

## Tangible Theology | Chris Sicks | January 23, 2015

1. Introduction
2. *“Preach the gospel at all times, using words if necessary.”*
  - a. St. Francis *didn't* say that. What's wrong with that statement?
  - b. Does the Red Cross preach the gospel?
3. God's people are called to do ministry in both Word and deed.
  - a. Jesus did both. (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 24:19)
  - b. Both are critical, but they are frequently kept apart. Why?
  - c. Are you more inclined to Word or deed ministry?
4. *Suffering is God's “megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”* – C.S. Lewis
  - a. What did Lewis mean?
  - b. This world is a mess. Oppressed people oppressing one another. Cancer, slavery, starvation, prejudice and pain.
  - c. But why? *Why* is everything such a mess?
    - a. God's answer: *All human suffering results from a broken relationship with God.*
5. Body of Christ is God's chosen instrument to address earthly *and* eternal suffering.
  - a. There's a deep connection between *physical* and *spiritual* problems, and Christ's solution.
  - b. Word & Deed address two sides of same problem.
  - c. The pain in the world is real, but so is the Body of Christ.
  - d. You have the incredible privilege of being the hands and feet of Jesus.
6. God's mercy brought me to the end of myself.
  - a. Skinny geek. D&D. 144 pounds.
  - b. Basic training. Pushups. Fraternity.
  - c. Army fed my pride. Fraternity fed my lust.
  - d. Atheist. “Army of one.”
7. We all need a rescuer. But to be rescued, you need to know you're in trouble.
  - a. Coast Guard
  - b. Failure. Brokenness.
  - c. 2 Cor. 1:8-9 “rely not on ourselves”
  - d. Paul was top of his class. Lots to brag about.
  - e. God's mercy brought Paul to despair, then to life.
  - f. Only by dying do we receive true life. (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22)
  - g. How about you?
8. We must receive mercy to give mercy
  - a. 2 Cor. 1:3-4
  - b. *Accept your brokenness...*
  - c. *So Christ can make you whole...*
  - a. *And use you to help others.*
9. Show and Tell. Word and Deed.
  - a. *“Jesus went about doing good. And we are trying to imitate him now because I believe that God loves the world through us. Just as he sent Jesus to be his love, his presence in the world, so today he is sending us.”* (Mother Teresa)

10. Jesus' deeds were signs.
  - a. Pointing where?
  - b. To Himself. We must do the same.
  - c. Jesus' signs pointed people back to Himself. His deeds of mercy were *self-referential*.
  - a. Our deeds of mercy must be *Christ-referential*... tangible evidence of God's love.
  
11. "To be a Christian is to move toward need, not comfort." (John Piper)
  - a. The US Army has long history of moving toward need, away from comfort.
    - i. God used the Army to win independence, and hold the Union together.
    - ii. Responded when freedom was threatened in Europe and Asia.
    - iii. Peacekeeping, earthquake in Haiti, Ebola.
    - iv. The Army responds to needs of vulnerable people globally.
    - v. *Proactive presence*.
  
12. God's people are called to respond to the needs around us, in Word and deed.
  - a. Everyone can do this—hurting people are already in your circle of influence.
  - b. You can respond to needs among:
    - i. Fellow cadets;
    - ii. Co-workers;
    - iii. Family members;
    - iv. People in your community, or overseas.
  
13. Exodus 3:7-8
  - a. The Lord said, "I have indeed *seen* the misery of my people in Egypt... I am *concerned* about their suffering. So *I have come down* to rescue them."
    - i. *See*
    - ii. *Feel*
    - iii. *Act*
    - iv. We must also: *Pray and Point*
  
14. Your homework:
  - a. Who is around me: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What is the need: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What I Can Do: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Use your *Head, Heart & Hands* to:
    - v. 1) See, 2) Feel, 3) Pray, 4) Act, 5) Point
  
15. When you rely up on Jesus to do the difficult work of ministry, you will:
  - a. Walk in His footsteps, and know Him better;
  - b. Be stretched beyond your comfort zone and ability, having to rely on Him;
  - c. Glorify God as you help people experience His love and truth.

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