

Teaching for Keeps

Kids don't get to do many of the things I took for granted, and maybe even did not appreciate when I was a kid. Every boy had a pocket knife. We took them to school to whittle, or play Mumbly Peg, or peel an apple. Today they'd call the Swat Team and start shooting if you were found with one at school.

I doubt little girls play Jacks or jump rope the way girls once did; talking some strong boys to throw for them so they could jump Double-Dutch or Hot Peppers. All the fun playground equipment has been outlawed by Lawyers and committees made up of Soccer Moms.

Little boys don't take marbles to school anymore. They may still say someone has "lost all his marbles", but only the old guys like me understand why we say that. Boy's don't carry around a bag of marbles in one of Grandpa's empty tobacco pouches. No Cat's Eyes, no Agates, no Commons. They don't have a "Steely" or an "Aggie", or some other special shooter marble.

Perhaps most important is that they have never played for "Keeps."

Playing for Keeps is what we called a game where everyone playing had to put all his pouch of marbles in the circle and each player took turns shooting. Every time a shooter hit a marble, he took it and kept it. You didn't get it back when the game ended. If you were unwise enough to put marbles in the circle that were the best and most desirable, all the other players would go after your's first. When all your marbles were gone; that's when you "lost all your marbles." It means you lost everything and were out of the game.

Playing for Keeps taught me that I could lose everything; I could permanently lose that which I held precious. Life is like that you know. People risk the most precious things in life every day. They act like they don't know that others are Playing for Keeps. When you lose, they keep what was yours. People lose everything they hold precious and someone loses every day.

When you Play for Keeps, you know the game is serious. You have to be serious, pay attention, try your very best, never be careless or negligent.

And so it is when we nurture our young people and new Christians. When we teach them, we are Playing for Keeps. The Devil and the things of this Carnal World and going after them so they can keep them.

Playing for Keeps means the Devil is putting his best marbles in the game to get them to put in their best. He doesn't care if the victim takes some his marbles. He and his allies will gang up until the player has lost all his marbles. When he does, the Devil has easy pickings to take him too.

But we are Playing for Keeps too!

We do it the way Jesus did. When we teach the young and the new in Christ, we are Teaching for Keeps. We are teaching to help them keep their Souls. It means we have to be serious about what we do. Those young and young in Christ don't realize the danger they are in.

Teaching is not showing others how much we know.

Teaching is causing a Learner to Learn –

Teaching is building relationships with those we teach that will last a lifetime.

It's not important that you taught someone to be able recite the books of the Bible. It is important that you spent time with them.

I'm not saying that learning Bible facts is un-important.

I am saying that when a teacher spends time with his students, the bond that grows between them is what is most important.

That young person, that new life in Christ, is going to grow and find themselves in need of someone to talk to.

That young person needs someone who they know cares for them to hold them accountable. When their peers lure them to do something they know is wrong. They need to be thinking about how someone who cares about them would feel if they did it.

They will need someone to call for help.

They will need someone to pick them up when they fall down.

You can't do that if you don't have a relationship built with them.

Jesus was above all a Teacher.

Jesus did sometimes preach – Herald – “the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”
But he was known as, and called himself “Shepherd” and “Teacher”.

John 13:13

¹³“You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.

To be a Christian – to be like him – we should be teachers too.
Christ’s Church depends on teachers.

Ephesians 4:11 - 13

¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

This is the only place in the NT where this word is translated “pastor”, everywhere else it is translated “shepherd.”

The phrase ‘pastors and teachers’ is speaking of one group of people. They show love by teaching and it builds the relationship needed to shepherd.

Consider the importance Jesus placed on shepherding:

John 21:15 - 17

¹⁵So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said* to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” He said* to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said* to him, “Tend My lambs.”

¹⁶He said* to him again a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” He said* to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said* to him, “Shepherd My sheep.”

¹⁷He said* to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said* to him, “Tend My sheep.

We usually get side-tracked into a discussion of the words used for ‘love’ in this passage.

The greater message is that Jesus was telling Peter that if one really loves Jesus, as most of us claim to do, then a lover of Jesus will love and care for the ones who Jesus loves and cares for.

Teaching enables Shepherding.

Jesus spent three years with his Apostles. He devoted his time to them. There are no examples in the Gospels where he spent time drilling them and having them recite back some teaching he wanted them to memorize. He sometimes gave them exercises to do, but we don't read of homework and practice problems like Worldly teachers assign.

He taught them mainly by being with them.

They learned by watching what he did, asking questions, trying and failing.

When Jesus went to the cross, they did not show much promise.

One betrayed him, the rest ran away, only one came back and stayed with him. Another came back to see what happened, but when recognized he denied Jesus.

Measured by Worldly standards, Jesus failed as a teacher with the Apostles, but you all know the rest of the story.

Sometimes teachers feel like their students are not getting it any more than the Apostles seemed to.

It may seem like our teaching is not having it's intended effect, but the day of trial will reveal what was learned.

It is important that we teach while we can.

Referring back to Ephesians 4:11-13;

Those who Jesus made able to do so should shepherd and teach.

Teaching will cause us to have an impact on the lives of those we teach.

- Imparting Knowledge & Learning Skills -important but secondary

- Building lifelong relationships with the Learners

- Modeling lifelong habits -

 - Regular Bible School attendance,

 - Study,

 - Reliance on the Scriptures

 - Serving Others

This is Teaching for Keeps. When that young person finds themselves in jeopardy, they will not have time and opportunity to build a relationship with someone who can help them. The relationship you can build now is necessary to shepherd them later.

There is a myth that sometimes we tell ourselves that we can't teach because we lack knowledge.

More important than knowledge is Love and Caring for the Learners you Teach. This was Jesus' motivation - listen to this

Mark 6:34

³⁴When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

Jesus' love and compassion for the people resulted in action, and that action was to teach.

Compassion is Love and Caring:

If you have that, then you will **learn** what you need to know so you can help others to learn.

Learners learn more about learning by watching their Teacher learning than they do by what the Teacher says to them about it.

They see the Teacher go to the best source, in this case, the Bible, to find out what is right.

They see you investing your time to learn what is right.

They see you spending your time for them.

I once held a workshop for Teachers. One of our exercises was to make up two lists; one of Bad Teachers, and one of Good ones. People added to the list at random, and when we had it all, we merged similar items then each person ranked them in order of importance.

We put all our ranks together and here is what we found.

Traits of a Bad Teacher

#1 Belittling Learners.

#2 There is only one Right Answer – and I know it!

#3 Being Unprepared to Teach.

The thing that most of the traits of a bad teacher had in common were forms of Arrogance of Self and Contempt for the Learners.

Traits of a Good Teacher

- #1 Respect for the Learners.
- #2 (tie) Making the Learners feel Loved and Cared for.
- #2 (tie) Sacrificing their time for the Learners.
- #3 Sharing their Passion for the Subject.

The thing in common here is caring for the Learner.

Long ago, we had written teaching goals for what our Cradle Roll class

Teachers taught 1 & 2 year olds:

God loves you.

I love you too.

Bible School is where you belong.

We may teach other things too, but in the end, these should be goals of every teacher of every class.

When students know that their teachers share God's love and care for them and respond by being regular Bible School students, then imparting knowledge becomes possible.

Teaching is not the only way to serve God, but it is an important way

Every person here today can help to teach others.

Some of you are teaching already. God bless you!

Some are supporting the Bible School in other ways

You can help your Teacher:

Come to Bible School - regular attendance - critical mass

Be on time.

Bring others to Bible School - especially children - visitors

Come prepared - study.

Offer to help in other ways. (help the teacher set up for class, or ask for an assignment that you can share with the class.)

Participate

not to show others how much you know,

but class members who study can stimulate discussion.

Or it can be as simple as raising you hand and saying

"I didn't understand what you just said."

Come with an open heart - Learn from others.

It even helps your teacher if you say something, anything, to get others talking and participating too.

Teach by your actions, they speak louder than words.

If you are able to teach – but you are not – you should ask yourself “why not?”

You should do something about the answer you give.

Sometimes people are committed to serve in some other way that prevents them from having time to prepare and teach.

Sometimes infirmity or other problems overwhelm us.

If these are not the case, there are two reasons that someone might not be able to teach in our Bible School.

1st There may be something in you that prevents you from serving. Most of the time such a problem also separates you from God and his family. Not teaching is just a symptom of the problem.

It could be an obvious outward sin that has overcome you.

Or it could be something less obvious to others.

It could be something as simple as being sore at someone else in the congregation.

If this is you, you need to do something about it.

Perhaps you should turn to someone with whom you have a relationship to help you find your way.

Maybe you need to call on the Elders and ask for help.

Please let them help. Please let us help.

2nd You may not be a Christian yourself.

You can't teach what you don't know.

You can't be a model for what you are not.

Jesus Christ left the glory of heaven to live as a man and show you and I how to serve God by doing his will.

Jesus submitted to a shameful death on the Cross to take on the sin that separated you and I from God.

In so doing he made it possible for you and I to be reconciled to God.

To accept his sacrifice, one must believe and confess that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of our sins, and be buried in the likeness of his death in Baptism.

If you have not done this, won't you come as the church sings and stands ready to help you be reconciled to God.

Teach
To cause learning and understanding

John 13:13

¹³“You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.

John 10:11 - 16

¹¹“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

¹²“He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*.

¹³“*He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.*

¹⁴“I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,

¹⁵even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

¹⁶“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd.

Mark 6:34

³⁴When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

Ephesians 4:11 - 13

¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Matthew 9:36 - 38

³⁶Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

³⁷Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

³⁸“Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

John 21:15 - 17

¹⁵So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said* to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” He said* to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said* to him, “Tend My lambs.”

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1Peter 5:1-6 ties Elders, shepherding, and humility together.
Acts 20:28-29 ties Elders shepherding and guarding together

It is not a spectator sport.

Preach

Evangelize – to tell good news
Herald – to proclaim or announce
To tell or tell thoroughly

Exhort

To call to join

Edify

To build up

Admonish

Put into or call to mind

Matthew 11:1

¹When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach [G1321](#) and preach [G2784](#) in their cities.

G1321 διδάσκω didaskō; a redupl. caus. form of δάω daō (*to learn*);

to teach:—instructed (2), preaches (1), taught (13), teach (33), teaches (5), teaching (43).

a prolonged (causative) form of a primary verb dao (to learn)

G2784 κηρύσσω kērussō; of unc. or.; *to be a herald, proclaim*

G2784

κηρύσσω

kērussō; of unc. or.; *to be a herald, proclaim*

Matthew 28:18 - 20

¹⁸And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

¹⁹“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Luke 20:1

¹On one of the days while He was teaching [G1321](#) the people in the temple and preaching [G2097](#) the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted *Him*,

G2097 εὐαγγελίζω euaggelizō; from [G2095](#) and [G32a](#); to announce good news:—bring...good news

Matthew 7:7

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Sam Giddings four kinds of Christians:

Retired

Tiresome

Tired

Tireless