

**ARE WORDS** 

## **REALLY NECESSARY?**

YES!

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## A popular premise

- "We don't need to proclaim the Gospel; we just need to *live* the Gospel"
- As Saint Thomas explained, "Always be ready to preach the Gospel. If necessary, use words."
- The two problems with that premise:
  - Saint Francis never said those words
  - The premise betrays a basic misunderstanding of the nature of the Gospel



There are two types of messages:

- Those that are driven by *conduct*
- Those that are driven by *content*
- The Gospel is a *content* driven message content
  - must be:
    - Communicated
    - o Understood
    - o Believed
    - Acted upon



The basic content of the Gospel message:

1 Cor. 15:3

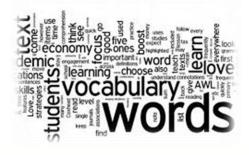
- The Bad News cf. Isaiah 59:1-2
- The Good News cf. Isaiah 53



## How do non-believers understand a silent testimony?

They see it as:

- A demonstration of kindness and good will "A nice change of pace!"
- A demonstration of the goodness of humankind "This is how all of us could behave, if only..."
- A demonstration of *Christian* repentance for the crimes of "the church"



What is the relationship between the conduct of our lives and the content we declare?

• God uses our Gospel-driven conduct to:

• Capture our attention

• Confirm that the content is true

But the content must be shared!



Why do we prefer a silent testimony?

The fear of rejection – the fear of man

How can we overcome that fear? We must:

- Understand the gravity of the situation
- Understand what our silence means about ourselves we're ashamed of the Gospel



## What does the Bible say about the need to speak?

- Virtually all the verses that exhort us to communicate the Good News use verbs such as *proclaim, declare, speak, say, tell,* etc.
- Jesus said that the seed that must be sown is *the Word*
- Paul explained that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the *Word*



For more information, contact:

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Additional reading:

Never Ashamed – Stories of Sharing Faith with Scoffers and Skeptics, by Avi Snyder

Word versus Deed, by Duane Litfin