

Something worth Sharing

Welcome back to Walking with Purpose! Maybe you're just joining us as we learn about God's desire for our lives to be *filled with purpose*. Or, perhaps you've been along with us during the whole series. But regardless, God created **each** of us to live lives filled with meaning and significance. Sharing the good news we have is the heart of "Evangelism"...our fifth and final purpose we will explore together!

A homeless man offered to share his coffee with Pastor Tony Campolo. Tony said the coffee must have been *swimming* with bacteria...but knowing how important it was to the giver, he took a drink. Then he said "that's very generous of you to share your coffee with me." The man replied, "I believe that when God gives you something extra special you *should share it*".

We've each received a gift so precious and life-changing! It's a gift that will determine where we will spend eternity. My prayer is that once you realize how "extra special" that gift truly is, you won't be able to *stop* sharing it!



Fellowship

1. Who first told you about Jesus? What happened?



Discipleship

Centuries ago, it was known far and wide that a certain tribal leader was the greatest in all the tribes. He was famous for his physical strength, but was also known for his wisdom. In order to help his people live safely and peacefully, he carefully put laws into place guiding every aspect of tribal life. He enforced those laws strictly and had long ago acquired a reputation for uncompromising justice.

In spite of the laws, there were problems. One day it came to the leader's attention that someone in the tribe was stealing. He called the people together. "You know that the laws are for your protection, to help you live safely and in peace," he reminded them, his eyes heavy with sadness because of his love for them. "This stealing *must stop*. We all

have what we need. The penalty has been increased from ten to twenty lashes from the whip for the person caught stealing.”

But the thief continued to take things that didn't belong to him, so the leader (once again) called all the people together. “*Please hear me!*” he pled with them. “This must stop. It hurts all of us and makes us feel bad about each other. The penalty has been increased to 30 lashes.” Still the stealing continued. The leader gathered the people together once more. “Please, I'm begging you. For *your* sake, this has to stop. The pain it is causing among us is too great. The penalty has been increased to 40 lashes from the whip.” The people knew of their leader's great love for them, but only those closest to him saw the single tear make its way slowly down his face as he dismissed the gathering.

Finally, a man came to say that the thief had been caught. The word spread and everyone gathered to see who it was. A single gasp raced through the crowd as the thief emerged between two guards. The tribal leader's face fell in shock and grief.

The thief was his very own *mother*, old and frail. “*What will he do?*” the people wondered aloud, a hushed murmur adding to the tension. Would he uphold the law or would his love for his mother win out? The people waited, collectively holding their breath.

Finally, their leader spoke: “My beloved people.” His voice broke and in little more than a whisper, he continued: “It is for our safety and our peace that there must be 40 lashes. The pain this crime has caused is so great.” With his nod, the guards led his mother forward. One gently removed her robe to expose a bony and crooked back. The appointed man stepped forward and began to unwind the whip.

At the same moment, the leader stepped forward and removed his own robe as well, exposing his broad shoulders. Tenderly, he wrapped his arms around his dear mother, shielding her with his own body. He gave a nod as the whip came down again and again. A single moment...but one in which *love and justice found an eternal harmony*. And *that*, my friends, is the meaning of the cross!

You see, God has a standard of justice that cannot be denied. He is totally holy, and the Bible says that without holiness no one can see God! Yet man is sinful and a price had to be paid. It's a price none of us could ever hope to pay...it is just too steep! So Jesus took the punishment *for us*, shielding us with His body.

I pray that by now you realize the incredible *debt* that was paid *for you* and have received this *free* gift! If not, be sure to talk to someone before you leave today and make this life-changing decision. Or maybe you are here, realizing you already possess this incredible news of love and forgiveness...but wonder how to go about sharing this message with someone else!

Turn with me to the book of Romans, as we look at a few verses which explain the Gospel in a nutshell! ***Highlight them, memorize them, and share them!*** This is

commonly knows as the “Romans Road”, and once you have them highlighted in your Bible, you can feel confident in sharing this incredibly good news with anyone God brings into your life!

The first verse on the Romans Road to salvation is Romans 3:23. (*pause*) "For **all** have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Notice the word “all”. We can compare ourselves to others and usually find someone who seems worse than we are! But the fact remains, we have all done things that are displeasing to God...**no one** is innocent. So highlight, first of all, chapter 3, verse 23, as you explain that a great chasm exists between sinful man and a holy God! Man’s sin creates a problem, just like in the story of the thief.

The second Scripture on the Romans Road is chapter 6, verse 23. Turn with me there and let’s read it together: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." So, you see, our sin creates a problem, even carrying a death penalty! Not just physical death, but eternal death as well! An eternity spent without God. But wait...the second half of the verse says that God supplied the answer! Jesus Christ! He alone **could** pay the price because He is holy...**completely** without sin.

Are you highlighting? Great! Maybe even do this...at each verse along the way—put the reference (or “address”) of the next verse. Ok, we’ve highlighted Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23...now let’s turn to chapter 5, verse 8: "But God **demonstrates** His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us**." Jesus' death paid for the price of our sins. We didn’t have to pay it. We couldn’t pay it. Jesus paid it for us. It wasn’t religion. It wasn’t rules and regulations and legalism. It was LOVE!

Our fourth stop is Romans 10:9 (*pause*), "that if you **confess** with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and **believe** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved**." I love this: true faith and confession in Him as our personal Lord and Savior gives assurance of salvation! Many religions hold out hope for an afterlife, but only **our Resurrected Lord** has the power and authority to promise His followers an eternity in heaven with Him! Romans 10:13 says it again, "for **everyone** who calls on the name of the Lord **will be saved**." Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins and rescue us from eternal death. Salvation, or the forgiveness of sins, is available to anyone who will trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Our final stop on the Romans Road gives **the results** of salvation. Romans 5:1 as well as chapter 8, verse 1. First let’s look at Romans 5:1: "Therefore, since we have been **justified** through faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Wow! Through Jesus Christ we are seen as “just” and have peace with God! Romans 8:1 teaches, "Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus." Because of Jesus' death on our behalf, we will never be condemned for our sins. When we are born into God’s family, we don’t serve Him or tell others about Him because of fear...we are motivated by our love and gratefulness for what He’s done for us!

And finally, we have this precious promise of God from Romans 8:38-39, "For I am **convinced** that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

That's a lot of good news! I don't know about you, but when I have something really great happen to me, my immediate reaction is to pick up the phone! I want to tell someone else so they can at least feel a bit of what I feel! When we realize the greatness of this free gift to us, we should **want** to share it...just like the homeless man with his coffee. Jesus called His disciples to be fishers of men, and He's calling you to that all-important work today! Yet Paul Harvey said, "Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men...but keepers of the aquarium." It's great to enjoy **each other** and fellowshiping among ourselves...but how is your concern level for the **lost**?

One church member was surprised to find his newly-appointed pastor standing at his study window in the church, **weeping** as he looked over the inner city's tragic conditions. The layman sought to console him, saying, "Don't worry. After you've been here a while, you'll get used to it."

The minister responded, "Yes, I know. **That's** why I am crying."



Ministry

2. Using the illustration of the "thief": Imagine if the old woman refused her son's sacrifice, how could you relate that to someone today?
3. Review the Romans Road to salvation and discuss any confusing areas in your small group:

Romans 3:23
Romans 6:23
Romans 5:8
Romans 10:9
Romans 10:13
Romans 5:1
Romans 8:1
Romans 8:38-39

4. Read I Peter 3:15. What is the most common question you are asked that is an "open door" to share the Good News of Jesus?



Evangelism

5. The Romans Road is easy enough for youth to do! Get comfortable sharing your faith by practicing on your family! When you return home have them mark *their* Bibles as you lead them along.
6. Think of 5 people you will commit to pray for during the rest of this series.
7. Begin to prepare your testimony for next week by thinking about your life *before* you met Christ.



Worship

8. Spend some time worshipping our Wonderful Savior, Redeemer and Justifier!
9. Close in prayer as you pray for the exciting week to come!