? Our neighbour is that person who lives next to us, who is in the class beside us or on the team at work (those whom God places beside us, those people whose lives significantly intersect with our lives). We are to take that walk across the room (like the good Samaritan did) to be their neighbour. Remember that they aren't just a spiritual work project but we need to catch the amazing fact that God has placed us beside our neighbour (or that person whose life significantly intersects our life) because God is their father as well. He loves them enough that He has placed you in their lives so you can bring God's care, love and His presence in a more tangible way into their lives. Why? Because He is their father too and He desires to care for them through us, no strings attached. So His call for us is to love those He places as neighbours in our lives. Just love them.

Last week Steve McCready reminded us that right beside our call to love them is a very specific call on our lives, to tell them about Jesus. Read Matthew 28:17 – 20. There is a call on our lives to tell others the good news of Jesus. Steve added that the exciting thing is that there is no level of spiritual maturity that we need to attain before we are called to care for our neighbour and tell them about Christ. Instead we are to go, (saturated in the power of God), as ordinary people to do extraordinary things in the lives of those around us. There are two simple ideas today.

I. This I Believe

What if at 6:15 on the next Easter Sunday morning you awoke just as the sun was starting to rise. For some reason you threw on your coat, stepped outside and walked about a block in order to catch a glimpse of the sun rising over the mountains. The sky was alive with colour, oranges and reds. It was more spectacular than you had never seen before. It simply took your breath away. You sat there transfixed by the sight; simply overwhelmed by the beauty of nature. It seemed to be a fitting beginning for a day in which you would be meeting in church to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. You found yourself picturing what it must have been like that first Easter morning when the gravel in front of the tomb began to bounce up and down, suddenly hearing the deafening crash as the rock exploded from the tomb entrance and then seeing Jesus stride out of the tomb with confidence and determination. You found yourself saying, *"Oh I wish I had been there."*

That is when it happened. As you stood there in the quietness of the morning, there was this sound from off in the East somewhere. It was a shout that seemed to

reverberate across the sky, growing louder and louder and yet it felt so inviting. Then there was a clear blast of a trumpet. The clarion call became stronger and oh it was so beautiful. You saw what looked like people begin to appear in the sky. It was weird but as you looked in the direction of Queen's Park cemetery or the Mountain View Memorial cemetery you could see masses of people seeming to float upward. Those who you knew were dead and buried began to rise heavenward. Then you found yourself starting to lift off from where you were standing and begin to float heavenward. Somewhere around 2000 feet you found yourself intersecting with those who had been dead and were now alive. There was this meeting in the air with loved ones you had so desperately missed. As well as others from your church and community who were followers of Jesus. It was then that you saw Jesus smiling, leading this crowd of billions from every tribe and colour and nation toward heaven. You knew that soon you would be taking part in a promise that He had made over 2000 years ago when He said, *"I will not drink of this communion cup again until I do it in glory with you."* You knew that right now the angels in glory were preparing for the most amazing communion service mankind had ever experienced. As you looked around you spotted your dad, your mother-in-law (for some it will be their husband or child) who had passed away before you and you gave them an embrace that you have been dreaming for years. Then as you were wiping the tears away from your eyes, you also saw a few people who surprised you by being part of this group. It was then that you saw heaven on the horizon. The view of it took your breath away, the wonder of it filled you with excitement and the glory of it filled you with a joy that was beyond description. You laughed out loud because you realized that today was just day number one of the rest of your eternity.

You know where I took that from? Listen to I Thessalonians 4:16-18. *"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words."*

Like the hymn writer said, *"What a day of rejoicing that will be when my Jesus I see."* When John caught a glimpse of eternity and saw the glorified Jesus Christ standing there in heaven, it simply says he fell on his face as if he was dead, he fainted dead away. (Revelation 1:17). Can you imagine what it will be like on that day when Jesus calls time to our world and invites us to join Him in glory forever?

Here is the question. Do you believe that what I have just said will happen? Now, let me ask you a second question. If you believe in what I just described, don't you want your neighbour, who you enjoy from across the back alley, the person you work with up town or the person you sit with on the sidelines at your kid's soccer game or your favourite Uncle to be with you and enjoy the wonders of eternity with Jesus as well? People, hear me clearly. While you and I are called to love our neighbour with no strings attached, there is nothing you can do for them which is greater than helping them find Jesus as their friend.

Why do we need to tell them about Jesus? Because as their friends, we want them to experience what Jesus can do in their lives. Do you remember how Rick Warren closed his prayer at Obama's inauguration? He prayed in the name of the one who had changed his life, Jesus. As their friends, we want them to enjoy the wonder of what we believe. We believe that there will be a time when we will be caught up to

meet the Lord in the air. We believe that death will not be the end and there will be glorious reunions in the air. We believe that there is heaven to experience and hell to shun. We believe that God loves them as much as He loves us. We believe that not only will there be a great communion meal in the sky but that this time on earth is just a sliver of time compared to the length, the experiences and the wonders of eternity. And we believe that, in the here and now God changes lives, attitudes, families, addictions, and adds purpose, depth, joy and a real, daily relationship with the God of the universe. It will not only touch their lives but it can affect the lives of their families, their friends and possibly 1000's of other people. Because of what we believe, we don't want others to miss out it. When one of our friends or neighbours finds Jesus, it is just like when a precious coin is found, when a lost prodigal son comes home and when a lost sheep is found. There is a party in heaven that is amazing. Because of that we need to understand the when God calls you to love your neighbour, He wants you to be His hands and arms and treat them with respect and care for them as friends. He opens the door to help them meet their heavenly Father and fall under His gentle care.

I think if it fully grasped what was at stake concerning our neighbours eternities, it would overwhelm us. C.S. Lewis said, *"It is hard to live with the weight of glory."* The eternal realities that are at work, on our shoulders. But what motivates me is thinking how wonderful it would be to look across the sky line on the morning we hear the trumpet of God and see my neighbour or my friend Al or others joining me for the ride. We must let what we believe touch our heart and affect how we live.

II. This I Am Called To Do

The second thought I want to leave you with this morning comes out of Obama's Inaugural address. It was a great speech. Listen to the closing lines. *"In the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words. With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations."*

Obama's call was a simple one. If things are going to change, if we are to make an impact on world, which will effect the generations to come, each of us have a responsibility to do our part. So let me change what he wrote by changing the word 'freedom' to 'Christ.' *Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom [Christ] and delivered it safely to future generations.* That is our call. How can we do that? Let me give you a simple formula that might help.

CL (Consistent Life + CE (Close Enough) + CC (Clear Communication) = Change A Life

When this happens, do you know that 83% of people who never attend church said that if they were asked they would attend church with their neighbour?

1. We need to live a consistent life.

Sam Ericsson was involved in the Christian Legal Society of Washington. One day, Sam was having lunch with a group of attorneys in the city of Los Angeles, he

turned and said, "I would like you to come to my church with me, I'd like to you be my guest." And the man said, "What church do you go to?" He said, "I go to Grace Community Church out in the San Fernando Valley." And the man hesitated for a moment and looked a bit shocked and then said, "I would never go to that church under any circumstances." And Sam said to him, "Well what makes you say that, have you been there?" He said, "I've never been there and I will never go." And Sam said, "Well how can you make that kind of judgment about the church?" He said, "It's very simple, the most crooked attorney I know of in this city goes to that church." Sam was so distressed that the following Sunday he got in the pulpit, told the story and said, "I don't know which one of you attorneys is that one, but I wish you'd get your act together or quit saying you belong to this church because the character of your life is making evangelism impossible."

In contrast to that, the other day, I met with a few of our business men uptown in their office to simply pray with them because it has financially been a very tough time for them. As I sat around the table and heard them speaking encouragement into each others lives, talking about how God was with them during this tough time and hearing how they knew that their testimony and how they lived their lives in the midst of situations (which would destroy lesser men without faith), I stood in awe to hear how they had determined to live, speak and act under the strength of Jesus so others will see Jesus living through them. In the good times and in the tough times, we are called to let Jesus live through us. By the way that only happens if we determine to keep on growing in our faith.

The other day I read of a pastor who was invited to spend the weekend with Ruth and Billy Graham. As it got late (seeing that Billy look tired), the pastor was about to call it a night when Billy said, "Bill, before you go, feed me from God's Word." Here is a man who has preached to more people than probably anyone in history and here was the reason his strength grew with his age. He knew he still needed and still loved God's word. First, live a consistent growing life before God and others.

2. Stay close enough to others so they can see how you live your life for Jesus.

You know the story in Luke 8, as Jesus and his disciples dock their boat in the Gerasene region of Galilee, a naked man with multiple demons rushes them. Through a set of circumstances, Jesus casts out the demons into a whole heard of pigs and within minutes this raving demonized man is sitting in front of them, clothed and in his right mind asking Jesus a question. (Luke 8:38.) Look at Jesus' reply in verse 39. He was told to go and tell his neighbours what has happened to him. They can put his testimony in a context of their experience with him. They should know from living with him that Jesus has made a difference in his life.

I have football tickets with Markus Lemke, chairman of our Elders Board and I sit near the neighbour who lives across the back alley from him. I went to the C-Section Grey Cup party (our tickets are in C-section) at his house. I can tell you that Markus and Shauna are not only good neighbours but as their neighbours have watched them and they have told me that they are impressed with their faith for it has touched them as a family and neighbours. We need to be close enough friends with those God brings into our lives that they can see Jesus in us.

3. We need to give as clear a communication as People want, and as God nudges us to do.

I Peter 3:15 says, *“be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you.”* Sounds simple doesn't it? Live in such a way that they will want to ask about this Jesus they can see is a part of your life. I believe each of us should think through how to explain our walk with Jesus so that in those times when God nudges us to share with someone else or those times when our neighbour will ask about our faith we will have an answer ready to give them. But don't forget that we don't have to have all the answers. Remember the man who Jesus healed in John 9:25 who simply said, “I can't tell you everything about Him but one thing I do know is that once I was blind but now I can see.” He said he didn't know all the answers, but he did know that since Jesus entered his life and his life had gotten better. Everyone of us can do that. We can say that in our lives, in our marriages, in our work, with our speech or area of fear that while we don't understand it Jesus has made a difference.

The other day, Greg Korsrud sent me a note about one of his co-workers, Ken. Greg is in the Insurance business. He and Ken regularly walked and had lunch together. One Friday, his friend Ken said he didn't feel good and he was looking a little jaundiced. Greg talked him into going to the doctor and the next day he found out that he had pancreatic cancer. Greg's note to me said, *“On Monday, Ken showed up for work and I was the only person in the office that knew of Ken's situation. We met for lunch and I told Ken of how sorry I am to hear of his situation. The first thing Ken says to me across the lunch room, ‘Did you say a prayer for me on Sunday?’ I was somewhat surprised by this question and answered yes. I had actually prayed that Ken would give his life to Jesus but was not able to tell Ken at the time. Ken still wanted to go for a walk, so we went for our walk and I gave him a book when we finished our walk. I had the privilege of going for walks for the rest of the week, not knowing it would be the last time I would see him. Ken did not ask any further questions about Christianity or the book. Ken went on sick leave and decided he did not want any visitors and passed away in September at the age of 58. Only God knows what decision Ken made with his life.”* Greg was friend enough and obedient enough to follow God's leading and give Ken an opportunity to be pointed toward faith. Jesus said John 2:21, *“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

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Do you remember that we began with a simple question? If you knew, by simply walking across the street that you could change your neighbour's life, would you do it? Can I ask you to act on what you believe and do what God has called you to do?

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