

RCMI L-Path Teaching
May 9, 2021

TITLE: Beyond Differences (Proclaim Without Prejudice)

TEXT: Acts 10:24-36

BIG IDEA: Looking beyond our differences will help us proclaim the Gospel without hesitation.

INTRO:

- One of the major barriers in proclaiming the Gospel is what we call “**DIFFERENCES**”.
- There are a number of differences we have with other people that prevents us to share the Gospel. And this may result to hesitation, fear, even anxiety.
- And as the world continually develops, these differences grow even more. That’s why it is important to first look at the different kinds of differences. Because by doing so, it will help us understand it and learn to go beyond it.
- And that in itself will help us share the Gospel to other people.

Different kinds of differences:

1. Cultural Differences
 - a. Values – such as beliefs, principles, lifestyles
 - b. Customs – such as how people dress, greetings, rituals
 - c. Government and laws – such as democratic, socialist, dictatorial, monarchy
 - d. Economy and trade – such as type of products (agriculture, technology, tourism), workforces, jobs, import or export.
 - e. Games and leisure – such as sports, tv, music, what people do in their free time
 - f. Language – different dialects
 - g. Religion – such as how people pray, object of worship
2. Social Differences
 - a. Gender or Sex – in our generation today, sex is different with gender. Sex is biological, male or female, while gender is one’s sense of self such as man, woman, LGBT, others. We need to recognize this basic difference in our time to avoid biases and prejudice.
 - b. Socio-economic status - such as upper class, middle class, lower class
 - c. Exceptionality – speaks of the groups of people that are different from the normal. Some of them are the intellectually, physically or mentally gifted that encounters discrimination. Some are minority groups that are deprioritized and sometimes taken advantage. We need to be conscious and aware of these groups of people to avoid prejudice. They should be treated equally and with respect.
3. Individual Differences
 - a. Physical – such as skin color, height, body shape, looks
 - b. Intellectual – measured IQ, High IQ, Lower IQ, Genius, Average
 - c. Attitude – there are people who are Introvert, while others are extrovert. Preferences also falls under this.
 - d. Age – children, youth, matured, elderly

As we can see there are many types of differences that may influence our ability and desire to share the Gospel. Some of these results to fear and hesitation, even biases and prejudice, that prevents us from sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Discussion:

1. Are you aware of any biases, prejudice, or differences that you have that prevents you to share the Gospel?
2. Why do you think you have it? Is it from bad experiences, misinformation, unaware, unconscious behavior, other reasons?

Now that we know the differences we may have, how can we overcome it.

Overcoming Differences:

1. Be willing to accept the message of change.
 - a. *v28 He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection.*
 - b. Peter was hesitant at first, but because God have said so, he obeyed without any objection.
 - c. He was willing to accept the change that God is bringing in his life. So should we.
 - d. Sharing the Gospel requires us to change.
 - e. There are areas in our life that God needs to break down for us to overcome the differences. It can be perception, opinions, beliefs, even traditions or things that we are very much used to.
 - f. Remember, only by changing can we unlock newer things in our life. Our old ways are not a guarantee of effectiveness today. There will always be areas of change for us to be better.
 - g. That applies more so in Proclaiming the Gospel. God intends to change us so he can use us more to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.
 - h. The Gospel is for everyone. And the first step to share it is to lay down the differences we have with other people.
 - i. Let us be open to change that will help us overcome our differences.
2. Do not hesitate to go. Know that God has prepared the harvest.
 - a. *v30 Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me 31 and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 32 Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' 33 So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."*
 - b. If God is preparing the messenger (Peter), He was even more preparing the receivers (Cornelius, his family, and his friends)
 - c. Most of the time we hesitate to share the Gospel because we think that the people we are sharing to, are not yet ready.
 - d. But the truth is, the harvest is ripe. God Himself has prepared them. People are just waiting like Cornelius, his family and his friends. Let us not hesitate.
 - e. Always remember, it is not us who are changing the people, it is the Holy Spirit.

- f. No matter what our differences are, like Peter and Cornelius, when the Holy Spirit move, it doesn't matter.
- g. One thing I would like to emphasize is, "Sharing the Gospel is by faith." We don't do it because our Pastors, our LPath leaders say so. We do it because we have faith.
- h. Salvation of people is a miracle that requires faith. We cannot just read the Bible to people; we need to share it with faith.
- i. If we have faith, let us not hesitate to go. The Holy Spirit will surely move in the lives of people and salvation will happen.
- j. Our willingness to go will result to the salvation of many.

Discussion:

1. What are the areas of your life that you see God is changing when it comes to Gospel proclamation?
2. Do you see the harvest field where God wants you to go?
3. Honest to goodness, do we have faith to share the Gospel?

Conclusion:

The Year of Fruitful Harvest

Luke 10:2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

We need to go back to this declaration with faith.
The harvest is waiting. It has always been waiting.

Isaiah 6:8

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

God is looking for people that will answer, "Here am I. Send me!"
Are you one of them?

Beyond all our differences, let us go. Let it be our prayer to God, "Here am I! Send me!"