

GLEANINGS — April 12, A.D. 2015  
Every Disciple is a Missionary

As believer in Jesus Christ, you already have a mission! God sends some of His servants on missions to far away lands. The missions of most servants are right on their home turf. Here are seven points to remember as you think about, pray for, and speak to your neighbors, acquaintances, friends and family members who are lost and on their way to hell unless they call on the Savior.

1. Like the Boy Scouts, Be Prepared! The apostle Peter put it this way: "...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear..." (1 Peter 3:15). Have you had a friend ask what the Bible says about some subject, and had nothing substantial to say? Know what you believe and why you believe it! This comes about as you faithfully hear God's Word preached, and as you faithfully and prayerfully read, study, and meditate on it.

2. Mr. Otis Redding's ever popular song speaks of "sittin' on the dock of the bay, WASTIN' TIME." Time wasting is unacceptable for God's missionaries at home and abroad. Paul wrote, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15,16). Redemption means buying back. The Lord Jesus redeemed us, bought us back for God, with His precious blood. We are to buy back precious time from being wasted by using it in God's service in advancing the cause of the Gospel.

3. Sadly, some believers have been so intimidated by the unbelieving world around them that they are ashamed to speak of their wonderful Savior. Let us remember our Lord's warning to His disciples: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). Proud unbelievers "glory in their shame" (Philippians 3:1) and mock what is glorious, the Gospel (Acts 17:32). Christians should be exactly opposite, "glorying in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:3), and despising the shame as did their Lord (cf. Hebrews 12:22)!

4. People of the world gossip about everything. Christians should "gossip" about the Gospel! "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praise worthy -- meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8). Surely, this includes the precious truths of salvation. They are to be our constant meditation, and the topics we discuss with the greatest facility.

5. Be a living "Gospel decoration", but not the centerpiece. Some folks approach personal witnessing as an occasion to talk about themselves. That little vertical pronoun, "I", can get in the way very easily! Personal testimony has its place, but sinners must be led to take hold by faith on Jesus alone for salvation! Our message is the message of what Jesus did almost 2,000 years ago when He died, was buried, and rose again: this is the Gospel!

6. STRESS! is one of today's buzzwords. The members of a well known cult apparently believe that their false god is pleased according to how many doorbells they ring. They often seem so joyless and stressed as they walk through the neighborhood, trying to work their way into Divine favor! The service of the true God is perfect freedom. Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden light. Don't be stressed out about witnessing. It's OK to let people know you're not a "super christian," or that you can't answer that question now, but that you will get an answer for them (but don't forget!) It's OK to avoid proud, belligerent people. According to 1 Peter 3:1, some can be won without a word!

7. Get beyond the small talk! "The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). Suppose you see your unbelieving neighbor one afternoon as you both arrive home from work. Suppose the neighbor remarks on the weather and says, "What happened to Spring! Isn't this cold snap terrible!?" Suppose you reply, "Well, God is in control of all things, He must know what He is doing." That is a true and bold, but inoffensive reply, and it's not likely that your neighbor hears it every day! Perhaps he would think about it, and your boldness will have earned an opportunity for further discussion at another time. In a variety of ways and in different circumstances, a similar boldness can be effectively used. Go and do likewise!

May God bless all His missionaries, serving Him worldwide.