



**September 15**  
**Rev. Nathan Scholl**  
**Christ Central, Charlottesville, VA**  
**Philippians 2:1-11**

*<sup>1</sup>So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Humility is in short supply these days. When the Church shows humility, the world sees people who are refreshingly different! What is the point of the call for the Church, the Christian community, to be refreshingly different? Why does Paul call the people in the Church to new and higher standards than the world around them? It's simple, really: to point people to Jesus Christ. The Church is his body- his hands, his feet, and his heart. The Church is the front door into knowing, finding and seeing Christ.

Paul knows that this fledgling little church in Philippi must be ready to heal, help, care, love, give and serve. Because that is exactly what Christ did for them and for us! He came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. It is all for him.

We are his body. The Body of Christ. And he is the head, the one whom we serve. And this means two things:

1. He is the one who nourishes us. We find all our strength and power in him and him alone. We don't dig deep in ourselves. He saves us, encourages us, loves us, redeems us, strengthens us and cares for us. We must never, ever turn to our own resources to be the true Church. We must rely on him alone to help us be like him.
2. He is the one we serve. When we serve others we ultimately serve him. He gets the honor and the glory when all is said and done. What a privilege!

When the body of Christ acts like Christ...people notice something refreshingly different. When you invite someone to church, you are not inviting them to a social club, or a book club, or a religious club, or a Sunday morning gathering, or a family get together (although those are good things). You are inviting them to Jesus. May we rely on and reflect him, more and more! And that is refreshingly different.

**September 16**  
**Rev. Peter Kemeny**  
**Good News Presbyterian Church, Frederick, MD**  
**2 Timothy 4:2**

*"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."*

### **Gospel Openers**

Paul exhorts us to "preach the word...in season and out of season." But how do I raise the topic of Christianity with a relative, friend or acquaintance who is not a Christian? Here are some things that you can say and do to open a conversation.

#### **Ask a question.**

- "Tell me about your religious background. How were you raised?" After they share their background, ask, "Where are you today in your religious thinking?"
- "Do you have any kind of spiritual interest?"
- "In your opinion, who do you think Jesus is?"
- "Do you think that you will go to heaven when you die?" If the person answers "yes," then ask the person why he or she thinks so.
- "Do you know what the Bible means when it talks about grace?"

- “Do you ever read the Bible? How would you summarize its main message?”

**Share a book.** Ask your friend if he or she owns a Bible. If the person does not have a Bible, give him one. My favorite book to pass on to interested unbelievers is *Basic Christianity* by John Stott.

**Invite** friends to come to church through one of your church’s side doors, such as a small group Bible study, a youth group, or a fellowship meal. But also invite friends to come through your church’s front door: Sunday school and Sunday morning worship.

**Christianity Explored.** Invite your non-Christian friend to a Christianity Explored Bible study. This informal seven-week course works through the story of Jesus’ life as found in Mark’s Gospel and answers questions as: Who is Jesus? Why did he come? Why did he die? How can God accept us? What does it mean to follow Jesus? A preview of the course can be seen at [ChristianityExplored.org](http://ChristianityExplored.org).

**One-on-one Bible reading.** Ask your friend if he or she would be willing to read the Bible with you. For example, you might say, “Let’s read through the Gospel of John on our own and each week we can get together to discuss the section we’ve read. Write down any comments or questions and we can discuss these when we meet. I can’t promise I can answer all your questions, but I’ll try to find an answer to those questions that stump me.”

Be daring. Be a fisher of men.

**September 17**  
**Rev. Ray Cameron**  
**Lake Placid First PC**  
**Psalm 71**

- <sup>1</sup>In you, O Lord, do I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame!
- <sup>2</sup>In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;  
incline your ear to me, and save me!
- <sup>3</sup>Be to me a rock of refuge,  
to which I may continually come;  
you have given the command to save me,  
for you are my rock and my fortress.
- <sup>4</sup>Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,  
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.
- <sup>5</sup>For you, O Lord, are my hope,  
my trust, O Lord, from my youth.
- <sup>6</sup>Upon you I have leaned from before my birth;

you are he who took me from my mother's womb.  
My praise is continually of you.  
<sup>7</sup> I have been as a portent to many,  
but you are my strong refuge.  
<sup>8</sup> My mouth is filled with your praise,  
and with your glory all the day.  
<sup>9</sup> Do not cast me off in the time of old age;  
forsake me not when my strength is spent.  
<sup>10</sup> For my enemies speak concerning me;  
those who watch for my life consult together  
<sup>11</sup> and say, "God has forsaken him;  
pursue and seize him,  
for there is none to deliver him."  
<sup>12</sup> O God, be not far from me;  
O my God, make haste to help me!  
<sup>13</sup> May my accusers be put to shame and consumed;  
with scorn and disgrace may they be covered  
who seek my hurt.  
<sup>14</sup> But I will hope continually  
and will praise you yet more and more.  
<sup>15</sup> My mouth will tell of your righteous acts,  
of your deeds of salvation all the day,  
for their number is past my knowledge.  
<sup>16</sup> With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come;  
I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.  
<sup>17</sup> O God, from my youth you have taught me,  
and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.  
<sup>18</sup> So even to old age and gray hairs,  
O God, do not forsake me,  
until I proclaim your might to another generation,  
your power to all those to come.  
<sup>19</sup> Your righteousness, O God,  
reaches the high heavens.  
You who have done great things,  
O God, who is like you?  
<sup>20</sup> You who have made me see many troubles and calamities  
will revive me again;  
from the depths of the earth  
you will bring me up again.  
<sup>21</sup> You will increase my greatness  
and comfort me again.  
<sup>22</sup> I will also praise you with the harp  
for your faithfulness, O my God;  
I will sing praises to you with the lyre,  
O Holy One of Israel.  
<sup>23</sup> My lips will shout for joy,

when I sing praises to you;  
my soul also, which you have redeemed.  
<sup>24</sup> And my tongue will talk of your righteous help all the day long,  
for they have been put to shame and disappointed  
who sought to do me hurt.

## **Evangelism and the Hoary Head**

Psalm 71 is an encouraging psalm for lifelong faith. It begins, *“In you, O Lord, do I take refuge.”* He acknowledges that life has *“troubles and calamities”* (v.20). He acknowledges that God’s faithfulness began *“from before my birth”* (v.6). In this security, he declares, *“My mouth is filled with your praise, and with your glory all the day”* (v.8). This psalm sets before us the high goal of ending life well, to the glory of God. Rather than becoming grumpy, complaining, inward and small-minded at the end of life, he has a clear and high knowledge of God, with an eye to the next *“generation.”* We who have known God’s grace in Jesus Christ for many years, even to *“old age and gray hairs”* (v.18), can testify that God is neither far off nor unable, even in the midst of *“troubles.”* Lifelong faith is forged and strengthened by life’s challenges, for the glory of God. *“I ... will praise you yet more and more”* (v.14).

A lifelong faith needs to be shared! *“... until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come”* (v.18). This is personal testimony to God’s faithfulness in your life, while proclaiming God’s *“wondrous deeds”* (v.17). Creation, judgment, redemption. *“Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens”* (v.19). Indeed! The cross, the empty tomb, the ascension, and the return of Jesus is the story of God’s *“righteousness”* brought to fallen humanity.

Daily the news reminds us of the anger, confusion, disappointment, and distress of the next *“generation.”* Understandably. Imagine trying to do life without, the most foundational reality: the existence of God! Much less, the righteousness of Jesus Christ! For those of us in the fellowship of the hoary head, we can ask God to help us connect with a younger man or woman from *“another generation.”* It may be through a leader with the youth in your congregation. It may be as a mentor through your local school. It may become a discipleship connection. It may become a conversion connection. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. But a lifelong faith is meant to be shared with *“another generation.”*

Ask God for boldness, and then actively seek out someone to meet with, listen to, and then authentically share your lifelong faith in Jesus Christ.

**September 18**  
**Rev. Dr. Jay Adams**  
**Acts 8:1, 4 (HCSB)**

*On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria . . . So, those who were scattered went on their way preaching the message of good news.*

### **Everyone Evangelizing Everywhere**

Even before he was converted on the Damascus Road, the apostle Paul was used to evangelizing the lost. “What?” you say, “How could that be? I thought only Christians could evangelize.” Well, it’s true; in the providence of God the unexpected often takes place. We must not limit God. Listen to what Luke wrote:

In the original, verse 4 reads, “those who were scattered abroad went everywhere announcing the message of good news” (or “evangelizing” – the Greek is *euaggeliezomenoi*). And, as the context shows, Paul was a part of those who did the scattering. One way God evangelizes is through persecution.

Today, there is persecution of the church throughout the world. Andrew Brunson is an example. We have been praying for his release (as we should), but in the meantime we should ask God to enable him to win some Turks to Christ. Remember how God used Paul and his companions to reach the Philippian jailor and his family for Christ and how the Pretorian Guard heard the message because of Paul’s trial in Rome (Acts 16:31-34; Philippians 1:12-13).

Notice in the text of Acts 8:1-4 how it was “all except the apostles” who went everywhere evangelizing. Up until then the church had been bottled up in Judea. But God scattered the laymen who were part of the church to evangelize in all of those places where they went. The task was not left to the apostles alone, although they were the ones to whom the Great Commission was given (Matthew 28:16-20).

Should persecution come to America, scattering believers, they should know that God is providentially providing opportunities to evangelize. And they should seize them. But they (you) should not wait for such an “opportunity.” You and the members of your congregation should not have to be driven to do evangelism—it should be the desire of everyone to evangelize as the result of the present freedom that they enjoy. Your task is for everyone to evangelize everywhere!

**September 19**  
**Rev. Rob Turner**  
**Arsenal Hill, Columbia, SC**  
**John 9:7**

*“Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.*

Think about this young man who was healed, who could see after perhaps 20 years of blindness. He was born blind. That means when Jesus opened his eyes that was the first time EVER that he could see!

We can't really imagine what that must have been like. Besides exhilaration, besides pure joy, it must have also been a shock.

Did things look like he had imagined they would look all those years when he was blind? Did he walk with his arms still kind of in front of him out of habit, feeling his way around like he used to? What was it like to experience light and shadows? What was it like to now deal with the big picture?

It must have been great joy like no other, but it also must have been a great shock, even confusing, even frightening at times.

I read a study examining people who had regained their sight after experiencing long term blindness. First of all, this is rare. Secondly, in the few cases found, people's experiences were different than what we might expect. Depression. Confusion. Two of the patients, even after gaining the ability to see, continued to act blind and needed more help than before they had sight. One doctor wrote: “An adult who newly regains his sight has to make a radical switch...And it flies in the face of the experience of an entire lifetime.”

Jesus came and gave us sight. We were blind, but now we see. Rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light. That's a radical switch, isn't it?

We can be sure that as we share the gospel and God begins a new work in people's lives and gives light into areas where there has been darkness for so long, that change and growth is going to hurt.

Relationships will be disrupted. Temptation to return to what is comfortable and familiar is going to be there.

Coming into the light is both exhilarating and joy-filled... but it also flies in the face of the experiences of an entire lifetime. Let us be prepared to be there for the ones we share the gospel with - walking with them, encouraging them, supporting them. It's all part of the deal of evangelism.

**September 20**  
**Steve Nichols**  
**ARP Foundation**  
**Zechariah 4:6**

*“Then he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”*

I set up a luncheon with a young businessman in Atlanta with the goal of challenging him to support us financially in our outreach to campuses and executives in the Southeast. Because we were on full missionary support at that time, making appointments like this were essential to finance our ministry operations and our means of getting paid: no support, no paycheck.

This contact came with high marks: his character was apparent, combined with his energy and enthusiasm quickly explained why he was recognized as a rising star in the financial services industry. Over lunch, we had a lively conversation about a variety of topics including our culture’s need for God, his family’s devotion to Catholic traditions – and that he had absolutely no clue what I was talking about as I described sharing the Gospel, or discipleship with college students and business leaders.

As I neared the end of my sandwich, I thought, how could I ask a guy to support a ministry he didn’t understand, nor have a motivation for the work? I decided to abandon my goal of financial support and just ask him, “Could you say that you have ever personally asked Christ to take control of your life?” He was very interested in the message, but said he had not. “Would you like to?” He exclaimed, “yes I would!” I showed him several Scriptures and explained how he could know Christ personally suggesting he consider it further in a more private setting.

He persisted that now would be a good time. Then when I asked if I could lead him, he followed me in a prayer of salvation and lordship! Wow! The Lord had a more important agenda here than raising our support! With his newly found power from the Holy Spirit, the spiritual lights obscured in his religious upbringing were coming-on... full force! Real, spiritual power on display!

By now I was feeling uncomfortable talking any further about finances, or to give him the slightest impression I was sharing the Gospel for a living. But my new brother circled back to ask again the purpose of my call. I deferred to say we could talk about that topic later – but he said, “No, no, tell me what you need!” He proceeded make a significant ongoing commitment to our support, became a life-time friend, a leader in personal evangelism and elder in a PCA church.

The money I had hoped to raise through my presentation power, the Lord raised first through His Spirit by reconciling this young man and his family to Himself for eternity, and then by His Spirit, met my financial needs in spite of my reluctance to ask for it!

**September 21**  
**Rev. Ken Kunkel**  
**Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church, Clayton, NC**  
***Romans 9:15***

*“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”*

One of the most frustrating things about being a church planter is seeing lost souls come into your mission work and than not respond to the Gospel. They are sometimes with us for a period of time and hear the Gospel time after time. We even visit them in their homes and in the hospital. We commit to taking them through parts of the Bible for weeks and even months, but still after all of these efforts they still don't surrender themselves to Christ and they simply leave and don't return. It's easy to become discouraged and question your calling and the work that is being done.

I recall an old friend, who was on the mission field to Muslims, once told me that he was so glad that he was reformed and believed in the doctrine of election. He shared with me that time after time he shared the Gospel with these Muslims and almost every time he was rejected and often spit upon. He said if he didn't believe in God's sovereignty in election he wouldn't be able to sleep at night because salvation would than be up to him. If that would be the case than he needed to sleep less and work harder. Every minute wasted could be a soul lost forever. He continually had to remind himself through the adversity and rejection that God is sovereign over all things, even salvation.

We who are on the frontlines need to remind ourselves that God is the one who calls people to Himself and regenerates their hearts. He is the only one who saves. It is liberating to come to the realization that we are simply called to be faithful as we carryout the command to make disciples of all nations. God takes care of the rest. But that also means that when our ministry is flourishing, the church is growing and people are responding, God is the only one that receives any of the glory.