

[[Psycho theme music](#)]

If you don't recognize that music, it's the theme music from the classic horror film *Psycho*. That music has become the quintessential "scary music" and we played it because today we're talking about something that can be pretty terrifying: Evangelism. [pic: [bullhorn guy](#)]

I think Dayton is the first town I've lived in that didn't have some version of this guy in it. (At least, we didn't... now there's a guy down on Dayton-Xenia sometimes.) And I always find myself on the receiving end of the bullhorn, which is ironic, since I've been following Jesus since I was a kid. In undergrad, there was a whole group of Christians who stood out in the town square every weekend shouting condemnation at the various people who hung out down there. I was in a band in college, and we play a lot of shows at a club on that square, so we were condemned as heathens and sinners fairly regularly.

I went to grad school at the University of Missouri, which has an area outside the library called Speakers' Circle. A guy named Brother Jeb (who apparently tours the country on these shouting tours) would spend a few weeks every year standing in the circle, telling anyone who walked by they were going to hell. I was singled out a few times by him, too (I think because I have tattoos).

Even some of the less-confrontational methods are pretty painful. When I was a cook at Applebees, I always dreaded a server storming into the kitchen trailing a stream of obscenities because some Christian had left a fake \$20 that was actually an evangelism tract. [pic of one of [these](#)] (A guy I follow on Twitter recently pointed out that pastors think those are a whole lot less cute when you leave those in the offering plate.)

Most of us in here have been exposed to those kinds of evangelism. And even if we're generous and assume those yelling and leaving fake tips really are trying to do the right thing, we recoil from that and say, No way. Evangelism's not for me. If that's what telling people about Jesus looks like, I'm out.

But if you've been with here this summer, you know that's not what telling people about Jesus has to look like. We've been spending time with Jesus' announcement of the kingdom of God all summer. We've heard how Jesus invites people to join in with him, to embrace the new life he offers. And it doesn't look like tricky tracts or shouting and condemnation.

The reason everyone found Jesus so compelling is because he was the real deal. His entire life was a proclamation of God's Good News. His words matched up with his actions. You could follow him around and see this new life he talked about wasn't just talk. He was living it every day. All the time. It oozed out of him, spilled out onto everyone he met.

The problem with Evangelism isn't that it's inherently ugly or cruel. If it were, how would any of us come to Jesus? It's that we've managed to disconnect the announcement of Jesus' new life from actually living that life with the people we're announcing it *to*. It's actually a bit like the experience of watching a film without the music. (bear with me a moment)

If you're a movie lover like I am, then you appreciate a great music score. It often gets ignored, but when a movie has truly excellent music, it makes the difference between a great film and just

a good one. It's probably easiest to see in horror films. We don't realize it, but the music in a horror film is what makes them so scary. [cue the *Psycho* music again]

The tense music prepares us for a scare, and then enhances that gotcha moment when we jump out of our skins. If you've never tried it before, watch a horror film with the sound off. They're nowhere near as scary. Because the music is an integral part of the whole experience. If you take away the music, you're not experiencing the whole film. You really lose the experience itself.

The same is true of Evangelism. When we separate the proclamation, the announcement, from the meat of our lives, our words seem hollow and empty. As worthless as a fake \$20.

But when we connect our proclamation and our lives, our words and our work, Evangelism is a whole lot less scary, and a whole lot *more* powerful.

If you have your Bibles, turn with me this morning to Matthew 10. If you grabbed one of our bibles on the way in, it's on page XXXX. If you don't own a bible, we'd love for you to consider that one a gift from us and keep it.

Matthew 10 is a chapter that tells the story of Jesus sending his 12 closest followers out into the surrounding countryside to spread his good news announcement. Imagine Jesus' ministry was based in downtown Dayton; this would be like him dividing the larger metro area up into six areas and sending his followers out in pairs - you two take Beavercreek, Fairborn, and Xenia. You two head up to Huber Heights, Troy, Tipp City. You guys take West of 75: Inglewood and all that. You guys head down to Kettering. You guys take Centerville/Miamisburg. And so on.

The whole chapter's great and well-worth your time to read a couple of times through this week. I want to focus on the first fifteen verses with you because we get a sense of Jesus' plan for these guys, for how he imagines their proclamation to take place. Let's read it together:

Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness... Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: "Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but only to the people of Israel—God's lost sheep. Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!

Don't take any money in your money belts—no gold, silver, or even copper coins. Don't carry a traveler's bag with a change of clothes and sandals or even a walking stick. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve to be fed.

Whenever you enter a city or village, search for a worthy person and stay in his home until you leave town. When you enter the home, give it your blessing. If it turns out to be a worthy home, let your blessing stand; if it is not, take back the blessing. If any household or town refuses to welcome you or listen to your message, shake its dust from your feet as you leave. I tell you the truth, the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will be better off than such a town on the judgment day. -- Matthew 10:1-15

Immediately, Jesus gives his followers authority to perform the same kinds of miracles that accompanied his proclamation. He specifically tells them to do the same kinds of things for others he's done for them - "give as freely as you've received."

He tells them not to travel like travelers - don't pack a suitcase and load up on travelers' checks (remember those?). He's telling them to go among the people not like travelers, but like neighbors.

[**graphic: bullhorn vs. eating**] For us today, it'd be like the difference planning to stand on a corner yelling for a few hours and spending an evening with friends, eating a meal, playing some games, laughing together. Jesus is telling his disciples: don't go as people with somewhere else to go. This isn't a stop on your way somewhere more important. You're going to live among the people you're meeting. This is sacred friendship.

Jesus tells us to extend blessing, to lead with kindness and assume the best in people. Not because they're necessarily going to *get* the best. In fact, as you go on to read the rest of the chapter, Jesus warns that his invitation to new life often leads to persecution and rejection (as we know because Jesus himself was crucified). But he reminds us that we're sheep, not wolves. No matter how we're treated, we treat others as we would want to be treated. We extend love and life and welcome and kindness no matter how we're treated.

But what about that last bit we read? Where Jesus tells us to shake the dust from our feet and leave?

Some Christians use this statement as license to be a jerk, to be combative in their announcement of Jesus' good news. They get cruel and judgmental and dismissive. When they talk about God's new life, it somehow ends up not sounding like very good news. It becomes condemnation, not invitation. And they point to Jesus' words here as justification.

But this isn't a license to fight. Those Christians who like to fight, who want to yell and condemn and use these verses to justify their behavior? They're ignoring the larger context of these words. *Jesus is sending them out to imitate him. Their proclamation ought to look like the proclaiming Jesus himself has already been doing.* And Jesus' announcement was always Good News to people who were far from God. Jesus' words welcomed those who'd been excluded by the religious system.

If the way we talk about Jesus doesn't look like that, we're doing it wrong. If the way we follow Jesus pleases religious people by alienating those far from God, we're not actually following Jesus very well.

No, when Jesus told us sometimes we'll shake the dust from our feet he simply meant that not everyone's going to like what we have to say. That's a reality we see in Jesus' own life. Not everyone was interested in his invitation.

So know that in advance. Be aware. But don't lead by assuming people are going to hate you. Don't be a jerk. Jesus says, You begin with blessing. You initiate invitation. You start with kindness and love.

And believe it or not, some people just aren't interested in what God offers. Some people simply won't hear your invitation. Don't fight with them. Just move on.

If we sit with this picture of evangelism Jesus offers his disciples - and us today - for a bit, the differences between Jesus' way of announcing and the bullhorns-and-tracts methods stand out. He sends them among the people they're proclaiming to as friends, as neighbors, not as travelers dropping in on their way somewhere else. Their proclamation is a whole-life announcement. The words they speak are underscored by the lives they live among the people they're announcing to.

So what does that faithful, good news life look like? Jesus tells us in every story we've explored this summer. We are to be faithful in those small, every day choices because God's new life is like a mustard seed, like a bit of yeast in some dough. Our faithful lives are like wheat growing up among weeds.

Jesus tells us that we are to live active, faithful lives. We are like bridesmaids, prepared for the wedding feast that could happen at any time. We're risky with our faith, investing in the future, not hiding our heads in the past. We're sheep, who faithfully give of ourselves even to the people everyone else says don't matter. We know that every person matters to God, that no one is left out of God's kingdom, and our lives reflect that.

Our lives demonstrate the incomparable worth of God's new life. We give up everything for God's kingdom and know it's worth far more than that, like the most perfect pearl you could imagine. Because we know God's kingdom is worth far more than we even have, we choose to live lives that reflect that kingdom, like a person who dresses for the party. We know God's generosity is endless, so we're not threatened when others experience that new life. Unlike those day-workers Sheila talked about last week, we celebrate every single person who finds God's new life. Their benefit is not our loss.

God's kingdom is found in the small, everyday choices. It's found in faithfully acting like Jesus every day, even when it doesn't seem expedient or convenient. It's giving everything we have in exchange.

This is the kingdom of God. This is the new life Jesus offers. This is the good news we now have the privilege and responsibility to announce.

If we are not announcing God's new life, we're not truly following Jesus. Because Jesus' whole life as an invitation to those far from God, proclaiming to them that God has drawn near to them. True Evangelism is what happens when we are truly becoming transformed into Jesus' image, when our whole lives begin to look like Jesus.

That's why all summer we've been celebrating how *you* proclaim the Gospel through our #mymission stories ([graphic](#)). Each of these stories is an example of the myriad ways you announce the Good News about Jesus not only through our words, but with lives that give those words depth and resonance.

Whether it's maintaining the grounds here to make first-time visitors feel as comfortable as possible, or serving the homeless community through Target Dayton. It's in how you show your coworkers what Jesus looks like by the very way you work like Jason does at the Wright State

Weight Room. Or how you use your passions and talents to be the image of Jesus to other people like Anita does through GriefShare.

#mymission interview with Jillian Gibson [graphic]

1. How did you get involved with Arbre de Vie in Benin?
2. When did you begin to sense God calling you to invest yourself more wholly in the community at the orphanage?
3. What will you be doing at Arbre de Vie?

When we hear "evangelism", we too often imagine a disconnect between the words we say and how we live. Evangelism becomes a cold, impersonal activity we engage in.

But if we've learned anything by listening to Jesus teach us about his Kingdom this summer, we've learned that following Jesus is who we are. It is our whole lives. Yes we will talk about Jesus because we have given our lives to him and received his life in return. But our words about Jesus, our announcement of the good news about him isn't impersonal, disconnected from who we are.

Like the disciples, we are called to live with and among those to whom we announce good news. Their stories become our stories. Their successes become our celebrations. Their pains become our mourning. And as we live with them, we announce Jesus' new life through how we live with them.

And of course not everyone is interested. We can't help that. But we're also not responsible for that. We don't have to fight or argue. We are called not to win converts, but to faithful proclamation. The Holy Spirit wins lives and changes hearts. We are called only to do as those first followers were called: go live like Jesus. Let your life be the ground that gives your words meaning. And let the beauty and power of the life you've found in Jesus be all the evidence you're required to provide.

The best way to do this is together. Mentoring has long been a practice of the Church. This idea of living life with others can be scary, but here's the recipe for success, based on what we see in Matthew:

[Let's illustrate these with a map]

Find someone who's a little ahead of you (or a lot ahead of you). The disciples weren't sent out blindly. Jesus spent a lot of time with them, mentoring them, showing them what to do, how to do it. When they went out, they went out doing what they had *seen* and experienced. So do the same. Find someone you look up to, someone who has a relationship with God that looks like what you want to have. And then just hang out with them. Ask them to teach you, to show you.

And then, look for someone who's about where you are. The disciples were sent out by twos, and it wasn't an accident. Following Jesus isn't something we do alone. So find a travel buddy. Spend time talking together, holding each other accountable for practicing your faith.

Last, look for someone who's a little behind you. You don't have to be an expert to share what God is doing in your life. This is hugely important: people don't want to "mentor" because they think they're not qualified. They say, I don't know enough! You are not responsible for teaching

someone else everything. You're responsible for giving them what you've received. That's what Jesus told his disciples and that's what he tells us. Share what you know. That's all you're responsible for. All you have to do is share what you have, what you know.

When you have a relationship with Jesus, Evangelism is as simple as living life with other people on purpose. Find someone ahead of you, someone next to you and someone behind you. Give, share and receive. This is the recipe for growing, for finding life with others.

Examine

1. Where in your journey with Jesus are you?
2. Who's someone ahead of you you could ask to teach you?
3. Who's someone about where you are you could ask to walk with you?
4. Who's someone a little behind you you could offer to help?