

See Yourself Here Series 5, We Are Saving A Seat For You

By: Bobby Sullivan

Recap: See Yourself Here - John 1:23:51

John 1:35-39

*Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?" He said to them, "**Come and see.**" They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).*

Invite is one of the verbs we value. There are three big ideas that I think when we wrap our heads around, inviting people becomes easy and natural.

3 Steps I want to touch on this Morning

1. Being excited about Jesus is ok! Its normal! Remember "Radical Christianity is normal Christianity. Anything less than that is subnormal"

When we first saved no one could stop us then maturity came on and something changed.

2. Sometimes we rightly focus on leading people to Jesus, but can overlook the fact that often, the first step is letting Jesus lead people to us.
3. An invite culture is more about **including** people than it is about **informing** people. It leads the person to believe they are wanted, important and included in what is about to happen.

1. Being excited about Jesus is ok! Its normal!

John 1:40-46

He [Andrew] first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus... The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me..." Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him..." "Come and see." (This is the invitation to experience first hand) Philip was so pumped up he never asked permission. He got straight to the point...COME AND SEE

Consider this quote from Dr. Thomas Rainer in [Ten Surprises About the Unchurched](#): *“Ninety-six percent of the unchurched are at least somewhat likely to attend church if they are invited. Perhaps we need to pause on this response. Perhaps we need to restate it. More than nine out of 10 of the unchurched said they would come to church if they were invited.”*

EXAMPLES OF THE INVITATION:

Luke 2:17

1.) “After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone...”

Those shepherds, all they saw was a baby in a manger, but by the eyes of faith they were excited about what they saw.

2.) The woman at the well. Jesus impacted her so much that:

John 4:28-29 Woman at the Well

*“...left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?’” Jesus was not afraid to invite. He was in Samaria and people were unclean there and people would stay away. Jesus initiates the conversation. He approached her, and demonstrates love with no social bias. His genuine love for her had such a profound impact that she went from hiding to hollering. All at once she dropped everything, ran off to the village and began telling everyone. She was so radically changed that the one encounter revolutionized her life and she could care less about her reputation. **Her past became a platform for promotion.** (Even though you may be insecure never let the invite intimidate you) Live with the Love of God so that people need sun glasses when you show up.*

3.) Luke 19:5-7 "Zacchaeus the Tax Collector"

19 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. **3** He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd.**4** So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.**5** When Jesus **reached the spot**, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” **6** So he came down at once and welcomed him

gladly.⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

Everyone in Jericho gave Zack Flack. He was the tax collector. Jesus went to the spot where Zac was. You can't just send a email blast out! You must make the effort to get to the spot then give an invite. Jesus sees people you don't see and includes people that others exclude.

Challenge: 30-60 sec video on FB for 30 days. Why Impact/Why Jesus. Write out your topics a head of time. Maybe a point on SUN that inspired you.

4.) Matthew 4:18-19 **18** As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.**19** "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."

5.) **27** After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him,

6.) Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael John 1:43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. **He found** Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

GOD THE BOUNTY HUNTER! LOL Jesus has an APB out for you. He is seeking you. Jesus is looking for men and woman to help change the world regardless of your background, education and occupation.

GO BACK to Matthew 4:19 Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

We are not found to just follow, we are called to fish

All throughout the New Testament there is a direct correlation between being called and collecting. In other words, fishing for people.

A.) You don't have to be a professionally sponsored fishermen to fish! Anyone can do it and you don't need all the fancy tackle and boat. You just drop your line and wait for the bait to do its thing.

REPEAT! DROP THE BAIT AND WAIT

B.) Most fisherman know there fish and how to catch them and with what method. They know where the fish live and what level. Sometimes we have to know and go to the level of the fish!

REPEAT: KNOW AND GO

C.) Fishing requires what I don't have! Patience. God give me patience! And HURRY! Sometimes they are not biting! What do you do? Change locations, get different bait, go to a different level.

Look at Matthew 4:19 Follow me and **I will make you** fishers of men. There is a promise and a purpose in this scripture.

This verse is descriptive and prescriptive. It describes what it looks like to follow Jesus. Its prescriptive in that it says what you should be doing by following Jesus. When we follow his life we pattern our life after his. He invites people into public club that many deem as private and exclusive with many rules of membership.

Jesus sole reason for relinquishing his royalty was to redeem mankind back into a relationship. He is on a mission to invite the immoral, the impossible, the impostors, imprisoned, impoverished, inconsistent, indecent and insecure into illuminated, impressive, inheritance that is irrevocable!!

The devil is in the deterioration business but Jesus is in the restoration business.

Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Look before: ⁹ And what is God's "living message"? It is the revelation of faith for salvation, which is the message that we preach. For if you publicly declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will experience salvation. ¹⁰ The heart that believes in him receives the gift of the righteousness of God—and then the mouth gives thanks to salvation.

Vs 14 ¹⁴ But how can people call on him for help if they've not yet believed? And how can they believe in one they've not yet heard of? And how can they hear the message of life if there is no one there to proclaim it? "invite" "tells them"

This is the normal reaction of people who have been touched by Jesus; you want to share that news. No one can shut you up!

RICK JOYER

"...the most powerful evangelistic force in the world is an encouraged Church. When the Church is encouraged, individual Believers share their

faith with their friends and relatives, and that is the most effective evangelism that exists, by far.”¹

Denny Duron, “Evangelism isn’t what you do, its what you are”

Give yourself permission to be excited, to be faith-filled, hopeful! Dare to color outside the lines of your own limitations.

If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. If they will perish let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one go there UNWARNED and UNPRAYED for.
Charles Spurgeon

1 Peter 3:15

*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared** to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the **reason** for the hope that you have. But do this with **gentleness and respect**,*

2. Sometimes we rightly focus on leading people to Jesus, but can overlook the fact that often, the first step is letting Jesus lead people to us.

Most of us don’t meet a stranger in the grocery store who is so ready and willing for me to tell them the whole Gospel, at which point they fall over, repeat the sinners prayer, and come to Bible study the next day. That does happen but it’s the exception, not the rule.

Todd White, Doug Collins, Troy Bohn, Mel Rolls, Denny Nissley where Christianity is a lifestyle not an occasion.

John Finney, a writer on mission and church growth, in his work *“Finding Faith Today: How Does it Happen,”* gives an outline of the typical way that most people today in our day and age end up coming to faith.²

1. They are first introduced to the church through a family member, a friend, a colleague, or a Christian friend.
2. They come, they ask questions, they listen, they pick things up from being apart of the community

¹Rick Joyner, “The History and Future of the Present Revival - Tighten Your Seatbelts. We Are in For the Ride of Our Lives!” http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word/6670

² George G. Hunter III, The Celtic Way of Evangelism

3. They are at some point invited to explore things intentionally in a little deeper way; to arrive at some specific knowledge, usually through a group or some sort of program, mentorship, or discipleship.
4. They then come to discover that they have in fact become a Christian and then take a formal step such as baptism.

Validation comes from Association. You are authorized and deputized by proxy. Jesus said follow me now go!

Quite often salvation comes from realization not decision. People make all kinds of decisions but when revelation comes from realization, the light bulbs come on that were once darkened. Why? We were not plugged in to the source that gave light.

Pastor Karl spoke about how Christianity really isn't a belief system, it's a belong system.

That's not to say what we believe is not important, it really is, but what we believe is best communicated and expressed in community more together than it is in a belief statement.

We the church embody the truth. The truth will set you free.

Not what we believe but who we believe.

Zach Sloane "Truth is not a series of propositional statements that we get people to agree to. Truth is a person not a program"

"The Truth that Jesus is, is not invested in the cold hard pages of a book, He has put it in living epistles" Zach SLoane

2 Corinthians 3:2-3 (NKJV)

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."

We as the church embody a message. We carry it within us and we model it, reveal it, and communicate the message in our lives and the way that we connect with one another.

The world will know you're my disciples by how you love one another, treat one another, talk to one another, interact with one another

Jesus Christ is the truth, but where can we find Him?

TEXT: *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him..." "Come and see." HE didn't say, "ready my book", "talk to my associate", "take this course", "Pray this way" He said, "COME AND SEE"*

1 Timothy 3:15 (NLT)

"... so that if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth."

The church is where mutual strengthening, life-giving relationships and connection are made and it's in these relationships that people learn, encounter, and experience Mr. Truth, Jesus.

3. An invite culture is more about *including* people than it is *informing* people.

This was Jesus's way. He could have answered their questions, given them cold hard facts, details, inspiring anecdotes, but he didn't. He included them in a process that would help and empower them to come to their own conclusions. He invited them to "Come and See."

So what does that look like? What does Impact look like?

It means that we do things like invite people to join us in the things that we do. We don't have an "us verses them mentality." There are no longer insiders verses outsiders.

2 Corinthians 5:14-16

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. **15** And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. **16** So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.*

Not advocating for universalism in the sense that no one needs to accept Jesus, we do. But we do recognize the universality of what Jesus did. He died for all. He has forgiven all, he accepts all, he loves all, and because of this, all belong and all are welcome, and all need to be invited in.

Inviting people really does have a lot to do with how you see church.

If church is for you that place where you encounter the presence of an Almighty and All-Loving God, church is the place where you have made relationships and connections with people that give you strength and make your life better, if church is the place where you are built up in the most holy faith, and it is a life changing experience for you... then ya, you want to include others.

The barriers to people's inclusion have been removed by Jesus.

Galatians 2:14-18

14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. **15** He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups.

16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

17 He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. **18** Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

When we invite people and include them in our community we live life and practice it before informing them. Our choice to show love and acceptance speaks a far more informative and powerful message than any pre-conditioned belief statement or behavioral expectation ever could.

We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, gay, filthy rich, black and proud, y no habla Ingles. We extend a special welcome to those who are newborns, poor as dirt, skinny as a rail, or got a hitch in their git-along. You're welcome here if you're "just browsing," just woke up, or just got out of jail. We don't care if you're more Lutheran than Luther, or more Catholic than the Pope, or haven't been in church since little Sophia's dedication. You can sit, stand, walk around, lay on the floor or be a gospel cheer leader. You can speak in tongues, wave a flag, dance or recite "Untie my bow tie who

stole my Honda and Kawasaki 3x with your eyes closed and arms in the air. We offer a special welcome to those who could lose a few pounds, think the earth is flat, work too hard, can't spell, or came because grandma's in town and wanted to go to church. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, are three-times divorced, had religion shoved down your throat as a kid, or got lost in traffic and wound up here by mistake. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. If you blew all your offering money at the dog track, you are welcome here. We welcome tourists, seekers, doubters, bleeding hearts ... and you. Bottom line is there is no place like home. ... Welcome Home We reserved a seat for you!!! Portions Taken from "The Gospel in Ten Words" by Paul Ellis.

With that said, What do we see ?

We see a church with a kingdom minded people, sold out to seeing revival in our communities and where lives are equipped and where people realize their purpose. We see a church committed to raising, training, and empowering a generation that committed to global transformation. We see a church that will fill every sector of culture to affect sustained transformation. We see Impact Church serving as a seedbed for raising up and releasing many leaders to plant churches throughout the Maritimes through an intentional process of focused leadership training and mentoring. We will encourage the development and strategic alignment of team ministries that will go to the nations of the world with an apostolic mandate of realizing global glory. We will not rest until the rest of the city has made a decision YES/NO and then conclude that every NO is one step closer to a YES!

Remember again the Samaritan woman at the well who went and told everyone about her experience with Jesus.

John 4:39-42

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

They believed, not because of what she said, but because they got to see and hear and experience him for themselves. Their own experience led them to know that he was the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Not saying what we say, or doctrine, or behaviour doesn't matter, but first we need to include people with no conditions, let them know they belong.

Invite - and once they show up, treat them well. Let them know they belong, no strings attached. Truth flourishes in an environment of freedom, freedom to be and to belong, and when it is experienced first hand.

TIP OF THE DAY...Some of you have not even invited your church family for dinner much less a stranger. Lets create a culture of INVITE.

Summary – Have a seat

1. People who encounter Jesus want to go tell everyone about him so they can come see him for themselves. Being excited about Jesus is ok!
2. Sometimes we rightly focus on leading people to Jesus but can overlook that fact that the first step is often letting Jesus lead people to us.
3. An invite culture is more about including people than it is about informing people.