

“Action Sermons!”**1. Intro:**

- 1.1. Before introducing **Charles Colson**, the host of a popular news interview program played a taped telephone message by 2 Christians who had fallen into sin. It was an attempt to embarrass Colson & make ineffective anything he would say. Knowing this, Colson responded with fervor: "There have been some dreadful mistakes, **but** why judge all Christians by the few who abuse their positions? There are 350,000 churches across America where people's spiritual needs are being met. Thousands of missionaries are living in conditions you and I couldn't. Thousands of volunteers are working in prisons, soup kitchens, & rescue missions. **That's the church in action.**"
- 1.2. Ezekiel gives us 2 More **action sermons**.
 - 1.2.1. The prophet **lived** the message he was declaring.

2. ACTION SERMONS! (1-8)

- 2.1. **1st ILLUSTRATION – LOAD YOUR LUGGAGE!** (1-16)
- 2.2. **THE SYMBOL!** (1-7)
- 2.3. Ezekiel is told to **pack** his belongings on his shoulders & **dig** a tunnel through the city wall.
- 2.4. (3) **In their sight** – repeated in vs.3,4,5,6.
- 2.5. (5) **Dig through the wall** – They couldn't go out the front gate when attacked.
- 2.6. **THE SIGNIFICANCE!** (8-16)
- 2.7. This depicts how Jerusalem's frightened citizens will **attempt to escape** the Babylonians siege.
 - 2.7.1. His evening actions depicted King Zedekiah's futile attempt to escape
- 2.8. **2nd ILLUSTRATION – SHAKE & QUAKE!** (17-20)
- 2.9. **THE SYMBOL!** (17,18)
- 2.10. Ezekiel is **tremble & shudder with fear** as he eats his food & drinks his water.
- 2.11. **THE SIGNIFICANCE!** (19-20)
- 2.12. This depicts how **the people of Jerusalem** will soon eat their food & drink their water.
- 2.13. **2 PROVERBS!** (21-28)
- 2.14. **THE OLD PROVERB!** (21,22)
- 2.15. "Those who predict judgment & doom are wrong...each passing day proves it!"
- 2.16. **THE NEW PROVERB!** (23-28)
- 2.17. "These predictions are true! The coming day of destruction will prove it!"

- 2.18. Sounds just like the mockers of 2 Pet.3:3,4 “scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.”
- 2.19. **Application:**
- 2.20. God might not ask us to do **bizarre things** as he did Ezekiel, **but** can others tell by **your life-style** that you believe Jesus is coming, & that he will one day judge the world?
- 2.21. **Q:** Is **your life** an **action sermon** that catches the attention of people who are blind & deaf to God’s truth? [See, “I am a sign to you” vs.11]
- 2.22. **Q:** Are we **living** our message? (**not just believing it...though it starts there**)
- 2.22.1. Recommit to **loving the Lord, & living & speaking** the gospel.
- 2.22.2. Here are **3 components** that form a **holy trinity** in our Christian life:
2.22.2.1. Gospel, Culture, & Church.
- 2.23. **Gospel (Loving our Lord)** – The heart of the Scriptures.
2.23.1. Consists of *Jesus’ death, burial, & Resurrection* to save sinners.
- 2.24. **Culture (Loving our neighbor)** – We have **various cultures** in which people live their lives.
2.24.1. The gospel must be fitted to (not altered for) particular people, times, & circumstances so that evangelism will be effective. [ex: JW, Jews]
2.24.2. **“Culturally liberal, but theologically conservative!”**
- 2.25. **Church (Loving our brother)** – Where people are **built up** in their faith & **knitted together** in loving community.
2.25.1. You must have all 3 – Try removing one element.
- 2.26. **Gospel + Culture - Church = Parachurch** [para=with, alongside; *but many aren’t!*]
2.26.1. Some are frustrated w/the church & try to bring the gospel into the culture...**w/o the church!**¹
2.26.2. They fail often times to **connect their converts** to the church.
2.26.3. They learn to get others saved, but often they are **theologically immature**.
2.26.4. They **lack benefits** of a church culture.
2.26.4.1. (i.e.) Since **age specific**, miss out on **all generations** to help navigate the transitions of life.
2.26.5. **The Danger?** – Love the **Lord**, Love their **neighbor**, but not their **brothers**.
- 2.27. **Culture + Church - Gospel = Liberalism; Liberal Christianity!**
2.27.1. Some are so concerned w/being **culturally relevant** that, though they are deeply involved in the culture, they **neglect the gospel**.

¹ Radical Reformation; Driscoll.

- 2.27.2. They convert people to the church & to good works, but not to Jesus!
- 2.27.3. They'll talk about **institutional sin** but shy to speak of **personal sin**.
- 2.27.4. **The Danger?** –Love their **neighbor** & their **brothers**, at the expense of loving their **Lord**.
- 2.28. **Church + Gospel - Culture = Fundamentalism**
- 2.28.1. Some churches are more into their church & its traditions, buildings, & politics than the gospel.
- 2.28.1.1. They know the gospel theologically, but they rarely take it out of their church.
- 2.28.2. It's debatable whether they love **Jesus & lost people** in their culture, as much as they love their own church!
- 2.28.2.1. They desire to bring other Christians in, more than sending anyone out.
- 2.28.3. Overtime, they can become so inwardly focused that the gospel is replaced with *rules, legalism, & morality*.
- 2.28.3.1. How many more stories do we need of children who grow up in church being **forced to act like Christians**, rather than being **won to the heart of God?** Not do what's rt out of fear. Do what's rt out of love!
- 2.28.4. **The Danger?** – Love the **Lord**, Love their **brothers**, but not their **neighbors**.
- 2.28.5. It was God who **created** cultures (Babel, when He scattered them);
- 2.28.6. It was God who **worked through** cultures (like Babylon, Israel, Nineveh, & Egypt to redeem his people);
- 2.28.7. It was God who came to earth & **lived in** a culture.
- 2.28.8. It was God who **at Pentecost** proclaimed the gospel in the languages & dialects of the many cultures that were represented.
- 2.29. **Understand a Christians mission:**
- 2.29.1. **Be close to Jesus.** (This transforms our hearts **to love** what He loves, **hate** what He hates)
- 2.29.2. Pursue relationships w/**lost people** in hopes of connecting w/them &, subsequently, **connecting them w/Him**.
- 2.29.3. This actually **protects us from sin**, because the way to **avoid sin** is not to avoid sinners, but **to stick close to Jesus!**
- 2.30. **Christian is your life an action sermon?**
- 2.31. **Choose to live for Jesus!** – Choose this day whom you'll serve... **yourself** or **Him?**
- 2.32. **Do something!** – Find your gifts, strengths, & use them to the glory of God. Use them don't wait!
- 2.33. **Risk!** – The only thing worse than dying is *living a boring life*.
- 2.33.1. Often times, the longer someone is a Christian, the greater their tendency to diminish **the Jesus of the Bible** until he becomes "a *predictable little God who ceases to surprise them!*"

- 2.34. **Realize!** - When you sign up to be a Christian “**your** part is to **follow**, **His** part is to **lead the way!**”
- 2.34.1. And, everybody **doesn't** get the same package!
- 2.34.2. Everyone **doesn't** get the **Premium Plan** “get rich, get comfortable, get secure, get safe, get well...when you get God!”
- 2.34.3. Some get the **John plan** while others get the **Peter plan!**
- 2.34.3.1. After Jesus told Peter how he'd die for Him, Peter responded,
“But Lord, what about this man?(John)” Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.”
- 2.34.4. There is **no cattle call**. - It's a **life-&-death proposition**. [He bids you come & die!(to self), Dietrich Bonhoeffer]
 He doesn't call you to a life that **everyone else will live**.
 He's not calling you to the **same path** that every other follower of Christ will walk. Your life is **unique** before God.
 Your path is **yours & yours alone!**²
- 2.35. **Our church's mission:**
- 2.35.1. To Love **God** completely;
- 2.35.2. To Love **people** authentically;
- 2.35.3. To make **disciples** globally.
- 2.35.3.1. Jesus started His ministry by saying, **“Come, follow Me!”**
 His closing instruction, **“Go!”**
- 2.36. **Ezekiel** lived out the messages he was delivering...Will we do the same today?

A clay mold is a fragile thing; but the molten metal poured into it may retain the shape so given ages after the mold has crumbled into dust.

The plate prepared by a photographer may be exposed to the light only a few seconds; but the impression then caught may be retained for many years.

Flowers are frail, and soon drop into the ground; but they leave behind a ripening seed that may perpetuate the species forever.

Such is the influence of our **present life** upon our **future life**.

² Barbarian Way; Erwin McManus; pg.36,37.