

From Dave's Laptop

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Today is significant just because it is a day the Lord made, and on which God has granted us life . . . AND it is significant in at least two other ways: this is the tenth anniversary of the beginning of our Iraq war; and it marks the inauguration of Pope Francis I. Beyond these things, this is also the week before Holy Week, and I want to be sure you know the schedule for the next two weeks:



SUNDAY, **March 24:** Palm Sunday (regular schedule)

WEDNESDAY, **March 27:**

Regular Wednesday activities will not meet

THURSDAY, **March 28:**

Maundy Thursday Service at 7 p.m. in the Chapel.

This will be a meditative communion service quite like the one we did last year.

FRIDAY, **March 29:** Good Friday Service at 7 p.m. in room 100.

Dawn Howard-Davis will be our preacher for this service.

SUNDAY, **March 31:** Resurrection Sunday!

7:15 a.m. SonRise Baptismal Service in room 100

8:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast together (Bible Study Classes will not meet.)

10:00 a.m. Resurrection Worship!

SATURDAY, **April 6:**

5:30 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres "under the tree" for our 40th Gala

7:30 p.m. Catered Celebration Dinner (by reservation only . . . you can still get in!)

SUNDAY, **April 7:** Celebration Worship at 9:30 a.m. (Bible Study Classes will not meet.)

I hope you'll be a part of each of these very special events!

On the subject of Holy Week: Studies have shown that non-Christians are more curious about what Christians believe during the Easter Season than at any other time during the year. Many persons will have had their interest piqued this year by the BIBLE series on HBO (that still has two more installments, Sundays at 8 p.m.), and I encourage you to pray for God's guidance in your conversations over the next two weeks. Ask God to give you opportunities to share your faith with someone who needs the Hope we have in Jesus!

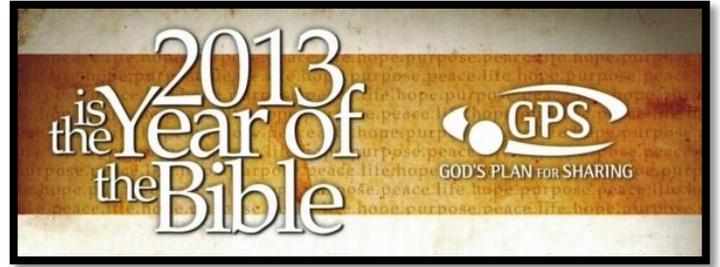
There are three keys to being an effective witness for Jesus: (1) **clarity** about your own experience of salvation (John 5:24; Romans 10:9-13); (2) **commitment** to be obedient to Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20); and (3) **confidence** about how to share your faith (1 Peter 3:15-16). While we may sometimes be able to lead someone to faith in Jesus in our first conversation with them, it is more often the case that our conversation helps to move them closer to faith.

When we are blessed to be present at the moment of someone's faith commitment, that moment is nearly always the result of many conversations that preceded it. I've attached a handout

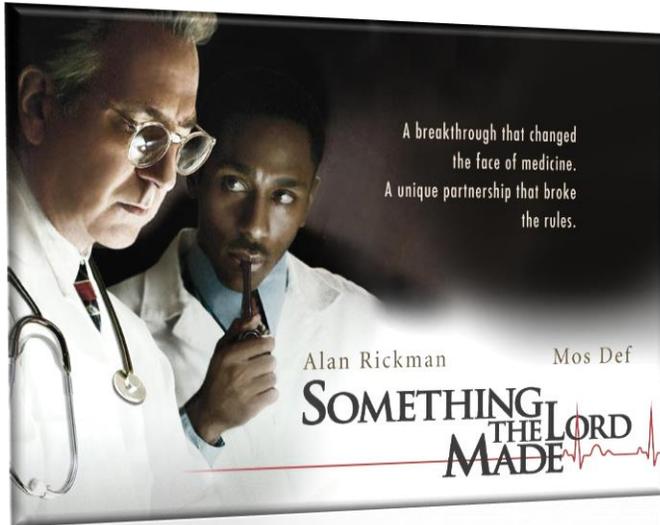
called “Engle’s Scale” that may help you to conceptualize the progression through which people usually move toward faith.

I’ve also attached a handout that briefly presents “God’s Plan of Salvation,” entitled, “Can You Tell Me How I Can Become a Christian?” This outline builds on the famous “Roman Road” to salvation from Paul’s letter to Rome, using the four-fold outline you’ve heard me speak about often: **God’s Purpose; Our Problem; God’s Provision; Our Decision.** I encourage you to prayerfully study this outline so you might be prepared for the opportunities God will provide for you.

Another way to prepare will be to pick up one of the free “Find It Here” evangelistic New Testaments that will be available on Sunday morning. These New Testaments are marked in such a way as to guide you through a presentation of “how to become a Christian.”



Finally, Dan Trollinger recently introduced me to a fascinating film about something that happened right here in Baltimore at Johns Hopkins Hospital during the 1940’s. Like the BIBLE series currently showing, this film was also made by HBO. There is some rough language in the film as well as lots of surgical footage, but if you can get past those two matters, you’ll find this true story quite inspiring.



Dave

P.S. Please note the attached flyers about upcoming Christian choral concerts.

P.P.S. Due to the scheduling of our 40th anniversary celebration, our Prayer Triplet reporting session will take place from 9:30-11:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 20. While all are welcome at this gathering, it will be especially important to have a reporter from each prayer group prepared to share a summary of what God showed you during your time together.

Engle's Scale (modified)

- 8 Awareness of a Supreme Being,
but no Effective Knowledge of the Gospel
- 7 Initial Awareness of the Gospel
- 6 Awareness of the Fundamentals of the Gospel
- 5 Grasp of the Implications of the Gospel
- 4 Positive Attitude toward the Gospel
- 3 Recognition of Personal Sin
- 2 Decision to Act
- 1 Repentance and Faith in Jesus
- 0 *A New Disciple is Born!*
- +1 Post-decision Evaluation
- +2 Incorporation into the Body
- +3 Development of Spiritual Disciplines
- +4 Discovery & Deployment of Spiritual Gifts
- +5 Great Commission Engagement
- +6 Submission to Christ's Lordship
- +7 Continued Sanctification through all of Life

James F. Engle and Wilbert Norton
What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975)

Can You Tell Me How I Can Become A Christian?

There is no one "right way" to lead someone to Christ. Each of us will find a way that fits our own personalities, and even then each presentation will be tailored to fit the person with whom we are speaking. We speak from within our own journey and our own testimony.

❖ SIX PRINCIPLES FOR SHARING YOUR FAITH

1. **The Principle of Responsibility**: The work of salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit. We give witness to what we ourselves have experienced, but it is the Holy Spirit who causes persons to open their hearts to Jesus (John 16:8).
2. **The Principle of Respect**: Because every person is created in God's image, whenever we speak of Jesus to others, we speak with respect, with clarity, and with love (Genesis 1:26-27).
3. **The Principle of "Loading the Heart Drive"**: The Bible tells us to "hide God's Word in our hearts" so that we will understand God's purposes (Psalm 119:11; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Psalm 19:7-14).
4. **The Principle of a Clear Spirit**: By God's grace, we live our lives in ways consistent with the Gospel, so that we are not ashamed of our testimony. We "walk the walk" (Colossians 1:10).
5. **The Principle of Current Experience**: "You must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it" (1 Peter 3:15).
6. **The Principle of Spiritual Breathing** (from Bill Bright):

"Exhale": "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong" (1 John 1:9)

"Inhale": "let the Holy Spirit fill and control you" (Ephesians 5:18)

Trust God: If we are faithful students of the Word, "the Holy Spirit will teach you what needs to be said even as you are standing there" (Luke 12:12).

One Way to Answer the Question . . .

- ❖ The verses in bold print are often called "The Roman Road to Salvation."
- ❖ If possible, use a New Testament and let the person read with you.
- ❖ You may find it helpful to underline these verses in your Bible or Testament, writing the page number of the next verse at the bottom of each page. You need only remember the first verse! Apart from Jeremiah 29:11, all verses are in the New Testament.

1. GOD'S PURPOSE

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."*

2. OUR PROBLEM

Romans 3:23 ***“For all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious standard.”***

Romans 6:23 ***“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

3. GOD’S PROVISION

Romans 5:8 ***“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”***

John 14:6 Jesus told him, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”*

4. OUR DECISION

Romans 10:9-10 ***“For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.”***

Romans 10:13 For ***“Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”***

- Don’t pressure, but do give a clear opportunity to respond. Conversion is God’s work.

Prayer of Invitation, “The Sinner’s Prayer”

(There is really no one version of this prayer—these are not “magic words.” Use words that fit what you have talked about together. Even better, prompt them as they use their own words.)

Dear God, thank you that you love me, and that you have paid the debt for my sin. I agree with you that I have sinned and am in need of your forgiveness. I ask you to forgive me of my sin, to cleanse my heart, to make me your child, and to begin to remake my life so that I will become more like Jesus. Guide me through your Holy Spirit as I discover the purpose you have for my life. Thank you for saving me! In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

- ❖ After the prayer: Sometimes people feel significant emotion after a prayer of repentance; sometimes they don’t. Emphasize that faith is anchored in God’s promises, not in our feelings.
 1. Point out that when a person asks for God’s forgiveness, (1) our sins are forgiven; (2) we become children of God; (3) we receive eternal life; (4) the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our lives; and (5) we begin the Great Adventure for which God created us (Ephesians 2:8-10)!
 2. Emphasize Jesus’ promise to the new believer: *“I assure you, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life [PRESENT TENSE]. They will never be condemned for their sins [FUTURE TENSE], but they have already passed from death into life” [PAST TENSE] (John 5:24).*
 3. Talk about the importance of baptism (Matthew 28:19-20) & church membership (Acts 2:47; Hebrews 10:23-25) for growing faith.
 4. Encourage immediate witness: Who can you tell about your decision who will rejoice with you? Who do you know who needs to find what you have found?