

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE	Contagious Christians
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SERIES	
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KEY SCRIPTURE	Various
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SYNOPSIS	We want people to catch what we've got when it comes to faith. So, we need to be Contagious Christians.
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HIGHLIGHTS	
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☞ Contagious Christians

We can invite people to “come and see” because Jesus can meet their need for something to believe in. We can invite people to “come and be” because Jesus can meet their need for something to become. We can invite people to “come with me” because Jesus can meet their need for a place to belong.

Begin now to strengthen some relationship you already have. Be intentional. Pray for them. Let your love show. Go where you’ve never gone before... next door. If you want people to catch what you have, you’ve got to be a contagious Christian. Jesus wants the Kingdom to expand; we need **to spread the Good News**. To be contagious, first...

☞ Do not Immunize

In medicine, vaccines are often used to immunize against sickness. The word vaccine actually comes from the Latin, meaning “from cows.” In 1788, the scientist Edward Jenner inoculated a healthy, 8-year-old boy with cowpox — a disease caused by a virus that closely resembles smallpox. Although rare today, cowpox was widespread in 18th-century Europe, where it was common knowledge that milkmaids who had been infected with cowpox — which is generally mild — were then immune to the far deadlier disease, smallpox. Jenner's experiment was a success. His patient failed to contract smallpox, even when deliberately exposed. By 1800, cowpox vaccinations were commonplace.

Today, it’s common to get a flu vaccine in the fall to prevent getting the worst of the flu each season. Given as one injection in the upper arm, the flu shot contains dead flu viruses that will **not** cause you to get the flu, but **will** cause your body to fight off infection by the live flu virus. Getting a shot of the dead virus causes you to become protected against that particular type of live flu virus if you come into contact with it. The flu vaccine reduces the average person's chances of catching the flu by up to 80% during the season.

Now, what does this have to do with evangelism and outreach? In medicine, people are immunized so that they don’t catch a potentially deadly illness. But in evangelism, we want people to catch what we’ve got, so we don’t want to immunize them against it. Remember, vaccines are made from dead viruses to immunize against live viruses.

☞ When your faith is dead, it can cause people to resist catching the living faith that we want to spread. It’s an immunization.

When people see so-called “believers” acting in a manner inconsistent with the Bible, they’ll view it as fake or dead. And, their response will be to resist that. People hate hypocrisy, especially in the Church. People intuitively know that faith should shape the way you live. When it doesn’t, they see right through it and it is a “turn-off!” Giving a dead faith to someone is like immunization. They’ll become resistant to the real stuff.

James 2:17 says, “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”



If you're a believer it should be readily apparent to people around you because of your actions. Do your actions prove that you have a living faith?

Dead faith acts like a vaccine to immunize people against Christianity. If you want to spread the Good News, you can't immunize people with a dead faith.

☞ **Your walk with Christ has to be real.** It has to affect all of your life. When it does, **then you become contagious**, and people will want what you have. So, don't immunize.

☞ **Do Infect**

A dead faith will immunize people against Christianity. But, a live faith has the potential to completely infect them.

So, how can we infect others with Christianity?

☞ **Be thoroughly infected yourself.**

3 John 3-4 talks about being faithful and continuing to walk in the truth.

2 Timothy 1:14 reminds us to guard the good deposit entrusted to us by the Holy Spirit

2 Timothy 3:14 tells us to continue in what we have learned and become convinced of

*Mother Teresa once was asked, "How do you measure the success of your work?" She looked puzzled for a moment and then replied, "I don't remember that the Lord ever spoke of success. He spoke only of **faithfulness** in **love**. This is the only success that really counts."*

Be thoroughly infected with faith. Stay true, loyal, and devoted to the Lord. Love God and others.

☞ Let people see **Jesus in you.**

--D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones... The glory of the gospel is that when the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it.

When you're thoroughly infected with Christ, it affects all of your life, and Christlikeness is an attractive quality. Be completely infected.

☞ **Be in close and open contact.**

In Mark 2:16-17 Jesus was criticized because he ate with the "sinners." But he said they were the ones who needed him the most. Now, he didn't just hang out with them to be "cool" and "relevant." He was there to rub off on them and transform their lives. He was in close contact.

Illustration... when our kids were young, Naomi wanted them to get the chicken pox before they were very old, knowing it can be much more severe if they got it later in life. So, when someone we knew had chicken pox, she purposely exposed our kids to it. They would have a play-date



with friends who already had the chicken pox. And, they caught it, because they were in close and open contact.

Matthew 28:19 tells us to go and make disciples. If you want people to catch the Good News, you've got to **go where they are**. And, when you spend time with pre-Christians, you must remember to let them see Jesus in you. Jesus spent time with "sinners" but didn't become one of them. Rather, he influenced them to become his followers.

1 Peter 2:12

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Last week I told about an African girl who said their method of evangelism was to simply live and work among the people and when they saw what Christians were like, they would want to be Christians too. Be in in open and close contact.

☞ Share your germs. (What infected you?)

Acts 5:42

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

*--Don McKenzie... I recall one night very late in the evening when I was called to the hospital. As I was walking down the semi-dark hall, with no people around, a man suddenly ran out of one of the patient rooms. He ran up to me--I had never seen him before--and he said to me with joy in his face, "She's going to make it. She's better. She is going to make it," and then he made his way on down the hall. I have not seen the man since. I do not know who he was talking about. I assume it was someone very near and dear to him, and he had just received good news. He could not wait to share it. He did not even have to know the person with whom he shared it; it just flowed from him because he had received good news, and **good news is to be shared**.*

--Billy Sunday... If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere.

Acts 8:4

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Colossians 4:4-6

☞ ...make the most of every opportunity... Let your conversation be always full of grace...

Remember the healed blind man from John 9:25... He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" Just tell your story. **How has Jesus changed your life?**



There is a legend that recounts the return of Jesus to glory after His time on earth. Even in heaven He bore the marks of His earthly pilgrimage with its cruel cross and shameful death. The angel Gabriel approached Him and said, "Master, you must have suffered terribly for men down there." He replied that he did. Gabriel continued: "And do they know and appreciate how much you loved them and what you did for them?" Jesus replied, "Oh, no! Not yet. Right now, only a handful of people in Palestine know." But Gabriel was perplexed. He asked, "Then what have you done to let everyone know about your love for them?" Jesus said, "I've asked Peter, James, John, and a few more friends to tell others about me. Those who are told, in turn, will tell others about me. And my story will be spread to the farthest reaches of the globe. Ultimately, all of mankind will have heard about my life and what I have done."

Gabriel frowned and looked rather skeptical. He knew what poor stuff men were made of. He said, "Yes, but what if Peter and James and John grow weary? What if the people who come after them forget? What if way down in the twentieth-century people just don't tell others about you? Haven't you made any other plans?" And Jesus answered, "I haven't made any other plans. I'm counting on them."

☞ Jesus is counting on us to be contagious and spread the Good News.

- Ten little Christians, standing in a line, one disliked the preacher, then there were nine.
- Nine little Christians stayed up very late, one slept in on Sunday, then there were eight.
- Eight little Christians on their way to heaven, one took his own road, then there were seven.
- Seven little Christians chirping like chicks, one disliked the song leader, then there were six.
- Six little Christians seemed very much alive, but one lost his interest, then there were five.
- Five little Christians pulling for heaven's shore, but one stopped to nap, then there were four.
- Four little Christians, busy as a bee, one got her feelings hurt, then there were three.
- Three little Christians knew not what to do, one couldn't forgive another, then there were two.
- Two little Christians, our rhyme is near done, argued over petty stuff, then there was only one.
- One little Christian, can't do much, 'tis true; took a friend to Bible study, then there were two.
- Two earnest Christians, each gained one more, that doubled the number, then there were four.
- Four sincere Christians worked early & worked late, each added another, then there were eight.
- Eight splendid Christians, if they doubled as before, in just a few short weeks, we'd have 1,024.

☞ Don't immunize. Let Jesus live fully in you. Let him shine.

☞ Do infect. Let the joy of your salvation show. Reach out to pre-Christians. Tell them your story. Be contagious!