
Biblical Steps for Sharing Your Faith

DARRELL DELANEY

I remember having sweaty palms and a dry mouth when I was told we are going out to soul-winning as a young person and believer. We would hit the streets and share with the strangers the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I was so scared. What do I say? What if they ask a question I cannot answer? What if they aren't convinced? Sharing your faith can be exciting, but it also can be pretty scary. In this episode of *Groundwork*, we want to talk about the importance of sharing our faith, as well as some methods that could actually help us to obey the commission to make disciples. Stay tuned.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, this is the fourth and final episode of our series called Sharing Your Faith...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

In the first episode, we talked about the ascension and the great commission to go make disciples; and in the second, we talked about the importance of sharing our faith; in the third episode, we talked about the power—the conduit—the Holy Spirit who gives us the juice to actually get that done; and this is the episode where we want to talk about how-to's and the practical application.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and we said in the last episode, that we really centered on that story of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came in power, and allowed first the apostles...the disciples turned apostles...to share the faith; and now allows us to do that. This is really the job of every Christian, to be authentic, transparent witnesses to Jesus; and one of the things we said at the conclusion of the third episode, right before this one, is that knowing that it is the Spirit who works through us is reassuring; it is comforting; it ought to take you...you said in the introduction there, Darrell, how scary it can be to share our faith; but it is a little less scary when we know it is the Spirit in us that gets this done. We are not graded on our own cleverness; we are not, you know, sent to seminars to learn some perfect technique, and if we miss a step, it is on us. No, it really is finally about the Spirit *through* us.

DARRELL DELANEY

I am so glad that it is the Spirit's power that works in us, because I don't know if I could muster up enough power, energy, or anything to get that done correctly; and I am glad, too, that it is not just a minister's job to share our faith, but it is everyone's job, and the Holy Spirit gives us what we need. I just wanted to point out one thing, Scott, is that we don't need to wait and sit back, because God has a predestined plan...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

You know, we always say God has a plan for your life. Some people use that as a way to *not* witness. They are saying: Well, God is going to save who he is going to save; but we actually have been given a direct order to go and make disciples, which we see here in Matthew Chapter 9:35 to Chapter 10:7:

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

And then Chapter 10:

¹(Then) Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

So, we see that Jesus has compassion on the people, and then he asked them to pray to the Lord of the harvest, and then uses the disciples as the answer to their prayer; and compassion, I believe, is the first step to sharing your faith.

SCOTT HOEZEE

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them...Matthew 9:36*. That verse right there, Darrell, gives us a key component of the compassion that, as you just said, is the necessary forerunner...the necessary condition...the necessary first step...whatever you want to call it...to wanting to witness, and that is that you see people. Every time in the gospels I think where we are told Jesus has compassion, the first thing you read is: When he *saw*... So, seeing...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Is the first step of compassion. You are not going to have compassion on people who you are blind to...people you ignore...people on the margins. You have to see them as precious images of God, worthy of your love, and worthy of hearing the gospel. Seeing is the first step of compassion.

DARRELL DELANEY

And you see that Jesus not only sees people, but he teaches the disciples and everyone in the room to see people. I am thinking about the woman who anointed his feet with oil and her hair wiped off the oil with her tears; and he says: Do you see this woman? He makes everyone in the room have compassion. Well, he has compassion, but he wants them to see her. I think that being able to understand the compassion means to suffer with someone...to have the empathy...to have the care about something that is going on in someone's life. You cannot share your faith unless you have compassion on someone.

SCOTT HOEZEE

When I was a kid, I remember reading some verses, what *I* thought said that he had *bowls* of mercy; but actually, I was wrong. It was actually *bowels* of mercy in the King James; because in the Greek this word *compassion* means it is in your guts. It is like you have a gut reaction because you so care; and right, as you said, you have to see them and you have to be moved. So, the first thing in compassion is you see, and you see them as worthy; and then the second step is you move in. In this case, we move in with the word of the gospel. You are not going to share the gospel with somebody you don't see, and you are not going to share the gospel with somebody you don't care about. You have to do both.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; you see that also in Jesus in John Chapter 11, where Lazarus has died...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And he goes in four days after, he is already dead and everybody is grieving; and it says that he is *moved* with compassion. That is when he wept, right? But then, that movement of compassion actually compelled him to do something about it. So, when we care more about people and less about how preoccupied we are with ourselves...what we might say...what we might do...what if we mess this up...what if it isn't perfect? If we have more compassion on the person whom we are going to speak to, or even listen to, then if that outweighs our fear of being preoccupied with ourselves, I believe that can actually get us to what we need to share our faith with someone.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You know, there were times, including in Matthew 9, that we just read, but you can think of the story of the Samaritan woman at the well in John Chapter 4, or you can think of when...in Matthew 15...when the Canaanite woman came to Jesus and they were in this land of all these Canaanites. So, sometimes Jesus and the disciples went through parts of Palestine there that weren't occupied by Jews. There were Samaritans—there were Gentiles—Canaanites; and the disciples saw those people as worthless, right? Like, ah, let's get out of here; you know, or the Canaanite woman: Send her away, Jesus. She is just bothering us. But Jesus saw them as fields ripe for the harvest, you know; so, Jesus says: Look around you; the fields are ripe for harvest; and the disciples say: No, they aren't; we don't see anything. Jesus says: Look again; look again; look again. Every person is a worthy candidate to hear the good news of salvation.

DARRELL DELANEY

And it is beautiful because all the motivation for Jesus to do something comes from his love and compassion for the people. When there are thousands of people in the crowd, when he was getting ready to feed the five thousand, it says he is moved with compassion. He cannot send them away.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

He doesn't want to send them away, even though the disciples are saying you have to get rid of these people. So, we need compassion in order to share our faith; that is the first thing. In this next segment, we want to give you another key to sharing your faith, so stay tuned.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, and this final episode in a four-part series on sharing our faith; and Darrell, we were just saying from the example of Jesus in the gospels, that if we want to share our faith, step one is compassion. You have to see the other person as worthy of your witness, worthy of receiving the good news of the gospel; but it is not the last step, only the first one.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is definitely the first one. We need the compassion for the heart for the lost, but there are other keys that are involved as well. One is obedience and the other is courage or boldness. Now, we understand that God gives a command, it is not something optional, it is not something that we think we can do whenever we get around to it. It is actually something God wants us to obey. If he calls us to something, then we need to go; just like

he did in Acts Chapter 10, when Peter was praying, and like you alluded to in the last episode, that God sent Peter to Cornelius's house, and it is not kosher for a Jew to hang out in a Gentile's house, or to even go in that direction; but because he was compelled in a dream that God gave him that he needs to go, he obeyed that call and God blew his mind with what happened next.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Which is a good reminder to us to never count anybody out. Don't say to yourself: Well, there is no sense in sharing the gospel with Jill at work. I mean, she is so anti-religious. She would never buy into my faith. I am not going to tell Jill about that. No; don't count anybody...or, well, they are so different from us, you know; or, you know, for Peter in Acts 10, well, they aren't Jews...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

They are Italians. They don't keep kosher. The gospel cannot be for them; but of course, he found out, as we said in the previous episode, that when he preached a mini-version of the same sermon he preached on Pentecost in Acts 2...when he did that with Cornelius's household in Acts 10, the same thing happened. The Holy Spirit blew in and converted all those people on the spot. So, Peter said: Well, there is no reason not to baptize them; so, let's baptize them. So, he did. So, you never know! Don't count anybody out.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is beautiful because God is working on both sides of the equation. That is one thing that is really powerful to see. You never know if God is actually preparing that person's heart for when you come in and share your faith. You never know because...I mean, the scripture tells us that one plants the seed, one waters the seed, but God is the one who gives the increase; and you never know how God might be already working in the heart of that person; and the other thing is about your point to never counting people out, in 1 Samuel 16, we learn that God doesn't look at the outer appearance, God looks at the heart; and we need not look at the outer appearance of other people or what they've got...their socioeconomic status or whatever...their abilities...their ethnicity. We need to look at what God is looking at, which is the heart of the person, and that will move us to compassion to continue to serve; and so, it is really crazy how we see God moving when we are obedient.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; so, we have compassion, we are obedient, we go where God wants us to go, and then we need some courage and boldness. If we go back to the book of Acts, in Acts Chapter 4, you know Peter and John and the other disciples, regularly get intimidated, sometimes by their fellow Jews on the Sanhedrin council, sometimes they are going to get arrested and get thrown in jail for a time; but you know, in Acts Chapter 4, they are detained and they are questioned and they try to intimidate these people not to talk about the gospel. Then, in Acts 4:23, we read:

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.

“Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one. ²⁷Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the

people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your Word with great boldness. ³⁰Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.

DARRELL DELANEY

Scott, there are a couple things that really stuck out to me when you were reading those verses, is that, first, they received opposition. So, don't believe that it is always going to be smooth sailing if you are going to share your faith with anyone.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

You may encounter opposition; and that comes with it. It is par for the course that we are going to receive some opposition sometimes. But the prayer was that you would help us, God, and God's answer was to make them bold. So, when we are afraid to share our faith, that is what we ask God for. We say: God, could you give us courage? God, could you give us boldness? Are you afraid to share your faith? Sometimes I am. Good; pray: God, help us; we need you to give us the courage to continue to share our faith.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; so, they don't respond to this intimidation by the chief priests and the elders, saying: Well, we tried; oh, well.

DARRELL DELANEY

I guess we're done.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We're done; let's go home. Nope, they didn't shrink back; they said: Well, I guess what we really need to do here is be more bold. We are probably going to get into more trouble; but, oh, God, you know, give us the power, and so they did. So, you know, we have to see people as worthy of compassion. We have to obey God's command to approach these worthy people, and we are going to need a little bit of courage...we are going to need a little bit of boldness to carry it out; because God wants to use us, and God is always looking to send us where we are needed; and as we said, I think earlier in this episode, Darrell, you know, in the book of Acts, nobody can keep up with the Holy Spirit. We said that in the end of the last episode, too. The Spirit pops up all over the place. It happens again in Acts Chapter 8, where Philip is suddenly, you know, taken to go stand by a chariot that he sees by the side of the road. We don't have time to read the whole story, but it is the Ethiopian eunuch, who has a scroll of scripture... Who knows where he got it, but he's got a scroll of scripture. He is reading something from Isaiah. He cannot understand it, so the Spirit of God says to Philip: Go over there. See what happens. And Philip says; What are you reading? And he tells him; and the guy says: But I don't understand it. Can you explain it? Sure, Philip says; and he does; and the eunuch gets saved!

DARRELL DELANEY

BOOM!

SCOTT HOEZEE

The Holy Spirit again. At the end of the story, Philip disappears because the Spirit transports him...beams him over to someplace else where he is going to be needed. Once the Holy Spirit got rolling in the book of Acts, amazing things happened; popping up all over the place with the least likely candidates you could imagine.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is a beautiful thing, Scott. We see that with compassion for people and committed obedience to the call, and courage that God gives, he will use people mightily; and we also see that he is looking for people...whoever is available to use, that is who God wants to use. You never know; he might use you in your breakroom; he might use you in your golf course; he might use you at the soccer game. Are you available and attentive to opportunity where God might want to use you to speak into someone's life and

bless someone else? That is really powerful because God wants to position us. So, as we wrap up this series, we want to talk more about some practical ways to share your faith. So, stay tuned.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

End of this four-part series here, Darrell. We have looked at the great commission; we have looked at the meaning of the ascension, the meaning of Pentecost. In this episode, we have seen that we need compassion and obedience and boldness to go and share our faith with the people around us, and not count anybody out. The apostles in Acts kept running into Ethiopians and Italians, and all kinds of people they didn't think could ever believe in Jesus, and then they did. So, don't count anybody out; but we need to get practical now as we bring this whole series in for a landing, Darrell, and just talk about some practical ways by which this happens.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, Scott; so, it is interesting, too, that when God uses those components of being compassionate, being obedient and being bold, that he wants us to be available whenever he wants to use us as a vessel. It is really interesting to see that over time that people have come up with many different ways to share your faith, like Romans Road or its two questions from Evangelism Explosion; and there are a lot of different ways that people could get trainings on these things; but one of the things I wanted to talk about was the fact that we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony, which comes from Revelation 12:11; and the fact that we all have a story; even if we haven't had all the specific training, we have a story; and to be able to develop that story; to be able to have a five-minute version, a ten-minute version, a twenty-minute version. To be able to share it with people at different times. You never know how God can use your own personal testimony—which really cannot be refuted by anyone—if you share your testimony about what God has done, it could encourage someone.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And the important thing, I think, to note in what you just said, Darrell, is that it is your story, right?

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I mean, it is not somebody else's story. We cannot witness to people by telling about how Billy Graham came to the faith; no, we have to tell how Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney came to the faith, and what my story is. So, that also, by the way, ought to lower our blood pressure and lower our anxiety a little bit. We can all tell our own story. That should be the easiest thing in the world to tell: Your story. Tell what you know. Tell what is in your heart.

DARRELL DELANEY

And you know what is interesting to me, Scott, is that even though I know that, I still get nervous.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I know.

DARRELL DELANEY

Every time I feel like maybe God wants me to share my story with this person... I may know them; I may not know them. I get intimidated immediately; and that is an indicator that I am supposed to do it, because the enemy would not want me to share my testimony of what God has done in my life, right? So, he wants to shut me up and shut me down, but I don't give into that pressure to fold or to not speak in that moment. I speak with the intimidation; asking God for boldness and courage to say it anyway, and I think that God has blessed because we were willing and obedient to go; and sometimes I have done that right and sometimes I haven't, but the intimidation is always an indicator that I might need to share it anyway.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; and I think there are opportunities to share our faith and witness, and I think it emerges best when it emerges naturally, right? I mean, nobody...I mean, I wouldn't like this and you don't like this. I mean, what is one of the reasons that we are always crazy about getting phone calls from a telemarketer, or back in the day of, you know, door-to-door salesmen, right, when those things used to happen. Well, one of the reasons that we, you know, don't take the call or we hang up or something is because we are not...you know, we are just a customer...we are just being treated as a mark, you know; we are just an excuse to sell a product. People don't want to just feel like, you know, they are the next notch on our Bible, right? They want to know that you are genuinely interested in them as a person; and so, you know, when conversations arise naturally with somebody you already have a relationship with at work, or somebody you sit by on the train on a fairly regular basis when you are commuting into work, or whatever it may be. If people sense that your interest in them is genuine, just in general, in sheer human terms, and that you are not just, you know, looking to target them for something special, that is when they are probably going to be the most open to hear our story, and then maybe ask their questions about Jesus or religion or the Bible or whatever it might be.

DARRELL DELANEY

I think people can smell it a mile away when you have a hidden agenda.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

I know that I can smell it a mile away when someone wants to sell me something...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And it really turns me off almost immediately; but then, like, if we follow the scripture, we will understand that the natural person...it says this in 1 Corinthians...the natural person who doesn't have the Spirit understands natural things. They cannot understand spiritual things. So, you have to walk through that process to understand that you might need to start in a natural place. Okay; what is the weather today? Or how are you doing? Or something just very general that any natural person can answer; and then you have to swing to the spiritual by asking something like: I don't know, do you know where I could worship around here? Are there any churches you know about? Or do you believe in Jesus? I believe in Jesus. Just kind of a thing that starts in the natural, swings to the spiritual, and that is where it is risky, because then if they are not trying to hear anything religious or anything Christian, they could give you a little bit of backlash or a rebuttal or something, and that is part of the persecution, but it is also normal to happen.

SCOTT HOEZEE

As Jesus himself made clear, there is an offense to the gospel message itself, and some people are going to recoil from that message and be offended by it no matter what we do. That is true; but that doesn't mean that we personally should be offensive. Let the offense be in the message, not the messenger, right?

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, that's good.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I mean, there is no reason to behave badly or to treat somebody badly, and then they say: Oh, that person was offended by the gospel. No; they were offended by *you*! Treat them like a normal person and be a normal person yourself. Be interested in their lives. Maybe they told you their dog died. Maybe they shared something, you know, sad or good. Maybe an achievement of one of their kids or grandkids, you know. Talk about that and establish a relationship, in the context of which, then, God will, by the Spirit, also give you the words you need to say to bring in your faith and how your faith operates for you on an everyday level as a normal human being.

DARRELL DELANEY

When you said that about how they tell you what is going on in their lives, you really get a peek into their soul...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

Because sometimes people have not had anyone with sincerity who actually cares listen to them. So, when you ask them questions and you really care, and you are coming from the compassionate heart, which they can feel, then they might start opening their lives up to you. Hey, I just lost my dad, or I am really nervous about this job interview, or whatever is happening; and those are opportunities where you can actually testify to what God has done to encourage you in your life; and you know, sometimes the conversation will be deep and sometimes it will not be deep; but then, you know, the part that really makes some people nervous is whether they... Do we close the deal here? Will you pray with me right now? Sometimes that happens, and you get to obey the prompting; but sometimes it doesn't happen, and then you ask God to: Hey, listen; I brought it to this place, and I have been as obedient as I could, and I trust you with the next step.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, we have said, just to kind of recap, we need compassion and we need to see all people as worthy of our love and of our being interested in their lives; all persons as being worthy of hearing the good news of the gospel, and then with obedience and with boldness, and now we have been saying in this last part of the program, with genuineness, with sincerity, we get to know people; and we show them that we love them. We love them even before they say yes to the gospel. It is out of love that we share the gospel. Throughout this whole series, Darrell, we have said it is finally the Holy Spirit of God who gets all the glory every time a soul gets saved. So, thanks be to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney with Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we continue to dig deeply into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives.

Connect with us at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or to tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Groundwork is a listener supported program produced by ReFrame Ministries. Visit reframeministries.org for more information.

***Correction:** In the audio of this episode, host Scott Hoezee misspeaks and says "John 9:36" when he meant to say "Matthew 9:36."

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