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Grace Evangelical Church
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"Having God's Heartbeat"
John 3:16; Luke 19:10; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

The true story is told of a young man named William, who was a fugitive from the police.

The teen-ager had run away with his girlfriend, because the parents had been trying to break them up. What William wasn't aware of was that an ailment he had been seeing the doctor about was diagnosed, just after his disappearance, as cancer.

Now, William was doing his best to keep away from the police, so he would not lose his girl friend, while the police were doing their best to find him, lest he lose his life.

William thought the police were after him to punish him, when in actuality, they were really after him to save his life.

William is really a representative of every person, whose guilt tells him that God is after him to take away all his fun – to put him in a straightjacket - and torture him forever.

That is not the conclusion that Jesus gave while on earth. For what did Jesus say, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. . . ." (John 3:16). Then Jesus went on to say, "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (John

Yes God has a great love for people, for while we were sinners Christ died for us. As Jesus also told Zaccheus, "The Son of man has come to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Certainly, Jesus was moved in His spirit regarding people needing Him as their shepherd, He did something about it. He ministered to people bringing the good news of His love and grace to them, as well as ministering to them physically. For He had come to seek and save that which was lost.

Yes, He didn't come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

What a heartbeat Jesus had. He came to provide people His eternal life and forgiveness. He didn't sit around think about what His mission was. He got involved and started ministering to people.

Jesus gave of us the supreme example of having God's heartbeat of wanting to see people who were lost, going to a Christ-less eternity, come to know Him personally through faith.

To help Him in that process, He chose His disciples, and before He ascended to heaven, after His bodily resurrection, He told His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. **Then in our verse for 2009, Acts 1:8, He told them that they would be His witnesses in the Holy Spirit's power, starting in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the far ends of the earth.**

The challenge for us who claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ is to have the same heartbeat that He had for those not knowing the Savior personally.

Do we? Do you? Do I? Do we have the same passion to share Christ's love with others that the Savior Himself had? Do we have the same heartbeat as the Lord Himself?

Here's a way for all of us to check up this morning as we begin the New Year together, as to whether we have the same heartbeat as the Lord for those needing His love and salvation.

1. Is Jesus personal to me?

This assumes that an individual has accepted Jesus Christ as one's own Savior, and knows without a shadow of a doubt that God is His Savior, and nothing or no one will separate him or her from God's love.

(1) Jesus' Teaching

What did the Lord tell His disciples and us in Acts 1:8?

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

But YOU – each of the disciples personally, each of us personally.

What did Jesus tell His disciples in John 15:16?

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you (personally), and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you."

(2) Jesus' ultimate example for us – His personal relationship with His heavenly Father.

Jesus knew the value of a personal relationship with His heavenly Father. In fact that is why Jesus had a personal dynamic relationship with His heavenly Father. He said in John 15:10:

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

That's why Jesus said in John 8:29 **that He always did those things that pleased His heavenly Father.**

Jesus also spent time praying to His heavenly as He would get up early in the morning and go off to a secluded place to pray (Mark 1:35). In the evening he would go out to the Mt of Olives and spend time with His heavenly Father (Luke 21:37).

Why did Jesus spend time in prayer with His heavenly Father? He was developing His personal relationship with Him. Christ knew that the personal relationship with His Father was the most valuable relationship that He had on earth.

Christ's personal relationship with His heavenly Father kept Him having that passion to keep seeking those who knew Him not personally, knew Him not as their Savior. For Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.

If we claim to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior, then Jesus should be personal to us, why we obey Him, why we pray to Him, why we trust Him!

The Lord's heartbeat for those outside of Christ should be ours.

Christ is the believer's life. "For me to live is Christ," penned the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:21. Paul also wrote to the Corinthians in his first letter, "Woe is me if I do not preach or herald the gospel" (9:16). Paul knew that He was an ambassador – a representative of Jesus Christ because He was his personal Savior.

Is Christ really personal to us, invading our thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

The bottom line is this: "Do we live Christ conscious lives?" Do we think Jesus' thoughts – pure thoughts, helpful thoughts? Do we should Jesus' attitudes (selflessness) and have Jesus action (laying down our lives for others. Do we walk or live as Jesus? Is He that personal to us?

But there is a second way for us to check up on whether or not we have the heart beat of Jesus for those needing the Savior.

2. Do I see people like Jesus does?

In Acts 1:8, Jesus told the disciples, and He is also telling us, that we are his witnesses. Jesus' words were, "you shall be MY witnesses."

Since we are to be the Lord's witnesses, we must also see people like He does.

Again Jesus, not only set the example of the ultimate personal relationship with His heavenly Father, which kept Him maintaining that heart-beat of His Father for others, but Jesus also set the example of seeing people how His heavenly Father sees people.

(1) Jesus' example of seeing people

How did Jesus see people?

Matthew 9:36 answers that question for us.

When Jesus looked out on the people, He was moved with compassion, that is He was moved in his inner most being, because they were distressed, that is harassed, (bewildered by those who should have taught them – hindered from entering God's kingdom), and dispirited (having no hope), like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36).

Jesus looked at people with compassion, with an eternal tug in His inner being, to help them because He saw them as people spiritually confused and having no hope in this world. Jesus, then, looked beyond people's appearance and what they did to what was happening in their inner lives – He saw them as needing a shepherd someone to guide them, to lead them, and to provide them forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus saw people needing His eternal intervention – His love and grace.

(2) My seeing people.

How do you and I look at people around us, people that we know, people that we work with or go to school with? Do we just look at the outward appearance of people and judge them by how they look and how they dress? Or if we know someone lives a certain way, we are judgmental of the person.

I know it's so easy to think that one is superior to others who may not have as much of this world's possessions as you or I may have.

Check up on yourself when you walk through a mall sometime, when there are all kinds of adults and young people shopping. As you observe the different "makes and models" what are you thinking about those you see.

Do you see them as Jesus does - people confused spiritually and needing hope?

Or do you think about what they are wearing and how they may be acting if they are teens. We look at the appearance of people and make judgments on that basis. God doesn't look at appearance – although appearance to Him is important – rather Jesus looks at the hearts of people, because Jesus came to change a person spiritually, for He knows if a person invites Him into his or her life, that individual will change on the outside as well to the glory of God.

Do you and I have the same heartbeat for people needing His love as Jesus does?

You can check up by asking, "Is Jesus really personal to me?" and "Do I see people as Jesus does?"

But there is a third way to check up if you have the heartbeat . . .

3. Am I willing and ready to move from observation to action like Jesus did?

In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His disciples that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they would be His witnesses from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the far corners of the earth.

Then Jesus ascended into heaven, and the people who were there to witness Jesus ascension, hearing as well from the angel that Jesus would return, walked back to Jerusalem to an upper room there, perhaps located in the house of Mary, the mother of Mark

Then Acts 1:14 tells us that these were all with one mind, continually devoting themselves to prayer. There the apostle to replace Judas was chosen, Matthias. But those in upper room continually devoted themselves to prayer.

The resurrected Jesus showed Himself to His disciples and others for 40 days after His bodily resurrection and then He ascended (Acts 1:3). The Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came, was celebrated 50 days after

the Feast of First Fruits, which pictured Christ's resurrection. Putting together the time from Christ's ascension to the time of the Feast of Pentecost, the people were meeting in the upper room praying for about 10 days. They evidently met each day and prayed in unity and prayed continually with fervency. For Jesus has told them to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

But in that 10 day period of time, they certainly didn't know what was actually going to happen on the Day of Pentecost. Regardless, they gathered for prayer, praying it would seem that God would accomplish His purpose for them.

It's interesting that in Jesus' ministry when He saw the crowds of people spiritually confused and without hope that He told His disciples that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, pray that the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.

As I mentioned in our prayer guide for our week of prayer, I believe that Jesus was telling the disciples that they were the answer to their prayers for the Lord to send out workers into His harvest. They were also to pray that God would raise up other workers for God's harvest.

What's God telling us in all of this?

If we have a vital personal relationship with Jesus, see people like Jesus does, then prayer must be the first thing that we do in order to be people of action like Jesus was.

(1) Prayer is the first action we take as we see people needing Christ's love and forgiveness.

Jesus prayed often, developing His relationship with His heavenly Father, praying that God's will be done on earth, people come to know Him personally.

Paul, the apostle prayed that His people in the flesh, his Jewish people would come to know Christ. "My heart's desire and my prayer to God for them (referring to his people Israel) is for their salvation.

How about us? Are we praying for someone we know who needs to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior? Perhaps a relative, a friend, or a neighbor, someone at school in one's class. Are we praying for the communities in which we live that God would soften hearts and cause people to look to Him. That's why in our annual week of prayer, I encouraged us to be praying for those we know who need the Lord. Without our praying for them, they may never come to know the Savior personally.

We pray to the Lord not just to develop our relationship with the Lord but that He might release His power on those around us who need the Savior, so that they will begin to see God at work somehow.

It's a process, and we may not even see the fruit of our praying, but we are to continue to pray to the Lord for those needing the Savior.

Ask God to bless our neighbors, individually and as families, blessing them physically and materially, mentally, emotionally, and most of all spiritually, that they may come to know Christ if they don't already.

Pray if the first action we must take as we see people like Christ does, needing His love and grace.

(2) We depend on the Holy Spirit to empower us to be available to witness for the Lord as He gives us opportunity.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come. He did at Pentecost. Today the Holy Spirit lives in each believer to empower him or her to live for the Lord, and in the process be a witness, giving evidence by life and word that one is living for Jesus and is available to say a word for the Lord as He gives the opportunity.

The believer is to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). The believer is to be controlled by the Spirit of God (Ephesians 5:18ff).

This means that our life and our words must match. One little fellow said we go all over telling about Jesus but then we are so grumpy at home.

Our lives should give evidence that Jesus is personal to us, in our attitudes of selflessness, in our words that build up, and our attitude of seeing the positive in the negative. Certainly, we will have our challenges and our doubts, but we know whom we have believed and are persuaded that He will keep us as nothing will separate us from His love.

It does mean that when God gives us an opportunity to say something for the Lord we should do so.

Perhaps we can give the person a tract. You will find a tract in the bulletin today. Perhaps you will meet someone this week that you can give this tract to – say here is something for your spiritual life that I thought you might like to read. Take it along and read it in your spare time. If the person is someone you will see again, tell them that you'd like to know what he or she thinks about it the next time you are together.

Obviously, there are different ways to share one's faith. Some call it going "cold turkey" just talking to someone who is not really known by a person. Some like to build a friendship with a person before sharing something about Christ. Others like to help people in different ways, called service evangelism. Others like to give a book to give to someone, like "More Than A Carpenter" by Josh McDowell.

There is also servant evangelism where one helps another neighbor, or is involved in some way in providing help for a friend. Should we as a church advertise for free lawn mowing, or free house cleaning, or perhaps some could tutor, or baby sit. Start thinking in this way, and send me an email. When warmer weather comes, we can do some servant evangelism for the glory of God.

Our life that demonstrates Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit is foundational for being a good witness for our Lord as God provides us the situation to cause a person to think a bit more about their spiritual journey.

Of course, people may have questions about the Bible and about Jesus Christ. Perhaps that is why some may not share their faith openly because of fear of not being able to develop the conversation. However, if the believer never attempts to witness verbally, he or she will never grow in their faith.

Paul Little has pointed out that there are 7 basic questions that people have about Christianity.

- (1) What about those who have never heard about the gospel?**
- (2) Is Jesus really the only way to God?**
- (3) Why do the innocent suffer?**
- (4) How are miracles possible?**
- (5) Isn't the Bible full of errors?**
- (6) Isn't the Christian experience only psychological?**
- (7) Won't a good moral life get me to heaven?**

In his book, "How To Give Away Your Faith," Little provides great answers for each of these questions.

Obviously, we don't have to have all the answers, but our experience with Christ needs to be genuine, and we can say that we will be glad to do some research, and get together again to discuss spiritual matters.

I trust today that we do have the Lord's heartbeat for those who know the Savior personally. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. We are His chosen each of us who know Christ as Savior to be an ambassador for Him. To be an instrument in a chain to be a witness to someone who needs to know Christ personally.

Perhaps it's good to review what is necessary for someone to come to know Christ as personal Savior.

It is possible to know God personally...

In fact, the very reason God created us is so that we might know him personally. But...to many people God seems very far away, distant, and impersonal.

Obviously there is a problem...

God's love and our need

The Bible teaches that God loves you

"For God so loved the world...that he gave His one and only son that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

And...God wants you to know Him personally

"Now this is eternal life, that men may know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." John 17:3

But...people are separated from God and His love

"God is on one side and all the people on the other side." 1 Timothy 2:5a

The Bible says our sins have separated us from God...

"...you sins have made a separation between you and your God..." Isaiah 59:2

"All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

God created us to know and love Him. But people chose to go their own way and that relationship with God was broken (Romans 1:19-21).

This separation caused by sin creates some severe problems.

Sin causes us to...

Miss God's very best for our life

"Jesus said...I came that you might have life and have it to the full." John 10:10

Face death and judgment

"For the wages of sin is death..." Romans 6:23

"...those who do not know God...will pay the penalty of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord."

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

Jesus Christ died and conquered death for you

We deserve death and judgment, but Jesus took upon Himself the punishment for our sins, so that we could have a personal

relationship with God.

"God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Jesus Christ is between them to bring them together by giving His life for all mankind." 1 Timothy 2:5

Jesus is the way to God

"Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.
No one comes to God except through me.'" John 14:6

Still, it's not enough just to know this...

Each of us by faith must receive Jesus Christ if we want to know God

"To all who receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God." John 1:12

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith
-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8

The "A,B,C's" of Faith involve:

Acknowledging your need- admitting you have sinned and desiring to turn from that sin (1 John 1:8-9).

Believing Jesus Christ died in your place and rose again to be your Savior
-providing forgiveness for you sins (1 Corinthians 15:3-4;17).

Choosing to invite Christ to direct your life.

You can evaluate your current relationship with God by asking...

Which life best represents your current relationship with God?

**Your desire to have a personal relationship with God,
can be expressed through a simple prayer like this...**

**"Dear Lord, I want to know You personally. I am willing, with
your help, to turn from my sins. Thank you for sending Jesus who
died in my place and rose again to be my Savior. Come
into my life and lead me." Amen.**

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?

If it does, you can pray right now and begin your personal relationship with God.

If you are unsure, what is keeping you from receiving Christ right now?

What's next?

What happens when you receive Christ into your life?

If you have begun your relationship of knowing God personally,
the Bible promises:

- Christ comes into your life. Revelation 3:20
- You become a child of God. John 1:12
- Your sins are forgiven. Colossians 1:14
- You have eternal life. 1 John 5:11-13
- You begin the adventure of knowing God personally. Philippians 3:8

Am I to feel different?

It is important to remember that we rely upon God's Word, not our feelings, as proof of our having Christ "within us."

"...If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

"To all who receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God." John 1:12

Regularly thank Christ for coming into your life...
and be sure to tell someone else about what you have done.

How to grow in your relationship with God!

1. Talk to God about everythingThis is prayer (Philippians 4:6-7)
2. Listen to God by reading the BibleThis is bible study (Hebrews 4:12)
3. Spend time with others who know God personallyThis is fellowship (Hebrews 10:25)
4. Help others to know God personallyThis is disciple-making (Matthew 28:19-29)
5. Let God daily direct your lifethis is obedience (John 14:15)

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Knowing God Personally tracks are available
from Sonlife by calling 800-770-4769

Let's say our year verse in closing.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be MY witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

Let's live in Christ's heartbeat for those needing the Savior this week!!