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VICTORY SHARED



What are some marketing campaigns you will always remember?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLvictory

THE POINT

The victory we have in Jesus is too big to keep to ourselves.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Ad agencies live to create that one slogan or campaign that's remembered for years. For example:

- ▶ Put a tiger in your tank. [1960s]
- ▶ It's the real thing. [1970s]
- ▶ Where's the beef? [1980s]
- ▶ Just do it. [1990s]

I do my own form of viral marketing because I am a grandfather. Yes, I am one of those grandfathers. I try to steer every conversation toward the subject of grandchildren. I can't help it! This news is just too good to keep to myself.

In his Gospel, Luke told one last story about Jesus with His disciples. Jesus reminded His disciples they were witnesses of some incredible events. What Jesus had done is incredibly good news, and like any good news, the story of God's saving work in Jesus had to be told.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Luke 24:44-45

⁴⁴ He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

It would be an understatement to say that Jesus’ disciples were surprised by the crucifixion. Yet, when Jesus appeared to His followers on the day of His resurrection, He reminded them of His warnings from the past: “This is what I told you while I was still with you.”

Jesus had repeatedly told the disciples He would be arrested, killed, and resurrected (see 9:22,44; 17:25; 18:31-33; 22:37). Furthermore, the Hebrew Scriptures themselves (what we know as the Old Testament) predicted what would happen.

Despite all this, Jesus didn’t rebuke the disciples for not figuring things out. Instead, “he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.” Jesus broke the Hebrew Scriptures into three divisions:

- ▶ **The Law of Moses.** The first five books of the Old Testament, also called the Pentateuch.
- ▶ **The Prophets.** This includes the “former prophets”—Joshua through 2 Kings—and the “latter prophets”—Isaiah through Malachi.
- ▶ **The Psalms.** This section is also called the “writings,” which is comprised of all the remaining Old Testament books.

Jesus opened the disciples’ minds to see that these Scriptures—the same passages that were well known to every Jew—were ultimately about Him!

What practical tools help you engage and understand the Scriptures?

QUESTION #2

This wasn't the first time Jesus had made this claim. Earlier, Jesus told this to the Jews who were persecuting Him: "You study the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me" (John 5:39).

Unfortunately, we still find too many examples of people who misinterpret the Bible or choose to read it in light of what they want it to say. How do we know when we're reading the Scriptures correctly? Look for Christ. Reading the Bible as God intended will always bring us back to Jesus.

How would you summarize the grand story of Scripture for an unbeliever?

QUESTION #3

Luke 24:46-47

⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The Hebrew Scriptures do more than just point to a coming Messiah. The Old Testament points to what He would do—that "the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day."

Luke didn't tell us which passages Jesus had in mind, but we know the early church used several Scriptures to point to the crucified and resurrected Christ. For example, Philip used Isaiah 53:7-8 to help an Ethiopian discover Jesus (see Acts 8:26-38). Or, read Psalm 22 and see how many references you can find to the crucifixion.

Not only did the Old Testament point forward to the events of Jesus' life, but also to their deeper significance for us. For example, some people want to make a distinction between the God of wrath and judgment in the Old Testament and the God of love and forgiveness in the New. But the New Testament also points to the holy God who judges sin, just as the Old Testament gives ample testimony of a God of grace, love, and forgiveness.

For example:

- ▶ “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:11-12).
- ▶ “I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity” (Jon. 4:2b).

The gospel is an old story. From the beginning, God has been working across the generations so that—at just the right moment in history—Jesus Christ would be born. Knowing this, we see that Jesus’ arrest and death were not merely unfortunate events. They were all a part of God’s perfect plan.

Jesus made the point that every promise of God will be fulfilled. Do you know these promises from His Word? Can you explain how Jesus fulfills these promises? I hope so. As followers of Christ, we should know the answers to these questions for a simple reason: Jesus’ place in history is a world-altering, life-changing truth that must be embraced—and proclaimed.

***What are the basics
of the gospel every
Christian can share?***

QUESTION #4

Luke 24:48-49

⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Jesus sent the disciples out to proclaim the gospel as witnesses, but He did not send them out alone. On the night He was arrested, Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit would come: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16-17). By calling the Spirit an “advocate,” Jesus used a word that literally means someone who walks alongside another. The Holy Spirit would comfort the disciples, explain the teachings of Jesus, and lead the disciples in their ministries and preaching.

The privilege of proclaiming Jesus Christ wasn't just for the earliest disciples—nor was the gift of the Holy Spirit. We also live as witnesses for Christ, and what we proclaim comes out of the overflow of our own relationship with Jesus. We may not stand behind a pulpit every week, but neither did most of the disciples. Instead, we share what we know and have experienced with those who need to hear it.

Remember: the gospel is good news! Over the years, I've discovered again and again that most people—even people who seemingly have it all together—are walking around in terrible pain. They have things in their past they can't forget or forgive. They have failures they can't get over. People they trusted have let them down, or worse. These are the people who sit on the pews around you in church, live down the street in your neighborhood, go to class with you, and work where you work.

Such people are desperate for the good news Jesus brings. Some of them may think they know about Jesus, but in fact, they don't. At least, they don't know the full story of His grace and salvation.

That's where you and I come in as witnesses. Under the leadership of the Spirit, we're brought into people's lives at just the right moment. Just as Jesus was born in the fullness of time (see Gal. 4:4), God leads you and me into other people's lives at just the right time to make a difference. Then, perhaps beginning with a cup of coffee or a little banter about the latest ball game, we listen to their stories. Right where they are, we begin to tell them the story of Jesus. We tell them everything that happened to Jesus and about what His victory means for all of us.

Don't keep the good news to yourself. Share Jesus—and let others experience victory, as well.



Where has God called you to represent Him?

QUESTION #5

SHARE

Use the acrostic SHARE to record different characteristics and qualities that are helpful in choosing a lifestyle of sharing the gospel with others. An example has been provided.

Boldness
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What is the primary obstacle that hinders you from sharing the gospel with others?

LIVE IT OUT

How will you share the good news of Christ's victory this week? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Invite.** Pray for an opportunity to invite a friend or family member to church. Begin with a simple invitation to join you in next week's Bible study group or worship service.
- ▶ **Study.** Plan to read through the Old Testament over the next several months. As you read, look for those signs, events, and teachings that point forward to the coming of Christ.
- ▶ **Share.** As a group, plan an event where every member can bring another person. Be strategic in planning this event to include time for one or more of the group members to share about their faith in Christ.



As a church, we don't need cheesy advertisements or viral marketing to spread the good news of the gospel. Instead, we simply need to share stories of lives changed through the victory and power of Jesus—stories like yours.

My thoughts

Share with others how you will live out this study: **#BSFLvictory**



A CRY FOR HELP

BY LANDON DICKERSON

A pair of old military boots in the corner. A folded flag in a triangular wooden box on a shelf. A military cavalry hat. A Green Berets hat. These and other war paraphernalia you may expect to find among the treasures of someone who collects war memorabilia. However, these are not just collectors' items. They are personal keepsakes that tell the rescue story of Bobby Welch.

That story begins back in the rural town of Fort Payne, Alabama, where Welch spent his early years in a loop of the Bible belt—but with no Christian values. “I grew up in a mill village, which meant that I literally grew up on the other side of the tracks,” Welch said.

"I grew up fighting in a rough neighborhood." He did not attend church and, in fact, knew almost no one who did. "None of my immediate family, that I knew of, showed any signs that they were Christians," Welch recalled. In his area of town, he only knew three women who attended church regularly. But it was one young lady who did go to church who changed everything for him.

"I met a girl [Maudellen] who attracted me, and I followed her around some and discovered that she went to church all the time, which kind of cramped my style," Welch said. He would go to the church but would not go inside. Rather, he would just wait for church to end and then walk her home. Eventually, he was convinced to go in and listen to the pastor speak. "The preacher was a strong preacher. ... He was preaching the Word of God, and I was hearing," Welch explained. "He preached the gospel."

Christ began to reveal Himself to Welch, causing him to wonder just who Christ really is. Maudellen suggested he talk with the pastor, Bob Mowrey. But when Mowrey asked how he could help, Welch had trouble gathering his thoughts: "I was so disconnected and so uninformed that I didn't know how to answer the question. But I gave one of the greatest and most stupid answers imaginable. I said, 'Any chance that I can be like that girl that I have been coming here with?'" That led to a conversation about Jesus' offer of salvation and eventually to Welch's trusting Jesus to be his Savior.

Life filled up quickly for Welch, who graduated college as a Commissioned Second Lieutenant. He then reconnected with Maudellen. "I found that girl who had graduated two years before me ..., and I married her," he said. They moved to Georgia where he joined the military as an infantryman and was trained as a Jungle Expert fighter.

But Welch admits, "When I got into the military after I got married, I just got further away from the Lord. There was nothing in me that resembled a Christ-follower. ... I was rough ... and mean as a snake, and this suited me just fine. So, I volunteered to go to Vietnam." Welch joined the First Air 12th Cavalry Division.



In Vietnam, Welch was placed in charge of a reconnaissance platoon of 28 volunteers. This unit would be dropped into enemy territory to uncover information and clear enemy bunkers—many times by hand-to-hand combat.

On one such occasion, his platoon was walking through a recently evacuated Vietnamese military camp when Welch noticed something in the bushes that he suspected to be enemy troops waiting in ambush. “I sent two guys around one way, and I went the other with another guy,” he explained. They were checking out the area when Welch came to a path in the road. “[Because of] the intense training that I had, I just automatically stopped, and I quickly made up my mind that I was going to jump it.”

Welch learned that his speculations were true as he looked down the trail and saw that the enemy already had him in their sights. Welch was shot on the left side of his chest. ... The medic tried to bandage his wounds, but they were too severe. “‘Sir, I’m sorry; there is nothing I can do,’ my medic said. And then that was it. I was going to die. I was going to go meet the Lord, and I was ashamed about how He had caught me. And in that moment, I could only say three words and only said them twice out loud: ‘God, help me! God, help me!’” In a cry for help, Welch told God he was sorry for the sins he had been committing.

“And that is when it happened,” Welch said. “A chopper was trying to get on the little patch of ground.” Miraculously, an American helicopter had been flying over and saw they needed help. No one knew where it had come from, but the timing was an answer to his prayer.

That began a new story in Welch’s life as he was physically dragged to safety and spiritually revived to live for Jesus. Welch went on to serve the Lord in many ways. After graduating from seminary, he served as a pastor, a two-term president for the Southern Baptist Convention, and the associate executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention before retiring to spend time with his family. He is perhaps best known for developing the FAITH evangelism strategy.

“All I said was ‘God, help me,’ and everything changed for the rest of my life. And if God would do that for me—a lonely, reprobate sinner—don’t you know He would do that for you too? Because He will. But you have to be willing to get honest with Him.”

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