

The Core of Evangelism Lesson 3

The Bread Jesus Offers

Last week we opened the gift Jesus puts in front of us. He says He brings abundant life. Sounds beautiful. But let's be honest. It also sounds confusing.

Abundant in what, exactly?

Paul says God will supply everything we lack according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19). And that's true. But we don't always read it right.

Look at the widow in 1 Kings 17:8-16. She doesn't have a full pantry. She has a handful of flour and a little oil. That's it. She's making the last meal for her and her son. Elijah shows up and asks for his first. She does it. And then something happens that never makes the headlines:

The flour doesn't run out. The oil doesn't run dry. But it doesn't overflow either. No mountains of bread. Just bread for today. God's provision isn't always a stockpile. Sometimes it's daily bread. Trust that gets renewed every morning.

When we talk about the abundance Jesus promises in John 10:10,

another danger shows up:

People come for the bread and not for the One who gives it. John 6:26 says it plain. They followed Him, not because of what they saw, but because of what they ate. And Jesus said it without sugar:

"You don't know what you're asking."

In Matthew 20:20-23, a mother comes with a sincere request. That her sons sit at Jesus' right and left. She's not a bad mother. She's a mother who sees her sons' effort and dreams of a reward. Jesus doesn't humiliate her. He answers with a cup. He talks about a higher blessing, and a deeper price.

It's not punishment.

It's grace in disguise. Because God doesn't give us what we want. He gives us what we need. Let's assume, or at least try to believe, that every request is sincere. Even so, not all of them lead to the same place. Jesus takes her request further than she was asking: Not an earthly reward, but a deeper place. What we ask for at first glance is the illustration of:

"You don't know what you're asking."

Death and life come in the same package.

If we've been united with Christ in His death, then we're also united with Him in His life. That union isn't symbolic or poetic.

It's a spiritual reality that drags us into the same path our Lord walked.

What happened to Him, death, burial, resurrection, becomes the mold where our own story starts to take shape. And that union pushes us toward something deep: To know Him. Not just His words. Not just His doctrine. Not just His works. To know Him. To know the power of His resurrection, yes. But also, to share in His sufferings. To enter the logic of sacrifice.

To walk in the obedience that goes through the cross before it reaches glory.

Because whoever wants to reach the resurrection has to walk the road Christ walked first. And when you put these truths together, a faithful saying shows up. A summary that runs through the whole Christian life: If we die with Him, we will live with Him. If we endure, we will reign with Him. Dying with Christ isn't defeat.

It's the door. Endurance isn't empty effort. It's the crown.

Everything faith asks of us, dying, trusting, resisting, is exactly what unites us to the life that can never be taken away.

Romans 6:5 describes it. Philippians 3:10-11 chases it. 2 Timothy 2:11-12 sings it as certainty.

Why isn't the heart of the gospel preached clearly?

What's so confusing about it? Someone once told me he had an unshakeable faith. That Wednesday after Wednesday he went to the miracle nights. And Wednesday after Wednesday he walked out with what we call "aguadito." With nothing.

What was he and his friends unconsciously looking for? What makes us circle around the gospel without ever stepping into it? "You're not far from the kingdom." Jesus told a man that. Which means he wasn't inside. Close isn't inside.

A man proud of his spiritual life comes to Jesus with the best intentions.

Or maybe looking to be praised for his works. I suspect he just wanted to be confirmed, like any child who does something good and tells his parents. Mark 12:34. Jesus showed him his reality to encourage him. It was never in Jesus' spirit to discourage anyone. He Himself said,

"Woe to the one who makes one of these little one's stumble."

Jesus' honesty hits all of us. The people of His time and every one of us today. I'm trying to be as open and honest as I can with what the Word of God says. The world is full of the convinced... And short on the converted. The gospel asks for honesty.

The question that confronts us is a kind of sincerity that cuts:

Why do I come to God?

If your Christian life has never looked like a cup, has it ever looked like His death? Baptism isn't getting wet. It's not just going under water. It's being willing to drink whatever cup God puts in your hand.

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