

JUST WALK ACROSS THE ROOM

2ND JANUARY 2022

HillSide's Minister – Rev' Allan Booth

WEEK 1 - WHY BOTHER

Blurb:

For most of us sharing our faith is scary, what if people think we're simple minded or they might even think we're unsure because we don't know all the details. Yet we are not expected to be theologians, just to share and teach from our own life experience; the truth is nobody has all the answers only Godself knows everything. The Holy Spirit is our promised and reliable guide. We must 'Just walk across the room.'

Matt 28:16-20 NIV

The Great Commission

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Sermon

Okay so Jesus, when you say go, just what do you have in mind? Deepest Africa, Thembisa, Alex or the unreached people in California? I know! I will go to Umhlanga for you.

This is a very popular sort of conversation to have with God; we have an inkling as to what is expected of us, but we negotiate the finer points better than a team of lawyers. We even argue that the great age of missionaries is over, it must've died with colonialism. Surely by now everyone has had an opportunity to hear about Jesus. Are we really expected to go to uncomfortable places to share with people something they can google anyway? So, do we still need to Go? There is even an academic argument placed for the fact that when Jesus referred to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth as recorded by Luke in Acts; he was referring to the known world of the day. That's surely been covered, so there it is we don't have to go anymore!

But... Where did the disciples go when they left the Mount of Olives?

They went to their homes, their neighbours, their places of work... and the world has not been the same since! Their message was not complicated; Jesus was crucified, he died and was buried. But we have seen him alive since then; Jesus is the Messiah that was promised! Simple.

A common mistake is that I want to design a bullet proof overwhelming testimony that would bring those who hear to their knees in repentance so that they would cry out for Jesus to come into their life; that the Holy Spirit would pour out gifts then and there, so there would be no doubt that my testimony is true. Can you see why that will not work? When we testify worrying about how people might react, then we have brought the focus onto our self and not onto Jesus. Also when we over complicate what we are trying to say, we run rings around ourselves and get lost in our own arguments.

I have a best friend that very few of you have met; if I tell you about him I won't begin with an explanation of his world view or try to explain why he loves his wife and children. Most likely I am going to tell you about the life experiences we've shared. I might even tell some stories about the mischief we've got up to! When we are telling others about Jesus, that's what we must do. No need for degree level theology, just sharing experiences of our own life lived with an ever-present friend. The golden rule is to keep it simple and relatable!

There is a story told of Sean an Irish protestant minister, and Paddy a catholic priest whose Churches were over the road from one another. After much discussion they decided to act together for the good of the whole community. One day

they were found putting up a sign by the roadside. The sign read: "The end is near! Turn yourself around now, before it's too late!"

The sign was barely erected when a car came racing down the road. The driver leant out his window shaking his fist and shouted: "Leave people alone, you religious nutters! We don't need your lectures." Seconds later from around the next curve the church men heard screeching tyres and a big splash!

Shaking his head Father Patrick says "tis sad, but that's the third one this morning..."

"Aye" says Rev Sean, "do you think, maybe, the sign should just say, bridge out!?"

Friends go to your homes, your families, and your places of work, just walk across the room, and share your friendship with Jesus. And as you go, remember two things; Jesus goes with you, and keep it simple!

Amen

Benediction

*May the coming year be one of increased riches of grace—
hearing His voice more clearly, knowing His heart more deeply,
resting in His love more fully, trusting His care more completely,
walking His pathway more peacefully, knowing His presence more intimately,
blessed by His goodness more abundantly.*

Amen