



Ashley's weekly evangelistic update from Italy

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No. 27 – Identification

Greetings faithful partners in ministry,

Someone reminded me recently that evangelism is a lifestyle. It's not just about an occasional outing here and there but rather it is about sharing Christ with our lives, our actions and our words. Certainly, purposeful outings have their place. They are a great opportunity to get to know people whom you never would have met otherwise. But ultimately, my aim as a Christ follower, is to live Christ, to show that I am identified with Him, every day, as well as during "Sunday evangelistic outings". Living Christ involves anything from sharing a thought-provoking sentence or taking time for a lengthier conversation about my Savior and Lord. It involves seeking out these opportunities. It involves confessing the sin of not identifying with Christ in every aspect of my life, when that is the case. It involves living for Christ in my actions and responses. It involves loving and treasuring Christ above all else. Pray that these things might be true in my life and that I might live for Christ without compromise.

There have been several opportunities recently to "live Christ" but I would like to share in particular, once again, about identifying with Christ in evangelism. Nearly two weeks have passed since I last wrote and as always there is much to share but Sherrie and I were able to hand out several invitations to the upcoming Family Course while grocery shopping. We were able to talk a few minutes with one woman who was waiting in line with us. She had a gentle face and a sweet little baby boy. She seemed genuinely receptive to the idea of attending the Family Course.

A week ago Saturday several of us in the church

were able to go out in the surrounding towns and distribute invitations for the upcoming Course and also talk with several people. I thank the Lord for the beautiful day which He provided because it meant that there were people out and about. If possible, it's so much better to make a personal contact rather than simply putting an invitation in a mailbox. I was struck by one conversation in particular with a woman named Roberta this past Saturday. When I approached her with an invitation, she asked when and where the course would be held. She kindly declined when she heard the time, knowing that she wouldn't be able to come due to her work schedule. However, when she heard where we were located she pursed her lips, furrowed her brows, and then said "by the way, do you know Piera?" I was dumbstruck. Come to find out, Roberta knows Piera because Piera worked at the nursing home where Roberta's mother was a resident. Roberta spoke glowingly about Piera and wanted to know how she was . . . Piera had obviously left quite an impression on her. She also expressed curiosity in the little group that Piera attended. On her way to and from work, Roberta passes by the church every Wednesday evening but has never met anyone besides Piera that goes to that group.

The Lord used this conversation to convict me in two significant ways. First, Piera, a professed non-believer, was a light for Christ to this woman. How much more can I, as a believer, who has the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ dwelling in me, be a light! Secondly, **pray that we would grow as a church in being more visible**. We are making progress, by the grace of God, but there's definitely more room to

grow considering this woman lives in the neighboring town and has never met one of us before. Roberta is only free on Sundays and during the weekday in the mornings so I invited her to our church service and picnic this upcoming Sunday. **Pray with me that she might desire to know Christ.**



My first passenger

I also have many reasons for which to praise my Lord for the evangelization this past Sunday. I thank Him for His provision in a car which enabled me to have Martina, 17, as an evangelistic partner on Sunday. However, there are even greater reasons for which to thank and praise Him.

First, I praise my Lord because “...*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...*” (1 Tim. 1:15). He is the propitiation for my sins and for Martina's sins and because of that we have a great hope to share with others. The only reason that we can even go out and share THE truth with others in the first place is because of God's great grace and mercy in sending Christ Jesus into the world. Secondly, I praise my Lord because we were able to give out several hundred tracts for the Family Course which most people received with a smile and a thank you. This is not typical. We praise Him for this. Third, I praise my Lord because we were also able to talk more in depth with several people.

This past Sunday, Martina incited me to give an invitation to Adriano, the used book seller with whom Dori and I have talked several times. He's the “Romans 1 man” and the one who always uses the excuse of time (“But listen, I don't have time to come and do studies or read the Bible”). I hesitated to talk

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with him because Dori and I have been very clear with him in the past, however, as a result of Martina's encouragement, I did go and give him an invitation to the Family Course. He was thankful for the invitation but mentioned time being a problem once again. Martina had encouraged me beforehand to remind him that time itself was a gift from God ...was he using it to seek Him? **Pray for the softening of Adriano's heart that he may seek Christ.**

Martina and I talked with two teenagers, Luana and Samanta, who were willing to listen. I shared with them about the grave consequence of our choice to not live for the Lord or seek Him in this life. First of all, He had given us this life in order to seek Him and that is already a huge unmerited gift from Him. Do we thank Him for this gift? No, we've rejected Him. What can we expect when we stand before Him on the day of judgment? The grave consequence of choosing to be separated from Him in this lifetime, rightly means eternal separation from Him. Samanta agreed. They continued to listen as I shared about the depth of our sin and about Jesus, the only One through whom we could ever be saved from God's righteous judgment. **Pray that they might truly be convicted of their sin of ignoring and rejecting God.**

I was reminded once again in this week's sermon that it's not important how much you know or how much you do but who you are in Christ. I am often asked by people what I do here in Italy. But, as a believer, I am not defined by my job, my family, my hobbies or my nationality, rather I am identified with Christ. This is the lifestyle which affects our evangelism, our sanctification, our effectiveness for the kingdom of God, and ultimately our relationship with Christ. What or whom I identify with determines whether I truly “live Christ” and if I am truly glorifying God with my life.

In Christ,
Ashley

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