The Core of Evangelism Lesson 5

Seeing People Through Jesus' Eyes

In our previous lesson, we talked about sharing our faith effectively. But before we talk about our words, we need to talk about our eyes. Because evangelism does not begin when we open our mouths. It begins when we learn to see people the way Jesus sees them. I use the present tense intentionally because Jesus is still looking at people with compassion today, and even now He is interceding for us before the Father.

"Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

"For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

For many years I thought evangelism was mainly about having the right answers. How to explain difficult passages. How to answer objections. How to present the plan of salvation clearly. Those things certainly matter. But I have never been particularly good at memorizing information, and I often struggled to explain my faith exactly the way others expected.

There was another reason as well. I have always disliked being pressured to accept something before I have had time to think it through for myself. If that frustrates me, it is likely to frustrate other people too. People often become defensive when we rush them. What seems obvious to us may not be obvious to the person standing in front of us.

The more I read the Gospels, the more convinced I become that Jesus did something before He taught.

He observed, He noticed, He paid attention. And that changed everything.

Most of us see the world through a narrow filter. Out of everything we could notice about a person, we focus on only a few details. Sometimes it is their appearance. Sometimes it is their reputation. Sometimes it is a mistake they made years ago. Without realizing it, we reduce a complex human being to a single characteristic.

We see the addict. We see the religious person. We see the skeptic. We see the arrogant person. We see the difficult person. But Jesus seemed to look much deeper. Where others saw a traitor, He saw Matthew. Where others saw a sinful woman, He saw a daughter in need of grace. Where others saw an impulsive fisherman, He saw Peter. Where others saw a small man hiding in a tree, He saw Zacchaeus. Jesus never ignored sin. But neither did He allow sin to become the only thing that defined a person.

Perhaps that is why people were drawn to Him. Not because He lowered the standard of truth, but because He saw more deeply than everyone else.

Matthew gives us a description that deserves to be read slowly:

"When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36)

Notice the order.

First, He saw them. Then, He felt compassion. Finally, He acted.

We often reverse that process. We want to speak before we observe. We want to correct before we understand. We want to answer before we listen.

Jesus did the opposite.

He saw exhaustion behind the smiles. He saw fear behind apparent confidence. He saw wounds behind hostility. He saw loneliness behind success. And honestly, our world has not changed that much. Every person we meet is fighting a battle we know little or nothing about. The neighbor. The coworker. The cashier at the grocery store. The driver stopped beside us at a traffic light. Every person has a story. Every person carries a burden. Every person needs grace.

That is why authentic evangelism does not begin with a prepared presentation.

It begins with transformed vision.

When we learn to see people the way Jesus sees them, we stop approaching them as projects to fix and start approaching them as human beings created in the image of God.

And that changes everything. It changes our conversations. It changes our tone. It changes our motives. It changes our responses. Because we are no longer trying to win an argument.

We are trying to love a person.

A Challenge for This Week

Over the next few days, try something simple.

Every time you interact with someone, pause for a moment and ask yourself:

What does Jesus see in this person that I am not seeing yet?

Do not rush to answer the question. Simply observe. Listen. Pray.

Because it is difficult to love deeply those whom we only see superficially.

And true evangelism almost always begins when we learn to see through the eyes of Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. Am I seeing people through labels, or through the grace of God?
2. Do I genuinely listen to people's stories before speaking to them about Christ?
3. Is there someone in my life whom I need to see again with the compassion of Jesus?