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‘I Stand by the Door’

Deacon Bob Coderre

Reading

John 10 7-9: “So, Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.”

Philemon 1:6 “and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.”

I Stand by the Door

by Sam Shoemaker

I stand by the door.
 I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out.
 The door is the most important door in the world -
 It is the door through which men walk when they find God.
 There is no use my going way inside and staying there,
 When so many are still outside and they, as much as I,
 Crave to know where the door is.
 And all that so many ever find
 Is only the wall where the door ought to be.

They creep along the wall like blind men,
 With outstretched, groping hands,
 Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door,
 Yet they never find it...
 So I stand by the door.

As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,
Near enough to God to hear Him and know He is there,
But not so far from men as not to hear them,
And remember they are there too.

Where? Outside the door -
Thousands of them. Millions of them.
But - more important for me -
One of them, two of them, ten of them.
Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.
So I shall stand by the door and wait
For those who seek it.

“I had rather be a door-keeper...”
So I stand by the door.

Introduction: Two Kinds of People
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1) Good morning church!

It is such a blessing and honor to be here today filling in for my friend and Pastor.

This poem that Anne quoted from today summarizes for me what I see as the *poterion* that God has called me to drink.

It has been my life’s primary purpose for over the past 30 years and will continue to be until the Lord takes me home!

2) Many of you may not be familiar with the story of this remarkable man, Sam Shoemaker.

Pastor Sam was born in 1893 and died in 1963.

He was an Episcopal priest at Calvary Church in New York City.

He is credited with being a spiritual mentor to Bill Wilson who was one of the founders of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, an organization I have been a proud member of for over 36 years.

Sam was a great preacher and had a radio ministry with a national audience.

He led thousands of souls to Christ!

When Billy Graham refers to you as, “a giant among men” you know you are having an impact for the Kingdom of God.

- 3) We have discussed many times from this pulpit that there are generally two kinds of people in this world.

Those who know God and those who don't. They may think they know God but if truth be told they really only know about God.

Same can be said for Jesus, there are scores and scores of people who profess Jesus as Lord but do not even know him.

This is not a new phenomenon.

It's been like this for thousands of years.

There are also those who don't know Him, but think they do.

Remember Jesus' words in **Matthew 7**?

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness’” (**Matthew 7:21-23**).

I grew up in Pawtucket and my mom and dad raised me and my brother and sister to get involved in public service.

There was a time prior to 1984 that no one in Pawtucket knew who the Coderre's were.

My dad had an uncle who was a boxer, Eddie Coderre, who once fought Joe Louis and that was our claim to fame.

As my parents got more involved in local and state politics, we began to know a lot more people.

But just because you know someone's name or their occupation it doesn't necessarily mean you "know" them.

One of the downsides to being "known" if you will is that people think they know you but have never even had conversation with you.

A few years back I was at a local establishment with one of my close friends and a guy came in and struck up a conversation with my friend Mark.

I didn't know the guy but they started talking about local politics and my friend said to the other guy who do you know in Pawtucket politics?

The guy says to my friend the only guy I know really well is Bob Coderre. Mark says to the guy, "how do you know Bob?"

He says we grew up together and he's known me for years.

Mark gives me a look like do you know this guy and I shrug my shoulders.

So, Mark says well Bob is sitting right here if you'd like to say Hi.

Clearly the guy didn't know me but was going around telling people that he did.

- 4) Jesus spoke about this in **Matthew 13** after the Jewish leaders rejected Him as Messiah and then Blasphemed the Holy Spirit by saying that He was doing signs and miracles b the power of Satan.

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So, when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So, the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the

harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”

In this parable, the field that Jesus is speaking of is the world.

In this world there are saved sinners and there are unsaved sinners growing in the “field”.

In the early stages of growth, they kind of look alike but they are not the same.

By the time of the harvest, it is easy for the reapers to tell the difference between the two.

- 5) I have a lot of experience with this in my own personal journey of recovery from substance abuse.

I have met multitudes of people in the past 37 years who profess to be sober and work a program of recovery.

And one of the great spiritual principles of AA that you learn early on is to take your own inventory.

We don’t worry about what the other guy or gal is doing.

Human beings have an innate ability to take the focus off of their life and what God has called them to do and to concern themselves with other people’s lives and actions.

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”

But I will tell you this from my own experience that you can’t fake spiritual growth over time.

The truth of our choices and our lives will be revealed. You reap what you sow. You can mask the sowing for a short time but eventually your thoughts, decisions and actions bear fruit.

The Bill Fay Way

1) Can a person really know God? YES!

I have a lot of experience with this in my own personal journey of recovery from substance abuse.

Psalm 46:10: “Be still and *know* that I am God”

There was a time in my life that I really didn’t know God, I had a Catholic upbringing and for a long time I thought I had to be good to please God.

I had never heard, and no one ever told me Hebrews 11:6 “that without faith it is impossible to please God”.

If you don’t know God, how can you ever tell others about Him?

Then one day I met Sue Machado and she knew God and she shared her faith with me, and I got saved!

I don’t know about you, but when I got saved, I couldn’t shut up about telling people about Jesus and warning anyone who would listen about Hell and begging people to receive Jesus as their Savior.

Now I don’t want to discourage any new believers from sharing the gospel, but I was downright confrontational and didn’t have a lot of success drawing people to the Lord.

I’ve tried lots of ways to bring people to Jesus.

Then I met a man named Bill Fay. He was an evangelist from Colorado who had an amazing conversion story. He was a modern-day Solomon who tried to fill that God sized whole in his heart with everything the world says will make you successful and happy.

But he wasn’t. Then someone shared their faith with him, and he got saved. I would strongly recommend you check him out and watch his video detailing his conversion.

He taught me *How to Share My Faith Without an Argument*.

It was just what I needed to win souls.

Bill taught me to ask some prodding questions to see if The Holy Spirit is working and if they are seeking a relationship with God and then ask permission to share your faith.

For many years this has been my approach to soul winning. I call it 'Spirit-led evangelism.'

2) Describe the Bill Fay Way: *How to Share Your Faith Without an Argument*.¹

- a) Do you have kind of spiritual beliefs?
- b) To you, who is Jesus?
- c) Do you think there is a heaven and a hell
- d) If you died right now, where would you go?
- e) If what you believed were not true, would you want to know it?

We passed out a flyer today so I would like you all to follow along and feel free to take some notes if any of this resonated with you.

Also, there is a link in my notes if you would like a copy just give your email to Anne and she can send you a copy.

¹ You can access the booklet free of charge here: https://gracepointvestal.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/how-can-i-share-my-faith-without-an-argument_5.pdf

Tools for Evangelism

Sharing Your Faith Without an Argument



Adapted from "Share Jesus without Fear" by William Fay

The key in this approach to sharing the gospel is to use your Bible and some simple questions. Questions are the key to focusing a person's attention where you want it to go.

The Approach

Ask the following questions in order. Do not refute or challenge their answers. Ask them in sequence and listen attentively to what responses are offered?

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
2. To you, who is Jesus?
3. Do you think there is a heaven and hell?
4. If you died right now, where would you go?
5. If what you believed were not true, would you want to know it?

The intent of the last question is to open the path to use the Bible to answer the questions. The point of the approach questions is to open a path to the Bible. So don't argue about any of the answers. Simply accept the responses and ask if they would like to see what the Bible has to say.

The Bible

Prior to sharing and asking questions, take a few minutes and mark the progression of verses in your Bible. At the bottom of the first scripture page, write the next scripture that you will use. In that way, you'll have a built in direction system from one verse to the next.

Share the verses in the following order. After each verse ask the question, "What does this say to you?". If they do not respond correctly, say "read it again". Have them reread the verse until they correctly state what the verse is saying. Do not correct or offer your opinions. Simply have them read the verse and tell you what it says.

1. Romans 3:23 (Question: What does this say to you?)
2. Romans 6:23 (Question: What does this say to you?)
3. John 3:3 (Question: Why did Jesus come to die?) [This is a different question but very important]
4. John 14:6 (Question: What does this say to you?)
5. Romans 10:9-10 (Question: What does this say to you?)
6. Revelation 3:20 (Question: What does this say to you?)

The Close

After reading scripture and answering the questions associated with the verses, ask the following questions:

1. Are you a sinner?
2. Do you want forgiveness of sins?
3. Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?
4. Are you willing to surrender yourself to Jesus Christ?
5. Are you ready to invite Jesus into your heart and into your life?

The Prayer

Father, thank You for the free gift of eternal life. I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I am sorry for my past sins, and ask you to forgive me.

Jesus, I believe you died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead. I now open the door of my heart and invite you to come into my life. I realize there is nothing I can do to earn my salvation. I place my complete trust in You alone for eternal life. I choose to follow you as my Lord. Please make me the person You want me to be.

When I am feeling led by the Spirit to share my faith with someone the first question I ask is, “Do you have any spiritual beliefs?”

Now I want you to notice something important. I do not ask them, “Do you believe in God?”

Most unbelievers if you ask them that question will tell you, “Sure” or “it’s none of your business!”.

But by asking if they have any spiritual beliefs most people will go on and on about what their opinion is of spiritual things.

It’s very important not to interrupt or try to correct them.

We do not want to argue.

You are simply listening and attempting to ascertain if this person is open to a conversation.

Once they tell you all about their spiritual beliefs, you ask them a second question.

“To you, who is Jesus?”

Now with this question you may get lots of answers; “He’s the Son of God, the 2nd Person of the Trinity etc...”

While all these may be theologically correct, they do not imply a personal relationship with the Lord.

Now let’s say I run into Jeff Jaquith at the supermarket and I say, “Jeff. to you who is Jesus?” and he says, “My Savior!” then I can give him a hug and say God bless you and be on my way.

The third question is an easy one and most people have little trouble with this one because it is an intellectual question. “Do you think there is a heaven and hell?”

Most people believe there is a heaven but not everyone believes there is a hell or they will say something like, “I feel like I’m living in hell”.

I immediately ask question number 4, “If you died right now, where would you go?”

Again, we are just listening to the responses, not arguing or even commenting on them.

My experience tells me that when you ask this question and there is a pause or they take it seriously then God is usually working in them.

The final question I ask is most important because I want to ask their permission to share my faith.

So, I say, “If what you believed were not true, would you want to know it?”

Now at this point in the discussion it is very important to pause and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work.

There are only 2 answers to the question. Yes or No?

If they say No, then I thank them for their time and let them know if they ever change their mind then please let me know.

You must be willing to walk away.

Most people if they are honest and if they are truly seeking a relationship with God will say Yes.

I call this Spirit Led Evangelism.

The Holy Spirit of God knows what He is doing and my job is to work with Him not against Him.

So, if they give me permission to share my faith, I pull out my trusty pocket Bible.

Bill Fay taught me that if I break out my big study Bible it may scare away an unbeliever, so I use what he calls his derringer.

- 1) Romans 3:23: What does this say to you?
- 2) Romans 6:23: What does this verse say to you?

- 3) John 3:3: Why did Jesus come to die?
- 4) John 14:6: What does this verse say to you?
- 5) Romans 10:9-10: What does this verse say to you?
- 6) Revelation 3:10: What does this verse say to you?

The Close:

- 1) Are you a sinner?
- 2) Do you want forgiveness of your sins?
- 3) Do you believe that Jesus dies on the cross for you and rose again?
- 4) Are you willing to surrender yourself to Jesus Christ?
- 5) Are you ready to invite Jesus into your heart and into your life?

Conclusion: The Importance of the One Who Brings the Gospel
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- 1) Let me leave you with a challenge this morning to be on mission with the Lord.

In God's wisdom, He has made believers a large part of bringing the lost into His Kingdom – moving them from outside the door to inside the family of God.

The Lord needs someone to stand in the doorway and shepherd the people outside inside.

Romans 10:14-15: “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Spiritual discernment is helpful when being a door keeper. Don't go planting seeds in a parking lot.

We have to be watching to see where God is working and then we begin to work there. Now we are working with God and not against God.

- 2) Keith Green used to say, “This generation of Christians is responsible for this generation of souls on earth.”

And we are! Jesus told us to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

He said in another place: “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” ... ¹⁹ So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere ...” (**Mark 16:14, 19-20a**).

God has chosen to use US to bring the Gospel to this generation of souls!

We have to be on task, on mission, and take this responsibly seriously – as I know many of you do.

Shoemaker’s Full Poem

I Stand by the Door

by Sam Shoemaker

I stand by the door.
I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out.
The door is the most important door in the world -
It is the door through which men walk when they find God.
There is no use my going way inside and staying there,
When so many are still outside and they, as much as I,
Crave to know where the door is.

And all that so many ever find
Is only the wall where the door ought to be.
They creep along the wall like blind men,
With outstretched, groping hands,
Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door,

Yet they never find it...
So I stand by the door.

The most tremendous thing in the world
Is for men to find that door - the door to God.
The most important thing that any man can do
Is to take hold of one of those blind, groping hands
And put it on the latch - the latch that only clicks
And opens to the man's own touch.

Men die outside the door, as starving beggars die
On cold nights in cruel cities in the dead of winter.
Die for want of what is within their grasp.
They live on the other side of it - live because they have not found it.
Nothing else matters compared to helping them find it,
And open it, and walk in, and find Him...
So I stand by the door.

Go in great saints; go all the way in -
Go way down into the cavernous cellars,
And way up into the spacious attics.
It is a vast, roomy house, this house where God is.
Go into the deepest of hidden casements,
Of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood.

Some must inhabit those inner rooms
And know the depths and heights of God,
And call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is.
Sometimes I take a deeper look in.
Sometimes venture in a little farther,
But my place seems closer to the opening... so I stand by the door.

There is another reason why I stand there.
Some people get part way in and become afraid
Lest God and the zeal of His house devour them;
For God is so very great and asks all of us.
And these people feel a cosmic claustrophobia
And want to get out. 'Let me out!' they cry.
And the people way inside only terrify them more.

Somebody must be by the door to tell them that they are spoiled.
For the old life, they have seen too much:
One taste of God and nothing but God will do any more.

Somebody must be watching for the frightened
Who seek to sneak out just where they came in,
To tell them how much better it is inside.

The people too far in do not see how near these are
To leaving - preoccupied with the wonder of it all.
Somebody must watch for those who have entered the door
But would like to run away. So for them too, I stand by the door.

I admire the people who go way in.
But I wish they would not forget how it was
Before they got in. Then they would be able to help
The people who have not yet even found the door.
Or the people who want to run away again from God.
You can go in too deeply and stay in too long
And forget the people outside the door.

As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,
Near enough to God to hear Him and know He is there,
But not so far from men as not to hear them,
And remember they are there too.

Where? Outside the door -
Thousands of them. Millions of them.
But - more important for me -
One of them, two of them, ten of them.
Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.
So I shall stand by the door and wait
For those who seek it.

“I had rather be a door-keeper...”
So I stand by the door
(**Psalm 84:10**).