



## Why Is It So Hard to Share our Faith in Jesus Today - Culture? Message?

It seems like it's tougher and tougher just to be a Christian today. There are challenges today unlike any other time in history. Some of it has to do with our culture, some of it has to do with us, when it does come right down to it, most of it has to do with the message. But there is help and there is hope for each challenge.

Looking at the challenges of our culture to sharing the Gospel, we see that we're living in a time when people are searching for things to organize their lives, things that will hold life together, but they're searching on their own terms with no real expectation that there is anything big enough to hold it all together. Many people have been told growing up there really isn't any God, truth is what you make it, the goal of life--be as happy as you can. On top of that there is a caricature of Christianity in our culture today that is unwarranted, for the most part. I know there are Christians who reflect the stereotype, but more often than not, most Christians realize that they are sinful, in need of repentance, and they are looking to Jesus Christ not only as their Example, but as their Savior.

There are many reasons for the culture to be antagonistic to a message that is so beautiful and empowering but I think a dominant one has to be laid at the time of the personal freedom revolution of the 1960s. In that decade, like never before, at least in the culture of the U.S., all authority was considered suspect and personal freedom, no matter the cost, was the goal. Authority figures in every vocation were suspect. Long-revered institutions like marriage, family, government, and, yes, even the church, were enemy number one in the revolution.

I believe that the distrust of religion as an institution is a major contributing factor in making faith more difficult to share. I remember in the '80s and '90s, talking about the statistics that are now part of our culture, the destruction of marriage, divorce rates, single parent homes, venereal disease, violence in the homes, in the schools. The spike occurred right after the so-called revolution. But we don't hear the revolution blamed very much. In fact, the church and its message is ridiculed more than ever today. Without Christ and the proclamation of His truth and His call to repentance and faith in Him, all movements are destined to bring misery and broken dreams in the end. So, the biggest challenge is to tell people that no matter what's going on in the culture all people eventually have to get right with God, and the Bible says that happens when one is face to face with Jesus Christ! In other words, you can know Him as your Savior or you'll meet Him as your Judge.

When Jesus calls us to repentance and faith, it is a call to see the sin in our own lives. That is one of the most offensive things to people today. They don't believe in sin, even if Jesus calls things sins. So, that's going to be a problem in sharing the faith no matter how loving and caring you might be. Truth is truth, and for Christ's blessing to have its way, Christ's truth must have its say with all of our lives.

What can we do?? First, make sure that you know the Bible. I hear people talking today about what Jesus says and they are saying something completely untrue, completely unbiblical. As Christians, we've got to know what He says. And, just as important to that, we have to serve others with that truth so that they see that what we're sharing something that is for their blessing and benefit, not for our ego or pride. Bible study is important ... both private and corporate. I pray that no one really believes that they don't need any Bible study!

Ephesians, chapter 4 says: **"Speaking the truth in love."** And 1 Peter tells us to be ready to give an account but with gentleness and respect, because you know that Jesus had to serve His love into your life too. Being a Christian does sound tough today, and to share Christ with others. But, person to person, I think it's always been the same. Trust the Word, pray for your friends, and love them the way that Jesus loves you. Who knows, that might even transform a culture again.

That's the View from Here

Pastor Bill Winter

Next month I'll address the other question about why it's so hard to share our faith ... is it the message??