

## What's The Deal At Stone Creek Church Part 7

Relational Outreach

*Matthew 5:16, Philippians 2:3-4*

*Memory Verses: Matthew 5:16*

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Hey, what is the deal at Stone Creek Church? Huh? What are they doing over there? Sometimes I wonder. In case you were wondering what our church was all about, we are in a series where we hope to make that clear. We have a vision statement; **Depending on Christ we will reach our world with the Gospel to see lives completely transformed.** We depend on Christ in all things through a reliance on the word, authentic worship, and consistent prayer. We will reach our world with the Gospel through relational outreach, and strategic missions. And we hope to see lives completely transformed through intentional discipleship. If you have happened to miss any of the previous sermons in this series you can go back on our website [www.stonecreekdanville.com](http://www.stonecreekdanville.com) or our Facebook page and watch or listen to them. So far we've covered Biblical Teaching & Preaching, Authentic Worship, Christ Focused Ordinances, Consistent Prayer, and Familial Fellowship.

And when I mention all of those topics I start to think... man, we are doing it right. If we could simply nail all of those then that's a church that I can be proud to call my home. Right? And so I just want to take one minute here to say thank you to you guys. We couldn't do all of that without you. We couldn't have a culture of a reliance upon the Word of our God as our standard of truth without your faithfulness to scripture. We couldn't have a culture of authentic worship and lifestyles of living sacrifices without your commitment to righteous living. We couldn't have a culture of consistent prayer without your commitment to being a praying church not merely a church that prays. And as we saw last week, there is absolutely no way we could have a culture of family-like fellowship if you weren't dedicated to one another here in this faith family. So thank you... and thank God for his goodness and grace up on our church!

So, with all that said, today we want to jump into the next tenet of our vision; which is reaching our world with the Gospel, and our next core value; which is relational outreach. And it's fitting that this sermon is almost directly in the middle of this series, because this tenet and this core value combine to form what I believe is our main philosophy of ministry here at Stone Creek Church! Of course we do everything we just talked about... but when it comes to getting things done! This is where the rubber meets the road! If you want to know what your main physical responsibility is at Stone Creek Church... it's this; reaching our world

through relational outreach!

But before we dive into what we mean by relational outreach, I want us to take a few minutes to talk about a generic overview of what it means to reach our world with the Gospel. When we use the word reach here, we are talking about evangelizing, or in laymen's terms, sharing our faith with the end goal being conversion; salvation for them. Jesus made it very clear to his disciples at the beginning of his ministry with them what their job specifically entailed. In **Matthew 4:19**; "he said to them, 'follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" Their first call was to reach people and their last call was to reach people. In **Matthew 28:19**, just before Jesus ascends into heaven he tells them again; "Go and make disciples!" It's not rocket science. A reliance on the word, a lifestyle of authentic worship, and a consistent prayer life is who we are. Reaching people with the Gospel is what we do!

We say that we will reach "our" world. We use the term "our" very intentionally. If we were to say "the" world it could be taken that our intention is to only reach foreigners with the Gospel and neglect those in our own community. Or it could be taken to mean that our focus is to reach every single person in the whole world, which of course is impossible. When we say, "our" world what we mean is that we will focus on three specific areas. First, our personal circles we all do life in here in Danville, VA. Where God has placed you to advance the Gospel through you. Secondly, our local community and state. And, Thirdly, the foreign mission fields we have a specific focus on. So, from now on when you hear of "our" world, we want you to think of these three distinct areas of our world. We deal primarily with the first area, our personal community, through relational outreach which we are talking about today. We deal primarily with the third area, foreign missions, through strategic missions which we will talk about next week. And, we deal with the second area, our local area, through both as you will see.

So, our primary job as Christians is to reach, or evangelize, our world, our community, our local areas, and the foreign mission field. But, what is the message we reach them with? We will reach our world with the "Gospel." The Gospel is simply the good news of Jesus Christ. That he, God in the flesh, came to earth as a child, lived a sinless perfect life, willingly gave himself over as a sacrificial lamb for the payment of our sins, raised again from the grave, sent his holy spirit to live in our hearts, intercedes on our behalf, and one day is coming again. All we have to do to inherit eternal life through Christ is put our faith in this and make him the Lord of our lives.

So now you should have a better understanding of what we mean when we say "we will reach our world with the Gospel." Right? Alright.

So, how do we do it? How do we reach our world with the Gospel? The first way we do that is through relational outreach. Relational outreach is the idea that the best way to reach someone with the Gospel of Jesus

Christ is by serving them and beginning a relationship with them in order to earn the right to share our faith.

You see, for a thousand years the church has neglected the example we are shown in scripture and has adopted two main philosophies of evangelism which in truth are short-cuts. We will call the first short-cut, drive-by evangelism. This short-cut's main weapon is quick logic. It works like this. You knock on someone's door or strike up a conversation with them at the market and ask them a series of questions such as where they attend church or what they believe about Jesus. The evangelist then uses the Bible to convince the target that they need Christ's salvation and leads them in a prayer, which we have dubbed, "the sinner's prayer." The target is then declared "saved" and invited to church. They are rarely, if ever, followed up on again. Discipleship is not the objective here... getting another number on the score card is! If one doesn't want to knock on a door or have a conversation they can simply drop of a little booklet, called a tract, with all of this info in it.

The second short-cut is what I call the church invite. Rather than spending your time convincing the target to accept Christ, which can be very uncomfortable, you simply spend your time and energy convincing them to come to church with you where they will hear the salvation message from "trained professionals." This absolves the Christian from the work of evangelism and puts it squarely in the hands of the Pastor and other teachers.

While both of these were successful in getting results, neither way accomplished making disciples and in today's world they simply don't work anymore. Don't get me wrong, you can still share the Gospel with someone without having a relationship with them and occasionally lead them to Christ. Tracts are still great for getting the word out when you don't have the time to have a conversation. And, inviting people to church is still an unthreatening way of introducing people to the church and to Christ. But we live in a world where non-church people are more intimidated by church experiences, having heard that Christians are hypocrites, and Pastors are swindlers. We also live in a world where people are more closed off and aren't readily open to hearing the opinions of those who are out of their circle. I know I don't have to prove these to you. I know you know because you have invited pretty much everyone you know and they haven't come, or they came once to appease you. It's just a different culture now. And that's not all a bad thing because those short-cut's are not what God's plan was for us in the first place. Jesus' strategy has been relational outreach from the beginning. **Reaching our neighbors takes more than inviting them to church.** Go and tell has always been more effective than come and see. And the old cliché still holds up; they won't care what you know until they

know that you care. And so if you get nothing else this morning, just remember that **if you want to share the Gospel, you must give a care and commit to being there**

### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

Let's take these one at a time. First... **Relational Outreach Means Giving A Care.** Let's look at **Matthew 5:16** which by now we all know pretty well. Let your light shine. Live your life in a way that shows you are a Christian. Wherever you go, whoever you are around, live a righteous, holy, sacrificial, worshipful, and faithful lifestyle that makes it obvious to everyone around you that you are different. You are a light in the darkness. And, also live your life in a way that attracts people to Christ. Be joyful, giving, loving, friendly, humble, and hospitable. Be the person that stands out and everyone wants to be around. In short, be Lisa Sloane! I'm not kidding. She's never mean, she's never said a mean thing about anyone, she's the most graceful, forgiving, and loving person I've ever met. Exhibit A – she's married to me! It's unbelievable! Everywhere she goes she makes friends. I don't know one person who doesn't like my wife! So... just be like Lisa Sloane!

Let your light shine before others so they can see! This means that your light is not accidentally seen. It's intentionally shown! This means that you live and love intentionally so that others will take notice. Everyday you should ask, who needs to see Christ and how can I show him to them. You should strategically select people in your circles through prayer and discernment to shine your light on.

Let your light shine before other so they can see your good works! This means that in order to intentionally shine the light of Christ on others you must do good works for them! You must do acts of love and caring! Things that take time and money! They have to be acts big enough to be notices and appreciated! You want to leave people with the wow factor! Because Jesus is a wow kind of God!

Let your light shine before others so they can see your good works and then worship your God! So get this... when you let your light intentionally shine the love of Christ on others through big acts of love and care... it leads to salvation! This is the plan! We will see people saved when we do this! **We must live intentionally for christ at all times for all people and also give special care towards specific people .**

Think of the good samaritan. He saw a need... he immediately acted ... it took his time and his money... he saved the man's life! Pretty big act of love and care! So... how are you showing everyone who you are in Christ everyday? How are you caring for specific people intentionally? **If you want to share the Gospel, you must give a care and commit to being there.**

Secondly... **Relational Outreach Means Being There.** Let's look

at **Philippians 2:3-4**; another verse you know very well. This verse tells us what does it look like to have a relationship with a lost person. Obviously having a relationship with a lost person doesn't mean that you are yoked together with them. We are not to be unequally yoked with non-believers because true unity only happens in Christ. It also doesn't mean that you let them influence you in your beliefs and morality. If you lay down with the dogs you wake up with the fleas. So don't lay down with them... visit frequently... but don't live there! They are to be friends but they are not your faith family. Does that make sense?

But, it does mean being there for them in service and in humility. We lose our pride and self-righteousness and set aside other priorities to be there for them. In fact, we count them more important than ourselves. We are to look to them and their interests and that takes time, and intentionality.

What does this mean for us? It means we have to really be dedicated to getting to know the other people in our circles and invite them into our lives. It means you have to cut time out of your schedules and dedicate it towards this endeavor. It may take committing yourself to uncomfortable introductions and hard work. But wouldn't you say seeing the lost saved is worth it? Is it?

You say, well I don't know where to start. I don't have any lost friends. That's the point! Christians don't naturally have friendships with the lost. We are light, they are in the dark. So you have to be intentional to go to them! Go, make disciples, and fish for men! Listen... **if you don't have any lost friends to reach then you have some homework to do.** Go fishing! **If you want to share the Gospel, you must give a care and commit to being there.**

## Application

So how do we do this at Stone Creek? We are committed to this mission and this philosophy of ministry and so we will put the bulk of our resources to this cause. First, we want to provide training. If we can get people interested in attending we will do three circles evangelism training, relationship building training, outreach training with the O'Neils, etc. I will teach a class every night if the interest is there!

Secondly, we are dedicated to providing opportunities to begin relationships through outreach events. In the spring we like to do an Easter Egg hunt, and throughout the year we do other smaller outreach events... but, coming up in a couple of weeks we will have our largest outreach event since relaunching as Stone Creek. Guess what, we need you on board. We need everyone who is a part of this church, whether Covenant Partner or attender to set aside whatever else they have going on the evening of October 23<sup>rd</sup> to be here! We need 5 big things from you! 1) We need you to promote it! Put a door hanger on the doors of

your neighborhood and invite them to come! 2) We need you donate lots and lots of candy! 3) We need you to bring your vehicles here and decorate them. If you have three vehicles bring them all and we will decorate them for you! We just need cars! 4) We need you to serve. Serve at a car, serve at the registration, serve in the parking lot, serve at an inflatable, serve by doing face painting, serve bowls of stew, etc....

Why do we do this? Because these are easy events to invite the people in your circles to and then begin relationships with them. And, it makes them a little more familiar and comfortable with our church. And, it shows our community a big act of love and care! It tells them we are here for them! If we do it right we can reach them with the Gospel! That's why number 5) I need you to have intentional conversations with them at the Trunk or Treat that lead to another conversation. Plan another date. Invite them to your house for dinner. Find out what they need and go there and serve them. Invite them to church Sunday! Use trunk or treat to begin relationships!

So we train, we do outreach events, and then we provide initiatives like care portal where you can supply needs for hurting families and jumpstart a relationship with someone who needs Jesus. At this time I want to introduce you to our new care portal director Sherrice Payne. Sherrice is a new covenant partner and she has a heart for people. As a nurse she knows how to help people and she sees the needs of the community! She is going to do a great job! In the last two month since we started doing care portal our church alone has already provided over \$2000 in needs and over 20 hours of man power. This impacts lives and begins relationships. Right now we are in the process of making sure our covenant partners are added as care portal responders so you will personally receive the care portal emails – if you are not a covenant partner yet and you want on this list let us know.

So that's how we do it at Stone Creek, but how do you do it personally as a believer? Well hopefully you are taking advantage of the initiatives we have provided you with! The first one is called bless every home. We need every single person here to go to [www.blesseveryhome](http://www.blesseveryhome) and sign up as a light. Make sure you mark stone creek as your church and then we will be able to monitor how many people we have onboard praying for their neighborhoods. This program sends out a reminder to you to pray for your neighbors by name. It's so simple! Once you have prayed for them then you can go to the next step of personally caring for them. Then you can even mark if you have had the opportunity to share the Gospel with them. It's an easy and awesome tool! Please go and sign up as a light today! If you need help please let us know!

The second initiative we started almost three years ago and it's called Each One Reach One. It's simple. We are simply asking everyone of you to pick just one person who you know needs Christ and pray for an

opportunity to care for them and begin a relationship with them. First you find just one person that you are specifically targeting that you are praying for to receive Christ. Secondly you strategically care for their needs. You could take them a desert. Invite them over to a cookout. Mow their yard. There are hundreds of ways you could do this! Thirdly you begin a relationship, a friendship with them where you build trust. You can't just shove the Gospel down their throats. If you haven't earned the right to have those very deep conversations then they will reject it.

**You must earn the right to share the Gospel!** Fourth, after you have earned the right, you begin having gospel conversations with them which may lead to them becoming a believer. Listen, if each of us reaches just one person a year within 30 years we will have reached the entire world.

**If you want to share the Gospel, you must give a care and commit to being there.**

## Conclusion

Think about how you were reached? Was it through someone you had a relationship with? Was it through a church that cared for you? Think about how Jesus reached you? He cared for you so much he gave his life to save you. He is a friend closer than a brother. He has never left you or forsaken you. He is always there with you. He is the most relational person ever! If Jesus can care for you as a lost person enough to die for you... and if he can never leave you or forsake you... can you commit to relational outreach to see the lost in your circles, in your neighborhoods come to know Christ?

This is our primary philosophy of ministry! If we are ever going to see this ministry grow, we will do it when we see everyone in this church commit to this core value! We will not succeed if you do not commit to relational outreach! Will you commit to this ministry today? **If you want to share the Gospel, you must give a care and commit to being there.**