



THE CASE FOR CHRIST SERMON SERIES

Sermon 4: Explaining the Good News of Christ

Matthew 5:13-16

Lesson #1 - Before Jesus would talk to his neighbors about the Heavenly Father, he would *talk to his Heavenly Father about his neighbors.* (Luke 23:34)

Let me give you two very practical steps you can do, starting this week, to assist you in praying specifically for your neighbors' salvation.

Step One: Use a simple prayer website to identify the names and locations of your closest neighbors: www.pray4everyhome.com

When you join this site, they will send you an email, listing 5 of your neighbors to pray for that day. When you pray for them, the website will then give you another 5 neighbors to pray for. You will do this for 20 days—at which time, you will have prayed for 100 neighbors and then you will repeat this process.

Step Two: Read the book, “The Art Of Neighboring” by Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon and follow the helpful ideas they give in their book. You can buy it online at Amazon.com (including a Kindle version) or, at Lifeway Christian book store. There is also an Audible version of this book for those who like to listen to your books while you're on the go.

Lesson #2 - If Jesus lived in my house, he would let the neighbors know *the door is always open for questions.*

John the Baptist is one of the best examples of this:

If anyone should have known the identity of Jesus, it was John, who once pointed at Jesus and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

John baptized Jesus and saw the heavens open up and heard the voice of the Father say, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” (Matthew 3:17).

John himself had earlier said of Jesus, “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.” (John 1:34).

But then John got arrested and thrown into prison. What happens to us when tough times come? Doubt begins to creep in, right? And the same happened to John. So he asked a couple of his followers to go to Jesus and ask him directly, “Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?” (Matthew 11:3).

So they did. And how did Jesus react to this? Did he get angry? Did he reprimand John for his question? No! In Luke 7:22 Jesus said, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.”

In other words, “Go back and tell John about the evidence you see with your own eyes that convinces you I am who I claim to be.”

Did this incident poison how Jesus looked at John? Did it disqualify John from a role in the kingdom because he dared to ask a question? On the contrary, *after* this incident Jesus said, “I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” (Luke 7:28).

Lesson #3 - If Jesus lived in my house, he would *live out an authentic faith.* (Matthew 5:16)