

Evangelism Update 05-29-06

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Note from Jim:

Here's a thought-provoking article from a brother in the Great News Network.

Was Jesus a friend of sinners?

by Franklin Reeves

Many claim that they do what they can to bring sinners into the church, even if it means not talking about sin, righteousness, judgment, and the wrath to come or any doctrine that is distasteful. They base this on the fact Jesus was friend of sinners. I ask you is Jesus a friend of sinners? Prove it!

Well what about Matthew 11:19 where Jesus says He is a friend to sinners? Well let's look at it.

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

If you notice Jesus says that they say He is a friend of sinners. So far no proof yet that Jesus was indeed a friend of sinners. Luke 7:34 records also that Jesus was accused of being a friend of sinners.

In fact Jesus said in John 15:14,15 that we are His friends if we abide by His commandments.

"You are My friends if you do what I command you."

"No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."

So the scripture does not actually say that Jesus was a friend to the sinner. You could ask, "but didn't Jesus hang out with sinners." Yes He did. In fact, Jesus went to where sinners were, whether it is the Temple of God or a party. The truth is that there is no scriptural evidence that suggests that Jesus brought (unrepentant) sinners into the Temple. An abundance of evidence shows that Jesus took the Temple to the (unrepentant) sinners. (John 2:19)

Jesus never brought a sinner into the House of God, Jesus always took God to the sinner's house.

So do you want to love the sinner like Jesus did? Then ask Him to help you. Study how He interacted with sinners and do the same.

You want to be like Jesus, are you sure? Jesus took the gospel to the sinners where the sinners hung out. Jesus in fact kicked some sinners out of the Temple (John 2:14,15). So quit trying to modify your church service, removing things that offend (unrepentant) sinners so you can draw them in.

The very thing that you remove because it offends is more than likely the very thing that God has chosen to convict sinners of their sin and therefore drive them to the cross.

Scripture of the Week:

"[The Father] gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." (John 5:27, NASB)

Quote of the Week:

"My entire theology can be condensed into four words: 'Jesus died for me.'" (Charles H. Spurgeon)

Evangelism Resource:

If you're not familiar with Mark Cahill, his website is www.markcahill.org and his book *One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven* is a must read for serious Seed Sowers. Click below to watch a great video by the same title.

[One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven](#)

Our first mini-EBC is coming this July. Click below for details.



Questions & Objections:

Q. What's the general consensus among seed sowers on watching *The DaVinci Code*? I'm on the fence over it, because the themes presented are offensive and I don't want to support such heresy! Not to mention I want to be discerning about what I expose my mind to. However, at the same time, I want to know what my unsaved friends are taking away from the movie, so that I can intelligently respond to their questions and arguments.

A. I heard a speaker aptly say that you don't need to step in manure to know it's manure. I also like to point out that the best way to show how crooked a stick is, is to lay the straight stick down next to it. In my humble opinion, saying we need to watch *The DaVinci Code* in order to relate and witness better to the lost who have seen it is like saying there's a popular movie out about pornography and we should watch it to help us relate to the lost that are struggling with porn.

That presents another danger. Perhaps there are those of us who have an interest in watching the movie from an apologetics or rebuttal standpoint. Maybe we consider ourselves mature enough in our faith, and it won't impact us. Does that mean it's a good idea to encourage other Christians whether by word or action to see the movie? Paul writes about food sacrificed to idols in the passage below, but I feel we can safely apply the issue in his culture to something like *The DaVinci Code* in ours.

1st Corinthians 8:9-13

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

I could probably read the book or watch the movie without stumbling or being shaken in my faith, but other respected Church leaders have reported cases where younger or more wobbly Christians have stumbled. In a recent newsletter from Mark Cahill, he says -- "Forty million copies of *The DaVinci Code*, by Dan Brown, have been sold. The paperback version has just come out. The movie, directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks, opens on May 19th. The book is, and the movie will be, all the rage. At the same time, I have gotten phone calls from people who say that as they have read this book, it has shaken their faith."

I guess I just want to stress the stance should be instead of our own actions encouraging possibly weaker Christians to read/watch it, I think discernment should be applied. With there being ample resources to equip ourselves to respond without having to read/watch the thing, let's consider that route.

There's so many resources available from those who have studied *The DaVinci Code* book/movie that, if we wish, we're fully capable of equipping ourselves to answer questions and respond without putting more money into Hollywood's coffers and Dan Brown's pockets. To me, that falls into the "friend of this world" bracket (James 4:4).

One of the best resources I've found is a free 8-part audio series at the website below.

<http://tinyurl.com/o42c2>

My experience in witnessing outside the theaters and talking with friends or family about the movie has been this. After listening to the audios above and looking into a few of the other resources available, I've been readily prepared to answer the common questions that have come up. Just like with any other witnessing encounter, however, I don't want to stay long in the realm of the intellect. I answer the basic question or objection and then shift right back into the conscience with the Law and grace.

Some people have worried that it'll hurt their witness if someone asks if they've seen the movie or read the book and they must honestly answer "no". I've been asked this and it hasn't been a problem. I tell them no, that the straight stick shows how crooked the other stick is. I tell them I've cared enough to spend more time than it would take to watch the movie in learning its claims and studying the facts, so I can hopefully answer their questions and share the truth with them. I find they respect this and we just keep going with the one-2-one. As always ... should they give me a question I don't have a response to (and they genuinely want an answer) I just tell them I'll check into it and get back to them.

Again, this is just my 2-cents. I encourage using the movie as a springboard, I just can't say I encourage watching it as a necessity to do so.

2nd Timothy 4:1-5

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Weekly "Fishing" Update:

This is a little long, but please stick with it. I have something on my heart I really want to share with you.

Todd Friel (Way of the Master Radio) talks about the danger of evangelist's pride; when one-2-ones and open air become a work of our own effort rather than leaning on God's Spirit. He tells a story about a time he came home from street witnessing and told his wife, "I've finally got it figured out. I now know how gather a good crowd for open air preaching." He says the next time out God taught him a lesson. It was just him and the trees. He mimics himself pitifully calling out "Hello? Hello?! Is anyone out there? Please! Anyone I can talk to?"

Proverbs 16:33

We may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall.

I'm going to be transparent and say I feel I experienced the same lesson this weekend. The Boatnik is an annual Memorial Day event here in Grants Pass that thousands of people attend and I had big plans for our team witnessing there. I'd heard from a couple in Eugene (Jack & Kathy Keeney) that were going to drive down and join us. Another sister from my church (Robyn Vina) was also going to come out to listen, learn and offer prayer support. That meant we'd have a team of seven, the largest group I'd had out yet! I had mental pictures of us setting up somewhere at Boatnik and just rotating open air preaching while the others played rent-a-crowd and picked up one-2-ones as people broke off.

A couple of hurdles presented themselves. First, the current weather, as well as the forecast, was showing rain. Next, I'd learned that though the event was held in a public city park, the group that hosted it provided their own security and somehow "rented" the park in such a manner that it was considered private property. No problem! God had shown us favor in both respects last weekend at our DaVinci Outreach, and I expected that He'd do the same here. Still, I covered my bases. I met with the officer in charge of crime prevention for the city police. I also planned out how I'd approach the event staff, introduce our team and seek their permission for a spot where we could plant camp and open air. I was confident we'd get an OK. Yes, I prayed... however, my approach to prayer was really just part of the perfunctory planning process.

"I... I... I... I... I..." Do you see it? Ick!

God let it all fall flat. First, I woke Saturday morning to see patches of blue amongst the clouds, but they filled in and turned grey as the morning went along. Soon it was raining. Next, I found I'd left my cell phone at home. When 3pm came, Robyn was the only one there. My team didn't show up. Greg ended up being out with a cold and we waited until 3:15pm but Randy and Terri didn't show. Since I didn't have my phone, Robyn & I spent another half-hour running to my house to get it. I had a voicemail from Jack & Kathy saying they'd gotten into Grants Pass, but couldn't find me. They didn't leave a callback number, so we decided to head for Boatnik to try and find them. Nowhere in here did I think to stop and pray-up as we usually do before we start. Instead, I just complained to Robyn about how I usually stress and try to take "fix" this kind of thing.

I handed out tracts as we headed down 6th Street and made our way through Boatnik, but I was so focused on finding Jack & Kathy that I didn't stop for any one-2-ones. Eventually, they found us! My next focus was to try and make up for lost time by getting a jump on open air preaching. However, God had lifted His hand off of things and there was a total spirit of confusion running amok when I sought the event staff for permission to be there. We wasted time first trying to find an administration booth, then wasted more time as we were sent from this event staff to that one and finally found we were sent to an admin booth that didn't even exist! I mentioned we should regroup and pray, but didn't actually do it.

Jack & Kathy said that while waiting for us, they had simply gotten busy "fishing" and had enjoyed themselves. Praise God for that. They'd apparently even come across Randy and another fellow handing out [Million Dollar Bills](#) around there earlier. However, I was still at ground zero of a much needed lesson. Unable to get a thumbs-up for open air at Boatnik, we thought perhaps we'd grab my other items and see if even with the rain there was anyone downtown for an open air there. The four of us walked all the way back to where Robyn & I had parked our cars at Budget Internet. We passed out more tracts, but in our push to get to the cars we still didn't stop for one-2-ones. Robyn's legs were also really hurting her and she had to head home. By the time we reached the cars, Jack & Kathy were kinda tired and we figured we'd wrap up. They had a 2.5 hour drive home.

I discovered the final stroke later that night. I'd lost the \$20 bill I'd tucked in my pocket for the "Name Ten Get \$20" challenge (which never happened). I stewed and worried about the lost money. Since I knew most people can't name the Ten Commandments, I figured I wouldn't give the money away that away that afternoon, My

plans were to put it back in my account for my next tract order. The fact that it was now lost just gnawed at me. Sunday morning on the way to church, I even stopped by the parking lot we'd been at to ask the parking attendant if anyone had found it. I wasn't letting it go.

Now, the story is not quite over...

During worship at church, I took a good look at the many faces of pride I had shown these last few days. I told God I wanted it gone and prayed that He would help me to lean on Him. The difference between Boatnik and the DaVinci Outreach had been my trusting him. With the DaVinci Outreach I'd had concerns on how we'd pull it off, I went in really just relying on Him. I told Him I wanted to trust Him... to provide the witnessing encounters, the crowds for open air, favor with man when it's needed, to provide the money for tracts. It had to be Him, because I saw there was nothing I could offer of my own. As I stood back up I looked around and saw a man coming in a little late with his family. He waved me over to him and quietly asked if I had the keys to my car. I said, "yes". He motioned for me to follow him outside. He told me his son was active in witnessing, but was now going to join YWAM in Hong Kong. He had a number of [Way of the Master](#) and [Living Waters](#) items that he'd given to his dad, since he'd heard about my ministry. When we got to his van, he gave me three boxes full of hundreds and hundreds of tracts. Probably ten times more than that lost \$20 bill could have ever bought! It was so humbling. Praise God!

God is good and He is faithful to see the seed of His gospel sown. However, I don't want the little glory story at the end to detract from the primary point I want to share. Folks, when it comes to our witnessing, if it's not from God, through God, to God and about God... we may as well just stay home.

Romans 11:36

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Lastly, since it dovetails so nicely with the lesson God taught me, I want to share something else with you. Take the time to look through the following list and see if the Holy Spirit may not shed light on an area of pride you may not recognize that you're wrestling with.

50 Fruits of Pride

<http://www.hobokenbaptist.com/docs/50FruitsOfPride.pdf>

Prayer Points:

- I'm fighting allergies on a level I haven't experienced before. Please pray for relief.
 - Please continue to pray for our Lord's blessing over the Southern Oregon Seed Sowing mini-EBC we'll be holding in July.
 - "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38, NASB)
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Calendar:

- **Downtown Fishing Hole** (Recurring)
Saturdays
Street witnessing (3pm to 6pm) downtown along 6th Street. Meet in the Budget Internet parking lot (4th St & F St).
- **DMV O/A** (Recurring)
Wednesdays
Open Air preaching at 8:45am to the people waiting for the DMV doors to open.
- **[Seed Sowing at the Rooster Crow](#)**
Rogue River, OR / June 25
The city of Rogue River fills with people for this annual event.
- **Church in the Park**
Grants Pass, OR / July 2

- **Mini-EBC - Southern Oregon Seed Sowing**
Grants Pass, OR / July 21-23
Our first mini Evangelism Boot Camp. We'll be taking the Gospel to the Jackson County Fair, Ashland, and the streets of Grants Pass.
Registration Deadline: June 30th.
- **Seed Sowing at Back to the 50's Summer Celebration**
Grants Pass, OR / July 28-29
Last year there were hundreds, if not thousands, of people along 6th St for the Friday night parade. Saturday downtown and at the park should be good "fishing" too.
- **Seed Sowing at Josephine County Fair**
Grants Pass, OR / August 19
We gave out 800 tracts along with doing one-2-ones within just three or four hours last year.
- **Seed Sowing at Asian Cultural Festival**
Grants Pass, OR / September 9
We'll hit the park and "fish" amongst the people this will draw on Saturday. We may even get to witness to Buddhists.
- **Seed Sowing at Art Along the Rogue**
Grants Pass, OR / October 7
Last year I was able to open air preach to about 300-400 people. Big time fishing opportunity right there are 6th & H St.

If you would like to join us, [click here](#) to send us your contact info.

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May Jesus receive the glory He is due!

'til the nets are full...

Jim Jones

"Sin and hell are married unless repentance proclaims the divorce." - Charles Spurgeon

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