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Lord's Day Morning  
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“The Gospel and Our Neighbors:  
A Year of Outreach”  
I Kings 10:1-10

Introduction

In the next couple of weeks our neighbors just to the south of us, here on east side of 9<sup>th</sup> street down to Teal Road; and the neighbors in the Highland neighborhood just to the north and west of us here, are going to begin receiving a wonderful little booklet from us called *Coming Alive!*. It is filled with testimonies from several of you, along with a gospel devotional, information about our church family and an invitation to come and visit us. We hope to send out something similar to this to the same neighbors every other month for a year.

This is one way for us to go into the world around us with the gospel. But for this to be effective we have to do more and be ready for more than simply sending out information. Outreach and evangelism are people based not program based.

I remember when we bought this building 13 years ago. We made a big deal saying that a building won't make the ministry, but if ministry is already taking place, a building can be a great aid to ministry. The same kind of thing is true in an outreach program. If we are ready, eager and equipped to do evangelism, programs can be a great help. They can open doors, create opportunities, and sharpen awareness. So one of things we need to do is be ready and active in evangelism. This new year that begins this week

begins a year of focus on outreach for our congregation.

Today we are going to look at the story of the Queen of Sheba when she came to visit King Solomon. Here we are going to see that when we are available to people, when we know that we have been given a message to proclaim and a life that demonstrates God's grace, God will bring forth His gospel through us to a needy and broken world.

### [I Kings 10:1-10]

In order for anyone to become a Christian 3 things must happen.

1. Embrace the truth of the message. They have to hear all about what their own sin and what Christ did through His life, death and resurrection to rescue us from sin.
2. They have to recognize their own personal need for Christ. There has to be conviction of sin. Sorrow and sadness and humility as they realize that they are separated from God because of their sin.
3. A commitment of faith to follow Jesus Christ. This involves whole life commitment – repentance of sin and trusting one's life to Jesus Christ.

These things are possible only by the grace and power of God. Without awakening one who is dead in their trespasses and sins, there will be no conversion. But the amazing thing is that God has chosen to use us as a means to accomplish that work. So here's the thing: It's not so much how we go about being a witness for Christ, it's that we go about it all that is important. Is a one particular outreach program better than another or more spiritual or effective? The Bible doesn't say so. It

doesn't give us a blue print for programs. God simply tells us to *go*. So what we need to do is obey that command to take the gospel to every creature and ask Him to divinely use whatever we do for His purposes. Will mailing the gospel to our neighbors convert people? No. Will God use these mailings to open doors for gospel ministry? That is our prayer.

There are a couple of important things that we can learn from our passage this morning that can prepare us for effective outreach to our neighbors.

- I. We need to develop an effective ability to communicate the truth of the gospel.

There are several things to notice in these first few verses.

1. She heard about Solomon. (read vs. 1a)  
Most people have heard about Christianity and have opinions about it. But much of it is misrepresented and misunderstood. Some of this is simply because of a lack of good information. Some of it is intentional.

- Like right at the tomb of Christ where the guards were told to tell a lie and make people believe that Jesus' body was stolen, not resurrected.
- Today, many tell things about Christians that are not true or misrepresent the facts.
- But more often than not, people simply have impressions that miss the heart of the gospel. The most common belief in America for instance is that being a Christian means doing certain things, living up to a certain set of rules.

The point is, whenever we begin the process of evangelism with a non-Christian, we are most certainly beginning with a set of unknown presuppositions the person holds about what a Christian is.

The Queen of Sheba was no different than most people today. She had heard about Solomon and his God (notice the phrase *she had heard about the fame of Solomon concern the name of the Lord*) and yet frankly, as verse 7 tells us, she didn't believe it. How true that is of so many people today. They've heard certain things about God, but frankly, they don't believe it.

2. She came to test him with questions. Not everyone, but some will want to know whether what they have heard is true. Some will be interested and inquisitive. Whenever we share some of our testimony with a non-Christian, we are attempting to discern if they are interested.

In reality, everyone has questions. You can't go to the funeral of a friend or loved one (no matter who you are) and not ask questions about life after death. Everyone at some point asks about the purpose of life and determines what is valuable and what is not.

In evangelism and outreach we pray for and seek people who are willing and ready to do what the Queen of Sheba did. Verse 2 tells us she asked him about all that was in her heart. If we can get people to interact with us at a heart level, it doesn't mean they will come to believe in Jesus, but it does open opportunities to address the needs of the soul from the vantage point of the gospel.

3. Solomon answered all of her questions. (Read verse 3.) Now, before you dismiss this rather remarkable verse – thinking that here's the main fear and problem with evangelism. Solomon was the wisest man on earth. Remember a few things.

- Wisdom belongs to and comes from God. Nothing was hidden from the king. God gave him the answers.

- Almost any question someone asks you from their heart, you can either already answer or you can find the answer or point them to someone who can.
- You are God's spokesman – an ambassador for Christ. You have an authority from God to speak to the world about Christ. This is the heart of the Great Commission.
- The Word of God is God's answer book. It is His truth which gives you the source of inspired, authoritative and inerrant answers.
- You must commit yourself to becoming better and better equipped. You don't have to know everything to witness for Christ. But you can be diligent to become a workman who does not need to be ashamed handling accurately the Word of truth. (II Tim 2:15)

If people are going to come to understand the gospel and embrace it as their own, the Holy Spirit is going to use His people – people like you – to effectively communicate that truth to them.

## II. We need to effectively demonstrate the power of the gospel.

(Read verse 4-7). The Queen of Sheba was not only amazed at what she heard, but she was overwhelmed by what she saw.

Now, don't misunderstand! This is not support for a health and wealth gospel. Solomon, as king of Israel, represented the blessings and stature of a King. But the queen's observations also included the blessings to the servants and to the nation in general.

She understood that what she saw was the blessings of God among a people. So the testimony to her was both the words she heard and the lives she observed.

Compare that with the Pharisees during Jesus' day. Jesus saw clearly that they said one thing but lived another. He called them hypocrites because they honored God with their lips but their hearts were far away from Him.

An effective witness means that our lives verify our message. II Corinthians 2:14-17 says *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.*

Whether some of our neighbors come and visit this church, or whether you simply begin to interact in a new way with your own neighbors, our lives are to show them the reality of Christ and the power of the gospel. How can you demonstrate the power of the gospel?

1. Consistency – don't be an on again off again Christian.
2. Stability – How do you handle trouble? Are you only spiritual in the good times? Your neighbors will look for how you handle the storms of your life.
3. Wisdom – Do you apply the word to your life? Do you practice what you preach? People will notice.

There is no doubt the Queen of Sheba was moved by her visit. She came face to face with the people of God – and through them God Himself. And it changed her thinking and impacted her heart.

Was she converted? The text doesn't tell us that. She blessed God for sure. And she gave to His people – but we can't tell here if she believed or not.

But that too is an important lesson. The fruit of evangelism is not in our hands. Only God can awaken a soul. But we have been called to communicate the truth of the gospel and to demonstrate its power. Outreach is not about building *our church* or *our kingdom*. It's about being faithful servants of God and witnesses of His grace to us. Some, perhaps many, will be uninterested. Some will be hardened. But some will come to know Jesus Christ personally. These will find forgiveness from their sins and a new life in Christ. And there is no greater joy on earth than to see someone else become a child of God.

May God be pleased to use us this year as we represent Jesus to our neighbors.

Will you:

- Pray for some to come to faith in Christ,
- Try and develop a friendship with one non-Christian
- Look for opportunities to speak about Christ,
- Identify with Christ and give Him the glory for anything good your neighbor notices in you.