

What Should I Say?
(Talking About Jesus in Everyday Conversations)
“Part 3: Talk About Jesus”

John 14:6; Romans 5:8-11, Ephesians 2:4-6

~ Delivered at Central Baptist Church on January 21, 2017 by Steve Edelman

Welcome everybody. We are so glad that you were able to join us this morning. We are in the middle of a new series on “**What should I say? Talking about Jesus in everyday conversations.**” Today we are on part 3 in the series and will be talking about “How to talk about Jesus.” It is based on the fact that Jesus commanded his people to go and tell others about the good news. Christians are to engage in spiritual conversations with people and tell them about Jesus. I am praying that we would have an urgency to have conversations with others about the most important thing we have.

The purpose of this series is to equip you to be able to explain the gospel to someone that needs to hear it. As we talked about last week, we want to address the main themes to help others understand the gospel. One way to define the gospel is to walk through the big themes of the Bible. We have broken this series into four parts: **the creation of the world, the fall into sin, the rescue through Jesus, and the future restoration when Jesus returns.**

You may be sipping a cup a coffee, an espresso, or an Earl Grey tea with a friend and somehow the conversation turns to “what do you believe?” or “who is Jesus?” In that moment what do you say? Some may try to change the subject, get awkward, or fumble through it. If we are being honest, many find it hard to talk about Jesus with friends and family. Sometimes it’s the last thing we want to talk about.

Maybe you have had people come to you for advice when they are going through a difficult time? What is the first thing you say? Many times, we offer good advice or support without a problem. For example, when people in our life are struggling we tend to affirm the problem rather than offer them Jesus. The person may say, “I am having this problem with my husband.” We may say, “o yeah, he is a real jerk.” Or the person may say, “I am having a real difficult time with my kids.” And we may say, “I will pray for you!” People need us to direct them to Jesus for help. I’m not saying that we shouldn’t have a supportive conversation at some point, or that we shouldn’t step in to protect people. However, let’s give them Jesus before every other solution.

Before we move on we need to acknowledge there are two common issues that often hold us back from sharing Jesus with others. **1. A lack of knowledge. 2. A presence of fear.** Fear of losing a friendship. Fear of your neighbor thinking you are crazy. Fear of losing your job, reputation, and the list goes on. This morning we will focus on the lack of knowledge. But, in your Community Groups don’t just talk about what to say, talk about why you may be fearful about talking about Jesus.

This morning I want to answer the questions: **Who is Jesus? What did he do? How does Jesus make a difference in our life today?** I also want to remind us that we Christians also need Jesus because we still have unbelief in our life. We too need to be refreshed with the gospel.

How do you start? Make a list of ways that Jesus is good news to you. What has He done for you? What difference has he made in your life? Who could you share that with?

In our Western World, it's best that these conversations happen organically and that we don't force them. Just a reminder, that these are Spirit-led conversations in which we do a lot more listening than talking. We want to demonstrate that we are truly seeking to understand people and remove the barriers between them and Jesus. We don't want to just simply win an argument or change our friend's point of view, we want to create a safe environment that allows them to open up so that we can introduce them to Jesus.

Those are some ways in which we can get started and continue the conversation. What are some of the key things we should try and talk about? Disclaimer: if you miss something or maybe nuance something incorrectly, the Spirit of God will still do His work through you. This is primarily the work of the Spirit of God. Use a bible or a resource that point you to the bible when you can to share truth. Those are a few tips that can help you overcome fear as you share Christ with others. I hope that takes the pressure off.

As God gives us opportunities to build trust and relationship with others, how do we go from talking about the weather or common things to talking about Jesus? In the book '*Beyond Awkward*' Beau Crosetto says, "If Ben (the person I am sharing faith with) sits down with me for a meal or comes over to my man cave for a chat, I will do everything I can to crack open the bible and show him a powerful encounter between Jesus and a seeker. In my experience this always leads to the best moments. . . . Whenever I can get a person into a Jesus story, it makes it that much easier for me to share the Jesus story with them. A Jesus story is any story in the Gospels where Jesus interacts with someone. The Jesus story is the work of his life, death, resurrection, and return." So, let's get going. In order to talk about Jesus in everyday conversations, we must be able to:

1. TELL OTHERS WHO JESUS IS.

How do we tell others who Jesus is? Look with me at John 14:6 which says, "*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*" Notice that Jesus is telling us who He is by saying "I am the way."

a) Jesus is the way.

We need to explain to others what Jesus means by, "**I am the way.**" He is the way to what? The end of the verse says, "**No one comes to the Father except through me.**" Meaning, *no one will come to God the Father except through Jesus. As a result of our rebellion and betrayal against God, we can't be in relationship with God by our own means.* (The chair illustration.) Jesus Christ is our mediator between God the father. We need a mediator because we have turned our back on God by putting ourselves above God. By doing life independently from God we have disconnected from that life-giving relationship that he wants with us. **As we are talking with our friends, we need to talk about who Jesus is. He is the way to experiencing freedom and a relationship with God.** This relationship with God can start now in the mess of sin though Jesus and continues into eternity.

We need to understand that **Jesus is the true authority** that we need to know to gain access to God. Those who follow Jesus, who come to the Father by knowing Jesus will be the

ones who gain eternal “life” (cf. 11:25, “I am the resurrection and the life”). Thus, this verse places Jesus in the role of mediator, **creating the only avenue to God. Jesus represents God the Father and reveals God’s truth and God’s life to us.**

The good news is that Jesus is the way. There is a difference between pointing to the way or to a particular place and taking someone by the hand to lead them there. Jesus leads us to God the father when we follow him. We ultimately need the presence of God to lead us in all areas of life. We need to tell people that when we follow Jesus, he is with us. Jesus is the person who guides us to the right destination. **Jesus Christ not only points out that He is the access point to knowing God, He personally shows us the way back to God. Jesus is the access we need to God because he is the truth of God. He is the life of God.** Jesus is carrying out the will of God the father.

ILLUSTRATION: Do you know someone that has special privileges and because you know them you share the benefit that no one else can give you? In our last church, we got a phone call from one of the sons of the Aquilini family who just happened to own the Vancouver Canucks. Our pastor got to know the son of the Aquilini family through a series of events and because he got to know the son, he was invited to a Canucks game. Our pastor was given access to the owner’s box which was a special place they could view the game. In the owner’s box sat Mr. Aquilini the father of the family. Anyone who entered the owner box was treated like a special guest and was given access to special privileges as they watched the game. Some of the privileges included the best appetizers and drinks. The pastor asked if a boy from our church who had leukemia could have access to the owner’s box so could also experience the life of the game. This boy Graden, not only got access to the owner’s box, he also got access to all the players after the game. At the boy’s funeral, I will never forget seeing the picture of Graden and Trevor Lyndon who was his favorite NHL player. You see, this boy had no access without knowing the right person who introduced him to the son of the Aquilini family. The son of the family then gave Graden access to the father. The father then shared what he owned with a dying boy. Through the relational connection to the son – there was access to the father.

Another way of explaining it, Jesus is telling us there is only one combination that opens the door to God the Father. He is that combination. However, the world is telling us there are multiple ways to God. Both those statements can’t be true. Either Jesus is the only way to God or he is not. Whether you believe Jesus is the way or not is the tipping point of entering into the Kingdom of God. To simplify, either Christianity is 100% true or 100% false.

ABSOLUTE TRUTH VS SUBJECTIVE TRUTH.

I find one of the most effective things to do when you get to this point in the conversation with others about God is to pray and ask God to not only give you the words as you are sharing about who Jesus is, but also ask the Spirit of God, to reveal who Jesus is to the people who need him.

“The exclusivism of this statement must not be reduced. Peter makes exactly the same claim in Acts 4:12, “Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” At a time when religious pluralism is popular and the amalgamation of belief systems are widespread, such claims are never going to be popular. The exclusiveness of Christ’s salvation is simply the uniqueness of his divine person.

Any hint at universalism or reaching the Father through any means other than Jesus is here completely eliminated.

Lee Strobel says, “This claim rankles people like nothing else. It's been called narrow-minded. It's been called bigoted. It's been called snobbish. Some of you are seekers and something inside of you chafes at the idea that Jesus is the only way to God, for you are living in a world where there seems to be endless options in virtually every area of life. For some of you this is a stumbling block to faith.”

To summarize, we need to understand that God is ruler of all things, we rebelled against God, and Jesus came down to our level to show us the way back to God the Father. As we are having conversations, we need to talk about who Jesus is. Jesus tells us he is the way. Next, Jesus tells us he is the truth. We need to tell others that Jesus is the truth.

b) Jesus is the truth.

What does Jesus mean when he says, “He is the truth.” We need to explain that Jesus is the perfect example of truth. God not only talks to man about Himself, God shows man what He is like in the person of Jesus Christ. This means that we can look at Jesus Christ and see a perfect living example of what truth looks like.

John 1:14 says, “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*”

Jesus becomes God in flesh to show us there is a better way to live. The good news for all of us is that God doesn't leave us in our state of rebellion. He sends us truth. He sends us the answer. The answer that we have all been looking for. Many just don't realize it yet. Our job as Christians is to help remove barriers so people can see Jesus as the truth they need in their life. Truth has come down to us and has been displayed to us through the life of Jesus. God has come among us in person to rescue his rebellious lost world, it follows necessarily that through him, and him alone, is the way to God. Jesus becomes truth in flesh so we can understand our need for him.

There are some main truths with which some have summarized the biblical teaching on the Incarnation:

- Jesus has two natures — He is God and man.
- Each nature is full and complete — He is fully God and fully man.

Another way the Bible teaches that Jesus is God is by showing them he has all of the attributes of God.

He knows everything ([Matthew 16:21](#); [Luke 11:17](#); [John 4:29](#)), **is everywhere** ([Matthew 18:20](#); [28:20](#); [Acts 18:10](#)), **has all power** ([Matthew 8:26-27](#); [28:18](#); [John 11:38-44](#); [Luke 7:14-15](#); [Revelation 1:8](#)), **depends on nothing outside of himself for life** ([John 1:4](#); [14:6](#); [8:58](#)), **rules over everything** ([Matthew 28:18](#); [Revelation 1:5](#); [19:16](#)), **never began to exist and never will cease to exist** ([John 1:1](#); [8:58](#)), **and is our Creator** ([Colossians 1:16](#)). In other words... Jesus is God - but he has a distinct nature.

One of the barriers to Jesus is a common view of God. It's what we call pantheism. It means that God is a distant entity, but not a personal God. A scholar defines pantheism this way, “**God is nothing more than the force and energy of the universe, the basic, underlying force and energy of all things.** Stated another way, pantheism says that God is

not a person, but rather that God is within everything, within everything as the force and energy that gives life and being to all things. For example, take a tree. The force and energy that makes a tree live and grow is said to be God. **God is nothing more than the impersonal energy and force that gives life to the tree and causes it to grow.**”

The Bible says the exact opposite. The Bible unequivocally declares that God is a *person* who sent his son to earth so we could have a relationship with him because he cares about us. **And God longs for a personal relationship with man. We need to explain to people that Jesus is the truth that wants to be known. Jesus is truth. Next, Jesus says he is the life.**

c) Jesus is the life.

We need to communicate to people that Jesus is the source of Life. The one who holds and gives life. We need to tell people what Jesus means when he says he is the life. The Bible tells us that, “in Jesus we find life,” he means spiritual life, eternal life, life that saves from judgment. If you have the Son, if you have Jesus—if he is in you and you are in him—life is in you, and you are in life. You have life forever. Vital union with Jesus is everything.

John Piper says, “Union with Jesus is everything... Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” **In him was life. So, if you have him, you have life. If you reject him, you reject life.** John 10:10 says, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” John 10:28 says, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.” Jesus is the foundation and source of life that we need.

As we have seen we need to tell others **who Jesus is**. He is the way, the truth, and the life. Secondly, we need to tell others what Jesus did.

2. TELL OTHERS WHAT JESUS DID.

It is essential that we explain the cross when we tell others about what Jesus did. Without the cross, there is nothing. Our understanding of what Jesus did on the cross is a key component to opening the door to the Father in heaven and to his kingdom.

Look with me at Romans 5:8-11 which says, “*8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*”

We need to tell others about **God’s unbelievable love and what he did to fix the problem of sin**. This passage discusses God’s unbelievable love. It shows the great depth of justification. The passage also gives one of the clearest definitions of agape love. It actually shows the meaning of agape love. Agape love goes much farther than phileo love. Phileo love is brotherly love, a love that gives itself for a brother. **But agape love is a new kind of love: it is a godly love, a sacrificial love, a love that gives itself for those without strength (Ro. 5:6), for the rebellious (Ro. 5:6), for sinners (Ro. 5:8), and for enemies (Ro. 5:10).**

- We were ungodly and powerless, yet Christ died for us (vv. 6–7).
- We were sinners, yet God demonstrated His love for us (vv. 8–9).
- We were rivals, yet God reconciled and saved us (vv. 10–11).

Franklin Graham says, “No matter what storm you face, you need to know that God loves you. He has not abandoned you.”

What Jesus did is perfectly connected to the who Jesus is. **Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Christ does not have a sinful nature, and neither did he ever commit sin – even though he was tempted in all ways.** God accepted Jesus’ death as payment in full for our sins, and raised him from the dead because Jesus was sinless. **It was the only payment that was sufficient.** The risen Jesus is what humanity was always meant to be: God’s ruler of the world. When we are pardoned through Jesus’ death, we can be sure that when Jesus does return to judge the sin of world, we will be acceptable to him.

The risen Jesus will give us eternal life, not because we have earned it, but because he has died in our place. God loved you enough to get Jesus involved. As God’s ruler, Jesus has also been appointed God’s judge of the world. The Bible promises that one day, he will return to call all of us to account for our actions.

God raised Jesus to life again as the ruler of the world. Jesus has conquered death. Now he gives new life and will return to judge.

Billy Graham says, “God proved His love on the Cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, ‘I love you.’” He did it because He loves you!

THE THREE GREAT TRANSFERS

Although this may be more effective in teaching a new believer than in witnessing, these three principles explain what happens when a person accepts Christ. **They condense a lot of theology into just two verses:**

a) Adam’s sin was transferred to Us.

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...” (Romans 5:12) As we talked about last week, **we are all like Adam and have rejected God’s authority over us and declared our independence from him. At the core of sin is a desire to fulfill earthly appetite over what God wants for us.** Because of our sin - both individually and collectively, we are separated from God.

b) Our sin was transferred to Christ.

“God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us...” (2 Corinthians 5:21a) **Because of our sin and our rebellion,** Jesus absorbed God’s wrath or death for us which is what we deserved for our sin. He took our place by taking our punishment and gave his life at payment for our rebellion against him. This is what Jesus accomplished on the cross because he loved us.

c) Christ’s righteousness was transferred to Us.

“...so that in Him **we might become the righteousness of God.**” (2 Corinthians 5:21b) God declared us to be just or righteous because of what Jesus did on the cross. The legal term is acquitted or declared innocent for our crimes against God. The work of God’s mercy is to raise us up with Christ.

In other words, Jesus died on the cross and shattered sin/Satan’s power when Jesus rose again. **This is the good news! The only way anyone can have their sin paid for and**

become reconciled to God is through Jesus' death on the cross. Our sin separates us from God, and Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin and bring us back into relationship with God." **"Jesus is my savior not my religion." John 3:17**

Well, where does all that leave us? It leaves us with a choice of two ways to live. One way is accepting what Jesus did on the cross as payment for your rebellion and then living for God. A second way is rejecting Jesus as payment for your rebellion and continuing to live for yourself.

As we have seen, we need to talk about what Jesus did. Lastly, we need to tell others that Jesus is for today.

3. TELL OTHERS THAT JESUS IS FOR TODAY.

Ephesians 2:4-6 says, *"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."*

We need to tell people that Jesus is for today. That the Spirit of God makes us alive if we ask him to be Lord of our life and we stop doing things our way. We need to tell people that today Jesus doesn't want to leave us in a place of rebellion. He can rescue us to a life-giving relationship with God. We need to tell people that because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in sin.

Jesus offers us new life, both now and eternally. Today, our sins can be forgiven through Jesus' death, and we can make a fresh start with God, no longer as rebels but as friends. In this new life, God himself comes to live within us by his Spirit. We can experience the joy of a new relationship with God. We need to tell others that the good news is the power we find in Jesus because God works through us.

Do you feel alive spiritually? How are you bringing life to others?

Being alive in Christ and dead to the rebellious ways of the world means that the matters that consume so many people's lives with stress and anxiety are (or should be) of no concern to a Christian. **We are concerned primarily with serving God, no matter what the cost. And that, in and of itself, is worth any pain or discomfort.**

If we are not finding victory in our life because we are not going to Jesus, then it's going to be difficult to tell others about something we don't do ourselves.

R.C. Sproul says, "I really believe that the North American Church needs a reminder of what it means to be Alive in Christ and how to thrive as a Christian. I see so many defeated Christians out there, whose faith is struggling and are living like they are defeated or dead. I want to let you in on a little secret: "YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE THAT WAY!" That passion and hope you once had for Jesus can be restored! But living alive in Christ has movement towards Jesus." Yet, we struggle with so much unbelief.

Jeff Vanderstelt says, "When I say we are all unbelievers, I mean we still have places in our lives where we don't believe God. There are spaces where we don't trust his word and don't believe that what he accomplished in Jesus Christ is enough to deal with our past or what we are facing in this moment or the next."

Illustration – Let me illustrate through an incident that a friend witnessed. A number of people were enjoying a day at the beach at the lake on a hot summer's day. There was a main swimming area that we roped off with a number of buoys that created a clear boundary for safety. A number of teenagers were swimming outside of the swimming area and at the time no one thought anything of it. At one point, the weather quickly changed into a storm and caused the water to be very difficult to swim in. Someone heard a cry of help coming from the water and noticed that one of the boys was drowning. The father jumped into the treacherous waters to try and save his son who was still outside of the boundary. The father made it to the son and managed to get his son to a buoy. However, the buoy could not hold the weight of the father and son. The son at one point realized the buoy was holding him up to safety because the father let go to save his son. That is the kind of love that God loves us with.

When realized, this great love changes the way we relate to each other. The way we use our money. The way we work. The way we do marriage. The way we deal with our problems. It should change the conversation we have with the people in our life. This great love, when understood, changes our heart through what Jesus did.

The same power that raised Christ from the dead now lives in all believers. When we get into conversations with people who are struggling, we need to talk about Christ and his power. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we come under a new kind of power. This power gives us what we need to live a victorious life: we can defeat sinful habits, find freedom from despair, and we can find new meaning.

Every person needs the good news that Jesus forgives them of their sin. But they also need good news that they can be in relationship with the living God, who has total power over death as well as their current situation. **If they need change, go to Jesus. If they need victory, go to Jesus. If they need to be lifted up go to Jesus. He has the power not found in this world.**

Can you tell the people in your life?

Who is Jesus?

What did he do for them?

And how Jesus can make a difference in their life today!

Some of you today may know Jesus, but may be struggling in your lives. Come to him and tell him you need him.

And others of you today may not know Jesus. Would you like to ask him in your lives? If so, please come and talk to any of the pastors or those standing here.