

Lake Cities Community Church
November 13, 2011
Pastor Craig Schill
Series: Church Works

“Learning to Share”

One of the great things about being a child is having toys. And one of the best things about be a parent or a child – or aunt / uncle / grandparent – is that you get to play with those toys, too! Toys are wonderful things – but they can also lead to conflict.

Imagine ONE wonderful, super-cool toy; but two children. And let’s say the toy belongs to child “A.” And then, child “B”, who desperately wants the cool toy, makes a grab for it. What is the natural phrase that eliminates out of child “A”’s mouth? “NO! Mine!!”

We really, at the core, don’t like to share. When we have something good, we want to keep it for ourselves. This is why nearly the first job a parent has with a new child is to teach him or her to share with others.

And it works the same way with us in the church. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit has given the church an incredible gift of abundant life now and eternal life later. Yet a Barna recent survey reported that 40% of Christians don’t feel it is their responsibility to tell others about Jesus, and an Evantel survey revealed that 95% of Christians have never personally led someone to put their faith in Christ. Like a child with her toys – the church needs our heavenly Father to teach us to share. To a world that desperately is seeking fulfillment, peace and joy, and not finding, we too often tell them, “mine.”

Today we come to our fourth and last purpose of our church – sharing the gospel. And my goal this morning is to lay out for you the four ways God teaches us to share the gift

of Jesus Christ with others.

SHARING MATRIX

I would like to now work through something I call the “Sharing Matrix.”



Let me explain how it works. On the X-axis – we move from individual to corporate sharing. Something for “me” and something for “we.” Next on the Y-axis we move from “acts of service” to actual evangelism. So in our four quadrants let’s label our individual call to service as: Sharing our time, and let’s label our individual responsibility to evangelism as Sharing our story. On the other side, corporately, together we are to serve our community,

and with respect to evangelism, we are called to sharing the Gospel. This entire left Column can be defined as “my responsibility”, and the right column as “our responsibility.” The bottom row is our call to “Sharing Good Works.” And the Top Row – “Sharing Good News.” Make sense? That is the sharing matrix. Different ways we are called to impact our world for Christ.

SHARE YOUR TIME AND SERVICE OUR COMMUNITY

Let’s work through it now but by looking in more detail at this bottom row – where we are “**Sharing Good Works**.” Why is this important? Why wouldn’t we just start with direct evangelism - sharing the four spiritual laws? It is certainly Ok to do cold-turkey evangelism. Let me give you four reasons why very often we start with good works.

First, doing good in the community establishes a **foundation of credibility** with non-believers. The old phrase is true. *I don’t care how much you know, until I know how much you care* is true. By serving in the community we build trust and a positive reputation. In an increasingly secular culture where people have distrustful and negative views of the church, serving selflessly builds credibility.

Second, acts of service **show compassion** on the real needs of the community. There are poor in the community that need to be served, food that needs to be distributed, children that need to be clothed, parks that need to be built, elderly that need to be loved. It should not only be the Rotary Club, the Lyons, the boy scouts and noon-exchange club that help meet such needs. Missionaries are taught that often people need to be served before they can be saved. And so medical needs, health needs and food needs are first met.

Third – we share because we have an **overflow of blessings**. If we have every spiritual blessing in Christ, and our spiritual cup “runneth over,” what happens to the excess? We share it with others. Do a concordance on the word “abundant” and you will see how richly we have been blessed -- so that we can share with other people in need. The theology of overflow – we have so much we must share.

Fourth – we do good deeds as a **response of obedience**. Over and over The Scripture commands us not to forget to “do good” wherever we are at.

Paul said to the church: [Gal. 6:10](#) **So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.** When the opportunity presents itself – be ready. Don Johnson, a member of our sharing team, gave me a great quote this week from Rick Warren: “Great opportunities to serve never last long. They pass quickly, sometimes never to return again.” (Purpose Driven Life, p. 259). Do good while you have opportunity – start with one another – and then the overflow goes to others.

Jesus also talked about good works. This will remind you of my sermon last week: [Luke 6:35](#) **“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great,** Question: “How do you get a hostile word’s attention?” By doing good works. People notice when we are out there making a practical, real positive difference. Even your enemies will notice. Do good and expect nothing in return!

And, third, Paul’s charge to Titus: [Titus 3:8](#) **...I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.** Do you remember Dudley Do-Right? That is the image here!! Paul

commands Timothy to boldly call the church to good works.

This bottom row of our sharing matrix has been a strong value at Lake Cities since our founding. Over the years we have served the City of Rowlett Police and Fire Departments, the elderly at the Rowlett Health and Rehab Center, the Rowlett Needy Children's Fund. We have face painted, and made countless balloon animals and distributed hundreds of goodie bags. We do these things because it establishes **credibility** for the gospel, shows we have **real compassion** for real needs, and such work is a natural **overflow of the blessings** we have been given and is in **loving obedience to Jesus**, who is the head, directing us (hands and feet) to do good works.

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

Let's move now to the top row – and our responsibility to verbalize the good news that Jesus Christ loves you, died for you and rose again, and our call for people to turn from sin and trust in Christ in order to receive abundant and eternal life.

SHARE YOUR STORY.

Let's start with your and my responsibility. Individually – we are called to share our story with others. All the church does cannot be a substitute for each of our own individual responsibilities to be witnesses for Christ with our families, friends, neighbors and co-workers.

The Gerasene man, you may recall, was possessed by many demons. After being healed the man wants pull up stakes and go with Christ, But Jesus tells him to stay put and share his story. Jesus says: [Mark 5:19](#) “...Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and *how* He had mercy on you.” [Mark 5:20](#) And he

went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed. The man shares his story, his testimony. He is a witness to what God has done in his life. And through his story – people are saved.

Second, recall the Samaritan woman at the well? After she turns from her sin and finds salvation in Jesus she also returns to her family and friends and shared her story: John records for us: [John 4:39](#) From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I *have* done.”

If you have never written your testimony down – you must start there. My challenge for every teenager and adult is to write down their testimony and be prepared to share it as a way to share the good news of Jesus with others.

Does anyone here like the new Yogurt shops that seem to be springing up everywhere? Your testimony is like a sampler cup. Your story is a sample of God saving power through the gospel! Give your friends, family members and neighbors a taste of what can be theirs, if they pull the lever of faith and partake themselves.

CORPORATE EVANGLISM

And just as you and I have individual responsibility – we also have a corporate or church-wide call to evangelize the world – this quadrant. Jesus said to his followers – PLURAL - [Acts 1:8](#) but you (plural) will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Matthew 9:37-38 Jesus said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few...” We have a responsibility to not only share in good works – but to share the good news in our world, starting here and rippling out to the

furthest corners of the world.

In the sharing matrix, it is my opinion that we are a little bit stronger on the bottom row - sharing good works, then the top row - sharing good news. That is not to say we have not shared the good news at all. Our strongest area of corporate outreach has been our very strong mission's program, supporting missions in Germany, Japan, Liberia, India and Pakistan. We also help Native American find Christ and grow in Him through the CDC in Colorado. But we are weaker when it comes to local evangelism. Though we have had some evangelistic events and have seen some people come to faith in Christ, it is an area for us to grow in.

APPLICATION / CONCLUSION

As we close, I want to consider how the Lord is teaching us to share in this area of local evangelism. I was shocked this week when at our staff meeting Elyce informed me that not everyone in the church ready my mid-week update. So... let me read to you what I started with this week, and you will see how it ties into us learning to share as a church: "***God, it seems, is at work.*** Of course He is always at work - but it does appear that something special is happening with our church and our impact and outreach into the neighborhoods around the school. Consider the following which have ALL occurred in the past two months: (1) God has raised up two members of our church who have begun going door to door in the neighborhoods around the school sharing about our church and the claims of Christ. (If you would like to join them, let me know). (2) New children from Cullins Lake Pointe (CLP) have begun attending Lake Cities *without their parents* and have gotten involved in Sunday School and His Beacons classes. We are adjusting as necessary to

serve these kids. (3) CLP has approached us *and has asked us*, to adopt as many needy families as we can to sponsor with gifts and food for Christmas. Malcolm, the chairman of our Sharing Team, last Sunday challenged all five of our church's CLG's to adopt a family. All have responded with enthusiasm that they will. Our desire is for our connection with these 5-6 families to continue past Christmas. (4) The Sharing Team has called the church to mobilize itself and go into the neighborhoods with information about the church and invitations for prayer. This will happen on November 27th, after church. Other plans to canvass the neighborhoods are also being discussed. (5) On Friday I received a call from Cory White, the principal at Cullins Lake Pointe inviting me to serve on a school committee called the Cullins Campus Improvement Committee, which advises him on how to improve and strengthen the school.

Is it just me, or is God doing something? Are you ready for this? Something big may be in store for our congregation that could change us all forever!"

APPLICATION

And so my challenge for all of us this morning, is to embrace what God appears to be doing in our midst – which includes BOTH sharing good works and sharing good news.

Would you like the opportunity to minister to CLP kids in His Beacons? See Terry. Want to help sponsor a CLP family for Christmas and beyond? Join a small group. Do you have a few hours on November 27th? Stay to help canvass neighborhoods. Want to actually knock on doors and share the gospel? Take with Terry or Danielle. Do you have time to help organize all these things? The sharing team could really use another person or two on their committee. See Malcolm if interested.

I want to end by inviting the chairman of our Sharing Team, Malcolm McGregor to come forward and to give us further updates on these initiatives. As he comes – remember God our Father wants to teach us how to share – His gift of salvation and His Love with others.