

To one brother - I will call him „Andrew“ here - I was answering his inquisitive questions about our Bridges to People training, how we learn simple tools there and how it helps - at least some Christians - to start connecting with their unbelieving friends and share the Good News with them...

I was surprised how quickly Andrew's friendly interest turned into harsh attack: „It's the fast pickles that don't persevere...“ brother Andrew fumed; „until I realized I how was completely lost, it was just a superficial religious interest...“

Yeah, some of those who have „said the prayer“ with us, break off the contact after a few weeks or months. Nothing seems left of their seaming „faith“...

Andrew's strong statements reminded me of others made by some believers. Perhaps it is natural to project our own experience onto those around us. But does it entitle us to general judgment that if someone has not experienced the depth of their own sinfulness as strongly and painfully as I have, they are just a superficial „quickie“? Some have come to deeper repentance only after some time of walking with the Lord. My own experience and my present knowledge cannot be the standard for all others...

I don't know how Andrew would respond if I told him: „That's great, Andrew, that you lead people to experience depth of their sinfulness and then the greatness of God's love and grace... Um, how many have you brought to the Lord in the last year? Or in the past 10 years?“ From my experience with similarly militant Christians, I suspect that brother's offensiveness would increase substantially. But one day, Jesus will ask about our fruit! (John 15:16) He Himself says that a branch or even the whole tree that bears no fruit is actually useless (Matthew 3:10).

The conversation with brother Andrew inspired me to look at how it was in the New Testament. In these 5 minutes, I'll make just a few abbreviated quotes. You can find more passages below. Please study them in their full context...

PHILIPPI, Acts 16:12 *and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were spending some days in this city. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were thinking that there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.*

In those few days a community is formed in the city of Philippi, to which Paul then writes very encouraging letter!



TESALONICA, Acts 17:2 *And according to Paul's custom, he visited them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,*

And in those three Sabbaths there is a community formed, to whom Paul then writes another very encouraging letter, that from them the Word of the Lord spread throughout all Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thessalonians 1:8). Within short time, hundreds of thousands of people heard the Good News through them!

Then, Paul writes to the same Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 3:1), *„Pray for us that the Word of the Lord will spread rapidly.“* (In the original language, this literally means: that the Word would „RUN“.)

EPHESUS, Acts 19:8 *Paul entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for THREE MONTHS... 9 But when some were becoming hardened... he withdrew from them and took the disciples away with him, and had discussions daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 This took place for two years, so that ALL WHO LIVED IN ASIA heard the word of the Lord.*

Notice: In two years, hundreds of thousands of people throughout the province of Asia heard the Lord's Word.

To the city of **COLOSSAE** Paul writes (Colossians 4:3), *„Pray at the same time for us, that God may open the door of the Word for us. 5 Live wisely in front of those who are outside, making the most of the opportunity.“*

The call to make the most of the opportunity is a call to use the time effectively! Because our time is running out very quickly...!

I'm sure, from the broader context of these lessons, you can perceive that I certainly don't want „quick-fixes“ in the sense of superficial confession that goes nowhere deeper: neither to repentance nor to following Jesus. But in terms of the PACE of sharing the Good News on our part, I certainly want to see much more. After all, at least 100,000 people die in our country every year, who have NEVER HEARD the Good News of living Jesus...!

Lord Jesus, thank You for the New Testament examples of how the Word of God quickly „ran“ to hundreds of thousands of people in each area. I long so much for that to happen in our country at this time...

CORINT, Acts 18:9 *And the Lord said to Paul by a vision at night, “Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many people in this city.” 11 And he settled there for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*

MACEDONIA, Acts 20:1 *After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had encouraged them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. 3 And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.*

ROME, Acts 28:30 *„Now Paul stayed two full years in his own rented lodging and welcomed all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching things about the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.*