



Takeaway: If you're looking for a reason not to share your faith, you'll probably find one.

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-17; John 14:6; Luke 19:10; 1 Peter 3:15b; Matthew 28:18-20

INTRO

Evangelism.
Sharing our faith.
Spreading the gospel.
Inviting someone to church.

No matter how you phrase it, evangelism has always been one of those weird concepts that just makes Christians feel uneasy.

Follow Jesus? Sure!
Read my Bible? Everyday!
Turn my life around? You bet!
Live a life full of the Holy Spirit? That's the plan!
Tell someone else about Jesus? Yeah, you know, I'm not sure that this is the right time. And plus, that feels like someone else's job anyway, right?

TENSION

Actually, I think we need to admit that the idea of sharing our faith with someone else, especially someone who we already know, can be a bit difficult to do. In fact, I feel like it's actually a lot easier to talk ourselves **out** of sharing our faith than it is to talk ourselves **into** sharing our faith with someone else.

There are all kinds of reasons that we tell ourselves why we shouldn't share our faith with others, and here are a few that rang particularly true for me when I was your age:

FEAR – The idea of sharing our faith with someone else can be downright scary, and it can be scary for a bunch of different reasons. Maybe for you,

you might be afraid that you're going to say the wrong thing, or that the moment you start talking about Jesus, your friends are suddenly going to stop wanting to hang out with you because you're suddenly "that kid who talks about Jesus all the time" (even though you only talked about Him once). Or maybe you're afraid that your friend will actually want to know more about Jesus, so they'll start asking you questions that you won't know the answers to, and suddenly, you'll start to look foolish.

For me, and I know this sounds a bit ridiculous now, but I was so worried that if I said the wrong thing, then my friends would get the wrong idea of who Jesus really is. And if they got the wrong idea about Jesus, then that would mean that they wouldn't believe in the *real Jesus*, which ultimately would mean that one day, they would die and go to hell. That was my logic. I literally didn't tell people about Jesus because I didn't want them to go to hell. It's amazing what kind of logic you can convince yourself of when you're afraid.

Another reason why we might not want to share our faith with someone is that we have this nagging suspicion that **ALL TRUTH IS VALID**. When I was growing up, I had a number of friends that were Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, atheist, and agnostic, and I remember having this really heavy feeling that sure, I believed in Jesus, but that was "my truth" and somehow "their truth" could be different. And I didn't want to come across as saying that "my truth" was somehow better than "their truth."

And honestly, that leads to another reason that that we'd probably give for why we don't share our faith with others: **EVANGELISM FEELS JUDGMENTAL**. Here's how this one worked in my mind:

- In order to follow Jesus, I've had to wrestle with some stuff in my own life that I'm not proud of. We call that stuff "sin."
- If I'm sharing Jesus with someone, it's because they don't yet believe in Him.
- If someone doesn't believe in Jesus, then there's a good chance that they also have sin in their lives.
- Or at a minimum, if someone doesn't believe in Jesus, they might already believe in someone or something else, and if I tell them about Jesus, I'm basically telling them that I'm right and they're wrong.

- So, in essence, I always felt like by sharing my faith in Jesus with someone, I was actually being super-judgmental because I was basically saying, “your life is so messed up that you need Jesus.” And that felt bad.

So, if it’s so easy to talk ourselves out of sharing our faith with others, then what in the world are we supposed to do?

TRUTH

A really good place to start is by evaluating our reasons for not sharing our faith to see if those reasons really hold up. So, let’s take a deeper look at the reasons that we just talked about and see whether they hold up.

FEAR

Nobody is saying that the idea of sharing our faith isn’t scary. Instead, I think the problem is that when we’re afraid, it results in us not sharing our faith. In Matthew 28, we read about the last time that Jesus hung out with His disciples. He was about to tell them that they should go and make disciples of the entire world, but keep in mind, this was **after** His resurrection.

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

Matthew 28:16-17 (NLT)

These were the people who were about to turn the world upside down by sharing their faith with literally thousands and thousands of people. But isn’t it wild that even after seeing Jesus crucified and raised from the dead that some still doubted?!? Long term, they didn’t let their fear stop them from doing what they knew they needed to do.

Nelson Mandela once said: *“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”*

What if we treated our fear the same way? What if instead of seeing it as a reason to quit, we saw it as something to be conquered? No one is saying that this fear is invalid or that it’s just an excuse. If you’re feeling fear



Takeaway: Jesus trusts you.

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20; Philippians 3:12-14; Matthew 5:13; Matthew 5:14-16

SURFACE:

- What do you think it would have been like to have been on the hillside that day with Jesus? How do you think you would have reacted to what you saw and heard?
- If you had been there, who would be the first person you would have talked with about what you experienced? How would you have described it?

SERIOUS:

- Have you ever tried sharing your faith with someone else? How did it go? How did they respond?
- Have you ever felt like you wanted to share your faith with someone else but didn't? What caused you to hesitate? (*Leader Hint: be sure to use this time as an opportunity to be encouraging for students who are brave enough to share*)

SPIRITUAL:

- During tonight's teaching, Josh [[Insert the teacher's name here.](#)] talked about *knowing your own story*, and he said that we should practice telling other people about what Jesus has done in our lives. Let's take a few minutes to do just that. Here are some ideas to get you started:
 - Get into groups of three and take turns sharing stories of your faith journey with each other.
 - Try to share your story in three minutes or less, and then spend a minute or two encouraging each other and asking questions.
 - If you're having trouble figuring out where to start, try answering these three questions:
 - What was my life like before I met Jesus?
 - Where/when/how did you decide to follow Jesus?

- What has your life been like since deciding to follow Jesus?
- And remember, be honest about where you're at. If you haven't decided to follow Jesus yet, that's part of your story!

PRAYER:

- Before we pray, are there any of us who want to commit to being more open with others about our faith? If so, how can we specifically pray for each other?

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