

# New Years Day 2012

1-1-12

## Gospel Realization, Communication, Incarnation!

### I. Announce: Slide #1

- A. Happy New Year - or, Y2K+12! :)
- B. End of year Giving: Any checks postmarked Dec.31st will be marked 2011.
- C. This Wed. Evening: **Inside Islam**. 55 min movie on “*What a Billion Muslims Really Think*”.
  - 1. Why is there so much anti-Americanism in the Muslim world? Who are the extremists and how do Muslims feel about them? What do Muslims like and dislike about the West? What do Muslim women really want?
  - 2. This new documentary film explores these questions by using the *Gallup World Poll*, which interviewed **tens of thousands of Muslims** in **over 35 countries** w/ predominantly Muslim populations. [Nate will host for me]
- D. Justice Matters Conf. - Feb.18th. 27 mill slaves in the world today.
  - 1. A conf to educate & motivate...what we can do. Is.61:8 “For I, the Lord, love justice.”

### II. Intro Message: Slide #2

- A. **Illustration**: Lobsters have to leave their shells in order to grow (molt about 10x’s a yr). They need the shell to protect them from being torn apart, yet when they grow, the old shell must be abandoned. If they did not abandon it, the old shell would soon become their prison...and finally their casket. - The tricky part for the lobster is the brief period of time between when the old shell is discarded and the new one is formed. During that terribly vulnerable period, the transition must be scary to the lobster. Hungry schools of fish are ready to make them a part of their food chain. For awhile at least, **that old shell** must look pretty good.
  - 1. We are not so different from lobsters. To change and grow, we must sometimes **shed our shells** (maybe a structure, a framework) we’ve depended on.
  - 2. **Discipleship** means being so committed to Christ that when he bids us to follow, we will change, risk, grow, and leave our "shells" behind.
    - a) Always keeping **tight in our hand** truth, elementary doctrines, the gospel. **And...** always keeping an **open hand** to how we communicate the good news in r ever changing culture.
- B. **Slide #3** G.K.Chesterton quote: “The object of a **new year** is not that we should have a **new year**. It is that we should have a **new soul**”.
- C. What do I see is the most important thing to take into the New year, w/r new soul? **The Gospel!**
  - 1. But, **Was is it? How do I share it? How do I live it?**
  - 2. Let’s look at: **Gospel Realization; Gospel Communication; Gospel Incarnation.**

### III. Slide #4 #1 GOSPEL REALIZATION! (What is it? Know it)

A. **REALIZATION!**B. **Slide #5** The Gospel is...Good News. *John Piper laid out 6 things.*1. **A Plan**...from eternity.a) Paul said, **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.** 1 Cor.15:3. **It was planned!**2. **An Event**...in history. **Christ Died.**3. **An Achievement**...between the Father & the Son.

a) (i.e.) Sins were paid for &amp; righteousness was completed.

4. **An Offer**...extended to the world. That is free (not of works)5. **The Application**...by faith. **I'm forgiven, I'm justified.**

a) I believe it, so it can be appropriated to me.

6. **God**...1 Pet.3:18. **For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God...**

a) We are forgiven &amp; justified ...to bring us to God.

C. **Have you applied the gospel to your life?** (not just intellectual ascent; **but** owned it as yours?)D. **So, #1 Gospel Realization!** (What is it?)IV. **Slide #6 #2 GOSPEL COMMUNICATION! (How to share it?)**A. **PROCLAMATION!**B. **Communicating the Good News** is simply sharing your faith. Letting God out from under the proverbial basket. Setting God free. Sharing your personal God story. Sharing your lifestyle with any & all around you.C. **Communicating the Good News** is just **one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.** **Communicating the Good News** is in its truest form is *introducing our friends to Jesus!* **Communicating the Good News** is *a Nobody, trying to tell Everybody, about Somebody, that can save Anybody!*D. **We have choices in our conversations.** Jesus directed his conversations.1. **Woman at the well:** He did not manipulate her, yet neither did he allow her to get off track. He was not molded by her presuppositions. Allowed questions, but always brought back on track.a) **There is a world of difference between persuasion & manipulation.**2. To have **purpose & ultimate desires** for a conversation, **is not wrong.**3. **And, it's not wrong to learn a few principles of communication to help us get a conversation going.** Or, to direct it toward spiritual matters.E. **CULTIVATE - PLANT - REAP!**

1. *Agricultural metaphor*: the soil must be **cultivated** before seed can be **planted**, in order for a harvest to be **reaped**.

F. Slide #7 **CULTIVATE!** Arouse the curiosity of the seeker so they will **want** to hear the good news.

1. Read Acts 26:18 - Paul was told to go to the Gentiles & to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.
  - a) 1st open eyes; then turn them from darkness & power of Satan; to receive forgiveness & inheritance.
  - b) We are called to be fishers of men who throw out bait; **not** hunters who gun people down
    - (1) **Be careful listeners**. Find as many points of **mutual agreement** before you explore where you **disagree!**

G. Remember, Cultivate the soil by **Love**.

1. Nothing touches the heart of people more than experiencing *God's deep care & concern* for them.
  - a) In today's world there is so much profound **brokenness**.
  - b) When Jesus was *feeding the hungry or healing the sick* he was doing **pre-evangelism**.
  - c) When people see the love of Christ **demonstrated** through us, people will be drawn to consider Christ.

H. Slide #8 **PLANT!** Announcing the gospel.

I. **Plant the Truth** - Don't tamper with God's message.

1. We want to make the gospel **viable** to the world **but** not **palatable**.
2. John Stott said, "For the gospel to be effective it must remain **prickly!**"
3. It's declaring **His message** & also declaring **our encounter** with the message!

J. **Plant His Love** - The church needs to learn how **not** to shrink back from naming **sin** & yet still be the bearers of **grace**.

1. When it comes to **sin** we tend to either be **silent or judgmental**. (balance)

K. Slide #9 **REAP!**

L. An appeal to *the will* to make a commitment to Christ.

1. Only God can make his/her response positive.

M. What's really remarkable that He invites us to **partner with Him** in this process.

1. We not only have the honor to **share God's message** but we have the awesome privilege of **inviting a response!**

N. So, #1 **Gospel Realization!** (What is it?)

#2 **Gospel Communication!** (How to share it?)

V. Slide #10 **#3 GOSPEL INCARNATION!** (How to live it out?)

A. **DEMONSTRATION!**

B. I believe the gospel is to be **more than** just Proclamation, **but** also *Demonstration!*

1. I will continue to hammer this home for a long time, **because** I believe this is still where **the church** is deficient **and the world** still screams for a demonstration of *any good news*.

C. **Paul, Silvanus, & Timothy's** gospel was **not** in word only! (1 Thes.1:1)

1. 1 Thes.1:5 For our gospel did not come to you **in word only**, but also **in power**, and **in the Holy Spirit** and **in much assurance**, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.
2. Proclamation & Demonstration!

D. **Jesus** in the Nazareth synagogue found in Isaiah's scroll, **The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel** to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are **oppressed**; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Lk.4:18

1. Proclamation & Demonstration!

E. When **John the Baptist** doubted, his disciples asked Jesus if He was the One, *Jesus answered and said to them*, "Go and tell John the things you have **seen** and **heard**: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, **the poor have the gospel preached to them.**" Lk.7:22,23

1. Proclamation & Demonstration!

F. Slide #11 **Tullian Tchividjian**(cha-vi-jin) Billy Graham's grandson said, "James makes it clear that true spirituality actually take us away from ourselves and into the messy lives of other people - it's "down to earth", focusing primarily on the **outside** of life rather than on the **inside** of life. It is not simply **introverted**, but **extroverted** - it doesn't take me deeper into me; it sends me away from me. Real spirituality is forgetting about yourself, washing your hands of you." [from his blog 12/21/11, What is True Spirituality]

1. Slide #12 Martin Luther, **God** doesn't need our good works, **but our neighbor** does

G. **So**, how do you live out the gospel Incarnationally? How do you demonstrate it in your life?

H. Many follow the religious path of the **Pharisees**, or the **Sadducees**, or the **Zealots**, or **Essenes**.

1. **#13a The Pharisees were separatists**. They were separate from the culture of their day. They were ultra-conservative. They avoided the world & the world avoided them.
2. **#13b The Sadducees were conformists**. They conformed to the world. They compromised with the culture of their day. They were Ultra-Liberal. Their religion was so watered down, they lost their effectiveness.

3. #13c The **Zealots** tried to **legislate** the world through politics & power. They tried to legislate the culture.
  4. #13d The **Essenes** tried to **hide** completely from the world. They formed a monastic moat around themselves & on one hand ignored culture completely & on the other formed their own exclusively. Bubble community w/their own bubble culture.
- I. **Which are you?** Brennan Manning said,
1. If the **Pharisees** had a Halo it would be way too tight! [**Ultra-conservative**]
  2. If the **Sadducees** had a Halo it would be in their back pocket! [**Ultra-Liberal**]
  3. If the **Zealots** had a Halo they would be throwing it at people! [**political**]
  4. If the **Essenes** had a Halo you wouldn't know it cuz you'd never get to see it!<sup>[monastic]</sup>
    - a) "The titled halo of a saved sinner is worn loosely & w/easy grace!"
- J. We must hold **the Gospel** in one hand & **the culture** we are serving in, in the other.
- K. **Slide #14,15** Our new life as believers should entail...**Not only a Personal & Transforming relationship with God, but a Public & Transforming relationship with the world.**
1. **If not**, your gospel has a **hole** in it.
  2. **Jesus said to his disciples: don't just believe, but love your neighbors & even your enemies.**
    - a) Basically, go **be** the Good News!
    - b) James 2:18 **Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds."** (NLT)
  3. Your faith should be so much more than God & you.
  4. 2012 lays out **a challenge to** Christians to make our faith **public.**
    - a) **A challenge to** live **not only a Personal & Transforming relationship with God, but a Public & Transforming relationship with the world.**
- L. **Slide #16,17** There are 56 steps leading up to Lincoln's Memorial, 1 for each yr of Lincoln's life
1. **Is each year of your life a step leading to higher ground?**
  2. CM, **Let's go for higher ground together! Let's go public with your faith. Let's live out an intentional life. Let's be the gospel. Let's be God's hands & feet down here. Let's wear our halo's loose & w/easy grace. Let's hold tightly to doctrine & loosely to dogma. Let's go for Proclamation & Demonstration. Let's be **Lobster Christians** that aren't afraid to change, risk, grow, and leave our "shells" behind. Let's not only enjoy a **new year** but a **new soul!****
- M. **Video:** [you are not...you are...]

## VI. Communion:

A. Bread -

B. Cup -

C. Does my life reflect only religious activity or does it bear the mark of profound love?