

To all those who share the Good News with others,

**SCRIPTURE:**

Mark 16:14-15 (MSG) – Larger reading: Mark 16:1-20

*“Still later, as the Eleven were eating supper, he appeared and took them to task most severely for their stubborn unbelief, refusing to believe those who had seen him raised up. Then he said, “Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God’s good news to one and all. Whoever believes and is baptized is saved; whoever refuses to believe is damned.”*

**STORY:**

On page 238 of “Vanishing Acts” by Jodi Picoult is this interesting and thought provoking dialogue:

Suddenly a ragged man wearing a hairnet and flip-flops walks toward us, holding a stack of pamphlets. Sophie, scared, hides behind her mother’s chair. “My brother,” the vagrant asks me, “have you found the Lord Jesus Christ?”

“I didn’t now he was looking for me.”

“Is He your personal savior?”

“You know,” I say, “I’m still kind of hoping to rescue myself.”

The man shakes his head, dreadlocks like snakes. “None of us are strong enough for that,” he replies, and moves on.

“I think that’s illegal,” I mutter to Delia. “Or at least it should be. Nobody should have to swallow religion with their coffee.”

When I look up, she’s staring at me. “How come you don’t believe in God?” Delia asks.

“How come you do?”

She looks down at Sophie, and her whole face softens. “I guess it’s because some things are too incredible for people to take all the credit.”

Or the blame, I think.

Two tables over, the zealot approaches an elderly couple, “Believe in the Father,” he preaches.

Delia turns in his direction. “It’s never that simple,” she says.

**OBSERVATION:**

Or is it? We have a tendency, don’t we, to make believing in God too complicated ... trying too hard ... trying to fill in all the answers to life’s questions before we believe ... trying to do the “rescue ourselves” thing before allowing Jesus to do it for us ... trying to relegate God, Jesus, faith, the Bible type issues to the recesses of our spirit – to be “dealt” with at a later time while we “get on” with life. And then, unexpectedly something or someone comes along and unashamedly asks the one question we have been trying to avoid, “Do you believe ... do you know?”

I’ve never liked the “in your face” type of evangelism as found all too often in the “knocking-on-doors-asking-the-if-you-died-tonight-where-would-you-spend-eternity” people. But, sadder still, is for us to have a personal friendship/relationship with

someone and never ask the more personal questions about one's relationship with Jesus Christ and/or God. Belief and Faith are personal issues, but were never meant to be private. They were designed by the maker to be shared, especially with the individuals we love the most.

**QUOTE:**

*The Order of the Mustard Seed founded by Count Zinzendorf had three guiding principles, namely: 1. Be kind to all people. 2. Seek their welfare. 3. Win them to Christ. - Source Unknown*

**PRAYER:**

Lord, shake us from our complacency ... disturb our spirit, make us uncomfortable, give us sleepless nights ... until we share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our family and friends. Please don't allow us simply to allow them to linger in their lack of understanding. Give us a certain "holy boldness!" Amen

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim  
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