

“Share the Good News!” A sermon by Lee Ireland
Cathedral City Community Presbyterian Church
June 25, 2017 Third Sunday after Pentecost
Matthew 10:32-33

Prayer: Open our eyes to see your Spirit in our life. Open our hearts to receive the blessings you send each day. Guide us with your wisdom so that through us Christ may walk on the earth once again. Amen.

By now you have figured out that last week was Vacation Bible School here at the church. Through the Passport to Peru program materials our kids learned about the culture and daily life of kids in Peru and discovered God’s good gifts for us all. As I looked over the lesson materials I was intrigued by one of the stories presented that tied in with today’s scripture lesson that I just read.

The story is about native Peruvian people who lived in the Amazon River basin. A long, long time ago, a group of these people saw the shape of a cross in a beautiful, lush area and decided it was a sign from the gods they worshipped, saying that the place was meant to be where they settled. So, when the first missionaries came to the jungle and told them about Jesus and the Cross, these native people saw something familiar. They trusted and believed in the Cross of Jesus Christ. That symbol was familiar to them and meant good things.

Now, the symbol of the cross is part of the pattern that this native group uses for clothing, weavings, blankets and more. (slide)

This group of native people living in the vast Amazon basin were approached by missionaries. The missionaries were following Jesus’ commission we spoke of a couple of weeks ago: **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.** (Matthew 28: 19-20)

The Vacation Bible School lesson goes on to say: The missionaries who came to the jungle told the natives about Jesus and shared God’s love with them, but the VBS children don’t have to go far away to share God’s love! Each child can share the gift of God’s love with the people right here in Cathedral City.

At VBS, the children were encouraged to share God’s love with others. Have you told someone about Jesus and shared God’s love with someone right here in Cathedral City? I hope you have! If not, I would encourage you to do so.

Jesus’ words in today’s scripture from Matthew explain the importance: **Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven.**

Sharing God’s love is easy. Think – share and show. Tell others what your faith means to you and show them your faith in action. Who knows who you may be sharing God’s love with and what impact it will have.

Chris Pratt is undeniably one of Hollywood's most visible Christians. In a magazine article, he shared how he came to know Christ. In his late teens, he lived in a van on the beach in Hawaii, waiting tables at a Bubba Gump Shrimp restaurant. Because neither he nor any of his friends at the time were old enough to drink alcohol, they'd asked someone else to buy them beer one day, and waited outside of the store.

Pratt recalled: "I was sitting outside a grocery store ... And a guy named Henry came up and recognized something in me that needed to be saved. He asked what I was doing that night, and I was honest. I said, 'My friend's inside buying me alcohol.' 'You going to go party?' he asked. 'Yeah.' 'Drink and do drugs? Meet girls, fornication?' I was like, 'I hope so' ..."

Chris continued: "It should've made me nervous but didn't. I said, 'Why are you asking?' He said, 'Jesus told me to talk to you . . .' At that moment I was like, I think I have to go with this guy. He took me to church. Over the next few days I surprised my friends by declaring that I was going to change my life."

Because a man named Henry approached a beach bum teen sitting on a bench, Chris Pratt, one of the biggest stars in Hollywood, represents Christ to a community where few Christ-followers are found.

You simply tell others what your faith means to you. Who knows who you may be sharing God's love with and what impact it will have. Share and show.

When you share and show your faith, it may take a bit of time for the Holy Spirit to work on that person's heart. Here's another story.

A single guy decided life would be more fun if he had a pet. So, he went to the pet store and told the owner that he wanted to buy an unusual pet. After some discussion, he finally bought a talking centipede, (100-legged bug), which came in a little white box to use for the centipede's house. He took the box back home, found a good spot for the box, and decided he would start off by taking his new pet to church with him.

So, he asked the centipede in the box, "Would you like to go to church with me today? We will have a good time."

But there was no answer from his new pet. This bothered him a bit, but he waited a few minutes and then asked again, "How about going to church with me and receive blessings?" (It must have been the blessing of the animals Sunday.)

But again, there was no answer from his new friend and pet. He waited a few minutes more, thinking about the situation. The guy decided to invite the centipede one last time.

This time he put his face up against the centipede's house and shouted, "Hey, in there! Would you like to go to church with me and learn about God?"

This time, a little voice came out of the box, "I heard you the first time! Give me time, I'm putting my shoes on!"

The first time you share/show your faith with someone, you may not get a response, but be patient – it may take time for the Holy Spirit to do the Spirit's work.

The children who attended VBS heard the story of the missionaries in Peru who shared and showed God's love with a tribe of native people. The children were encouraged to share and show God's love with people in Cathedral City. Henry shared his faith with a beach bum who became a very famous actor. Who have you recently spoken to and told what your faith means to you? Have you recently shown your faith in action to someone? Who have you shared God's love with recently?

Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.