BEING A WITNESS TO JESUS

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I believe that a serious part of our calling is to stand at the points where our families, our friends and our workplaces and professions are in tension and in pain and to reflect Jesus values, meekly serving, not pushing ourselves forward and making peace as we go.
Category: Observations

Let's have a quick little look at Luke's version of the "Great Commission" as it's found in Acts 1:8

> *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;Â and you will be my witnessesÂ in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria,Â and to the ends of the earth.*

There are a couple of things which are absolutely central to this verse, which I'm not going to touch on; the importance of the Holy Spirit and the international nature of our call to witness to Jesus. I'm just going to consider the nature of being a witness to Jesus in our home setting.

A quick thought, in passing. When some people comment on this verse, they suggest that Jerusalem, is the disciples' home, the place they feel comfortable, the place where they can witness to Jesus without crossing cultural boundaries. That is true-ish. Jerusalem is also the place where Jesus had been brutally crucified just a few weeks earlier and where Stephen was to be stoned to death not too much later. Just because a place is home, doesn't mean that it is comfortable for Christian witness.

So, what does it mean to bear witness to Jesus in our home setting? Simply put, it means pointing people to Jesus (not to a church, our view of Christianity or whatever). This involves exposing them to the historical facts about him that are recorded in the Gospels and also to our own lived experience of Jesus at work in our lives.

The obvious way we can and should do this is through our words; you know that, I know that, we all know that - and (with a few exceptions), we struggle to do it. I could bang on about how we need to share our faith more, to take the opportunities to witness to people as they arrive, but I wouldn't be saying anything new and, unless I can come up with something really helpful, I'd just end up making everyone feel guilty. Let's just admit that this is a huge issue - and one we need help with - and move on.

I'd just briefly like to think about what itÂ means to bear witness to Jesus in our actions. How can our lives authentically reflect Jesus' values and so point people to him? I think that part of the answer is found in the beatitudes in Matthew 5. What would it look like if we applied these in our family, social and professional lives? What does it mean to be meek in a competitive, dog-eat-dog business environment? How can we be peacemakers in an office riven by jealousy, rivalry and faction fighting? What does it mean to mourn when you are a teacher? How can students be pure in spirit? What does being merciful mean in a family relationship?

I believe that a serious part of our calling is to stand at the points where our families, our friends and our workplaces and professions are in tension and in pain and to reflect Jesus values, meekly serving, not pushing ourselves forward and making peace as we go. We may not be successful at bringing peace and we may not be popular for confronting some of the discord and injustices at we come across, but we will be, in a quiet way, bearing witness to the life of Jesus in our world. Of

course, at some point, a verbal witness is needed. We have to talk about him. But talking about Jesus is both easier and more authentic when it emerges out of a radical lifestyle that reflects his values in tough situations.

Just a little thought for a Monday morning.