

January 31 Compelling People

(I'll do this on the white board again)

Last week we saw how God the **Father** sent **Jesus**, the Son, Who sent the **Holy Spirit**, Who sent the **church**, who sent **you/me**. A compelling **message** makes us compelling **people**.

Jesus was, of course, THE most compelling person who ever lived. But so was a guy named "Paul." Actually, he was given a descriptive name: "The Apostle Paul." Our English word "Apostle" is the Greek word for "sent." Literally, he was "The Sent Paul" (maybe we should call him "Sent Paul" instead of "Saint Paul"). Compelling people "Go." That is, they don't just believe something, they "Do something."

2 Cor 5:1-11a

*Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, ³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. ⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ We live by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So we make it our goal to **please** him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to **fear** the Lord*

"**Paul's Why?**" "Sent Paul" (not "Saint Paul")

1.) So we make it our goal to **please him** v9)

2.) Let's see if you can figure this second one out.

There's a certain phrase used 11x in the Book of Proverbs (22x in the whole Bible):

(The fear of the Lord)

9:10 TFOTL *is the beginning of wisdom,*

10:27 TFOTL *adds length to life*

14:27 TFOTL *is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.*

15:16 *Better a little with TFOTL than great wealth with turmoil.*

16:6-7 *Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through TFOTL a man avoids evil.*

When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.

19:23 TFOTL *leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.*

22:4 *Humility and TFOTL bring wealth and honor and life.*

23:17 *Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for TFOTL.*

The term is used once in the New Testament:

Acts 9:31 *Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in TFOTL.*

FEAR the Lord 2 Cor 5:10-11a *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to **fear** the Lord*

There is a "Fear Factor." Properly understood, "the Fear of the Lord" is an essential part of faith.

Without it, we tend to treat God and our responsibilities in a casual or even a dismissive fashion.

Set in this context, Paul doesn't appear to be terrified; rather he seems motivated. Twice he uses the

word "**confident**." In healthy relationships, there is a sense of "fear" like this. It's "fear" in the sense of "respect." It's not the sense that someone is going to be abused, liked a whipped puppy.

2 Cor 5:11b-15

we try to **persuade** men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ **For Christ's love compels us**, because we are **convinced** that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2.) **Paul's What?** = to **Persuade People** Paul is a persuader! In Acts 26, Paul was taken prisoner in Caesarea and the Roman leader (Festus) didn't know what to do with him. Since King Agrippa (great grandson of King Herod & son of King Agrippa) was in town, Festus told Agrippa about Paul. Agrippa said he'd like to hear what Paul had to say. So Paul gave his testimony.

Acts 26:28-29 *Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" Paul replied, "Short time or long — I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."*

Paul was convinced that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead and that Christ had died for all. The love of Christ compelled him to try to persuade people to follow Christ.

There is a "Fear Factor" but there's also a "Love Factor." ¹⁴ *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.*

What are we convinced of? Christ died for all! Every human being has value to God because they are created in God's image? If I'm convinced of that, it should show in my speech/actions.

Peter says:

1 Peter 3:15-16 *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience*

Because Christ died for all, it means we have a different worldview regarding others, Christ, and our own call in life. We have become new people with a new mission for living. It's not about pleasing self – it's about pleasing Christ and persuading others to follow Him, too.

"gentleness and respect" – happens primarily through relationships.

I was speaking with an Asburian on Friday. His name is Bob. His elderly mom lives in an assisted living place in Michigan. One reason he went to see her was to talk to her about Jesus. He read and explained Ephesians 2 to her. Then he told me of a conversation he'd had with his brother in Seattle, who had a brain tumor. Bob said: *"I knew I had to talk to him about the Lord, as he had wandered away, but I struggled with it so much because I didn't know how to approach him. I prayed for help and guidance from the Holy Spirit. They did a procedure on him which left him able to understand but he couldn't speak. So, I talked to him about Jesus and His love and how He died for our sins. He stared at me intently though the whole time, but he couldn't say anything. So I asked him: "If you want to ask Jesus into your life as your Savior, just lift your hand." Without any hesitation, my brother raised his hand." It was amazing. Then Bob thought: "How will I tell his family? They aren't all believers. In fact, some of them are atheists. So, I spoke with the Hospital chaplain and we set up a meeting with the family and the chaplain. The family was rather shocked at what had happened - like "Why did he do that?" My brother didn't make it out of the hospital. But Bob said, "That was the best thing I've ever done in my whole life."* I told Bob about my sermon Sunday about wanting to please God and wanting to persuade people and said, "This is a perfect fit for my sermon - can I share?" He said he LOVES to share with people about his faith - and by all means - YES! His is an appropriate question for you to both answer and ask: "Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?"

That's a very direct way to present the gospel. The key is to do it with gentleness and respect. We can ask direct questions with gentleness and respect. We need to be convinced of our message that Christ loves all, died for all, and invites all to come into relationship with Him. Here's another way that persuasion can happen... SHOW GANEM VIDEO....

What persuades people?

Hostility. "Persuasion" is like an exchange of ideas. Communication, not arguing or fighting.

Authenticity. Story.

"We met in a bar....now we're in church doing a video." Tommy and Angie Ganem

T "I just really disliked church"

A "It took a lot of patience & understanding. I wasn't going to force him because I know his personality."

A "It started with my dad – he would always read scripture to me."

T "If she would've forced me we would not be here."

T "I was never anti-God....it was just church."

A "It was helpful that we could watch church on-line."

T "If I come to church I'm going to come in a pair of jeans."

T "I knew that a marriage was not going to make it w/o God."

T "Opening your heart is tough, but opening your heart to God makes you a stronger man, a better husband, father, everything you need to be."

T "We are a work in progress. Who I was is not important; it's who I'm trying to become. I've got a long ways to go. I'm not a perfect person and not trying to pretend that I am. I just try every day to be a little better."

SHOW GANEM VIDEO A 2nd TIME