

**Just a walk across the room.
HTS. 8.1.12**

Today we are beginning a new series of talks, based on a book that was written by Bill Hybels. It is called a walk across the room. The purpose of the book is to encourage and show everyone who follows Jesus how to share Jesus with people who don't yet follow Him. Hopefully after this story which Bill tells, you will understand why it is called a walk across the room.

Larry's story.

Larry is an African American in one of the southern states of America, and in a line of work where his heritage didn't help him, and sometimes made for an uncomfortable existence.

He would have to go to lots of cocktails parties and social gatherings, and as the evening wore on, people would form small circles with friends or business contacts, and Larry always left on the outside on his own. When he deemed that he had been polite and stayed long enough he would leave.

One night, while the small circles were forming he looked up and saw a man engrossed in discussion with his friends. As this man looked up and saw Larry he made his excuses, left his group and came over and introduced himself to Larry.

They got chatting, and Larry told him he was a muslim, and this man said that he followed Jesus, but then he followed it up with, I know very little about Islam, could we meet to talk about your faith. They met up regularly and would talk. After many weeks, while at home one day, Larry knelt down and gave his life to following Jesus.

Why, because one man had gracious and humbly followed the example of Jesus and walked across the room to reach out to someone he didn't know.

Will you walk across the room for Jesus?

Jesus example.

Why did this man walk across the room? Because it is exactly what Jesus did 2000y ago. In Phil 2:5-11 you can read that Christ left heaven, and humbly came to earth, something that we have just celebrated, and reached out to the world, so that you and I could be introduced to God.

Will you walk across the room like Jesus did?

Greatest Gift.

I don't know what the best present you received for Christmas was this year, or what your best present has been, any year? What is the greatest present you have received? For me, it is most certainly having been introduced to God. How did this happen?

Because someone walked across the room to me.

Why would you want to bother walking across the room to share Jesus with someone, either by your actions or with words?

1. God has given you the task of reconciling people to himself.

Reconcile means to bring back into relationship.

2 cor 5:18. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him.

Why should you walk across the room? Because God ask you to and has given you the task of doing so.

It also says in verse 19 in the NIV that you are Christ's Ambassadors. You are to do and say what Jesus would say to that person

Someone did this for you, will you be Christ's ambassador, representative for others. It was my mum and dad who did that for me, that is why I follow Jesus today.

Another reason why you will want to walk across the room is this.

2. Hell is a real place.

In the gospel reading which we had read, Jesus talks about the rich man and Lazarus. While this parable is predominantly about warning the rich to not ignore the poor, you cannot escape the fact that Jesus, the most loving man to ever walk this earth, talks about, teaches about, warns about, HELL. If anyone is going to know if hell is real, it will be God. Jesus teaches about it saying that it is a very real place of pain and suffering and loneliness. V24, I am in agony in this fire.

One of the reasons that I am in this job, other than being called by God is because I have a passion to see people saved from Hell for heaven. I find it a powerful motivator to think that my friends might not be in heaven with me, but burning and in flames in Hell. Rico Tice has a poster saying, where will their souls be in eternity? So I ask you again today,

Will you walk across the room for Jesus?

3. What do you give your life to?

I keep asking if you will walk across the room. Why? Because throughout your life, you will give your life to something. Everyone does. The question is what will you give your life to?

Fame, fortune, power, position, wealth, fashion, friends, career, travel, self, achievement, sport, things, food.

As I follow Jesus and his life and example I ask myself, what did he give his life to? In Luke 19:10 we read.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost.

Jesus gave his life to people. John 3:16. Not to power, possessions or popularity, but people. Because lost people matter to God.

Will you walk across the room for Jesus?

Evangelism isn't just for those like me who run alpha courses, it is for everyone, all of you. The great commission is for all of you, not just some.

It is easy for me to talk about walking across the room, but how do you do it, when do you do, what do you say, what if you fail.

Follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Walk by the spirit, keep in step with the spirit Gal 5:16 &26

Listen, feel for those promptings. Look out for people that know one is talking to. All you need to do is say Hi, I am Luke, I'm sorry I don't know you. What do you, how many children do you have, grandchildren, job do you do.

You will pick up if they want to talk or don't want to. You could also introduce them to someone else. Simple.

Won't always see results. Won't always have conversations.

Barbers.

Likewise when the oppo, comes, you have to take it. I remember when I went to get my hair cut once, I sat in the chair and thought, I can't be bothered to talk. The girl cutting my hair asked me what I had been doing. I had just come back from course, where I was being encouraged to tell others about Jesus. I think God has a sense of humour. I ended up spending the next 5min or so, talking about Jesus to her.

Alternatively, I have gone to get my hair cut, said, right, God, please give me an oppo here today so I can share Jesus with these people. And nothing has happened, no oppo, come, so I didn't tell anyone about Jesus.

Paras.

Praying in army, lots of talks, no conversion, no moving anyone from -10 away from Jesus to -9.

Occasionally I get to see a -1 move to a 0, but only because many other people have been faithful and walked across the room before me.

Will you walk across the room for Jesus?

The key point here, is obey what the Holy Spirit asks you to do.

Green light.

A learner driver pulled up to a set of red lights. Hand brake, into neutral all that sort of stuff. A big articulated lorry pulled up behind the car. The lights turned to green. The learner put the car into gear, hand brake off etc and promptly stalled. This

happened a couple more times. After the third or fourth time, the driver of the lorry got out of his cab, big man, tattoos up his arms, bit like me, bent down and peered through the learners window, stuck his head in and said, just exactly what shade of green are you waiting for?

What shade of green are you waiting for to walk across the room when the Holy Spirit asks you to? Lets pray.