

20250518 Passive vs Active Christianity – Ps Brad Ogg

Scripture in Acts 3: 1-13 NLT

Share context first

- This is just after the day of Pentecost, where the believers were filled with the holy spirit, and it is of course, after the resurrection of Christ
- Peter and John are on their way to a prayer meeting

Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar

Thoughts:

- The believers were filled with the holy spirit, their faith had been activated. The holy spirit is the great activator (doesn't want to be stifled).
- Now we see Peter and John boldly sharing their faith. Peter, who had just recently denied Jesus in public, etc. And John, who wanted to call down fire. Two men, transformed.
- When I read this scripture, it makes me think about what it means to be an active Christian in our community. In our context?
- This word challenges me, I want to represent Christ well and love my community

The TITLE OF MY MESSAGE TODAY IS Passive vs Active Christianity

Passive Dishwashing

- I want to open with this analogy. SHOW pictures of dishes. Compare with an active dishwasher, and me dishwashing.
- Active chore person, always looking for the tea towel.

Segway

- I want to suggest to you that the same can be said about our Christian lives. There are times when we are passive Christians, and times when we are active. I think Peter and John embody active Christianity for us in this passage, and I want to break that down a little bit for us today. Here is my first point.

Point 1: Passive Christians notice things; active Christians take action with what they notice

- Acts 3: 2-5 As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. **3** When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.
- **4** Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!"

- Where was the beautiful gate?
- To get the best results, one would want to be where the traffic was greatest, would have been the Double Gate in the southern wall of the Temple Mount. Because of its monumental proportions, this gate was probably used by most of the pilgrims going to worship at the Temple
- Share that Peter and John did something when they noticed. We know that he was noticed by others because they said, "Isn't he the lame beggar?"
- How often are we either blind to what's happening around us, or we notice and take no action. A part of activating our faith is identifying the needs around us. It is living by listening to the spirit of God and his prompting
- Noticing when the youth kid needed a ride home from youth story
- Those car rides were some of the most fruitful car rides with prayer, etc
- Those needs could be help in the community (a fundraiser, lawns needing mowed, helping with a sick whanau etc), it could be making time for someone who you know needs an ear to listen, or an encouraging word
- Sometimes it takes effort, time and our capacity. 9 times out of 10, the encounters we have are in the mundane or busy moments (on the way to the supermarket)
- THE GOOD SAMARITAN Luke 10:30-35 READ/summarise- talking to the crowd who had asked "who is my neighbour"- Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.
- **31** "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. **32** A Temple assistant[d] walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.
- **33** "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. **34** Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. **35** The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins,[e] telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'
- Part of loving our neighbour, we take action when we notice a need. That is active faith. Faith without works is dead (James 2).
- I acknowledge everyone in this room has different spheres of influence, wisdom, years of experience

Mother Teresa

- We have all obviously heard about this woman (Show picture of Mother Teresa). Mother Teresa's accomplishments were that she was known for being a humanitarian and an advocate for the poor and helpless. She also won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979
- Born in Macedonia, she was already working in Calcutta as a teacher and then principal. But she noticed the needs in her community. She spent 50 years helping the poor and the sick. She noticed a need!
- The ultimate need is for people to come to know Jesus SEGWAY
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Point 2: A passive Christian gives people what they want, an active Christian gives them what they need

- Acts 3: 5-9 READ The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. **6** But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, [a] get up and [b] walk!"
- **7** Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. **8** He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them.
- People may well have noticed the man, and in fact acted by giving him money. But what he really needed was an encounter with the Lord.
- Because Peter and John gave the man what he needed, not only did he experience Christ, but he heard the good news
- You have to remember, this man was not allowed in the temple unclean. He hadn't been in for 40 years. When he entered, that is when Peter and John "Saw their opportunity" and preached the good news.
- (Carry on reading from ACTS 14- 20) The crowd needed to hear that. The lame man needed to hear that. That is what the people around us, in our whanau, community, workplaces, friend groups, etc, need to hear.
- Yes, preaching the gospel is in part our acts and deeds within society (how we love others, treat others, helping others and taking action with the needs we notice). But that is an incomplete gospel.
- Maybe even some people in this room today need to hear this. I am not just talking the "Jesus loves you man" and that's it. People need to hear the reality of why he died on the Cross
- I share this because I have seen far too many friends walk away from Jesus. Some even are deconstructing Christians. Did these people really know their need, not just want, for Jesus.
- AEROPLANE ANALOGY Ray Comfort
- Jesus didn't come to give us a better life, he came to save our life
- That's what the lame man needed to hear that day. To repent

- My parents aren't Christian; I've shared news with them. Then this summer I shared the full gospel with them. My mum- being a good person? Jumping out and flapping your wings
- I am not saying you need to go around with billboards telling people they are heading to hell. Jesus did it in love. Jesus talked about hell more than heaven
- Don't be afraid to ruffle feathers, the word does that. We get fearful of "offending others", but we need to remember Jesus even said in John 6 *"does this offend you"? And many disciples deserted him except the 12. Simon peter says "where would we go, you alone grant eternal life"*.
- Its practical things too. Tell people what they need to hear.

Point 3: A passive Christian goes unnoticed, an active Christian attracts attention

- We all know those people that light up the room when they come in. When we enter the room as Christians, what do people notice.
- What do people notice when you enter a room? Acts 4:13 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus
- One of the worst things I can hear as a Christian is "I didn't know you were a Christian?" TELL STORY ABOUT THAT HAPPENING AT WORK. This tells me the fruit of my life didn't stand out.
- I don't want to be an undercover Christian. Matthew 5 says we are to be salt and light to the world. A light on a hill.
- We are called to be in the world, but not of it. We are called to be imitators of Christ. If we say we are Christian, but our lives both inwardly and outwardly are the same, then what has changed?
- I am not talking about behaving as if we are perfect and holier than thou. I know we will fall short, not self-righteousness is like filthy rags (Isaiah 64)
- We always say Jesus hung out with Sinners and disreputable folk, etc, they changed, not him.
- I strongly believe people aren't Christians not because they haven't met Christ or believe he potentially exists, but because they have met Christians who have misrepresented him
- Us changing is a conversation starter!
- The real miracle is the 2000 that were saved that day, and that's just the men.
- One of the men that received it that day was the lame man
- The best part, they were unschooled, ordinary men, Like us
- We can all be active Christians, no matter our age, demographic or lifestyle
- We all reach different people.
- Pray