



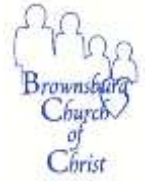
Start a Celebration in Heaven

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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PM Assembly



Introduction:

Luke 15:7 says, “Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (ESV). Then **Luke 15:10** says, “Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (ESV). What a wonderful scene. Can you see the shouting and singing? How would you like to be involved in that celebration? How would you like to be part of the reason they are celebrating? How would you like to be the cause of that party? That is exactly what you are when you are involved in evangelism. Right now we have a great opportunity for you to be a part of this cause for joy and celebration in heaven. At the beginning of November, we kicked off our new outreach effort called “Dial a Bible Study.” I just want to spend some time tonight explaining why this is the perfect opportunity for you to be a heavenly party starter.

Discussion:

I. The blessings of evangelism.

- A. A spiritual pedicure: **Romans 10:15** provides perhaps the most well-known statement about evangelism simply because it is an odd word picture. “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” (ESV). It comes from **Isaiah 52:7-10**. The point is it is a joy to bring good news to people. It is a joy to the proclaimer and it is a joy to the hearers. What a blessing to proclaim the good news.
- B. Significance: We’ve probably all heard the poem “100 Years from Now.” Some of us probably even have it posted in our homes. “One hundred years from now it won’t matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much money I had in the bank, nor what my clothes looked like. BUT the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child.” That may be true. But what about 1000 years from now? What about 10,000 years from now. What about in eternity? Do you want eternal significance, then don’t just be important in the life of a child; pass on the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Help people glorify God and go to heaven. I guarantee you the people you help will think you are significant.
- C. The “joys of parenting”: I don’t know any other way to describe this than the joys of parenting. Do you remember the joy you had when you brought your children into the world? It is a similar joy to see someone you have worked with, even in a small way, be brought into Christ’s family. Watching them go down into the watery grave of baptism and come up a new person in Christ and knowing you were involved in that, is amazing. I think of passages like **III John 4**: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (ESV). John wasn’t talking about biological children, but spiritual children. What a great joy to see people you have invited, talked to, studied with become God’s children and serve Him.
- D. Personal growth and maturity: **Hebrews 5:12** says there is a point at which we all should become the teachers. We move on from just being students to passing on what we’ve learned. The amazing fact is once we move into that teaching role, we begin to grow by leaps and bounds. No one grows like the one who is trying to pass the Word on to others. If you want to really start growing in your knowledge, service, and ability start getting involved in personal evangelism.
- E. Investments in eternity: In **Matthew 6:19-20**, Jesus said we need to lay up our treasures in heaven. Talking to people about Jesus, inviting people to assemblies, telling them about a phone message will not line our pockets down here. But it is an investment in eternity. It reminds us there is something more important than what is going on down here. It reminds us of what we are looking forward to. It is showing where our heart is and is preparing our heavenly inheritance.

II. What are you doing when you pass on a Dial-a-Bible-Study card?

- A. There are all kinds of opportunities for being involved in evangelism. In this lesson, I just want to highlight our newest opportunity—Dial a Bible Study. It is a 3 to 4 minute Bible message that anyone can call in and hear. At the end of it, the caller is offered an opportunity to sign up for a correspondence course. When they do, we will send them that course and strive to follow up with them personally. I’ve talked to several who are doing similar work and they all say the same thing. There is one key to making this effort work. The entire congregation must be actively getting invitations out every week. With that in mind, I want to encourage you to grab some invitation cards from the table in the foyer and start passing them out like nobody’s business.

- B. Let's just take a few minutes and think about what you are doing when you give one of these invitations to someone.
1. You are planting a seed—**I Corinthians 3:5-9**
 2. You are confessing Jesus before men—**Matthew 10:32-33**
 3. You are shining your light—**Matthew 5:14**
 4. You are adding some salt to the world—**Matthew 5:13**
 5. You are adding virtue, steadfastness, godliness, and love to your faith—**II Peter 1:5-7**
 6. You are making your calling and election sure—**II Peter 1:8-11**
 7. You are using your talents—**Matthew 25:14-30**
 8. You are discipling wherever you go—**Matthew 28:19-20**
 9. You are sowing to the Spirit—**Galatians 6:8**
 10. You are building on the rock—**Matthew 7:24-27**
 11. You are offering hope—**Romans 8:18-25**
 12. You are inviting someone to abundant life—**Romans 6:23**
 13. You are following in Jesus' footsteps—**John 4:1-42**
 14. You are striking a blow at Satan—**II Timothy 2:24-26**
 15. You might just be talking to your next sibling in Christ—**Romans 10:13-17**
- C. I'm sure I could list much, much more. But what an amazing thing this little card is. Pass it on and be part of God's amazing plan.

III. Who can you give these cards to?

- A. I know what you're thinking? How will we be able to maintain a large volume of invitations over the long run? I mean, we can all think of a handful of people we could give these to, but then what?
- B. With that in mind, let me share with you some people you can give these to.
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| 1. Family | 11. Pizza delivery guy |
| 2. Friends | 12. Department store checkers |
| 3. Neighbors | 13. Grocery store checkers |
| 4. Co-workers | 14. Receptionists |
| 5. Bank tellers | 15. Your doctor |
| 6. Gas station attendants | 16. Nurses |
| 7. Waiters and waitresses | 17. People in the waiting room |
| 8. Teachers | 18. Folks in line |
| 9. Classmates | 19. Folks in the hospital and nursing homes |
| 10. Club members | 20. People running the yard sale you are visiting |

IV. How do you pass them out?

- A. It's one thing to make a list of people you can give these cards out to. It is another thing to actually do it. Some of us can think of a million people to give these to, but when we get face to face with them our brain shuts down, our tongue gets tangled, and our plans fizzle. So how do we get this done.
- B. First, we need to remember the lesson of the apostles and the woman at the well. In **John 4**, Jesus and the apostles were traveling past Sychar in Samaria. Jesus sent the apostles into town to get some food while He waited at the well. The woman came out, Jesus spoke with her, and she went back into town. The apostles came back from Sychar and brought nothing but food. The woman came back from Sychar and brought bunches of people to meet Jesus. What was the difference? The apostles got so caught up in the mundane job of getting food, they didn't notice the people who needed to meet Jesus. When the woman went back into town, all she could see was people who needed to meet this prophet out by the well. Don't get so caught up in the mundane daily habits of life that you miss the opportunities around you. Don't be in such a hurry at the bank that you only go through the drive-thru. Go inside, talk to people, give them a card. Don't run your card through the machine to buy gas and drive off without ever coming in contact with a real person. Go inside, pay for your gas, buy a drink, talk to people, give them a card. See the opportunities around you all the time.
- C. Second, come up with a plan. You might even write it down. Why not take some time this evening and envision some scenarios, perhaps with a neighbor, a bank teller, a checkout clerk. Then write out what you might say to them when you give them the Dial-a-Bible-Study card. It doesn't have to be elaborate. Just come up with the plan. You might say, "You've done such a great job today. Thanks for your help. I'd like to offer you some help too. Here's a little Bible message phone line you can call to get a brief daily pick-me-up. Give it a call some time. I hope it provides you help like you've given me."

- D. Third, start with the small talk. Don't just shove a card in somebody's face that you haven't talked to. Have a brief conversation. Ask about their day. Talk about what is going on in the world around you: weather, sports, holidays, news. After those ice-breakers and warm connections, make the offer. If it is someone you will see more than once, like a bank teller, you may take one or two visits just to warm up that connection and then give the invitation. But don't miss great opportunities. The other day I was talking to a new bank teller. My plan was to just get the conversation going and offer an invitation on a later day. But for some reason she opened up with a litany of struggles she was going through. By the end of that, I had a great opening to say, "Sounds like you've been through a really tough time. Let me share something that might give you a little boost. Here's a daily Bible message phone line you can call with a three or four minute message each day. I'm sure it can give you a little pick-me-up when you need it. Why don't you give it a call?" She took the card and seemed genuinely thankful.
- E. Fourth, make sure to tell them it is a brief, daily message. I've already learned that folks think of a "Bible Study" as something long. Let them know as you are talking to them that the daily call will take them less than five minutes each day. It's like a brief daily devotional.
- F. Obviously, just be yourself. Whatever you say or do to pass these out, be natural and be yourself. If you like to joke with people, joke with them. If not, don't try to tell a joke just to get an opportunity to give them a card. Don't let this be mechanical. Let this stem from your genuine concern for their soul. Envision the party in heaven when they are baptized and the joy you'll feel knowing you were part of it. Then invite them to place the call.

Conclusion:

What a great opportunity. Make sure you grab some cards on your way out tonight and start handing them out. Remember, as we learned some time ago, God works when we work. Let's get to work.