

# *Anyone Can Witness*

## Matthew 9:35-10:8

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1 [Jesus] called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions:

"Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 10:1-8 (NIV)

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### **Children's Sermon: "Exercise Bike" or "Garage Sale"**

Take several garage sale items. Examine each of them and ask, "Who would like this?" "What about this?" How about you? No?

"Is there someone who would like to buy this?" Probably there is. But who?

The answer is "anybody!" Anybody might like this. But what's the only way we can find out? Well let me show you.

(Have a child take the item to a person in the congregation and ask, "Would you like this?" Have the child repeat it several times and come back and report on their progress. This can also be done with several others, too)

Well, did you find someone to buy the garage sale item? Whatever their response, when someone says, "No" what do you do? You either keep asking them...or you tell others...or both, right?

But, the one thing we have to do is this. We have to ask people.

What do I have here (show a Bible or Cross)? Do you think there's someone that needs a Bible or a cross? Do you think there are people who need and want Jesus? Of course there are! How do get somebody—anybody—to know about Jesus?

We simply have to ask them. That's called "witnessing." Sometimes adults think that it's hard. But we know the truth. It's simple. All we need to do is to ask if someone would like Jesus in their life. Let's try it now!

(Have a child take the cross or Bible to a person in the congregation and ask, “Would you like Jesus?” Have the child repeat it several times and come back and report on their progress. This can also be done with several others, too)

That wasn’t hard, was it. In fact, wasn’t it fun? Just think—you told someone the best thing that they could ever know. You gave them the best thing they could ever have: Jesus.

What’s the most important thing about Jesus? He loves us...He loves anybody...and loves everybody...and He even loves you and me.

Because He loves us so much, let’s tell anybody we can, OK!

**Sermon:**

Recent studies show that when children want money from their parents, the average parent is asked *nine* times for money before they say “yes.” And, as we parents know, for some children, nine times isn’t enough. For others, it’s more than enough.

Sometimes it takes time to get a message through. Sometimes things have to be repeated over and over and over again—over weeks, months and even years—before the message gets through. Advertisers say it takes 14 times for people to become aware of their product. And who knows how many more times it takes for people to act on the awareness of that product.

For example, I have in my hand a thing I’ll call a “what-ya-ma-call-it” (Note: Show a “What-ya-ma-call-it,” simply some sort of novelty item that most have probably never seen. Display it, demonstrate it, etc). Have you ever seen it? What do you think of it? Have any of you heard of it? What does it do? Perhaps most of you don’t know what it does.

Well, I know almost all of you have heard of the “What-ya-ma-call-it.” They’re all over the place. Millions and millions of people throughout the world have used the “What-ya-ma-call-it.”

How do we know about it? Because we’ve heard about it countless numbers of times. Now, that we’re familiar with the name, we go to the next question. What does a “What-ya-ma-call-it” do? Why do I need it? How will a “What-ya-ma-call-it” change my life?

And now the last , and most important question.

- ?? Do *I* want to change my life? Or, we can ask it another way.
- ?? Do I *want* to change my life? Or, perhaps the question is,
- ?? Do I want to *change* my life? And we can ask it like this,
- ?? Do I want to change *my* life?

Yes, whether you decide to buy and use the “What-ya-ma-call-it” will depend on a simple “yes” or “no” answer to this question: Do you...or don't you...want it?

It's probably not all that important whether you want a “What-ya-ma-call-it” or not. Frankly, I've got enough “what-ya-ma-call-its” in my life. In fact, some of them I've already brought to our church garage sale.

But there it is important—vitaly important—to want Jesus. He's our Savior. He's our Lord. He's our comfort, Shepherd, Redeemer and friend. Without Him, well, life wouldn't be worth living.

*Anybody* knows that! Or do they?

That's why Jesus, in our Gospel lesson, chose twelve disciples. We see their names indicated by Matthew. Well-known discples like Peter, Andrew, James, John...and not so well known ones like Bartholomew and Thaddeus. Anyone could share Jesus with others...that's why Jesus chose...anyones!

But Jesus gave these “anyones” two special things.

*First*, Jesus gave them authority. Matthew wrote,

“He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.” (Matthew 10:1)

Wow! When Jesus told His disciples to tell about Him, He gave them authority!!! Do you think He gives authority to anyone who shares Jesus with others today? Of course! Do you think He'll give it to you? Definitely!!!

*Second*, Jesus gave them instructions.

"6 Go...to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 10:6-8 (NIV)

“Go to the lost sheep,” Jesus said. Find the ones who are hurting. Find the ones who need healing. Find the ones who need Jesus. Anyone can do it...so go!

There's lots of people who have heard of “What-ya-ma-call-its.” There's also lots of people who have heard the name “Jesus.” But, like the “What-ya-ma-call-it” they don't really *know* what Jesus does and who He really is.

If they don't know Him, how can they have a relationship with Jesus? How can they have Jesus in their lives? How can they walk with Him...and know He walks with them...every single day?

That's what Jesus wanted His disciples to do. That's what He wants you and I to do also.

Who can tell them? *Anybody!* Anybody that's a Christian that is. That's what Jesus meant when He said, "Freely you have received, freely give." It's because we've received Jesus' love so freely and wonderfully that Jesus calls us to freely give that same wonderful love of Jesus to anyone...and everyone!

Hey, could that be you? Have you ever thought that maybe *you're* the anybody that God wants to tell others about Jesus? Have you "freely received?" Of course! Now the question is, "Are you ready to 'freely give'?"

It seems to me that telling others about Jesus is a lot like selling "What-ya-ma-call-its."  
*First*, you may have to tell someone nine...or more times about Jesus just to get them thinking about Jesus.

*Second*, you have to show how Jesus works in our lives. How do we do that? Simply by living the Christian life. That's a challenge for us, isn't it.

*Anyone* can say they love Jesus. *Anyone* can say, "Jesus loves me." *Anyone* can talk the talk. But, if you really want anyone to know Jesus, you have to show how your life is different *because* of Jesus.

(Holding the "What-ya-ma-call-it"). You know, my life is so much different now since I've had this "What-ya-ma-call-it." Before I had it, my life was just like anybody else's. But now, I have a life like I never imagined. (Give details).

I wonder. Can I say the same thing about having Jesus? Can *you*?

I guess that brings us to the last—and most important—question.

?? Do *you and I* really want to change others' lives?

?? Do you really *want* to change others' lives? Or, asked another way,

?? Do you really want to *change* others' lives? And, last of all,

?? Do you really want to change *others'* lives?

If so, we need to ask a more basic, personal and penetrating question: Do *you want* to *change your* life? No matter how you ask it, the question is still the same. Do you...or don't you?

It's *that* simple.

And when we've answered this simple question correctly, we're ready to help others – *anyone*—answer that question, too.

This is a challenge for *anyone*, isn't it! It's a challenge not just to "talk the talk" but to "walk the walk."

Several years ago I saw a book entitled, “*Who Are You When Nobody’s Watching?*”

Who are *you* when nobody’s watching?

That’s the hard part, isn’t it. Getting honest with *ourselves*. Because until we do, Jesus is nothing to us...or anyone else. And the first step to being honest with ourselves is simply to come to the cross of Jesus and say, “Lord, I’ve messed up. I’ve messed up royally. I’ve hurt people, I’ve hurt myself, but most of all, I’ve hurt you, Lord.”

You know, I find that sometimes trying to be perfect works *against* our walk with Jesus. Sometimes the more perfect we try to be, the more we try to put up an “image” that we’re better than we are. It might fool others. It might fool ourselves. But it doesn’t fool God.

In fact, I believe that the more energy we try to maintain that image, the less energy we direct to the things that Jesus really wants us to do. What does Jesus want us to do? Well, He wants us to quit “showing off” and “playing the part.” He wants us to get honest with others...and let them help us with our weaknesses. He wants us to be honest with God. Most importantly, He wants us to be honest with ourselves.

Honesty with ourselves, others and God begins at the cross, doesn’t it. There you’ll receive the greatest “What-ya-ma-call-it” you can ever receive. And “what-do-we-call-it?” Jesus’ love and forgiveness for you, for me, for anyone.

I’d like to close with another verse of a song I introduced last week. Here it is.

Anyone can tell of Jesus.  
Tell His grace that’s from above.  
Anyone call tell of Jesus.  
Tell your friends of His great love.

Yes, anyone can tell of Jesus. Why not you? Why don’t you share Jesus with others you love...repeatedly, with conviction. And, as hymn writer Daniel March wrote in his famous hymn, “Hark the voice of Jesus crying,”

If you cannot speak like angels  
If you cannot preach like Paul.  
You can tell the love of Jesus.  
You can say, “He died for all.”

Yes, anyone can witness...even you! Amen.

Thomas F. Fischer