

The gift of the message...

We have a gift

- Ambassadors for Christ
- Taking the message of salvation to the world

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- How we communicate it is critical
 - Ugly American

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- We have a role model for our “words”

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 - Jesus is referred to several times as The Word
 - A verbal representation of a Spiritual Reality
- The Way, the Truth, the Life
 - But He is also a physical representation of a Spiritual Reality

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In the Beginning...

- In Jesus, we see the Perfect combination of words and deeds
- As His ambassadors, we seek this same balance between what we say and do

There are times...

- When speaking the truth is painful

“I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while. Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.”

2 Corinthians 7:8-10

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- Paul did what he needed and left the results up to God
 - We are responsible for speaking truth in love, not for the results

Paul's wisdom

- But Paul also had a personal testimony to offer of his own need for repentance
- Paul is willing to let it all be redeemed
 - “Hey, I’ve not always been what I am now”
 - “Do you know what I’d be if it weren’t for the love and mercy of Christ?”
 - “Don’t hesitate – repent now!”

We would often be surprised...

- Those who know there is a problem, but don't know what it is or how to fix it
 - They are living frustrated, unfulfilled lives
 - They are bound by their sin
 - They are locked in hopeless behavior patterns
 - They are waiting for someone they trust to “get inside their heads” and help them know what to do

2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord isn't really being slow about His promise, as some people think. No, He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent...”

Just enough rope...

- God will use the misery of our experiences to get our attention
 - But we need to be open to seeing that
 - Caution – don't become bitter
 - Don't blame God if you are positioning yourself outside of His blessing by ignoring truth or what He has told you
 - When we ignore Him, we are rebelling

Romans 2:4

“Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that His kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?”

It is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance

- Son, this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you...
 - Bunch of hooey?
- An undisciplined child is an unpleasant one
- An undisciplined child is an under-achieving one

It is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance

- Back to Paul's testimony
 - Look at what I was
 - Look at what God has done
 - I can speak with authority as God's ambassador that He wants a relationship with you through Jesus Christ
 - I can speak about forgiveness, mercy, redemption

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Psalm 139: 23-24

“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”

Ugly Christians...

- Ambassadors who speak Truth but do it without love
- Ambassadors who speak Truth but do it without transparency about their own need
- Ambassadors who speak Truth but are so caught up in their own bondage that their words aren't heard because their actions speak so much louder

Beautiful Christians...

- Ambassadors who speak Truth with love
- Ambassadors who speak Truth with transparency about their own need
- Ambassadors who speak Truth free from their own bondage and allowing their actions to speak so much louder than their words

Challenges...

- Ask God to search your heart
- Ask Him to reveal any sin that is there
- Repent and seek to be restored

- Pray for God's gift to you
- Pray for opportunities to be an ambassador
- Fast Friday