



The Life-Saving Station

You may be familiar with the story that Bren Hunter tells us in his booklet, *Personal Evangelism 101*, about a little life-saving station. Even though you may have heard it, I think it is worth repeating. Hunter tells us about a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur and where there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea. With no thought for themselves, they went out day and night tirelessly searching for the lost.

Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding area, wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were purchased and new crews were trained. The little lifesaving station grew.

Some of the new members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea.

They replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it as a sort of club.

The members became less interested in going to sea on lifesaving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do this work.

The mission of lifesaving was still given lip-service but most were too busy or lacked the necessary commitment to take part in the lifesaving activities personally.

About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boat loads of cold, wet and half-drowned people.

They were dirty and sick, some had skin of a different color, some spoke a strange language, and the beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities citing them as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal pattern of the club.

But some members insisted that lifesaving was their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a lifesaving station.

But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the life of various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. They evolved into a club and yet another lifesaving station was founded.

If you visit the seacoast today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but now most of the people drown!

I think you can see the point in this parable – All too often the church has become an exclusive country club. We've lost sight of our mission. And a lot of shipwrecked souls are dying. But God's expectations for His Church for carrying the salvation plan forward, is clear,

"Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!" Ephesians 3:10 (The Message).

But, let me ask you. In your opinion what does an exclusive church club look like? Take 2 minutes to share your thoughts with those around you.

2' Countdown

In the series "Breakthrough", we are building a definition about church, studying what church is not about. We have learned that church is not a building, but people. We have considered that church is not about worship service, but koinonia, the doing of life together in Christ. Then, we studied that church is not about a pastor, but the ministry of every believer - the Priesthood of All Believers. And on our last message, we considered that the church is much more than a denomination, it is a movement. Today, we will consider that church is not about an exclusive church club, but a mission agency.

I know that when we start experiencing a deep fellowship with people, it is a wonderful thing. Who does not like to belong? To have a group that we can share part of our life with? When we

feel good about the relationship that we are developing, we want to protect it. We don't want to mess up the good thing that is going on. Somehow, after sometime we accommodate, and we move to a preservation mode, where we want to keep our comfort zone as it is. That could be a reality for a group of close friends, and even a club, but it should not be a reality for God's church, God's ecclesia.

You see, when we start to experience koinonia, it is something amazing. It's terrific to be loved, to belong, to be part of something special. But in the true christian koinonia, where we do life together in Christ, we start sharing some of the same passions of the people that we are in koinonia with. But also, we start sharing the same passion of Jesus' heart. And let me ask you, what is Jesus' main passion? Let me give you the opportunity to read some bible verses where you can find out what Jesus' passion is. Read Luke 19:10; Luke 15:7, Mark 2:17 and 2 Peter 3:9.

3' Countdown

The reality is that, if your heart does not burn for the lost, your heart may not be in alignment with God's heart, because God's heart is with the lost!

Christ is the Rescue Worker sent by heaven, He came to save us. As we are saved by Him, Christ expects us to join hands with Him, also becoming rescue workers.

"And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to Himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him. God was reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NLT).

The reality is that God's church has a reason for existence, through His people who live in koinonia, God wants to save the world, calling people to repentance. We are not a club, we are a mission agency!

Let me just be open with you. In my experience as a pastor, I have realized that people tend to reject or have some resistance to, or even denial about, seeing or embracing the church as a mission agency. This is not because they don't want to see people being saved. I do believe the majority of our church members want to see those who don't know Christ coming to Him. The resistance is not with the mission, but with the methodology used to bring people to Jesus. The traditional ways of proclamation are not necessarily the ones that fit the ways God has designed you or me to proclaim. The conventional methods of evangelization may not match the spiritual gifts that God has bestowed upon you. The issue is with how to do-it and not with the mission.

In my humble opinion, your main contribution to God's kingdom, the most important act of worship that you can offer to God, the most efficient way to proclaim Jesus Christ is being who God has designed you to be. Living out God's blueprint for your life! Embracing the person that you are in Christ Jesus! This is your contribution. This is your worship. This is your evangelism.

Usually, the way God has gifted us to be is the most natural way to share God's love to others. Take this time to share with those around you, how God has shaped you and how you feel comfortable sharing with others about God's love?

2' Countdown

"For 'Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.' But how can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them?" (Romans 10:13-14 NLT)

God's church is here on this Earth to tell others about Jesus. That is our mission. That is the reason for our existence. Let's embrace our mission. Let's live out God's plan for ourselves. Let's Be the Church - Loving and Serving.