

How to Say “I Love You” Without Using Words

Matthew 20:29-34

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 6-6-2010

Introduction

Last week I began a series dealing with various facets of evangelism by non-experts. You don't have to be an expert to be used by God to lead someone to the Lord. And Peter says that all of us must be ready to give a defense of the hope that lies within us. But there are some things that will make you much more effective when you give that defense of the faith. Last week we look at seven bad attitudes that we need to get rid of. Today I want to look at nine more things that we can put on. These are nine ways of saying, “I Love You,” without using words.

If you've every read about the five languages of love, I think you will know what I am talking about. We communicate with far more than our words. The Ray Comfort training beginning this Tuesday evening will show you how to use words effectively to share the Gospel. But this passage says a lot about the non-verbal communication that should accompany the Gospel. There was a Western Church father who said, “Preach the Gospel. If necessary, use words.” I don't like that phraseology because the Gospel *is* words. Nevertheless, he was recognizing that the Gospel must be accompanied with effective non-verbal communication. It's not enough to give the words, “I care about your soul” to the world. That's important. But our attitudes and actions communicate things as well. And I believe these nine things can help to reinforce and strengthen the verbal communication of the Gospel that you are going to be learning in the next few weeks. And if you haven't signed up for it, please do.

I. Don't be Programmatic (v. 29ff)

The first thing that I see in this passage is that Jesus was not programmatic in the way he approached evangelism and mercy ministries. And you can see that in two ways. First of all, dealing with these blind men was probably not part of His schedule. It was obviously part of the Father's schedule. But Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. And I think it is ever so easy to become insensitive to the Spirit's promptings for ministry because it isn't part of our schedule or program. Right? When pastors say, “The ministry would be great if it wasn't for the people” they are being programmatic. They've got all kinds of things to be done, and the people are

© Copyright 2010 by Phillip G. Kayser. Permission is granted to all readers to download, print, and distribute on paper or electronically any Sermons, provided that each reprint bear this copyright notice, current address, and telephone number, and provided that all such reproductions are distributed to the public without charge. They may not be sold or issued in book form, CD-ROM form, or microfiche without prior permission.

Phillip G. Kayser • Dominion Covenant Church • 307.N 41st Ave. Omaha, NE 68131 • 402.934.3300

getting in the way. And God says, "Excuse me! We wouldn't need you as a pastor if we didn't have messed up lives. OK? Get used to it." And when you are program driven (*I have to get to Jerusalem before the feast starts!*) what's going to happen is that you will probably pass by the little old lady who is broken down on the highway. Or you may not be sensitive to the Spirit's prompting to help out a neighbor in need. Your schedule will keep you from ministry; your budget that you set up last year will keep you from taking the proverbial shirt off your back and giving it to another person when God prompts you. Why? Because it's not in my budget. *If plans and budgets can't be broken it means that you were omniscient when you made them*, which is ridiculous, right? You can't know the future, and God says that you can't control the future. Instead, you should say, "Here are my plans if God wills." We must not be programmatic. We need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

But you know what, this first issue slices both ways. We can become programmatic even when we are excited about helping poor people. Socialism is a programmatic way of helping the poor. Let me explain it this way: Jesus was not focused on disease, poverty or any other problems. He was not focused on needs. He was focused on people. And that meant that Jesus did not have as His goal to do away with all disease, all poverty or all misery in life. How do I know that? Well, there were many, many blind and lame people that Jesus did not heal. Verse 30 indicates that He was passing by and He wasn't planning to heal them until they cried out and the Spirit prompted Him. And in the book of Acts we get the impression that He must have passed by many people that He had not healed. For example, in Acts 3 it speaks of a person who was lame from birth who had for many years been left at the temple daily to beg. That meant that Jesus had walked past that beggar without healing him many, many times. And the same is true of the multitudes healed in Acts 5. Jesus didn't heal everybody that He could have healed.

And if it had not been for the initiative that these two blind men had taken, they would not have been healed. And you might be thinking, "OK? How is this a way of saying 'I love you.'?" At first blush it may seem like it is the very opposite of loving action when we at Dominion say "No" to some charity cases, and just plain ignore other charity cases. And that's a good question: Why *didn't* Jesus seek out every lame person in the country and heal him or her? And the perverse thought might go through someone's mind – "Well, maybe He couldn't do it all. We need big government for such a big problem as that." We are so used to big government developing programs to do away with poverty and throwing more and more money at

problems in society that we interpret the big anti-poverty programs as the more loving approach. But it isn't. Anyone who has been served by government welfare knows how impersonal it is. Yes – people have benefitted. But it is not personal and it is not loving. People feel demeaned with the programmatic approach to evangelism or mercy ministries. Christ approached each person individually and uniquely. He was sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, which sometimes meant that Christ looked like He was reactive rather than proactive. I don't think that was the case, but it may have looked that way. His goal was to minister to the people that *God* sovereignly brought along, not to fight against all disease.

But we speak of governments who want to put a chicken in every pot, and give medical care to every person and who declare war on poverty as being Messianic States. The irony is that the real Messiah didn't do it that way. He didn't model what big government, big church or big money can do. He modeled a kind of ministry that any of us can achieve. And I find that encouraging. Can any one of us minister to one person who contacts us and says, "I haven't had a meal in two days. Could you get me some food?" Yes we can. We can buy him a meal at Burger King and sit down and talk with him. That's the difference between personal ministry and program ministry. Don't treat the training you will be receiving in the next few weeks as a program that you will be part of. See it as a tool.

II. Focus On Individuals, Even In A Crowd (vv. 29-30)

The second principle that I see in this passage is that we must not let individuals get lost in the crowd. We must focus on the individual, not on the crowd. Verse 29 says, "**a great multitude followed Him.**" Working with crowds is much different than working with individuals. And interrelationships in a crowd are quite different. For example, some people will be quite conversational when it is just you and them. They may still be quite conversational when you add two or three people. But the more people are added to the group the less they talk. And in a crowd of a certain size, you couldn't get a word out of them. That's pretty normal. I can tell several of you exactly how small the prayer meeting needs to be before you will pray on your own. You may love praying. But unless you are called upon to pray, you probably won't in a larger group. There is nothing wrong with that. It is just that you are much more in tune with crowd dynamics than some extroverts are. These blind people were either extroverts or were desperate enough that they broke the crowd dynamics rule and they called attention to themselves as individuals. But you know what? Many people

won't. And sensitivity to the Spirit may be necessary to see what really needs to be ministered to. Some of you are really good at recognizing when someone is standing by himself or herself, and you go out of your way to minister because you sense that they are having a hard time joining. That's great. That's exactly what this principle is about. The crowd may be saying one thing, but the Spirit may be saying something totally different. The crowd was telling these men to shut up. The Spirit was saying something different.

Look at verse 31. **“Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!’”** Here's the principle in a nutshell. Focus on individuals, even in a crowd. The individual may not expect you to focus on him. The crowd may not want you to focus on him, but if our evangelism is to be effective, we must not allow the individual to get lost in the crowd. And that's exactly what will happen.

And this principle is a protection for us. We would be overwhelmed emotionally if we took into our bosom every problem that is out there. And so we tend to treat people as statistics when there is a huge number of them. I think some of the most insensitive people on the face of the planet are people involved in government welfare, Indian affairs and other social programs. They'd go crazy if they didn't become that way. But it is a far better protective mechanism to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and not feel like we need to solve everyone's problem. That way when we do minister, we can treat them like people.

III. Don't be Put Off by Eccentric Behavior (vv. 30-31)

OK. Third principle is “Don't be put off by eccentric behavior.” Now you may not consider what they are doing here as being eccentric. Let me assure you, it was. Just think of it this way. You are at Christ Community Church with a big crowd of people because you heard that Jesus was in town preaching, and you are just dying to hear what He has to say. But two minutes into His speech He gets interrupted by these guys in the back of the auditorium who are shouting at the top of their lungs. **“‘Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!’ Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!’”** And people are turning around and saying, “Would you shut up!” And the ushers are warning these people that they will call the police. But these guys just don't understand the meaning of “No.” They just keep crying out the same thing louder. And to top it all off, when Jesus calls them, they throw off their clothing and come running up. At least Mark 10

tells us that one of them did. It says, “**And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus**” (Mark 10:50). Now maybe he had under garments on, but the way it reads it seems as if he throws off his only garment.

Maybe I am reading into this more than is there. But having grown up in Ethiopia and having been accosted by beggars of all sorts, I know that hardly any of them have social manners. They lost those in order to survive. And sometimes they could be downright annoying. I can just see these blind men intent on getting Christ’s attention.

And when you engage in evangelism you might run across annoying people, or eccentric people, or people who dress in drag, who are a few bricks short of a load in their heads, who are bums, etc. And if you are put off by their eccentricity, it will be harder to convince them that you care about them. See their soul.

IV. Carefully Examine the True Needs of Others (v. 30 – “they cried out”)

The fourth principle is to carefully examine the true needs of others. They will come to you with their felt needs (which we will look at in a bit). But it is still helpful if you can try to discern what their true needs are. Verse 30 says, “**they cried out...**” Now that was not unusual. That’s just what beggars do. But Jesus heard something different about their words. The cry for mercy was different than the usual cry for money. Their title of Lord and Son of David was a Messianic title, which may have indicated some spiritual awareness on their part. Perhaps He heard the intensity of their cries, but certainly Matthew, Mark and Luke all noticed it as unusual.

On this occasion men cried out to Jesus with their voices and He listened between the lines. On other occasions, the people may have been silent about their needs, but Christ listened between the lines. For example, what did Christ see with the woman at the well? Without her saying a thing He knew immediately that she was a social outcast. No one else would have come alone at this time of day to get water. And His probing questions showed that He knew she had needs that she had never felt free to talk about. Those unspoken needs were vehicles to the Gospel. Ray Comfort is good at ferreting out those unspoken needs that people don’t usually talk about.

V. **Be Willing To Stop Your Schedule Sometimes (v. 32 – “and Jesus stood still”)**

A fifth thing that shows that you care is when you stop your busy schedule and take unscheduled time out for people. That’s a huge way of showing that you care. Verse 32 says, “**So Jesus stood still and called them.**” We have such a hard time standing still, don’t we? We are so busy with schedules that we can’t stand still unless it’s in our daily planner to stand still. And I’m just as guilty as anybody else on this. I’ve gotten better at doing this, but I still tend to be so production oriented that I can easily get anxious about my schedule if a new need arises. When that happens I know that the schedule has become dictator instead of servant and it has become more important than the people that the schedule was originally intended to serve. And then I have to immediately repent. My wife is much better at this than I am. But I believe I have grown hugely over the years.

Now I don’t want to imply that we shouldn’t have schedules. I am still a strong, strong advocate of everyone having schedules and trying to keep to them. Far too much time can be wasted when you don’t push yourself with a schedule. I think Christ mandates careful planning. Certainly Paul did. But our schedules can’t be so inflexible that we can’t take time out when it is really needed.

Have you mothers stopped your chores from time to time to just sit down and talk with your kids heart-to-heart? Or do your kids know that it is a death wish if they mess up your schedule? Obviously we need to have balance here or we will not be productive. There’s a time and a place for everything. For example (to balance this out) Christ sometimes made people wait until after His teaching before He healed them. It’s appropriate to make your kids wait sometimes and not be driven by their needs. Jesus was driven by the Spirit, not by people’s needs, and not by His schedule. With the Syrophenician woman, he put her off until He could see how serious she was. But flexibility with schedules is important. And one way that I try to force flexibility is by putting catch-up time into the schedule. And I tell you, it seems like I am always having to use that catch up time lately.

VI. **Your Personal Presence (“v. 32 – “and called them”)**

A sixth principle is the importance of your personal presence. You can see that in verse 32. It says He “**called them...**” Now even here, this is not absolute. With the centurion and with the Syrophenician woman he was willing to heal from a distance. We can do evangelism by mail. In fact, I think we ought to use that a lot more. I think Ruth had a couple of quite

strategic evangelism letters that she sent out with a tract this past week. So it's both/and, not either/or. But it is an unhealthy American trait that we seem to almost always salve our consciences by throwing money at projects from a distance. A lot of people don't want to get their hands dirty. They don't want to be personally involved. This is true of evangelism as well. People want the church to be involved in evangelism, but they never do it. If people are to know that we really care, it is helpful if personal presence can be added.

VII. Find Out The Felt Needs Of People (v. 32 – “What do you want me to do for you?”)

The seventh principle that Christ shows here is that we need to find out the felt needs of the people. Earlier we looked at the needs that were really greater. But this is the need that people sense themselves. Many times God will put felt needs into people's lives in order to lead them to the Gospel. Don't immediately jump to conclusions. I find it interesting that despite the fact that Jesus can see that they are blind (that's their felt need), He doesn't assume that healing is what they want. In verse 21 He asks them, **“What do you want me to do for you?”** And there could have been different answers. This isn't just a rhetorical question. Maybe they were going to ask for money. After all, He did have a moneybag for the poor. Judas carried their mercy ministry funds. Maybe these two were more concerned about hell than they were about healing. After all, they do use a Messianic title to address Jesus with. And so Christ wants to find out exactly what is motivating them. Sometimes that can be helpful information in later ministry. Their need of salvation was far greater than their need for healing, but where does Jesus start? He starts with their felt needs, and *then* in verse 34 it says that they then followed Jesus. This can be abused, but Gary North in an essay called *Bread and Butter Evangelism* points out that Reformed people are sometimes lousy evangelists because we are always trying to answer questions that people aren't asking. So he said - Find out what the people's felt needs are. Show them that the bible is relevant to those felt needs, and after solving those needs they may be more open to the further claims of Christ upon them.

If Jesus could ask, **“What do you want Me to do for you?”** surely we can do so as well. That's asking for felt needs. You cannot ram the Gospel down people's throats. If they are not interested, they will tell you. We need to have a trust in God's sovereignty that He is capable of bringing things into people's lives that will make them sense their dependence upon

and their need for God. God has orchestrated these pains, needs and discomforts into their lives. It's not only the goodness of God that leads to repentance. It is also the severity of God.

It may be a divorce that someone has gone through that has caused such pain that this person needs a shoulder to cry on and advice from the Bible on what to do about their relationship. The problem with much ministry is that we answer questions no one is asking. We are scratching where there is no itch and it rubs people the wrong way. Now it's true that this principle can be taken too far as well. Jesus sometimes helps people to realize what their true needs really are with questions. Ray Comfort is brilliant at that. But if that can be coupled with a willingness to minister to felt needs, our presentation will be even stronger.

VIII. Empathize With Others (v. 34 – “and Jesus had compassion on them”)

The eighth principle that shows we care is empathizing emotionally with others. Verse 34 says, “**and Jesus had compassion on them...**” The word for compassion is literally the moving of our intestines, but is used to refer to the emotional identification with a person in need. And the first few moments after a person unloads their hurt or their particular need is key to being able to express this compassion. Maybe it will show on your face or in your words, but they will quickly discern whether you care emotionally.

But there is a second benefit of allowing your emotions to be in gear. Compassion is a powerful motivator for evangelism. Every time the word compassion is used of Christ, it results in some kind of action that seeks to resolve the pain or problem. Five times the Gospels say, “**He was moved by compassion**” (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 18:27; Mark 1:41; 6:34). Ask God daily for compassion for the lost and you will find it easier to engage in evangelism.

IX. Do Not Underestimate the Power of Touch (v. 34 “and touched”)

The last principle is that we should not underestimate the power of touch. Verse 34 says, “**and touched their eyes.**” I find it amazing how many times Jesus touched people in His ministry. And especially the number of times He touched those whom nobody else would touch. And I know growing up in boarding school and not having loving touch for months on end, how important touch is for my family. You don't realize how important something is until you miss it. And most beggars would be people

who had not experienced loving touch in years. People would toss money to them from a distance. Usually they were dirty and smelly. People didn't tend to want to get near. You might get fleas – or for a Jew what was worse, you might get ceremonially defiled. And yet Jesus is willing to touch them. Matthew 8:3 has Jesus touching the lepers. Most Jews wouldn't ever do that because they were either afraid of getting leprosy or they didn't want the inconvenience of being unclean. But Jesus touched them. That act alone was probably an emotionally liberating thing because it showed that Jesus cared. It wasn't an impersonal healing. You know, in mercy ministries there will be people that we don't want to touch let alone hug. But there is a power in touch that communicates that we care. And it can be a powerful prelude to openness to the Gospel. And I'll admit that that this is perhaps the most difficult point for me. I tend to be shy about touch. But I have seen others who are very, very effectively in communicating "I care" through a hug or touch. It tends to be women who are better at that.

So just to review, if you want to demonstrate your care in evangelism and mercy ministries,

1. First, don't be programmatic, be personal
2. Second, focus on individuals, even in a crowd
3. Third, don't be put off by (or for that matter, don't mock) eccentric behavior
4. Fourth, carefully examine the true needs of others
5. Fifth, be willing to stop your schedule sometimes
6. Sixth, give personal presence
7. Seventh, find out the felt needs of people. Don't just jump to conclusions about what you think they need.
8. Eighth, empathize with others. Express compassion. All three Gospels show that others saw the compassion of Christ – either in His eyes, in his demeanor, or in His words.
9. Ninth, do not underestimate the power of touch.

And may God receive all the glory as you reach out to a world in need. Amen.

I charge you that as you share that you care for the souls of men by engaging in evangelism, that you also show that you care in the non-verbal ways that we have talked about today. Use all the languages of love. Amen.

How to Say “I Love You” Without Using Words

Matthew 20:29-34

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 6-6-2010

Introduction

I. Don't be Programmatic (v. 29ff)

- What did pastor mean when he said, "If plans and budgets can't be broken, it means you were omniscient when you made them, which is ridiculous"?
- Why do government programs violate the spirit in which Jesus worked? Programs are focused on n_____ whereas Jesus was focused on p_____.

II. Focus On Individuals, Even In A Crowd (vv. 29-30)

- What was the crowd saying?
- What was the Spirit saying?

III. Don't be Put Off by Eccentric Behavior (vv. 30-31)

- What kind of eccentrics would you have a hard time caring for?

IV. Carefully Examine the True Needs of Others (v. 30 - “they cried out”)

- What showed that these men understood their need of something more than healing?
- What were some of the needs that were obvious about the woman at the well?

V. Be Willing To Stop Your Schedule Sometimes (v. 32 - “and Jesus stood still”)

- Why is standing still for a need difficult for us?
- How do schedules sometimes become dictators rather than servants?
- Explain the difference between 1) being driven by a schedule, 2) being driven by people's needs, and 3) being driven by the Spirit?

VI. Your Personal Presence ("v. 32 - "and called them")

- What are some ways that evangelism can be done from a distance effectively? What are some ways you have engaged in evangelism face-to-face?

VII. Find Out The Felt Needs Of People (v. 32 - “What do you want me to do for you?”)

- What's the problem with answering questions that no one is asking? How can this principle be taken too far?

VIII. Empathize With Others (v. 34 - “and Jesus had compassion on them”)

- What are two benefits of this point?

IX. Do Not Underestimate the Power of Touch (v. 34 "and touched")

- How is touch a language of love?

