

Punching Holes in the Darkness

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Harvest Festival - *Larry*.
- B. Slide3 Potter's Field Ministries - This Wed Night.
- C. Slide4 Stuff The Bus - *Safehouse* is our county's emergency shelter for runaway and in-crisis teens.
 1. Stuff the Bus is how *SafeHouse* receives all their homes' necessities for the year, since it's a non-profit organization.
 - a) They also have a special division that works with *HT victims* in our county.
 2. This is a tangible way to help our county as well as help victims of exploitation.
 3. We've worked to build a great relationship with the *Safehouse* and the task force, and we'd love to continue that.
 4. Many of you ask us how you can help. This is a great, easy way to help.
 5. We'll be collecting these items thru Thurs. A bus will come here on Sat morn and pick up our supplies, before they proceed to Target. They plan to have local TV stations on site to highlight this community event.
Please help us help them!!! [Pick up flyer in info booth, or on our website]

II. Slide5 Intro: Punching Holes in the Darkness

- A. Who needs the gospel the most? Those who are well or those who are sick?
Those who are righteous or those who are sinners?
Those who have the most light or those who are living the darkest lives?

III. Slide6 SUN RISING (12-17)

- A. Insert Jn.1-4 here, in between vs.11 & 12.
- B. Slide7 Galilee - *Galuthe*, in Aramaic means captivity. [About 40m.w x 70m. long. 204 villages, 15,000 each, about 3 mill in region]
 1. This Northern region was known as the region of death.
 2. In 721bc the Syrian's conquered 10 of Israel's tribes, brought them into captivity, and settled them in Syria. They brought a large mixed Assyrian and Babylonian pop to settle in Samaria & northern Israel. These new settlers spoke Aramaic. They worship their own gods, practiced their own custom

customs, **but** they also accepted *the God of Israel* as their chief god, because he was the God of the land where they were dwelling.

3. The descendants of these early settlers were called *Galileans*, considered foreigners by the Jews of the south. **So** the Jews always despised them and look on them as the **descendants** of the people that conquered them and destroyed their country. **They had nothing to do with them.** And they would not tolerate **a prophet** that came from that region.

a) It was thus a mixed multitude, filled with mixed marriages. **Not pure bred's.**

b) Down in Jer they considered them the *hicks from the North*...with *funny accents*.

C. Galilee of the Gentiles - *Galilia ton ethnon*

1. **Amazing** that Jesus came to earth as a baby, born in a manger, & to a poor family.

2. **But just as amazing**, His ministry is **not** down in the religious epicenter of *Jerusalem*, **not even** in the Judean region, **but** in *Galilia ton ethnon*.

D. **Slide8 Capernaum** - Jesus set up headquarters here. *His beach house* (lake-house).

E. **Slide9a,b By the way of the sea** - Via Maris

1. **Mile Marker** - Matthew stood next to, to collect taxes.

F. (13) Isaiah had prophesied (9:1,2) that light would come to this region, and Matthew saw this movement of Jesus to *Capernaum* as fulfillment of this prophecy.

G. This region was the area settled by the tribes of *Zebulun* and *Naphtali* after the conquest of Joshua's time.

H. **Slide10** (15,16) Msg *Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, road to the sea, over Jordan, Galilee, crossroads for the nations. People sitting out their lives in the dark saw a huge light; Sitting in that dark, dark country of death, they watched the sun come up.*

I. (16) **Sat in darkness** - Interesting *Isaiah* wrote about people who **walked in darkness**, **but** by the time *Matthew* wrote, they were **sitting** in it.

1. As the **Titanic** was going down, how strange if some thought, **Hey, we can shoot pool for free...come on!** - **Yet**, that's how some people are **living their life** here...**not** even realizing, their boat is **sinking**, their **walking** in darkness, their **sitting** in darkness.

J. **Dark to Light** – from death, **to** the dawning of a new day.

1. Slide11 Jesus explained this in more detail to Paul in Acts 26:17,18 - *I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.*

- a) Slide12 When a *Great Light* encounters great darkness, *Who do you think wins?*
- b) Light always wins over darkness. Try it tonight in your backyard with a flashlight. *Darkness can't swallow a light beam.*

K. Death shadows - Scary shadows (But only shadows)

L. Jesus is the difference between light & darkness, between life & death (2).

1. Slide13 Sir Walter Scott tells how as a young boy in Scotland he would stand on the porch of his home and watch the *old gas lamplighter* switch on the lights throughout the town. As he moved from place to place Scott followed his path by the small pools of light that he left behind. As he got closer to home the young Scott would run in and call to his mother, *"Mother, Mother, come and see a man who is punching holes in the darkness."*

- a) Slide14 This is an excellent definition of *the mission of God's people* in every age: to punch holes in the *moral, spiritual, social, and political darkness* of the world and allow the light of the gospel to bring **direction** and **healing**.

M. Slide15 So Jesus set headquarters up **where?** Where people talked funny. Where the outcasts lived. Where people on the periphery reside, who weren't recognized by the crowd.

1. Do you hear the beautiful message here? You might have felt like an **outcast** your whole life. Maybe you were never in the *inner group*, but always in the *darkness or shadows*.

2. It's **YOUR** heart that Jesus wants to *put His headquarters in today*.

- a) But I don't feel *religious* enough...so Jesus came to *Galilee*.
- b) But I don't feel *spiritual* enough...so Jesus came to those *walking/sitting in darkness*
- c) But I feel *disqualified*...so Jesus came to those *sitting out their lives in the dark*.
- d) But I don't feel *alive*...so Jesus came to those *dwelling in death's shadow*.

3. **Slide16** Who needs the gospel the most? Those who are **well** or those who are **sick**? Those who are **righteous** or those who are **sinner**s?
Those who have the most **light** or those who are living the **darkest lives**?

N. (17) The work of God was rapidly moving toward the establishing of the glorious *kingdom of heaven* on earth.

O. **Preach** - *Kerusso* (kay-RU-so) is the Greek word for herald, and the herald was the man who brought a message direct from the king. Barclay

IV. **Slide17,18 MEN CATCHING (18-22)**

- A. Jesus showing **discipleship 101**. Invest yourself in a dozen of peoples lives, living *relationally, authentically, & transparently*.
- Yes, He began to **preach** (17) **but** immediately began to **call others** the task.
- B. (18) Jesus previously met them in Judea (Jn.1:35-42)
- C. **Casting a net** - A net thrown over the shoulders & spreads out in to a circle as it falls upon the water. It had weights & a draw rope around its edge.
- D. (19) **Follow Me** - *Disciples normally chose to become students of a particular rabbi, rather than a teacher calling his own disciples.*
- E. **Slide19a** This was a call to **constant companionship** w/Jesus.
- Here would be a new twist to teaching others to evangelize: Instead of **classes & courses, methods & technics, read a book or attend a seminar**, simply just have someone follow you & watch. (nothing wrong w/those)
 - Jesus said, Hang around me, I'll make you *man-fishers*.
- F. **Fishers of Men** was not a new term. *For centuries, Greek & Roman philosophers had used it to describe the work of the man who seeks to catch others by teaching & persuasion.*
- This is only **one** of many pictures of Evangelism: shepherd/sheep, workers in the harvest field, etc.
 - Yet**, He was speaking to 4 Fishermen [poss 7 in his band of merry men were *fishermen*]
 - Slide19b** Augustine, *Fisherman Peter did not lay aside his nets but changed them.*
 - Why would Jesus pick over 50% of his team from the Fishermen trade?**

a) They were **busy** people. Either fishing, catching fish, *or* preparing or mending their nets. They were **courageous & patient** people.

(1) **Saul** was looking for his father's donkeys. **David** was keeping his father's sheep. **The shepherds** were guarding their flocks. **Amos** was farming in Tekoa. **Matthew** was working at the tax collector's table. **Moses** was tending his father-in-law's flock. **Gideon** was threshing wheat.

G. Slide20 (20) They immediately left their nets - Let *no net* entangle those whom Jesus calls to follow him.

1. They came immediately. They came at all cost. They came w/o question. They came to follow the leader. They came w/o stipulation or reserve.

2. Following Jesus means *leaving some things behind*. The Samaritan woman left her pitcher, Matt left his tax table, & blind Bartimaeus left his cloak to follow Jesus.

a) Our prayer: *Lord, help me to be this faithful, & unhesitatingly follow you as long as I live. May no nets detain me.*

H. (21,22) Spurg, *These would be the briars upon which he would graft the roses of his grace.*

I. Slide21 (21) John - the disciple...*whom Jesus loved* (Jn.13:23, 20:2, 21:7,20)

1. Now, since he wrote that about himself. You might think *how boastful!*

2. But, isn't the real question, *why don't you think that about yourself?*

a) If you can't...*Houston, there's a problem.*

J. (22) Zebedee, Matthew specifically highlights that James and John...left not only their fishing, *but* also **their father** to begin following Jesus.

1. A loss Zebedee? - **No, way.** Zebedee let **both** of his sons walk away from his plans for his boys, *i.e.* the family business. *Would you let your son/daughter go to the mission field?* [Do you encourage it? Talk about it w/them? Pray about it w/them?]

K. Recognize this *sudden departure* as a sure sign of *radical discipleship*.

V. Slide22 **TEACHING, PREACHING, HEALING (23-25)**

A. (23) A **summary statement** of Jesus' public ministry.

1. You could say Jesus cares about: *Church, School, & Healthcare.*

- B. (24) The presence of multitudes seeking relief at **hot springs**, like *Hammath-Tiberias* (near our hotel) in Galilee testifies to the vast numbers who sought healing in the 1st century.
1. Also note, **unlike** the 5th-century b.c. Greek **Hippocrates** who thought **epilepsy was due to demonic activity**, Matthew here **distinguishes** the two.
- C. (25) About a 100 mile perimeter.
- D. **Slide23a,b** *Jesus' province was His parish*. His interest? man's **mind/teaching** & man's **heart/preaching** & man's **body/healing**.
1. **Teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom.**
 - a) Difference between teaching & preaching is *1 of emphasis & manner not of content*
 - b) **Slide23c** "**Preaching is the uncompromising proclamation of certainties; teaching is the explanation of the meaning and significance of them.**" Barclay
 2. **Slide24 Healing** - Jesus' ability to heal those with all different kinds of diseases demonstrates that **He has authentic power over the damage done by the fall of man**. His authority over demons (and those who were demon-possessed) shows **He has authentic power over all creation**.
- E. Our Lord's main ministry was **teaching and preaching**, but his **compassion** moved him to minister to the **physical needs of the people**. *warren wiersbe*
1. How tragic that most of the people who followed him wanted his **services but not** his **salvation**, the **gifts but not** the **giver**.