

The Calvary Challenge
Part 3 - Outreach to Others
Acts 1:8
April 22 , 2018

Well, good morning, and welcome to part 3 of **“The Calvary Chapel Challenge”** - Today is our FINAL CHALLENGE SUNDAYS - In February we were challenged to:

- 1. Spend 5 minutes each day in Bible reading and prayer!**
- 2. Commit to come to church on Wednesday night for 4 weeks!**
- 3. Build a Christian Friendship at church!**

In March we were challenged to:

- 1. Become a more engaged worshipper.**
- 2. Commit to tithing 10% of your income for 6 weeks**
- 3. Invite a friend to church.**

I hope you have taken at least 1 or 2 of these challenges - I know some have taken on all 6 - To whatever extent, I know the Lord has BLESSED & HONORED your efforts!

Today, our challenges will all center around our OUTREACH TO OTHERS - In the Old Testament the JEWISH PEOPLE had an interesting way of WITNESSING TO OTHERS about Jehovah God - God used what I call a **“National Evangelism Strategy”**.

Through Moses, God MADE A PROMISE to the Nation - He said, **“If you obey My Law, I will bless you so greatly that every nation will say, ‘Their God must be the true and living God’ - But, if you disobey My Law, I will curse you so badly that every nation will say, ‘Their God must be the true and living God’”**.

Either way, the Nation of Israel would be a WITNESS TO THE WORLD of the ONE TRUE GOD!

As individuals, the Jewish People were NEVER VERY EVANGELICAL - but as a nation, they were God's CONSTANT WITNESS to the world.

Yes, from time to time, He would send out a PROPHET FROM THE NATION to go out to other cities or nations to CALL THEM TO REPENTANCE - men like **Jonah, Daniel, Obadiah or Nahum** were EXAMPLES of men called to witness GOD'S MESSAGE to foreign nations - but these were few and far between - The NATION ITSELF would be God's PRIMARY TOOL FOR GOD'S WITNESS & OUTREACH.

But, in the New Testament, THIS ALL CHANGED - God's methods for reaching out moved from this NATIONAL APPROACH to a very PERSONAL APPROACH - When Jesus commissioned His followers, it was EVER INDIVIDUAL PERSON was to go - SPREAD the Good New about Jesus - and make disciples!

In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, **“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

For these EARLY BELIEVERS, Jerusalem was their NEIGHBORHOOD - their community - Judea and Samaria were the SURROUNDING REGIONS - and the ends of the earth - well, that is everywhere else!

When TRANSPORTATION was primarily by walking, the world was a MUCH LARGER PLACE than it is today!

If you are a Christian today, God has called you to BE HIS WITNESS - God has called you to REACH OUT to others with a SIMPLE MESSAGE - **That Jesus has changed your life, and He wants to change their lives as well!**

You know what a WITNESS DOES? - They do TWO THINGS - First, they TELL A STORY - they simply RECOUNT WHAT they have experienced - They relate what has HAPPENED TO THEM.

Second, a witness INFLUENCES THE OUTCOME of a trial - Being a witness for Jesus CAN INFLUENCE the outcome of a PERSON'S LIFE - By sharing your story of what GOD HAS DONE in your life, hopefully, you can change their FUTURE LIFE & their ETERNAL DESTINY! - Being a witness is a POWERFUL THING!

Where do you EXERCISE THIS INFLUENCE? - FIRST, in your Jerusalem - RIGHT HERE - this church / this community - Your NEIGHBORHOOD - Your Workplace - Your team - Your group of Friends - that is your Jerusalem!

God calls some of You to GO FURTHER - to your Judea and Samaria - God has given some of you a LARGER PLATFORM - Maybe you TRAVEL - Maybe you WRITE - Some of you have GREATER INFLUENCE because of YOUR BIG PERSONALITY or your LARGE RESOURCES - If you do, THEN GO! - take advantage of THE INFLUENCE God has given you.

A few of you are CALLED EVEN FURTHER - Some are called to the MISSION FIELD - God has put a SPECIAL TUG on your heart to REACH THE WORLD - If you think this SOUNDS GLAMOROUS OR FUN, you have much to learn about the WORLD OUTSIDE of your Jerusalem.

The mission field is TOUGH PLACE - it requires GREAT SACRIFICE - It takes a SPECIAL CALLING to go - but some of you GOD MAY BE CALLING - Like Julia Pugh over in Papa New Guinea - SHE KNEW God was leading her to LEAVE BEHIND her friends and her family and to MOVE HALFWAY around the world to BE HIS WITNESS.

This is the calling for a few - but God has called all of us to BE HIS WITNESS SOMEWHERE! - For most of us, it is RIGHT HERE in Jerusalem - or in our case Snellville or Lilburn or Stone Mountain or even LOGANVILLE!

Today, our challenges are all about BEING THAT WITNESS - being that EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE to the people God has strategically placed right around us - Are you ready for the Challenge?

Let's get right into them - Our first challenge for the coming weeks is **To give to the next generation!**

For 2,000 years, God has TRUSTED HIS CHURCH to pass down the TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL from one generation to the next - This is PLAN A - God does not have a PLAN B - if we don't pass along our LOVE FOR GOD and the TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE to the next generation, it will not happen!

In the First Century, men like the Apostle John invested in other men & women JUST AS JESUS had invested in him - Men like POLYCARP - HE BECAME one of the next generation's GREAT CHURCH LEADERS - He sat under the teaching of John for several years.

He later became the PASTOR OF THE CHURCH in Smyrna - This was a LARGE & INFLUENTIAL CHURCH of the 2nd century in Modern Day Turkey - Polycarp WAS MARTYRED for his faith around 156 AD - But first, he also invested in the NEXT GENERATION of men and women who would CARRY ON GOD'S WORK.

And this is how the Gospel has passed from ONE GENERATION to the next from the time JESUS ASCENDED into heaven until today - What a HUGE RESPONSIBILITY each generation has been given!

Can we HINDER THIS from happening? - **Absolutely!** - Let's first address a couple of BAD ATTITUDES that ever generation carries towards the NEXT GENERATION that can hinder our faith from being passed along:

(1) Every generation considers the next generation to be weak and inferior to their generation! - Life was ALWAYS HARDER for the older generation - They ALWAYS FACED greater challenges - **They had to walk to school in the snow every day and it was UPHILL both ways!**

Today, millennials GET SO OFFENDED by the fun the older generation has at their expense - Don't think this HARASSMENT is anything new! - When my generation (the BABY BOOMERS) came along we were **"useless, long-haired hippies who were all drug addicts and draft dodgers!"**

And now we have BECOME OUR PARENTS! - and one day YOU WILL HAVE FUN at the expense of the generation that follows you! - This is just THE WAY LIFE IS - the next generations NEVER MEASURES UP to the challenges and victories of the previous one!

By the way, you millennials think you have it bad? - What if your generation had to follow WHAT WAS CALLED **“The Greatest Generation”** - All my parent’s generation did was FIGHT A WORLD WAR - and saved the world from Nazis and Communist! - Try measuring up to that LITTLE ACCOMPLISHMENT! - No wonder we boomers have an INFERIORITY COMPLEX!

(2) Every generation grows older and thinks, “everything old is always better than anything new!” - How many of you guys under age 30 ARE SICK of hearing about HOW GREAT THINGS USED TO BE? - Trust me, I know the feeling!

But, this is what EVERY GENERATION does - They look back and GLORIFY THE OLD & MINIMIZE the new! - **As if walking uphill in the snow to school every day is somehow better than driving a car to school in the sunshine!**

In the Book of Ezra, we have the record of the JEWISH PEOPLES RETURN to the Land of Israel after the 70 years of CAPTIVITY in Babylon - When they RETURNED, Jerusalem was destroyed - and the Temple of Solomon REDUCED TO RUINS.

In Ezra 3, the foundation of the NEW TEMPLE had been laid - the people had an INTERESTING & DIVERSE REACTION to the event BASED ON THEIR AGE!

The YOUNG PEOPLE, the new generation, who had been born in Captivity REJOICE WITH GREAT JOY & EXCITEMENT at the floor plan of the new temple - But, the OLD MEN who remembered the Temple of Solomon **“wept with a loud voice”** when they saw the FOOTPRINT OF the new temple - Why? - Because their FRAME OF REFERENCE was different - **They remembered WHAT WAS! The new generation only KNEW WHAT IS!**

Who was right? - Both! - But, I fault the OLDER GENERATION for missing a GREAT OPPORTUNITY - They had a chance to REJOICE AT THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS & FUTURE of the younger generation - but they chose rather to COMPARE IT to what they had known - and then CALL IT A FAILURE!

This is a HUGE MISTAKE every older generation can make! - FOR EXAMPLE, whether you like the WORSHIP MUSIC of this next generation or not, DON'T POO POO IT.

There are great songs IN EVERY GENERATION - Yes, they are DIFFERENT IN STYLE from the ones God used to ministry when you were young - but that doesn't mean YOU CAN'T REJOICE in them - and WORSHIP WITH THEM!

The USE OF TECHNOLOGY is relatively new in ministry - Don't POO POO it because you like paper bulletins rather than video announcements! - If we are going to GIVE TO THE NEXT GENERATION, **we first have to accept them - and then embrace them!**

Are you INVESTING in the next generation? - Have you REACHED OUT to someone younger - not to preach to them - or to “**straighten them out**” - but just to love them and help them?

Older ladies - I didn't say OLD LADIES - Older ladies - those who have RAISED CHILDREN - Have you reached out to a YOUNG MOM just to see if she NEEDED SOME HELP? - Not to tell her what she is DOING WRONG - but to offer an afternoon of babysitting - or to give her A NIGHT OUT with her husband - or to give her WISDOM in DEALING with a testy 2-year-old?

Have you MADE YOURSELF AVAILABLE if she needs advice in understanding her husband or handling a difficult teen? - Have you thought about ASKING HER if she would like to go out ONE EVENING for coffee just to talk?

Older guys, have you taken the time TO GET TO KNOW a younger man in the fellowship? - Have you eye-balled a young man who is WHERE YOU WERE one day not so long ago?

He's trying to manage a young family on a TIGHT BUDGET - He is trying to keep both a DEMANDING BOSS & an EXHAUSTED WIFE HAPPY!

You might be asking "HOW DO I DO THIS"? - First, stop looking at the NEXT GENERATION with contempt - Like they are SOMEHOW INFERIOR - They are just LIKE YOU WERE 30 years ago!

Second, ask God TO PUT SOMEONE in your path - IDENTIFY THEM - begin to pray for them! - INTRODUCE YOURSELF to them after the service - Let them know you are praying for them.

Third, meet them for lunch one day & YOU PAY THE BILL - they probably don't have any money - Get to know them - LISTEN & give advice only when asked!

I like the method Jesus used - He had MANY FOLLOWERS - But, He picked 2 or 3 to really INVEST IN - For Jesus, it was Peter, James, and John? - Do you have a Peter, a James, or a John in your life?

You might just BE SURPRISED AT HOW OPEN a young man would be to you taking an interest in his life? - Ladies, you MIGHT BE SHOCKED at the WILLINGNESS OF A YOUNG WOMAN to embrace your love for her family - You could be TURNED AWAY - and if you are, just look for SOMEONE ELSE! - But, do something to invest in the NEXT GENERATION!

Let me say a QUICK WORD to the younger generation - Do you realize WHAT YOU CAN LEARN from the OLD GEEZERS sitting around you? - Do you have any idea the AMOUNT OF WISDOM 50, 60 or 70 years of life can GIVE TO A PERSON?

Why would you want to PASS ON LEARNING something from them just because they DON'T UNDERSTAND INSTAGRAM OR SNAPCHAT - or because they THINK YOU ARE STUPID to eat a TIDE POD!

IF THEY ARE WILLING to give you a chance, then you give THEM A CHANCE!

Our second challenge is **To lead someone to Jesus** - Have you ever experienced the SHEER JOY of praying with someone to become a Christian? - It is an AMAZING FEELING!

Think about it - What an INCREDIBLE THING that God would use us to change SOMEONE'S DESTINY FOR ALL ETERNITY - It is FASCINATING that God would involve us in HIS SALVATION WORK!

Let's talk for a moment about how Jesus RECRUITED FOLLOWERS - Trust me, He did not have a PACKAGED APPROACH - He did not use a ROMAN'S ROAD TRACT - Do you know what that is? - It was a popular tract for STREET WITNESSING when I was in HS and College.

It was a 4 OR 5 STEP approach to salvation from the Book of Romans - It started with **Romans 3:23** - "**For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" - then **Romans 6:23** "**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**".

You could WALK A PERSON through the WHOLE PLAN of Salvation given to us in the Book of Romans - It was a POWERFUL TOOL that led many people to a relationship with Jesus - I am not knocking it - I am only saying THIS WAS NOT Jesus' approach.

It would seem that Jesus used a different approach with EVERY PERSON He came in contact with - Let's look at a FEW EXAMPLES:

- John 3 - **Nicodemus** - He was an educated Pharisee - Jesus took a THEOLOGICAL APPROACH when talking with this religious leader - The FAMOUS STATEMENT of Jesus to Nicodemus was "**Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again!**" - Jesus reached this man by correcting HIS DOCTRINE - He SET RIGHT his understanding of HOW TO BE SAVED!

- John 4 - **The woman at the well** - An uneducated Samaritan woman who was living an IMMORAL LIFESTYLE - Jesus took a MORE CONFRONTATIONAL approach with her.

His famous line to her was **“You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you have spoken truly!”**

Talk about IN YOUR FACE EVANGELISM - This was it - But, like Nicodemus, it was EXACTLY WHAT SHE NEEDED to hear - Her issues were NOT THEOLOGY - they were IMMORAL LIVING - Making BAD CHOICES and then JUSTIFYING them!

- John 8 - **The woman caught in the act of Adultery** - Again, we have an obviously immoral person - but she seems to have a very different ATTITUDE TOWARD HER SIN - His famous line with her was **“Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more”**.

It appears she was MORE OF A VICTIM than someone who was PROUD OF HER CHOICES - So, Jesus addressed THAT NEED - He showed her COMPASSION - NOT THE CONDEMNATION she seemed accustomed to receiving from others!

- John 9 - We have **A BLIND MAN** who needs HELP & HEALING - Jesus implies that HIS BLINDNESS HAD NOT BEEN caused by a sinful lifestyle - He appears to be a NORMAL MAN WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY - Jesus' IMPORTANT QUESTION to this man was, **“Do you believe in the Son of God?”**

Jesus met this MAN'S PHYSICAL NEED IN ORDER to open the door so that He could meet HIS SPIRITUAL NEED - For this man, the question was ONE OF FAITH - Jesus is saying, **“I have healed you, but now DO YOU TRUST ME with the rest of your life?”** - Or, was YOUR PHYSICAL SIGHT all you really wanted from the Messiah?

Notice, FOUR INDIVIDUALS - 4 different APPROACHES - With each person Jesus met them right where they were - It wasn't a ONE SIZE FITS ALL approach to EVANGELISM - Jesus' approach REQUIRED PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE of each individual situation.

Obviously, as God, Jesus KNEW ALL THINGS - We don't have THIS ADVANTAGE - But the principle is STILL EVIDENT - The more we know someone - the DEEPER OUR RELATIONSHIP with them - the more powerfully & effectively we can SPEAK INTO THEIR LIVES!

This week, in PREPARING THIS MESSAGE, I was thinking back to times when I have had the privilege of LEADING SOMEONE TO CHRIST - Interesting, MOST OF THE TIME it happened in a COUNSELING SETTING.

As we talked - as they OPENED UP their life to me, I could SPEAK MORE DIRECTLY to their need - I could SPEAK TO THEM with words that would TOUCH THEM DEEPLY - Why? - because I UNDERSTOOD THEIR REAL NEED - they had REVEALED it to me during our conversation.

I just had to have the PATIENCE TO LISTEN - the DISCERNMENT TO UNDERSTAND - and the COURAGE to address the REAL NEED.

As I got to know them, I could CLEARLY SEE what was standing between them and God - I could see if the issue was PRIDE - or GUILT - or emotional or physical HEALING - or an IMMORAL LIFESTYLE - or if they had a WRONG UNDERSTANDING about God.

The same will be true for you - The people you are going to MOST EFFECTIVELY reach for Christ are going to be those YOU KNOW BEST - Effective Evangelism starts with CARING ABOUT PEOPLE - Then, learn TO LISTEN to them - As you do PRAY FOR DISCERNMENT - lastly, patiently wait for the RIGHT MOMENT TO SPEAK into their life the RIGHT WORDS.

UNDERSTAND, IT WILL TAKE COURAGE TO SPEAK THE TRUTH into another person's life - Jesus always spoke THE TRUTH IN A LOVING, BUT POWERFUL way! - FOR most of us, **THE PROBLEM is not "what to say - but do we have the courage to say it?"**

We know what THE ISSUES are - We know that we have THE ANSWER - but do we have the BOLDNESS TO SPEAK? - Do we have the COURAGE TO POINT a person to REPENTANCE and to Jesus?

Our challenge to you this month is that you will have THE COURAGE TO SPEAK BOLDLY into someone's life - And to lead them to Jesus Christ as their Savior - You will change a life for ALL ETERNITY!

Our third challenge is **To do a random act of kindness in Jesus' Name** - We not only SPEAK OUR FAITH, but we LIVE OUT our faith!
James 4:17 says, Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

James 2:20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

There is POWER IN ACTION - As Christians, we often talk about the POWER OF THE WORD of God - and there is great power in God's Word - But, there is also INCREDIBLE POWER in our actions - the LIVING OUT of our faith in that Word.

When we are KIND TO SOMEONE, not just with our words, but also with OUR DEEDS, we communicate the message that YOU MATTER TO ME - Our actions SCREAM THE MESSAGE, **"You really are loved!" - Words alone do not always SEND THAT MESSAGE!**

It is important that I TELL MY WIFE that I love her - but, trust me, from time to time I MUST COMMUNICATE that same message through MY ACTIONS!

To Donna, nothing screams “I LOVE YOU” like taking out the trash without being asked to do so! - Nothing says, “YOU MATTER TO ME” louder than when I CLEAN THE KITCHEN before she comes home in the evening - and the BIGGEST MESSAGE of all is sent when I TURN THE TV OFF when she comes in the room!

My point is that ACTS OF KINDNESS say “I CARE ABOUT YOU” far more effectively than just my WORDS ALONE!

Do you recall the BEAUTIFUL STORY recorded in 2 Samuel 23 about David and three of his MIGHTY MEN WHO WERE HIDING in the CAVE OF ADULLAM - They were hiding because A GARRISON of their ARCH ENEMY, the Philistines, were encamped nearby.

One day while HIDING OUT, David started DAYDREAMING about how wonderful it would be to be BACK AT HOME DRINKING water from the clean wells in Bethlehem.

In verse 15 he said, **"Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless, he would not drink it but poured it out to the LORD. And he said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.**

David is SO OVERWHELMED by the actions of the three men that he could not even DRINK THE WATER - He pours it out as a SACRIFICE TO THE LORD - In other words, he gives glory to God because of the DARING, DEVOTED, AND LOVING ACTIONS of his friends!

There is POWER IN KINDNESS - Mother Teresa once said, **“The biggest disease today is not leprosy or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted”.**

Loving actions say to a person, **You are loved. You matter in this lonely, cold world!**

ONE IMPORTANT POINT to remember is that we want to do these random acts of kindness IN JESUS' NAME - in other words, they NEED SOME CONTEXT if they are going to communicate the TOTAL MESSAGE.

Yes, being kind to someone will always MAKE THEM FEEL BETTER - but it won't necessarily point them to Jesus!

Our goal is to love - but it is also to COMMUNICATE TO THEM GOD'S LOVE - We want them to know there is a GOD WHO LOVES THEM and we are simply HIS HANDS & HIS FEET to show that kindness.

Our actions don't need to be accompanied BY A SERMON - but they may need to be accompanied by a SHORT MESSAGE like **"Jesus loves you & so do I"**.

One thing I like to do is LEAVE A WAITRESS A NICE TIP - but to leave it with one of these CARDS **(SHOW ON SCREEN)** - I might even write a short message on there like, **I am praying for you!** or **Jesus loves you!**

This serves to GIVE MY KINDNESS some context! - There is someone MUCH MORE IMPORTANT than your customer who CARES ABOUT YOU!

One other quote from Mother Teresa is an important thought: **"If you cannot feed a hundred people, then feed just one!"**

Sometimes WE GET OVERWHELMED by the number of needs we see every day - When we feel overwhelmed, the temptation is to DO NOTHING - We feel OUR FEEBLE EFFORTS are useless in the face of such GREAT NEED - Remember, Jesus urged us to help OUR NEIGHBORS one at the time.

Be the GOOD SAMARITAN to one person today - Show kindness to one HURTING FRIEND - Reach out to one LONELY CO-WORKER - Take a meal to ONE SICK NEIGHBOR.

You are NOT RESPONSIBLE for everyone's neighbor - but you are for YOUR NEIGHBOR!

One final point: **Kindness always begins at home!** - So much of the NT teaching on family was centered around BEING KIND TO ONE ANOTHER - Showing LOVE & RESPECT for each person in the home.

This was a REVOLUTIONARY IDEA in the first Century - Before Christianity, neither women nor children WERE AFFORDED much love, respect or kindness!

Nothing will RADICALLY CHANGE the environment of a home LIKE RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS! - Having troubles with your spouse? - Having problems with your teenager? - Before you SEEK COUNSELING, TRY KINDNESS - Do something Kind for that person every day for a week and see WHAT HAPPENS.

Once you start BEING KIND at home, START EXPORTING IT to others - And when you are ASKED WHY you are being kind, tell them it is all because Jesus WAS KIND TO YOU!

So, there we have it - The Calvary Challenge 3.0

- **Give something to the next generation.**
- **Lead someone to Christ.**
- **Do a random act of kindness in Jesus' Name.**

May God use you in a POWERFUL WAY as you reach out TO OTHERS in Jesus' Name - in your Jerusalem, your Judea and Samaria, and the uttermost parts of your world!

Let's Pray.