

Proclaiming Christ in Society

The word proclaim in English is to announce officially, publicly and clearly.

Kerruso – herald, formality, gravity and authority. To publish something that must be listened to and obeyed.

There must be no other options:

Gal 1:6-8

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!

Gal 3:1

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.

Gal 5:4 – falling from grace

You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

- You can be a so-called Christian, say the right things and yet be embracing another gospel.
- Grace is what sets true Christianity apart from every other religion. Every false religion puts the burden of salvation on the individual.
- YOU CANNOT SAVE YOURSELF.
- Now that we have established that we will preach the true Gospel the question is, what mind shifts have to take place?

I. There is a shift in your citizenship

If immunity is not waived an ambassador cannot be arrested, they can only be expelled.

Eg: Taken 2 based in Istanbul, they went to the US embassy for protection.

Phil 3:20-21

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

- This is significant because the people of Philippi prided themselves in being Roman citizens.
- Do you know the full benefits of your heavenly citizenship? Paul must have, because he emphasized this over his Roman citizenship, that already had many advantages. (Roman women had limited citizenship).
- Paul and Silas' Roman citizenship proved advantageous to them after their flogging, yet Paul still recognizes his primary citizenship.
- Philippi had lots of gentiles. Paul does not quote the Old Testament in Philippians.
- It was named after Philip II the father of Alexander the Great.
- There were a lot of retired military given land in the vicinity.
- It was an important city of Macedonia on the highway to Rome.
- It's also where Lydia was converted.
- When you embrace your heavenly citizenship you activate the blessings of the citizenship. Eg Lycias in Switzerland. TCN (Third Country National). It's powerful when you were not born a citizen of a country and then become one. This is full benefits, unlike in SA when someone becomes a citizen they are sometimes still told, no, this only applies to you if you were a citizen before 1994.
- As a heavenly citizen I have access to the name of Jesus, I can apply His promises, I have a right to fulness of salvation in its entirety, I have been adopted as an heir etc.
- Paul was also aware of his rights as a Roman citizen. Some people are more aware of their national rights than the rights they have as Kingdom people. Do you know that healing is in the covenant?
- In many nations there is limited citizenship for certain people. Do you remember the daughters of Zelophad (5 sisters in the book of Numbers that appealed for their land inheritance). Women in USA only got to vote in 1920 and in Sa it was in 1933 elections. This was just white women. In God's kingdom your citizenship is not limited.
- Sometime scholarships for high schools are limited based on your junior school. The kingdom is not like that. You are an heir.

II. There is a shift in assignment

You are called to a specific place and to specific people.

Acts 16:6-7

⁶ Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

- The Spirit of Jesus not permitting them. The problem is that many people are not sensitive to the Holy Spirit and they go where he has not permitted and wonder why they are not fruitful. The devil wants you to burn out. He doesn't mind having you do good things at the wrong time and place.
- If you want to transform society supernaturally you must operate within the spiritual jurisdiction that God has called you to. They responded to a vision with regards to Macedonia.

Acts 16:9

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

Acts 16:10

After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

They said "Help us..." and he knew it was the gospel that needed to be preached.

How have you been called to proclaim Christ? Is it as a preacher or in another way? There are so many opportunities e.g. with Muslim lady at work or with Programme manager or with haircut guys, or the people I counsel (marriage). How are you wired? God's will never take you where His grace cannot sustain you. Ask God to open your eyes.

For what do people ask you for advice?

What compliments do you receive most?

What comes to you easily without much training? (Listening, baking, hospitality etc)

What can you get up and do at 2am without complaining?

What do you get so absorbed doing that you lose track of time? Eg TJ praying.

What can you do that requires minimal effort but the results are phenomenal? (getting revelation from the word, writing, developing card games etc)

Can I proclaim Christ in these contexts?

Sometimes your talent opens doors for your calling e.g. singing might be a talent you have but its to open doors for your calling which may be discipling the next generation.

III. There is a shift in Association

Are you spending a few hours with people you should only be spending a few minutes with?

Are you spending a few minutes with people you should actually be spending a few hours with?

Acts 16:13-15

¹³ *On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.* ¹⁴ *One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.* ¹⁵ *When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.*

- There are people we meet who are worshippers of God but not yet born again.
- You relate to people based on your commonality in Christ.
- Lydia was a Greek business woman from Thyatira.

- Who is your Lydia?
- People will beg you to stay with them.
- Ask yourself: Relationships to Initiate, Nurture, Rebuild, Redefine, Terminate.
- Let's form a community. It's attractive. Let's have tea at each other's house. No shame.
- Let's be delivered from hurry sickness. Do life with me e.g. Ps Michael.
- Ever since becoming a believer has your primary association changed? There is your primary community and then those you spend time with in order to influence.
- There has to be a balance between reaching nations and loving the church.

IV. There is a shift in what you confront.

What do you argue about? What do you attack? Often we fight the wrong things and leave the true enemy untouched.

Acts 16:16-21

¹⁶ *Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.*

¹⁷ *She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."* ¹⁸ *She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.*

¹⁹ *When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.* ²⁰ *They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar" ²¹ *by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."**

- What is the love of money stopping you from doing?
- Paul became so troubled/annoyed.
- What troubles and annoys you? Queues or the enemies strategies against kids?
- Was she speaking the truth? YES. But by what spirit?
- A religious spirit? E.g. experience I had casting out a demon.

v20-21 There was an "uproar". False peace is often the alternative. Paul challenged the status quo. What are you not confronting because you want to keep false peace?

Some things seem nice on the surface but then spiritual discernment shows you that it is contrary.

Do you procrastinate having difficult conversations?

A key life question – what am I going to fight?

V. There is a shift in what you do

How do you respond to a crisis? That's how culture is created. Jesus said "Do good to those who persecute you". "Pray for those who hurt you." Some translations say "those that despitefully use you. (Mt 5:43-47) What strategy is Jesus giving you? Sometimes it's serving. Other times it's praise. We proclaim Christ by how we respond.

Acts 16:22-28

²² The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. ²³ After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. ²⁴ When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷ The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

- Praise and prayer regardless of circumstances.
- It must have been fairly loud for the other prisoners to have listened to them. They didn't stop them interestingly.
- There was a public dimension to it. They were not ashamed.
- It could have seemed foolish or bad press for Christ but they still praised.
- Praise releases power and majesty, bringing heaven to earth.

VI. There is a shift in power

Acts 16:29-37

²⁹ The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved —you and your household." ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household. ³⁵ When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." ³⁶ The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

³⁷ But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

- Do you just go in peace or are you like Paul who has a "BUT Paul....."
- Citizens would normally be proud of this association but we saw in Phil 3 that Paul knows his source.

The power dynamic changes. E.g. People saying “amen” in my corporate workshops or atheist leader suggesting that her team starts prayer meetings.

Why did the jailer do all these things?

- The joy of the Lord will be your strength.
- The stakes were high. To suggest the worship of another king in Roman Empire this was treason.
- Promotion comes from above. God gives you authority to proclaim Christ. Make a decision to do this wherever you go, and the authority will be there.

Mt 28: 18 – 20

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,... and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”...*