

Gregg's Presentation

Holly Ridge Baptist Church

October 21, 2010

What a special gathering this is this evening! I am so humbled and excited to see many friends and to meet friends of my friends. I am so blessed to have Pastor JT as a friend and partner in this ministry, and a church family for encouraging me and hosting this event. I welcome Bobby Richardson. Thank you so much for coming.

For the next 10 to 15 minutes, I will be sharing my personal testimony of the call to the ministry of discipleship. Then three of the boys will stand as trophies of God's grace. Then, four friends each will share two-minute testimonies of how the ministry of discipleship is impacting their lives. And then around 7:30, I will introduce you Bobby to share with us for as long as you would like.

A special aspect of discipling is providing people with opportunities to stand as trophies of God's grace knowing that Christ has given them surpassing value and hope that they can share with others. So, this evening we will not only hear *about* the ministry of discipleship, but we will *witness* the ministry of discipleship through these testimonies.

My testimony this evening starts at a crisis point in my life 20 years ago when God lifted me up by His grace to see a glimpse of the hope of the gospel through Christ in me rather than in my good efforts. and led me to grow in Christ. For the past 10 years, I worked part-time to allow time to train and to serve as discipleship counselor, teacher, and trainer for teenagers and adults. My heart has been drawn more and more to this ministry. This past March, the door opened for me and Joy to step into full-time vocation as missionaries with *Journey in Christ*.



I soon realized more profoundly what I have sensed for many years...that ministry is not about me doing good things for others, but ministry is all about relationships...and the life that flows through relationships.

God placed this verse on my heart: *Philippians 1:3-5* says, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your partnership...your relationship...in the gospel."

I used to believe God has to get a truth from my mind down into my heart. I am learning that God places His word (truth) on my heart first where Christ dwells. I don't fully understand this initial revelation of truth placed on my heart, but God renews my mind to this truth as I take steps of faith to live out that truth. You see, the world says "seeing is believing." God says, "believing is seeing!"

So, with this verse on my heart, I started sharing my heart to my relationships. I mailed out letters, a brochure of my testimony, made visits and calls. The seed thought for this service in April was out of a desire to simply share my new journey with as many of my friends as I could.

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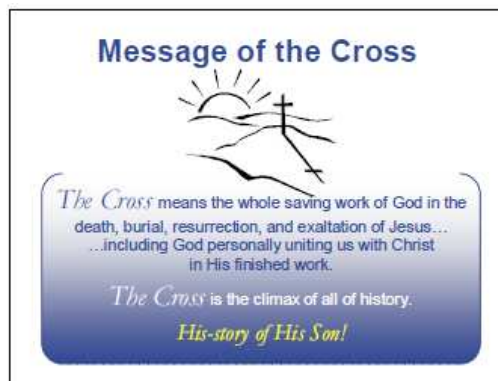
In addition, my contacting Bobby was not to get a high-profile name to draw a crowd, but was out of a relationship that started when, as a young teenager, I read of his relationship with Christ in his autobiography, and his personal encouragement to me in this ministry in recent years.



I am blessed to be part of the discipleship ministry of *Journey in Christ* based on relationships. Kellie Boggs sat in with me for several years when I counseled women and now serves as our treasurer and a minister to many people. Michael Chalmers is a veteran discipleship missionary I have known for years because we both received training from *Grace Life International* in Charlotte. Michael moved to Greenville in 2008, and soon we partnered to start *Journey in Christ* as a non-profit, non-denominational ministry. Pat Graham is our newest staff member who counsels women, after going through our counselor training program for nearly 2 years. We have others who are entering that program.



My personal discipleship ministry statement is *to provide opportunities for people to be nurtured in Christ's life by experiencing and sharing hope through the message of the cross.*



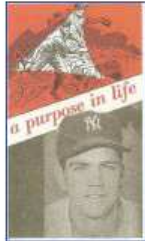
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The cross is Paul's term for the whole saving work of God in not just the death and burial, but also the resurrection and ascension of Christ, including God personally uniting us with Christ in His finished work. The climax of all history, past and future, is the cross...the finished and sufficient work of Christ. History is God's story, or His-story of His Son. God the Father has orchestrated all of history so we could be united with His dear Son! This is the foundation for ministry.

Message of the Cross




I take my stand on a Bible verse that has strengthened and challenged me because I know to claim it means a completely surrendered life...

Bobby Richardson

I remember reading for the first time in Bobby's autobiography a verse that has become a foundational truth for my life and ministry, a verse that challenges us to live a surrendered life to God, a verse that concisely summarizes the message of the cross.

Message of the Cross



Galatians 2:20

Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I know live in this body, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Message of the Cross

FORGIVENESS

NEW IDENTITY
You in Christ

NEW LIFE
Christ in you

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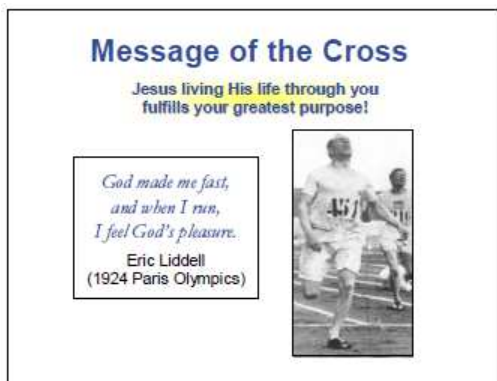
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The message of the cross is that through Christ we can have forgiveness of all of our sins. *And*, we can have a new identity, no longer to be defined by our past but by what Christ has done for us through the cross...this is what the Bible refers to as being *in Christ*. *And*, we have a new life source...this is what the Bible refers to as *Christ in you*.



Our greatest purpose in life is to glorify God in our new life. The glory of God is so profound, yet we can embrace the reality of His glory by being united with Christ. *Hebrews 1:3* proclaims that Jesus *is the* glory of God, the very outshining of the Person of God! So, our greatest purpose of life is simply to live out our relationship with Jesus, who is the glory of God, as He genuinely shines through each of our unique personalities.



A scene from the movie *Chariots of Fire* 30 years ago has ministered this truth to me. In 1924, Eric Lidell was selected to run for Great Britain in the Olympics in Paris. His sister Jennie was upset that he was delaying their schedule as missionaries to China. Realizing her concern, Eric took Jennie on a walk...not to prove he was right and she was wrong, but to testify from his heart with all his love for her.

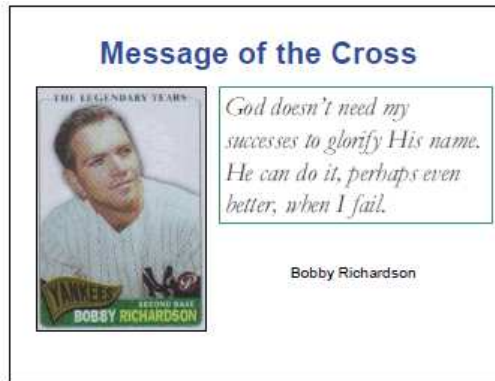
I will never forget the scene. At one point on their walk, Eric gently stopped and looked at Jenny in her eyes and said, "Oh Jennie. You don't understand. God made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure!"

Over the years, I have come to see what Eric was saying was more than God being pleased with Eric because of Eric's hard-earned victory and because of Eric being a good steward of the gift God gave Him. Eric was more profoundly saying that he felt the pleasure of God's fellowship through the indwelling Christ whether he won the race or not!

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Bobby expressed this same truth in his autobiography, "God doesn't need my successes to glorify His name. He can do it, perhaps even better, when I fail."

And I want you to know that right now I feel God's pleasure. Not because I am doing a good work for Him, but all because He is the faithful One doing a good work in me and in you! And this is not solely a feeling, but a deep joy.



Journey in Christ comes along side Christians to equip them to grow in and to share these foundational truths.

We first meet people where they are with one-on-one discipleship counseling. Counseling from the world's perspective starts with the *premise* that something is wrong with you. Counseling from a Christ-centered perspective starts with the *promise* that something is right with you all because of the message of the cross. There may be something wrong in how a person is relating with a person, a circumstance, a substance, or their own thoughts...but we start from the foundation that Christ has already accomplished a great work in a Christian's heart through the cross.

Our core training ministry is comprised of 3 phases: a 10-hour conference, a 40-hour workshop, and an 8-month advanced training. Our advanced training qualifies as a 3-hour course credit for a Masters in Counseling degree from *Luther Rice Seminary*.

I have also recently compiled a booklet concisely presenting the message of the cross that can be shared with individuals and small groups in just a couple of hours. I piloted sharing this booklet this past year in all adult Sunday school classes in my church here, and it was a great time of fellowship. This booklet can help *anchor* a new Christ and *affirm* older Christians, and can be a smaller step toward more discipleship training.

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In summary, discipleship is training *in* the ministry, not just training *for* the ministry. We don't have to wait to get our act together in order to minister the hope and life of Christ to our loved ones...we can minister Christ to others right where God has us...in the midst of the realities of life. This is where He shines forth from our lives.

Discipleship is coming along side others in the realities of life to lead them to see how amazingly close they are to the heart of Christ, and how He is with them always, and how He is their strong arm.

Based on *Journey in Christ's* core ministry of training, partnerships with churches and other ministries are unfolding to offer our training in various venues. For example, I've had the opportunity to teach the Grace Life Conference in a prison, in churches, in homes, and in hospital conference rooms. I've recently had the opportunity to teach a Bible study from my booklet at *Haven of Rest* in Anderson, a ministry leading men to be set free drug and alcohol addictions through this message of the cross.

I am also drawn to chaplaincy ministry in industrial settings based on encouraging employees to be the best employees to the glory of God by resting in their dignity and identity in Christ. For 30 years, I loved working with wastewater treatment operators across the State. A few weeks ago, an operator I had not heard from in over 5 years called me to encourage me in my new ministry role, and to ask me to pray for another operator having health issues.



For the past 8 years, I have served as volunteer chaplain of the *Boys Home of the South*. And it is with great joy that I ask the boys to stand for a moment. Let's praise God for these boys as trophies of God's grace!

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Introduction of Bobby Richardson

From Sumter, SC.

The day after high school, the Yankees signed Bobby.

Traveled to Newark, NJ on \$85 in coins collected for him by his hometown.

Played second base for the New York Yankees from 1955 to 1966.

2nd in voting for American League MVP behind Mickey Mantle in 1962.

Won seven World Series.

MVP in the 1960 World Series.

Think about all of the power hitters in the history baseball, particularly the Yankees, e.g., Babe Ruth, Mickey Mantle, Lou Gehrig, Roger Maris, Joe Dimaggio, Reggie Jackson, etc...and none of these have hit more RBIs in a World Series than the littlest Yankee of them all...Bobby Richardson.

Baseball coach at South Carolina from 1970 to 1976, and took the Gamecocks to the College World Series for the first time with a 51-6 record.

Coach and athletic director at Coastal Carolina from 1984 to 1986.

Coach and athletic director at Liberty University from 1987 to 1990.

Ambassador of Christ

But most of all:

Wife Betsy

Robbie 53

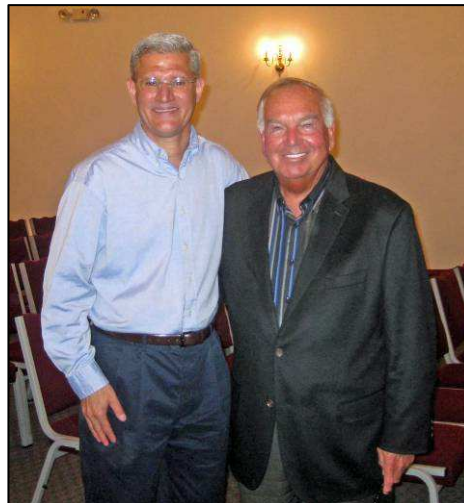
Ron 52

Christie 49

Jeannie 46

Rich 42

15 grandchildren



Gregg with Bobby
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Brother in Christ