

✚ It is impossible for we ourselves to bring someone to faith in Christ, it is impossible to bring them to true repentance; it is impossible to manipulate or coax a person to faith and trust in Jesus. "So, faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ" Romans 10:17. We carry the message of the Gospel which is the power of God to save. "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes, the Jew first and also the Gentile" Romans 1:16. We don't save and nothing that we do or add to manipulate brings anyone to actual faith. We have gotten away from this in our evangelical churches. Somehow, we have lost our faith in the power of Word of God to convert the sinner to a saint. Instead, we have put our faith in our ability to present that message as the key to the person's salvation. It's not the message anymore but our presentation of it that has all the power, we think. We focus on our presentation of the Word instead of the Word itself. We focus on our education and the degrees of our leaders as the key to success. We focus on worship styles and the how necessarily pleasing they have to be. We focus on curb appeal making sure our buildings and presentation are attractive. We focus on the minister and how he may look on a billboard and that his messages are encouraging and non-offensive. We see these things as key to bringing people to Christ, but none of those things existed or were focused on in the New Testament church, yet they turned their world upside down. Our condition is the same as Ezekiel's situation before the dry bones, in Ephesians 2:1-2 they are dead and the Devil is standing on their graves, note Ezekiel 37:2-3; 4-10. That shouldn't have worked by all measures of ministry we have today. He didn't play contemporary or traditional music, he didn't install any stained-glass windows, he didn't have a degree in resurrecting the dead, he didn't have the correct lighting, sound, iPad, overhead display, or rockstar good looks. Again, the Bible teaches us that it is the message and not the messenger that brings people to faith in Jesus. It is the message not the vehicle of delivery, be it a preacher or a church or a ministry, the vehicle is of little concern in the Scriptures. Our modern interpretation of ministry, we would ask: is this a qualified Sower?, Matthew 13:3-4. Does he have the right spin on the seed as he scatters. What does he look like? Is there the right background music? Is he dressed in a presentable way? See 1st Corinthians 3:6-7. It is impossible for us to bring someone to faith in Christ, it is impossible to bring them to true repentance; it is impossible to manipulate or coax a person to true faith and trust in Jesus. It is solely the work of the message that we carry and the One who sent that message through us. It is impossible for people to be saved if they are only moved in a human way.

1. The Rich Young Ruler was the perfect seeker of salvation.

- ✓ He comes eagerly and humbly, Mark 10:17. Jesus loved him and had compassion for him, Mark 10:21. He came to the right person. He asked the right question. He's in the perfect position to be led to salvation. In our modern thinking on evangelism, he's what we are looking for he's willing and he's got money!

2. How did Jesus mess this one up?

- ✓ Any Baptist preacher would have had this guy joining the church and baptized within the month. He doesn't tell him to accept Him into his heart, neither does that phrase show up anywhere in the Scripture. He doesn't tell him to accept Him into his life either, Ephesians 2:1-2. He doesn't give him the information he gives to woman at the well in John 4:25- 26, because this man has no concept of his own sin, Luke 18:11. He doesn't lead him in the sinner's prayer. He doesn't sign him up for catechism or discipleship classes. He doesn't follow him and beg him to change his mind. If the clear testimony of the Scriptures are in front of people, how, if we beg them, will they come to Christ when they won't do it while under the conviction of the Holy Spirit? Jesus doesn't perform a miracle to win him over. I have harped on this, but it needs to be revisited in light of this passage, miracles don't save people, the word of God does, Romans 10:17. The word not miracles brings conversion, Luke 16:31. I say that to say, isn't that what we seek when we concern ourselves with music and lights and architecture and pretty preachers and skilled oration? We are seeking to wow people, like a miracle would, but people don't get saved through that.

Jesus doesn't follow him and beg him to change his mind. Just like the parable of the Sower the seed comes up or it doesn't. But the seed doesn't need our help or need propping up, does it? And we have no power over the soil, do we?
