

Celebrating God at Work and School, Part 3 | Act and Speak

I. God expects us to Act and to Speak in such a way that we shine the truth of God's *salvation* into this dark world.

- Matthew 5:13-16
- Evangelism is the process whereby you introduce unbelievers to God and encourage them to trust in His saving work on the cross.
- Did you notice that the first recorded time Christ talked about being the salt of the earth, He did so from a *negative* context? Yes, He explains the positive expectation, but then He focuses on what happens when we fail to meet that expectation.
- When we fail to be the salt of our school or the salt of our job, when we do not carry the taste of spiritual things into those arenas, how can we be made salty again?
- If you truly are born again, but you've been living in sin, there is always *hope* for forgiveness and Christ-honoring living, but I will tell you this — the sinful choices you make on the job and in the classroom are going to follow you and likely tarnish your testimony as you try to live for Christ. Though we're thankful when a convicted child molester submits to God, that doesn't mean he will ever be fully welcomed teaching elementary Sunday school.

II. God expects us to Act and to Speak in such a way that we shine the truth of God's *righteousness* into this dark world.

- Matthew 28:19-20; Matthew 5:13-16
- Discipleship is the process whereby you grow in your sanctification — that is, your conformity to Christ — and help other believers do the same.
- In order for our works to actually be “good works,” they must be categorically different than the world's good works.
- So many people think that superficial behaviors — things which any unbeliever can do — can fall under the category of good works. But they can't, and they don't. Anyone can attend church. Anyone can read the Bible. Anyone can be a good student. Anyone can be a friendly cashier. Anyone can be a hard worker. Anyone can be a decent individual. But when unbelievers do these things, God is not glorified. You can check out Romans 8:6-8 if you're unsure about what I just proposed. So, if God is not pleased when unbelievers do good works for godless reasons, why would He be glorified if we did the same things for the same reasons?
- The difference will always be the spiritual realities that undergird and motivate the behavior.
- We Christians must throw off the mere externalism that has plagued religious zealots as long as people have been religious. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because they did all the right stuff on the outside, but they didn't do it as an act of worship to God. Had it been an act of worship to God, then they wouldn't have dismissed the weightier things of the Law, they would have pleased God, and the people around them could not miss for a second that their words and actions had grown from a spiritual act of worship to their Lord.

III. God expects us to Act and to Speak in such a way that we shine the truth of God into every facet of this dark world.

- Matthew 5:16; I Peter 2:9, 12; I Corinthians 10:31; Titus 2:14
- Jesus wants our good works to be so evidently an intentional act of worship to Him that people observing our lives can't help but recognize God in it.
- The uncomfortable reality is that it's not enough to simply be a decent person. We need to be a *different* person, a *peculiar* people.
- Peculiar people will be people who do not participate in lawless deeds, people who are purified from the inside out, people who are zealous for good works, priests of God, and holy.
- All of that goes *far* deeper than the freckle-level behavior modification. All of that is *mind* change.
- How do we reconcile this with the fallacious modern ideas that "We need to always preach the Gospel, and — when necessary — use your words"?
- Romans 10:14-18
- **We should never submit to an earthly authority who won't allow us to obey God by being salt and light.** That demands that our coworkers and classmates won't be able to help but recognize that our good works are a product of our relationship with God.
- **Talk about your God in the same way you talk about anything else that's important to you.**
 - None of us can pretend that the opportunities to talk about God aren't there. The real problem is not that we can't find the time, and it's not that we don't know what to say. Quite often the problem is that God's just not that important to us. At least, He's not the most important thing.
 - If we truly love God and the person to whom we're talking, we're definitely going to find times to talk directly about Him because it pleases Him and it's loving toward them.
- **Exemplify the divine character of God in all you do.**
 - Sometimes the most Christ-honoring things you can do will be to share the Gospel with a co-worker on a lunch break, sometimes it will be quietly running your press or flipping your burgers in the joy of the Lord and to the best of your ability as an act of worship to your Creator, sometimes it will be explaining the biblical reasons you won't be attending that after school party where alcohol will be present, and sometimes it will be praying with a friend or associate or peer who happens to share with you that they are going through a very difficult time.
 - And as we verbally share our faith in God, our consistent holy living will be interpreted in light of what we've said. And our peculiar righteousness in word and deed will be an evidence of God's working in us instead of some kind of moral life choices we've made for ourselves and in our own power.
 - The key is that we don't just do good things, we do them in the right way and for the right reasons. Our actions need to be filled and controlled by the character of God, the fruits of the Spirit, and the highest motivation a person can have.
 - Couple the intentional desire to live for the glory of God with consistent holy living and frequent, winsome verbal testimony to our great God and the love we have for Him . . . and that will be salt and light that is experienced by the world in a God-focused and — Lord willing — transformative way that will allow us to lead our classmates and coworkers to Christ and help them be more and more conformed to the image of their Savior.