



PNEUMA: EMPOWERED TO BE A WITNESS...Week 9

“This is a great time to be a Christian.”

With courage, this season of history can be viewed not with fear and trepidation, but instead with hope and a sense of opportunity. With courage, our perspectives turn, and we can be excited and encouraged about this cultural moment and not intimidated, angered, or paralyzed by it. ~ from *Take Heart* by **Matt Chandler**

- The apostle Paul's view of the present, also gives a peak into the future.

¹ You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. (2 Tim. 3:1–4 NLT-SE)

- The cultural shift we are currently experiencing can be **JARRING** to our lives.
 - **Post-Christianity** is the loss of the primacy of the Christian worldview in political affairs, especially in the Western world where Christianity had previously flourished, in favor of alternative world views such as secularism or nationalism.
 - Post-Christianity is not pre-Christianity; rather post-Christianity attempts to move beyond Christianity, whilst simultaneously feasting upon its fruit. Post-Christian culture attempts to retain the solace of faith, whilst gutting it of the costs, commitments, and restraints that the gospel places upon the individual will. Post-Christianity is Christianity emptied of its content. ~ from *Disappearing Church: From Cultural Relevance to Gospel Resilience*, by **Mark Sayers**
 - **Mark Sayers** points out that the rules have changed and we have been presented with a new set of beliefs:
 - **The highest good...**is individual freedom, happiness, self-definition, and self-expression.
 - **Reshaping freedom...**Traditions, religions, received wisdom, regulations, and social ties that restrict individual freedom, happiness, self-definition, and self-expression must be reshaped, deconstructed, or destroyed.
 - **Worshipping technology...**The world will inevitably improve as the scope of individual freedom grows. Technology—in particular the Internet—will motor this progression toward utopia.
 - **Focus on the individual...**The primary social ethic is tolerance of everyone's self-defined quest for individual freedom and self-expression. Any deviation from this ethic of tolerance is dangerous and must not be

tolerated. Therefore social justice is less about economic or class inequality, and more about issues of equality relating to individual identity, self-expression, and personal autonomy.

- **Humans are inherently good.**
- **Big is not better...**Large-scale structures and institutions are suspicious at best and evil at worst.
- **Authenticity rules...**Forms of external authority are rejected and personal authenticity is lauded.
- **Is it any wonder that we are having a hard time finding an interested ear for the Good News?** Is it any wonder people don't want to join our "Jesus Club?" It's not that people are just disinterested in what we are bringing to the table, they not only refuse to welcome the gospel to the table, **they don't want US to come at all!**
- **Then, how are we to preach the gospel? How are we to be Jesus' witnesses? How is evangelism supposed to happen?** If you look in the New Testament, you will find a different set of "tools" for evangelism. Here are the methods you'll typically find as you look through the scriptures:
 - Parables by Jesus
 - One-on-one conversations
 - Discussion meetings
 - Public speeches
 - Miracles
- If you keep using methods that worked decades ago to talk to people outside the Christian faith about Jesus, you might see some fruit. But I'm quite certain you'll lose the vast majority of people you're trying to influence, and I'm positive you'll lose the vast majority of people under age 35. ~ from *5 Important Ways Evangelism Is Shifting In Our Post-Christian World* by **Carey Nieuwhof**
 - **Here are the shifts Nieuwhof is talking about...**
 - Embracing the question is as important as giving the answer.
 - Steering the conversation is better than pushing for a conclusion.
 - Being open is more effective than being certain.
 - Arrogance, smugness and superiority are dead.
 - The timeline is longer.
- **In a Post-Christian culture**, the rules for witnessing have changed dramatically:
 - Sharing your faith is a **lifestyle**, not an activity or an event.
 - What **persuades** is hospitality and life stories, not clever arguments.
 - **What makes sense** to people in our current culture has made a **dramatic flip...**
 - **Moderns** tended to look at believing this way.
 - This is **true**
 - If it's true, then you must **believe** it
 - If you believe it, now you must **live** it

- **Postmoderns** flip the script.
 - The Christian life is **livable**
 - If it's livable then it's also **believable**
 - If it's believable, then it's also **true**
- When non-Christian see how the Christian life works they will discover it is livable, leading them to see that it's believable. "And if they see that, they might also acknowledge that it's true. ~ from *Evangelism in a Skeptical World*, by **Sam Chan**

- **The Way we live choose to live our lives can give us a glimpse at our own Spiritual Health**

- Remember the verses out of Second Timothy that we read when we began this conversation about sharing our faith? **Let's look again at Paul's message to Timothy...**
 - ¹ *You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God.* (2 Tim. 3:1–4 NLT-SE)
- It seems that "those people" Paul is writing about are circling the drain, getting more corrupt, desperate and self-absorbed as time goes on. The world is becoming a crazy place! There's only one problem...**Paul wasn't writing to Timothy about the world, but about THE CHURCH.** Take a look at verse 5...
 - *They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!* (2 Tim. 3:5 NLT-SE)
- **Two things stand out** in Paul's warning to his protege and to the church as well:
 - **First, they are living in hypocrisy.** They are acting religious, but beneath the surface these people are just like the world. They are not just religious, they have been enculturated into another gospel...the gospel of self. In their attempt to fit into the culture, they have abandoned the distinctives of their faith that they were mandated by Jesus to manifest to the world. They have lost their saltiness (Matt 5:13) and as a result, their lives are preaching a "different gospel." (Gal 1:18)
 - **Second, they have "rejected the power that could make them godly."** They have rejected the transforming, equipping, empowering and leading work of the Holy Spirit. Instead, they have found the answers inside themselves, the power of "self." They have closed the door to humility and become "puffed up with pride." Unfortunately, the repercussions of this shift can be devastating.
- The kingdom of heaven is entered only through humility. It belongs to the poor in spirit, the needy, the merciful, those who come empty handed and relying on grace. God's love breaks us free from the cocoon of self into new life. We become new creatures, born of compassion and existing for the flourishing of others. ~ from *The Burden is Light* by **Jon Tyson**
- **"You will be my witnesses..."**
 - ⁴ *"Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. ⁵ John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...⁸ you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And **you will be my witnesses**, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:4, 5, 8 NLT-SE)

- **Various types of witnesses:** In legal matters, a witness is an individual who has knowledge relevant to the case, but may also be someone who claims to have, or who is thought by others to have, such knowledge. A witness may be sworn under oath to testify to his knowledge and details of the case, including things he has seen, heard, smelled, or touched first hand.
 - **Eyewitness**—Eyewitness testimony is the account a bystander or victim gives in the courtroom, describing what that person observed that occurred during the specific incident under investigation. Ideally this recollection of events is detailed; however, this is not always the case. This recollection is used as evidence to show what happened from a witness' point of view... **You have had the dream, heard the voice, been there when the miracle happened and it changed your view of that it meant to follow Jesus!**
 - **Hearsay witness**— A witness cannot always testify about things he heard or read. Hearsay is a type of testimony that is generally inadmissible in court – meaning it is a category of testimony that courts generally prohibit... **You've heard others talk about the encounters they've had with God and you believe they are valid. In response, you have adjusted your life to have similar encounters yourself.**
 - **Expert witness**—An expert witness is an individual who has specialized knowledge or skills relevant to the matter at hand. Expert witnesses are used to make sense of complex evidence, such as scientific data, or to explain complicated matters to the judge or jury... **You have invested yourself in not just knowing about Jesus (the Word), but learning, growing and experiencing him at deeper and deeper levels (the Spirit). Your desire is to have a relationship with Jesus and to walk in obedience to the Holy Spirits leading.**
 - **Character witness**—A character witness is a person who testifies in a trial on behalf of a person as to that person's reputation for honesty and morality both by the personal knowledge of the witness and the person's reputation in the community... **You have learned and understood the character of God. You desire to tell others about what he is like and encourage them to pursue a relationship with him through the person of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.**
 - **Silent witness**—The silent witness theory pertains to the introduction of photographs or video recordings as evidence, without first having a witness verify its authenticity. The silent witness theory holds that, when a solid basis is provided to assure the accuracy of a photograph, it can be used as testimony, to speak for itself... **You have studied the Bible, not just to gain knowledge, but to have a deeper understanding of the heart of God as it relates to his love for people. You know that the Bible speaks for itself and has inherent power as well!**
 - **Hostile witness**—A hostile witness, sometimes called an “adverse witness,” is an individual who, after being called to the stand and sworn in, appears unwilling or reluctant to tell the truth... **Everyone's faith gets tested. These tests often become our testimony of, n to our faithfulness, but the faithfulness of God.**
 - **Materiel witness**—The testimony of a material witness is someone who has knowledge of something that is very important to determining the outcome of the case, and because of this, the court must make every effort to allow the witness to give his testimony... **When we allow the Holy Spirit to bring there words off Jesus back to our remembrance and empower us with signs and wonders, miracles can happen! Our testimony becomes a critical element in the salvation of others.**
- **We have access to a great deal of power by yielding to and being in relationship with the Holy Spirit.**
 - ⁷ **God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.** ⁸ So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. (2 Tim. 1:7–8 NLT-SE)

- **"Fear not**, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32 ESV)
- **Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?** (Is. 43:19 ESV)
 - There has been a unity between churches in our city that was seeded beginning 30 years ago and it is now beginning to bear fruit under the Spirit's direction. It began with **prayer**, was watered by **worship** and is now bearing fruit through **service**!
 - Just look at the expressions of this fruit being empowered by the Holy Spirit and manifesting in our city **RIGHT NOW** that **YOU** can participate in:
 - **Family Promise...BRAND NEW!** Evangel is one of the 14 Support Churches working with the 9 Host Churches providing a place for min astray to homeless folks in our area. You can volunteer to provide hospitality at either the churches or the Day Center. Ryan Retterath (360) 957-8088 is our liaison and Family Promise office (360) 703-3131.
 - **Love INC...**You can volunteer to help with various short-term projects throughout the area through Love INC, painting, repairing cars, light carpentry, delivering household items and many other forms of service to local residents. Love INC office (360) 232-8576.
 - **Severe Weather Shelter...THIS IS ALSO BRAND NEW!** We are working with at least 8 other local churches to provide a Severe Weather Shelter at First Christian Church for people living on the streets this Winter. There will be lots of opportunities to serve with this ministry. Last year Love Overwhelming's SWS was open 50 days. More info coming soon!
 - **Three Rivers House of Prayer...**Be part of a prayer/worship team at TRiHOP on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights. Ian Rutherford (816) 786-0407.
 - **Community House on Broadway...**Evangel serves CHOB a couple ways. We provide 3-5 gallons of milk every day during the month of June (other local churches cover the other 11 months) and we serve dinner the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM. Everyone's welcome to join the party!
 - **Good News Club...ANOTHER NEW MINISTRY!** Child Evangelism Fellowship has materials and access to the local area churches to do an after-school at the schools called Good News Club. If you would like to get a couple people together to start a club from Evangel, call Angi Jamieson at (971) 207-8830.
 - **Leadership Prayer Group/Summit...**Local area pastors and leaders have been praying for our community **every week for over 28 years!** Each Spring they get away for 4 days at the Cannon Beach Conference Center to pray and build relationship as well.
 - **Regeneration City Youth...**Three local churches (New Hope, Shekinah and Evangel) work together to provide a multi-church Youth Group on Wednesday nights at 6:00 PM at New Hope City Church. If you would like to help out, call Jordan Kilgore at (360) 560-4409.
 - **Caring Pregnancy Center...**Our local CPC has been serving local families for over 25 years. They do way too much to mention here, but if you would like to volunteer, talk to Tami Pickett or Cindy Stonex or call the CPC office at (360) 636-3333.

AREA NEWS

Shelter debate starts anew

With cold weather coming, shelter draws support, criticism

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With temperatures forecast to dip into the mid 30s this weekend, discussions over plans to open a severe weather shelter on Kessler Boulevard this winter are already heating up.

Organizers of the shelter plan said Friday they hope to collaborate with the City of Longview on the project, after presenting their plan to the council Thursday evening.

"They (the City Council) are the ones that came to us and said, 'What are the churches doing?' " said Longview Presbyterian Pastor Liz Kearny Friday. "We started having those conversations and this is what that looks like."

The Kelso-Longview Ministerial Association plans to open the temporary shelter in First Christian Church, at 2000 East Kessler Blvd. The shelter only would be allowed to operate when the city declares a severe weather emergency (when temperatures are above 100 degrees or below 32 degrees).

Love Overwhelming is partnering with the association to staff the shelter and help plan it, at the request of the ministerial associa-

tion. Nonprofit Love in the Name of Christ (Love INC) is holding funds to run the shelter and will reimburse for operations.

Kearny, a member of the ministerial association, said the group looked into multiple locations for the shelter over the last few months before First Christian Church volunteered just two weeks ago, she said.

Jamie Craig, board moderator for First Christian, said the church is a good match for the project because it is centrally located and has an often unused large fellowship hall. The group knew the church's close proximity to schools would be the biggest concern, she said. However, most churches in Longview

and Kelso are near schools, Kearny said.

Craig said school officials told the group they are worried shelter residents will come over to the school when the shelter closes in the morning.

Chuck Hendrickson, Love Overwhelming executive director, said the group is working on a safety and security plan to make sure people leave the area when the shelter closes. The shelter's entrance and exit will be away from the school and trained staff will patrol the building, he said. The group hopes to find a location to take shelter residents during the day as well as transportation to get them there, Hendrickson said.

Drugs and alcohol will not be allowed at the shelter, he said.

Last year, Love Overwhelming operated the weather shelter in its building at 618 14th Ave. It closed in early March after the city denied its request for funding budgeted for cold weather shelters and because of complaints from neighbors.

Multiple Longview residents spoke out against the location during Thursday night's council meeting, including at least two people who live nearby, saying they already feel unsafe in their neighborhoods due to the homeless people who camp at Lake Sacajawea.

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Shelter

From A3

Teachers from Kid's World Learning Center elementary school, which is next door at 811 20th Ave., said they were concerned about their students' safety.

"I have a great deal of respect for the passion (these churches) have for human life, but our responsibility is for our kids," said teacher Valley Ingham.

She added she's had to call the

police to deal with people sleeping in the school's doorway and she drives down the alley every morning to make sure it is safe for kids to walk through.

Kari Gallagher, who bought Kids World Learning Center earlier this year, said she is also concerned about her investment and her family's livelihood.

"I have 3- to 5-year-olds there that will see people urinating, doing drugs, damaging property and loitering," she said.

But supporters argue that the churches are stepping up to ad-

dress the homelessness problem, just as city officials have asked them to do for years.

"Folks have bashed and bullied our local churches saying 'Where are they?' Here is a group of churches and their congregants stepping up and saying 'We will do it, but we need help,'" said LO board member Shawn Nyman.

Hendrickson and Kearny said Friday the group wants to collaborate with the city on the plan.

"I hope they can see themselves as a part of the solution with us," she said.

Longview City Manager Kurt Sacha said Friday if the City Council heard enough complaints about the location or had enough concerns, it could reject the proposed temporary shelter, Sacha said.

However, the city is open to collaborating with groups that want to open a shelter by working on a good neighbor agreement and ensuring that the facility satisfies the needs of the shelter and the community, he said.

Hendrickson said the group plans to apply for the permit for

the shelter and is working on the good neighbor agreement to submit to the city.

The council budgeted \$9,000 in 2019 and 2020 for a severe weather shelter, so the group could apply for those funds, Sacha said.

Kearny said the ministerial association may apply for those funds down the road depending on what donations they receive.

The ministerial association will hold a community meeting regarding the proposed shelter at 7 p.m. on Oct. 7 at First Christian Church.