



So let's start from the beginning. I had no idea where my heart to share Jesus with others was going to go, but I was inspired by the Holy Spirit to sit at different bus stops, and I really do mean bus stops!

When I looked at the bus timetable, I noticed that buses come every 3 or 6 minutes apart. I wondered how I could share Jesus' love with the people sitting next to me in those few minutes. So I would sit, pray, and ask God to lead. God would always bring people to me; I never needed to seek out or go to them.

I was surprised by how lonely people were. They were really happy to talk to someone, in the summer months. In the winter months many people were really miserable, but in the warmer months people were often happy to engage.

Let me tell you the story of how it started.

On this occasion a young man came and sat next to me at the bus stop. I knew he was in pain because he kept rubbing his knee. I sensed the Holy Spirit saying to me, 'tell him that you'll pray for him.'

'I don't even know this guy' was my response. He had tattoos all over his face, and I thought he might not take kindly to an older woman telling him that she was going to pray for him.

The Holy Spirit prompted me a second time, so I didn't feel that I could ignore it.

'Can I pray for you, because you obviously look like you're in pain?'

He looked at me, grumpily, and grunted 'no thanks', and turned his head away.

The Holy Spirit prompted me again, to which my response was, 'Lord, I don't want to be punched in the face, thank you!'. But another prompt came, 'ask him again'. So I did.

'Look, you're in pain. You've got nothing to lose. Let me pray for you and see what happens'

'Who are you?', he demanded.

'I am a Christian. I can pray for you'

‘Alright then’, he again grunted his reply.

I put my hand by his knee and, honestly, I just felt power in my hand like a hot coal. When I removed my hand, I felt like he’d been healed, and he just looked at me and grinned.

‘What have you done to me?’

‘I’ve done nothing – I just prayer for you to be healed. Are you in pain now?’

‘No!’

He got up and walked, then he ran, then he came and sat back down. Again he got up, then he walked, and then he ran, as if to test to be sure.

‘You’re alright, you know love, you’re alright’ he finally called over to me, this time without the grunt.

‘Would you like to know Jesus who just healed you?’

‘I’m not going to church!!’

‘You don’t need to go to church to meet him. Jesus is here. If you want to know him, you can. He’s available 24/7, and you don’t have to go to church’.

‘Alright’. A word which seemed to suggest a greater openness and positivity than you might imagine, for this young man at least. So I led him in a prayer, and we parted.

There was no hesitation the next time I saw him in the town centre and the next development from the bus stop encounter was revealed. ‘I’ve got some friends who could do with some prayer. Will you pray for them?’. We arranged to meet in a high street coffee shop, and they came in making a loud noise – swearing and whatever – but I was able to share Jesus with them. We continued to meet in the coffee shop to do little Bible studies.

That’s how my bus stop ministry started.

It’s probably important to say at this point that I am a woman of South Asian heritage, and from a Muslim background. I often wear Asian-style clothing, and will probably initially be assumed to be ‘one of them’ by the Muslims I meet at bus stops (and other places). I want to build a rapport, some relationship, and to let them see and feel the essence of who I am before correcting their assumption. I think this opens the door for me to share or pray with them. I am not suggesting that you should try to appear Muslim or anything, I am just sharing that some things about yourself may open doors. Maybe there are other things that do this for you?

Often my bus stop ministry revolves around prayer (at least initially), but sometimes it might involve a word or a story. The words or stories are always prompted by the Holy Spirit, reminded of the fact that in the Bible we read that Jesus often used to sit with people and give them a word which would transform their life. He would give them living water, and their lives wouldn’t be the same again.

Sometimes I use Bible stories - the woman at the well, the women suffering from bleeding, or even a parable, but asking God to inspire my thoughts with something specific relating to that person’s life or circumstances (a gift of knowledge) is always key. When God blesses you with a gift of this kind, He can reveal something that only they know, and can be a breakthrough in their

recognising that God knows and loves them. This parallels what happens in the story of the Samaritan woman.

Let me share an example:



This is about a young Pakistani man with a story that would make your heart weep. On losing their mother to cancer, he and his sister were made homeless and found themselves in a hostel for young people. I heard a little of his story, and then felt prompted to ask ‘why do you go and swear at your Mum when you visit her grave?’

‘How do you know that?’

I was able to tell him that the Holy Spirit told me, and showed me how he behaved when visiting her because he felt abandoned. I could share the revelation that he was blaming her for dying, for leaving him and his sister all alone.

‘Do you remember when you used to go to the seaside, and your Mum used to make you sandwiches? And do you remember when you were four years old, and your Mum saved up to buy you a bike? They were some of the good things your Mum did, and she wants you to remember them.’

He still did not understand.

‘How do you know about the bike? How do you know?’

So I told him the story of Jesus at the well, who showed that he knew the woman by giving a word about her 5 husbands, and then offering her something that transformed her life. I explained that this is what Jesus wants to do for him too – to bring transformation to his life too. That was enough for him to give his life to Jesus.

At such a point, a little way into the conversation, some of the Muslims I share with may ask me directly, ‘Are you Muslim?’, and at this point I can reveal that I am not. Sometimes what started as a positive interaction can take a down turn at this point, and the drawbridge goes up a bit. If they ask whether I was born a Muslim, and I reveal that I was, the drawbridge sometimes goes up even further. Some ask how I could betray my country, my parents, them, and my identity as a Muslim. This gives me chance to share a bit more deeply. I talk about Jesus giving me my identity, as a woman of value, a child of God. That He is my love. They are often intrigued by this. Whilst they may use the words revere and fear when talking about God, they would never say love. And they can see some kind of closeness and power that comes through my connection with God. Others just close down the conversation, but I pray they go away with some things to ponder on – do they love God, or Mohammed? Do they feel valued and loved by God? Have they experienced His power?

Sometimes, like in the first story, a question arises AFTER I have prayed. They might ask, ‘Did you pray to Allah, because I felt something happen?’. I tell them that I am praying to Jesus. I can

share that I know nothing about them or their life but that God knew them from the beginning, knows their circumstances now - that they need healing, to be set free, or a word. The answer is often 'wow!'. I ask them how they think I know about what I am sharing with them, and often they say I must be say I must be جادو کرنا *jardo karna* (a witch, or doing magic). 'I am not a witch – I am just an ordinary person that God is using' is my reply. I try to gently explain that His Spirit lives in me, guides me, and reveals truth to me. They are usually intrigued.

Recognising and using a gift of knowledge in this way was something God needed to prepare me for. We have to remember it is a gift, reliant upon God, and not taken lightly. We may not even realise we have been given such a gift, but as we learn to recognise the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and to listen, God can work with us in this way. But how did this start for me? It wasn't in a bus stop encounter. Here's my story:

I was on holiday the first time it happened. I was gobsmacked, surprised, scared and I thought, 'no I can't do this'. I was just sitting quietly, minding my own business, and reading a magazine, when a couple came into the room. I felt in my heart that I needed to say something to them, but I knew that I didn't know them. I never met them before, so I asked 'what do you want me to do Lord?'. (I find that I always ask what God is asking me to do, and why. I may not always get the full answer I would like, but I always have His reassurance).

'Get up. God and tell the man that the building he wants will be his in a few weeks'.

I thought, 'I can't do that. They're on holiday. I can't, sorry.'

Three times I felt that I needed to get up and talk to this couple. So, finally, I did. I approached the man, with my legs shaking because I thought that I was going to get this horribly wrong! And I said, 'ok Lord, this is me and You. You prompted me, so please don't let me be made a fool of.'

'Excuse me. I hope you don't think I'm mad'

'Go on, my child'

When he said 'my child' I felt a bit comforted, and sensed that he knew what this was.

'The Holy Spirit that lives in you prompts you sometimes to do things out of the ordinary. And it's not my idea on holiday to do that, but I need to see it through. The Holy Spirit prompted me to tell you that building you want, that you have your heart set on, will be yours in a few weeks' time.'

The man looked at me, and at his wife, with tears in his eyes and said, 'do you know who I am?'

'No, I have never met you before'

'I am the Bishop of Wolverhampton' and he shared that they had been praying about a building project for which they needed a confirmation to go ahead.

'My dear child, you have just given me confirmation I have been waiting weeks for'

He hugged me and, still shaking, I prayed 'thank you Lord'.

That's how it started, but each time it is different. Sometimes I get a picture, sometimes you pick up a feeling of sadness or joy, but often God will give me something that only the other person knows and I couldn't know without supernatural spiritual revelation.

Sometimes God uses something from my own life experience.

I also meet women from all kinds of backgrounds who have suffered various types of abuse, especially honour-based violence. These women are very down-trodden, broken-hearted, vulnerable women. It takes a lot to pluck up the courage to start to seek help, but even then, some women have to stay in abusive relationships until they can find a safe place to go. Here's another story:

I remember one time, there was a fully-veiled lady who stood away from everyone, keeping her distance. I felt such compassion for her, not that I don't feel compassion for the others, but there was something about her that reminded me of the situation I was in many years ago.

In my own background, I had also suffered domestic abuse, and was very much controlled by my ex-husband.

After I had escaped the relationship, I remember the first time I was able to buy something for myself. It was a little bottle of perfume, but I kept it hidden in a drawer. I wouldn't open it. I wouldn't put it on, because I could hear my ex-husband saying, 'You're not worthy. You don't deserve it. You haven't worked for it, so don't you dare touch it.'

It took me many months to open the bottle and use the perfume with its beautiful scent. It was another breakthrough, and after that I always carried hand cream, or sometimes a little bottle of perfume, in my bag.

This lady that had triggered my memory, touched my heart. So, I gave her the little bottle of perfume from my bag. She just looked at me with mixture of confusion and sadness, 'Why are you giving me a gift? I don't deserve gifts.'

And, honestly, my heart just crumbled.

'Yes, you do', and I told her stories of how Jesus gave identity and honour to women.

'You are worthy! And this is just a little gift – not from me, but from God. Go, and enjoy it'

'I can't. I have to pay you.'

'No, it's a gift.' And I had to explain to her what a gift means – that it is given out of love. But she didn't understand how people can give and receive gifts out of love. So, I spent some time with her, sharing about Jesus' love for women, and it was turning point in her life.

Sometimes it's not easy to know whether the person you are talking to is Muslim or not, and I have sometimes made assumptions based on appearance, and got it wrong (just like I mentioned others doing with me earlier). I have learnt to ask a few sensitive questions upfront to be sure. And my approach is a little different if it's a non-Muslim – and with some non-religious people what I share about myself relates to knowing that God is real initially, rather than about His love.

What could I encourage you to try?

Firstly, a caution – pray beforehand, trust God’s Spirit, but also make sure you’re in a safe place with other people around. I think it’s best doing this alone rather than in pairs or groups, so also think about having an escape route, especially if you’re a lone female. I wouldn’t do this in a back alley in case anyone really took offence and it turned nasty! It hasn’t, but best to be prepared.



Secondly take every opportunity, even a few minutes, to find your way of sharing the love of Jesus with others. You cannot cover the Trinity in 3 minutes, but you can help people to have an experience of God – emotional or physical healing, or a sense of His presence and power. And you can give them something to ponder. Learn to listen for the promptings of the Holy Spirit and be brave enough to act on them. Let the stories of Jesus be a natural part of what you share with others. Allow God to use your life experiences to bless others. And maybe even try hanging out at some bus stops – sometimes even not getting on a bus at all, but having some wonderful God-encounters with people!