

First Baptist Church of Augusta
Colossians 4:2-6
Opening New Doors: Sharing
September 28, 2008
Stewardship 2008

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, 4 so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should. 5 Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

(Colossians 4:2-6)

For the last several weeks, we have been looking through the open doors of what it means to be a good steward of God. We have looked through the door, the opportunity, of:

- Discovering
- Serving
- Welcoming

Today, I invite you to join me, as we peak through the door of sharing. This, like many times, when we are engaged by the Holy Scripture, requires asking a question. What are we sharing?

I know we are tempted to quickly answer that question with the predictable, “steeped” responses of the church and say, “the gospel, of course. You know - *evangelism*.” What, however, do we mean by evangelism?

Many times, I go to downtown Augusta for *First Friday*. I find it all fun, mixed with a rather eclectic group of people. Every time I am down there walking along Broad Street, there are individuals and groups promoting their causes and proselytizing for converts. Some are for political issues, others for social concerns, and still others, are there for religious causes. One of the favorite Bible tracts used for such “sharing the faith,” and I know you have seen it, is a tract that looks like cash money. One side of the tract looks like a real bill, but the other is a statement on how you are going to Hell, if you do not accept Jesus. I wonder, if Jesus is as wonderful as we claim, why would we resort to trickery or scare tactics for the non-believer?

This gives me a good opportunity to say my appreciation for this church that we do not resort to scare tactics, when it comes to evangelizing, especially our children. Let me go one step further and say, that anytime we use fear to motivate our children to turn to Jesus, we are on the borderline of spiritual abuse. Church is a place where children should feel the security and welcome of Christ.

Sharing our faith, or “evangelism” repulses many, because we think we have to go and do something completely artificial to our way of relating. Images of door to door confrontations, or handing out tracts, or fiery testimonies abound. When I hear questions like: “Brother, have you found Jesus?” I always want to shoot back, “I didn’t know he was lost!” Some consider that evangelism is a unique spiritual gift reserved for preachers with blow-dried hair, loud ties and double-breasted sport coats.

Back to the question: *What are we sharing?* When in doubt, go to the Greek! Evangelism is just a transliteration of the Greek word *euaggelion* – good news. It is actually rather simple: good news.

Several years ago I was hosting a photographer for a newspaper. He was photographing the church’s stain glass for an upcoming expose of stain glasses in metro Atlanta. He had worked with the *Atlanta Journal*