



Same Gospel Different Ways to Share

By Derek Kiser on April 12, 2021

TODAY'S READING: 1 Corinthians 9

Starting in verse 20 of this passage Paul lays out some ideas that may be foreign to us. Paul says he became a Jew to the Jews. He approached things differently with the Gentiles (those outside the law). To the weak he became weak. Paul then says in verse 22, "I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some." This topic is called Gospel Contextualization -- We do not change the gospel, because that would be robbing it of its power, but how do we present the gospel message in different contexts, in different cultures, with people in different life stages, etc.?

As an Army Chaplain I realized quickly I needed to understand this concept. I was in a new culture. I had to become a soldier for soldiers to respect me. I had to wear the same uniform, share some of the same experiences (gas chamber) and be where soldiers were to share the gospel with them. For those of you reading this who have been in the military or have been around military people, you know they really do have their own culture, a different language, and ways of doing things. Sometimes that meant having a chapel or conversation by a tree, in a tent, or the motor pool where the Humvees were, never in a church building.

For us what does it mean? We share the same gospel message regardless of who we are sharing it with. We contextualize it to the person(s) we are talking with. As a student pastor I share differently with a teenager than I would an adult or a child. How do we do this? For starters, it sometimes means spending time trying to understand life from someone else's shoes. It takes being willing to listen to a person to get to know enough about them to know where the gospel connects. It means instead of giving a canned gospel presentation we really care enough about a person to meet them where they are. This means caring enough about them to think through and pray through how best to share with them. A question about retirement and how someone would spend their retirement years would be appropriate to an empty nester, but if you ask a teenager about that they will not connect at all with you. For the mom with three kids running around her feet while you are talking with her, asking her about how she spends her free time would get a "you don't have a clue" stare. We understand this in basic conversation, but do we think about it when it comes to the gospel? Are you willing to take the time to pray through how to share the gospel with someone in a way that will most connect with them?

PRAYER: God, help me care enough about the person I am sharing the gospel with to be willing to get to know them. Help me understand them in a way that will help me share the gospel. Help me to know what to say and not say, do and not do, so the gospel is on full display and I am not a distraction.

TOMORROW'S READING: 1 Corinthians 10

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