

## Victory of the Lamb October 17,18, 2020

### Path to Victory Series – G0 – Acts 1:8 - Pastor Bill Limmer

#### Sermon Bumper

October 31 is just around the corner. A handful of people know as All Hallow's Eve, a few know it is a Reformation Day, but most of our community knows it as Halloween. When I was a kid I would get dressed up and go trick or treating on Halloween. Anyone go trick or treating? Remember a favorite costume? Well I would get dressed up in a costume, and go door to door, be polite and come back with a bucket full of candy.

But not every house was as fun to go to as others. Some of the houses were terrifying. I remember one house that was on the next block over, there was a coffin in the front yard. And you had to walk by the coffin to get to the front door for the candy. Some years I made it to that house for candy and some years I just skipped it. Too scary – just saying. Then there was the scariest house of all. No lights. Black curtains. Everything just super dark. The lady who lived there dressed up as a witch. And when she opened the door it was just as dark on the inside as it was outside. I think I probably went to that house like every three years. Just way too scary. Hold on to that thought and we will come back to something that people are often afraid of in a just minute.

As far, today we are wrapping up our foundational series *Path to Victory*, but it will always be what we are about because it was always what Jesus was about. We will continue to have space to gather for worship just as Jesus did in the temple and synagogues of old. We will form groups so that we can be in relationships with other people just as Jesus did with the 12 disciples. We will continue to encourage time alone with God just as Jesus sometimes went away from the crowds and prayed. We will continue to be generous with our time, our skills, and treasures just as Jesus gave first and foremost Jesus gave himself. And today we will look at the final G – Go. Because Jesus came to seek and save the lost. That is why we Go! Jesus says, Matthew 28:16-20 <sup>8</sup>**Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>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, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** It is the go part that can be scary right?

We all have fears when it comes to sharing Jesus. We all have the let's back out of this scenario. I remember growing up in El Paso, and we would go door to door, just hanging flyers on doors and I think every single time before we were about to do this, I would say to myself. I don't want to do this. I hope it rains. God make it rain. Which is hilarious because it never rains in El Paso. So, I was asking for a miracle. Even Pastor Ben Kuerth would talk about times when he just didn't want to go door to door.

But I know why it is a fear to share Jesus. It is a fear to share Jesus because it is because it is spiritual warfare. (Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.) If Satan will lead us to keep our lips sealed and our actions dormant, the world will become full of animosity, hostility, misunderstanding, there will be back biting, lack of trust, disunity, suspicion, a world void of absolute truth, it will be a world where everyone will do as he or she sees fit. Sound familiar.

Here is what that spiritual warfare often sounds like in our heads.

1. *Who am I to tell anyone about Jesus?*

I have my own sin. I have done some bad things. I still don't have my life all figured out. Well, of course, you have sin and have done bad things. That is why Jesus came: to save sinners. Sharing Jesus isn't saying we are perfect, it is saying we need him and if you are like me you do too. It is one beggar sharing with another where we found food. If you are imperfect, flawed, still working through stuff, you are not disqualified. In fact, you are the very person that Jesus opens his door too. "The life of Christianity consists in possessive pronouns. It is one thing to say, 'Christ is a savior.' It is quite another to say, 'He is my savior.' Everybody who is a follower of Jesus has a story of grace to tell. Spiritual warfare in our heads sounds like this too.

2. *I don't want to offend anyone.*

I don't want to ruin the relationship. You have to wait for just the right time. If you are concerned about offending someone there is a good chance that you are already on the path to not do that. Here is a way you can handle that. "I really want to tell you about Jesus, but I don't want to offend you. Can I tell you about Jesus, my church, etc.," And if they say yes, you are good to go and if they say no – well that leads to spiritual warfare example

3. *I'm afraid of rejection.*

Undoubtedly, somewhere along the way that will happen. Jesus did too. And here is something I have seen, just because someone rejects at first doesn't mean they are always going to reject. We know that from our own life, we have changed our minds too. If they reject you, remember they are really rejecting God. Be patient with them and God has and is and will be with us. when we turn from him and not do what he asks us to do, like sharing him with the world. And the final spiritual warfare conversation that goes on in our heads is this one:

4. *I am afraid they will ask me a question I don't know the answer to.*

What do you do then? You say, "Great question. I don't know the answer, but I can't wait to find out and share it with you."

One antidote to this fear is relying on God and not ourselves. Remember when Jesus says go, he is not telling us to assure someone how great we are but how great He is. Sharing Jesus isn't about self-sufficiency; it is about being God-dependent. Jesus says, Matthew 28:20b **And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**" God is with you. It is how the book of Matthew starts and how it ends. Jesus is born and is called Immanuel which means God with us and then the resurrected Jesus saying I am with you always.

Another antidote to this fear is prayer. **If you and I saw what happened when we prayed, we would never stop praying!** In prayer you can admit any fears, ask for strength, ask for an open door, ask for courage. Pray that the Holy Spirit guide you. You can pray with urgency because there is a real heaven that is better than we can perceive and there is a real hell that is worse than we can perceive, and both are eternal. And there doesn't need to be a mystery as to how to get to heaven. It is not by belonging to the correct political party, having the correct view on COVID, going to the right school. Jesus is the door to heaven that is open to all people. People need to see Jesus the doorway to heaven. Pray for them to see that, to see and believe in Him!

There are two people who want us to share Jesus more than we do. Person number 1. The person who just entered into heaven and see how great God truly is and how great heaven is. The second person is the person who just entered hell and sees how horrible it is.

With Jesus with us and with a prayer in our heart, we follow Jesus and go into our community following Jesus lead. Acts 1:8 **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.** Hospitality is the way to engage people living in a post Christian world. In other words we need to be front doors in our community.— What does Victory's front door look like? It looks like getting involved in our community through Trunk-or-Treats and Blood Drives. It looks like serving our community through offering events like Bedtime Stories and Jingle Jam.

And there are other doors as well, including our support of the Franklin Police Dept where we purchased, cameras, bikes, software and other items to keep you and me and all who visit our community safe all in the name of Jesus. Country Dale Elementary school where we encourage them by donating school supplies, supporting their activities like Teacher Appreciation, Cougar Chase and Ice Cream Social. We are just showing the love of Jesus in a practical way. **Simple acts done with great love can change the world.** As we go and serve the power is not in who I am or who you are but the power is in Jesus living through you and me.

Hospitality calls for invitation too. Here are some things you can invite people too – CFS presentation on loss and grief, invite to check out a bible study on you version – whether that is on the New Testament, race or voting, or some other current issue, invite to join you for worship in person or online.

The front door not only includes service but also digital engagement. Beginning this week we are going to offer you an opportunity to be trained you on digital engagement. Digital engagement is so important because of the ripple effect. Just like when you throw a rock into the lake the ripples go out. I checked this week and I have 1492 friends on FB. If I share something it has an automatic opportunity to reach 1492. If one my friends shares what I posted it has the opportunity to reach all of their friends. And let's say they have 2,000 friends. And one of those shares. The ripple effect can be far and wide.

In addition to this, I will also offer a training opportunity to meet people where they are at, whether that is on a walk in the neighborhood, in the front seat of your van, or on the sidelines of a soccer field.

Here is what I will also be doing this week: I am going to keep praying for opportunities for you and me to share Jesus with others. I am going to keep praying that sharing Jesus becomes just a joyful part of our everyday life whether that is in person relationship or in social media relationship. And that we would begin to talk about Jesus with the freedom and ease that we talk about sports, the kids, and our hobbies that we share Jesus not only with our words but with our actions. I am going to keep praying that you and I would love Jesus and love people even the ones with flaws like ours and other flaws too. Because Jesus loves us despite of our many flaws too. I am praying that people would be open to at least starting a move toward making Jesus their Lord and Savior. I am going to keep praying that when people think of you and me and Victory that they don't see a scary door, but an inviting door, the open door of Jesus. And I am going to keep praying that even though it appears our world is going farther and farther away from God that you and I will see exactly what Jesus has said, the harvest is plentiful!

Here is what I am asking you to do this week: pray about sharing share the love of Jesus in a practical way. And then do it! This might help get you motivated to do this: Think about your life. How would it be different if Jesus weren't it? And then share the love of Jesus in a practical way in person or online.

Let's GO!