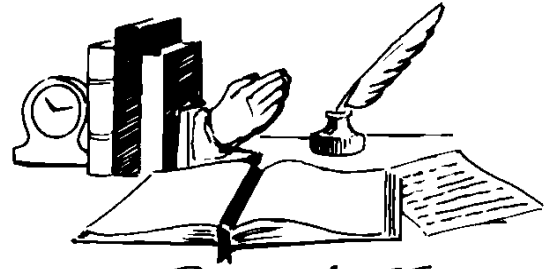


The Secret Spot!!!



the Pastor's Notes

When I was growing up we spent a lot of time fishing in the creek across from our house. I remember a time when my friend David seemed to out fish us all. We tried to figure out how he was always able to catch the most fish. It turned out he had found a pool that just naturally held fish and for a while kept it as his secret.

Once we discovered it we named it “the secret spot,” and it remained the secret spot until the ‘72 flood washed it away.

David lost his fight with cancer many years ago. He was a good friend and became a devout believer. He was never pushy about his faith but had a way of letting folks know the difference Jesus made in his life. Even near the end David remained faithful that God would care for him and his family. He confided in me to pray for him and quoted 1Peter 5:16:

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

I guess he saw something in me that I hadn’t ever seen and in the midst of his illness he allowed God to use him help me along in my spiritual journey.



**Be ye fishers of men -
you catch them
and He'll clean them.**

Funny how after long periods of time some memories pop up and we see how God has used others to touch our lives, shape us and reveal Himself to us.

I am always amazed at how the Lord reveals things sometimes like a collection of pieces in a puzzle. You know what I mean. Maybe it’s part of a verse of scripture from your daily devotions, a memory of a faithful brother or sister, another piece may come from a thought in a sermon, and yet another from a hymn or a song on the radio, and all of a sudden there it is, the big picture. Well something like that

happened to me last week.

The past few months we have been focusing on sharing our faith. My last two newsletter articles have drawn the biblical analogy of sharing the gospel as fishing for men. Well, the other day I had a few extra minutes between appointments in Bellefonte so I walked down to Talleyrand Park. As I stood on the bridge looking down into the creek at the hundreds of trout, really big ones, I thought this would be a great place to fish. All of Spring Creek is fine trout fishing but the section at Talleyrand is loaded with the potential to land huge fish. (That is, if it were legal.)

Suddenly a verse from our Fox Hill bible study popped into my mind.

“But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!”

John 4:35b-36

With that thought I got a clearer picture of at least one reason the church has been less than effective at making disciples (fishing for men) in recent years. We have been spending most of our time in the area with the least potential of disciple making.

Bill Hybels points out in his book, “Just Walk Across the Room,” that most Christians spend most of our time with our Christian friends. We go to worship, to church meetings, to concerts and out to eat with our Christian friends. These are all good things to do and essential to the life of the church and our spiritual journey. But yet if I spend 90% of my time relating only to other Christians then only 10% of my time even has the potential for making disciples.

Think about Jesus’ ministry. One of the major complaints of the religious establishment of his day was that he spent most of his time with those ungodly people. Recent surveys say as high as 75% of Americans claim no church home. That means, 3 out of 4 persons in our community are potentially wrestling with spiritual questions or in need of spiritual encouragement and 90% of the time we are unavailable.

Here are some interesting things to think about. Take a look at your cell phone and e-mail address books. How many are non- Christians?

Take a look at the last three months of your calendar.

- How much time each week were you in contact with persons who do not participate regularly in a faith community?
- Pause for a minute and list all the people you had contact with yesterday. This one is harder. Don’ t forget the Sheetz attendant, bank teller, and waitress. With which one did you miss the opportunity to extend an unexpected kindness or offer a word of encouragement or thanks.
- Now for the rest of today watch for similar opportunities where you might share God’s love and kindness.

One of the ways we can be more effective in sharing our faith is to be intentional about recognizing and creating moments of opportunity.

As I look back on the books I’ve read, scriptures I’ve searched, and sermons I’ve prepared I begin to assemble the pieces to this often seemingly puzzling topic of evangelism. The bigger picture that seems to be emerging is this: we have taken possibly the most natural thing we are called to do for the Lord and made it complicated and fearful.

I can’t help but think about the blind man that Jesus healed. When questioned by the Pharisees about how he was healed and the theological implications of him being healed on the Sabbath the man replied.,

“All I know is I was blind and now I can see.” Bill Hybels says it all about taking simple steps to point people to Christ.

On September 10 we begin our look at sharing our faith through Bill Hybels "Just Walk Across the Room." See our news page for details. Who knows what secret spots of faith we may discover as we share the journey

Blessings,

Pastor Duane

(Dedicated to the Glory of God in memory of David Springman)