

Evangelism

Teacher's Manual

Evangelism

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Lesson 1

Evangelism Today

I. What is the current status of evangelism in the western church?

While many of the following statistics relate specifically to the church in the United States, it is most likely typical of many other places in the western world today (Most of the following statistics were taken from *Evangelism that Works* by George Barna.).

- A. Most churches have reached their plateau or are declining. In these churches, little or no true evangelism is taking place.
 - 1. Eighty percent of all churches fall into this category.
 - 2. Fifty percent of all churches will not add one new convert this year.
 - 3. Most church growth that does occur happens primarily through Christians transferring membership from one church to another church.
 - 4. Overall church membership in America is dropping by over 2 million per year.
 - 5. The average size of a local church in America is 102 adults.

- B. Most pastors do not focus on the area of evangelism as their primary purpose. This is the case even though the great commission is clear.
 - 1. After the initial start of the church, the focus often shifts to building the programs of the church.
 - 2. Many pastors themselves do not feel confident in sharing their faith.
 - 3. Only one in four pastors interviewed described their church as “evangelistic.”
 - 4. The average annual budget allocated by the typical church for all of its evangelistic endeavors amounts to only about two percent of its revenue.

- C. Most church members feel inadequate in communicating the Gospel to another person.
 - 1. Over ninety percent of all believers have never led someone to Christ (Compare to the Mormons or Jehovah Witnesses).
 - 2. The most common form of evangelism is for people to invite someone to church to be ministered to by the pastors and other leaders of the church.

II. Why is it that most believers do not evangelize?

There are many potential reasons why most believers do not evangelize. Here are the top fifteen reasons. But before we look at them, here is a story that presents this in a rather humorous way.

“When I was in high school, our family used to fish every year during spring break. One year my brother and my mom couldn’t go, so my dad let me invite a friend. I asked Mark. He was a good pal and a great sport. He got permission from his parents, and we began planning our trip.

“Days before leaving, we could already anticipate the vacation. We could feel the sun warming our bodies as we floated in the boat. We could feel the yank of the rod and hear the spin of the reel as we wrestled the white bass in the boat. And we could smell the fish frying in an open skillet over an open fire.

“We could hardly wait. Days passed like cold molasses. Finally spring break arrived. We loaded our camper and set out for the lake.

“We arrived late at night, unfolded the camper, and went to bed – dreaming of tomorrow’s day in the sun. But during the night, an unseasonably strong norther blew in. It got cold fast! The wind was so strong that we could barely open the camper door the next morning. The sky was gray. The lake was a mountain range of white-topped waves. There was no way we could fish in that weather.

“‘No problem,’ we said. ‘We’ll spend the day in the camper. After all, we have Monopoly. We have *Reader’s Digest*. We all know a few jokes. It’s not what we came to do, but we’ll make the best of it and fish tomorrow.’

“So, huddled up in the camper with a Coleman stove and a Monopoly board, we three fishermen passed the day – indoors. The hours passed slowly, but they did pass. Night finally came, and we crawled into the sleeping bags dreaming of angling.

“Were we in for a surprise. The next morning it wasn’t the wind that made the door hard to open, it was the ice!

“We tried to be cheerful. ‘No problem,’ we mumbled. ‘We can play Monopoly... again. We can reread the stories in *Reader’s Digest*. And surely we know another joke or two.’ But as courageous as we tried to be, it was obvious that some of the gray had left the sky and entered our camper.

‘I began to notice a few things I hadn’t seen before. I noticed that Mark had a few personality flaws. He was a bit too cocky about his opinions. He was easily irritated and constantly edgy. He couldn’t take any constructive criticism. Even though his socks did stink, he didn’t think it was my business to tell him.

“Just looking out for the best interest of my dad’s camper,’ I defended, expecting Dad to come to my aid.

“But Dad just sat over in the corner, reading. *Humph*, I thought, *where is he when I need him?* And then, I began to see Dad in a different light. When I mentioned to him that the eggs were soggy and the toast was burnt, he invited me to try my hand at the portable stove. *Touchy, touchy*, I said to myself. *Nothing like being cooped up in a camper with someone to help you see his real nature.*

“It was a long day. It was a long, cold night. When we awoke the next morning to the sound of sleet slapping the canvas, we didn’t even pretend to be cheerful. We were flat out grumpy. Mark became more of a jerk with each passing moment; I wondered what spell of ignorance I must have been in when I invited him. Dad couldn’t do anything right; I wondered how someone so irritable could have such an even-tempered son. We sat in misery the whole day, our fishing equipment still unpacked. The next day was even colder. “We’re going home” were my father’s first words. No one objected.

“I learned a hard lesson that week. Not about fishing, but about people. When those who are called to fish don’t fish, they fight. When energy intended to be used outside is used inside, the result is explosive. Instead of casting nets, we cast stones. Instead of extending helping hands, we point accusing fingers. Instead of being fishers of the lost, we become critics of the saved. Rather than helping the hurting, we hurt the helpers.”

“The result? Church Scrooges. “Bah humbug” spirituality. Beady eyes searching for warts on others while ignoring the warts on the nose below. Crooked fingers that bypass strengths and point out weaknesses. Split churches. Poor testimonies. Broken hearts. Legalistic wars. And, sadly, poor go unfed, confused go uncounseled, and lost go unreached. When those who are called to fish don’t fish, they fight.

“But note the other side of this fish tale: When those who are called to fish, fish – they flourish! Nothing handles a case of the gripes like an afternoon service project. Nothing restores perspective better than a visit to a hospital ward. Nothing unites soldiers better than a common task.

“Leave soldiers inside the barracks with no time on the front line and see what happens to their attitude. The soldiers will invent things to complain about. Bunks will be too hard. Food will be too cold. Leadership will be too tough. The company will be too stale. Yet place those same soldiers in the trench and let them duck a few bullets, and what was a boring barracks will seem like a haven. The beds will feel great. The food will be almost ideal. The leadership will be courageous. The company will be exciting.

“When those who are called to fish, fish – they flourish! Jesus knew that. When he arrived at Bethsaida, he was sorrowful, tired, and anxious to be alone with the disciples. No one would have blamed him had he dismissed the crowds a second time. No one

would have criticized him had he waved away the people. But he didn't. Later he would. Later he would demand their departure and seek solitude.

“But not before he ‘healed their sick’ and taught them ‘many things.’ Self was forgotten... others were served... and stress was relieved.

“Make a note of that. The next time the challenges “outside” tempt you to shut the door and stay inside, stay long enough to get warm. Then get out. When those who are called to fish don't fish, they fight.” --Unknown

Many Christians do not evangelize. They may not evangelize for some of the fifteen following reasons:

A. They are unsaved themselves.

You cannot bring others into an experience with Christ that you do not have yourself. Unfortunately, there are many people who are members of churches who still are in need of evangelism. Many of them were raised in the church and would consider themselves Christian, but they have not had a personal, dynamic, life-changing experience of Jesus Christ.

B. They have a wrong belief system

1. They do not believe that Jesus is the only way. In other words, they sincerely believe people from other faiths will be saved if they keep most of the Ten Commandments. This is especially true when dealing with those of the Jewish faith.
2. They do not believe in a literal hell. Many people who fall into this category either believe that hell is only a temporary state that will be remedied in time or that there is no life after death for the unbeliever. In this view the unbeliever who dies is annihilated and simply ceases to exist.
3. They believe that if you are “basically good,” you will go to heaven. They not only believe this about others, they also believe this about themselves. For this reason they would consider that some people are “okay” without Christ. Some people are “good enough” and do not need our witness.

C. They are fearful.

1. They fear discussing serious spiritual matters with people. They find it difficult to open such a conversation.
2. They fear potential confrontation. No one likes the uneasiness that comes with confrontation. We fear that if we raise certain sensitive issues with people they will over react.

3. They fear potential rejection. No one likes to be rejected. It is easy to feel that if our message is rejected we will ourselves be rejected and become a bit of an outcast in our social circles.
4. They fear talking to strangers. Because of our sense of insecurity at times it is difficult to engage total strangers in conversation. Jesus did this with the woman at the well. How do I break the ice with people I do not know?

God wants to help us with our fears. The Bible says that perfect love casts out fear (I John 4:18). If we love the lost more than we love ourselves, we will be able to deal with our fears.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear...

D. They are procrastinators.

These are people whose motto is, “Why do today what you can put off to tomorrow?” However that philosophy soon becomes “putting off until tomorrow that which I already put off until today.” The cycle never ends. Procrastinators always believe that tomorrow will be soon enough. Unfortunately, no one really knows how much time they have. Jesus indicated that procrastination is simply based on wrong thinking. Jesus told His disciples that they did not have four months to the harvest, the harvest is ripe now (John 4:35).

Do you not say, “There are still four months and then comes the harvest”? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”

Paul reminds us that “now is the accepted time...now is the day of salvation” (II Cor. 6:2).

For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

E. They are discouraged.

These are those who have participated in evangelistic endeavors in the past but with little or no fruit. They have knocked on doors, passed out tracts and talked to their unsaved family members but have seen little or no fruit. In some cases they seem to have had a negative fruit, driving people further away. Often they are a victim of an erroneous concept that says that “you have not evangelized anyone unless you have been able to close the deal.” They do not understand that all sowing of seed is evangelism.

F. They misunderstand their call.

These are people who understand the importance of sharing the Gospel, but they do not feel that this is their particular call. They understand the need for people to evangelize, but they do not feel that their personality lends itself to this activity. They look to others who are more out-going and more suited to witnessing. They believe that this is the work of those who are called to be evangelists. They do not fully understand that we have all been given the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18-20).

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

They do not understand that we have all been called to be witnesses of Jesus in our corner of the world (Acts. 1:8).

G. They misunderstand the needed qualifications.

Some people have the idea that you have to be a really “mature” believer if you are going to be an effective witness. Actually the very best ambassadors or witnesses are those who have just received Christ. Think of Andrew immediately going after Peter (John 1:40-42) and Philip immediately witnessing to Nathanael (John 1:43-51).

One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

John 1:40-42

H. They are indifferent or lukewarm to the idea of witnessing.

People have heard the message of evangelism so much without putting it into practice that they have become dull of hearing. Not only that, they have become so comfortable in their own expression of Christianity they have lost touch with lost people and have no desire to make their life complicated by reaching out to unbelievers and taking care of new believers.

I. They have had bad personal experiences in the realm of evangelism.

These people have had some bad experiences. Either they have had some very bad experiences when they have shared their faith with others or they have had people share their faith in a way that “turned them off.” In the first case, they tasted a failure

and they do not want to see it repeated. In the second case, they do not want to come on that way to others so that they are also “turned off.”

J. They have wrong priorities.

Many people are very humanitarian and will get involved in a variety of social causes to relieve human suffering (as well they should), but the greatest need for all of mankind is being restored to right relationship to God (Luke 9:59-60). These people need to continue their efforts to relieve human suffering, but they also need to be sure that they are using this work as a springboard for preaching the Gospel. There is no point in sending someone who is full and well clothed to hell.

Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”

K. They have been affected by wrong stereotypes.

There are certain stereotypes that have been fostered in the church world of what it means to be an evangelist. In many cases an evangelist is seen as an extrovert who borders on the obnoxious. Evangelists are seen as strong, pushy, salesman-like personalities who make everyone feel uncomfortable. Most people do not see themselves in this way and do not want to become this way.

L. They are intimidated by people in the world.

Some Christians have been “saved” for so long that they are out of touch with people in the unsaved world. They have been so absorbed in their world of religion that they find it difficult to carry on a conversation with the lost without resorting to “Christianese”, a language that is totally foreign to the lost. In addition, Christians can be intimidated by people of station and power in the world not realizing that these individuals are still people with the same needs as everyone else.

M. They are not proud of their local church.

Sad to say, I have known people who were attending a local church that they were not sure would be a good place for a new convert to go to church. They are not sure that their local church will be a good representation of Christianity where the new believer can find the kind of support that they need. Should they, in fact, lead someone to Christ, they would most likely encourage them to go to different church to meet their needs.

N. They are ignorant of the process of salvation.

These people equate sharing the Gospel with making a sale. In their mind you have to make the pitch and close the deal all in the same encounter. They do not

understand that often entering into a relationship with Christ is the result of many encounters. In fact, the average person who has received Christ did not do so on their first encounter. In most cases it was on the third, fourth or fifth encounter. The Bible teaches that there are those who sow, those who water and those who reap what has been sown (I Cor. 3:5-8).

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

O. They are ignorant of how to witness of Christ.

In many cases people just lack confidence in this area because they have never been trained to share their faith. This is the easiest of the problems to correct. If it is just a matter of a lack of training, the answer is simply to get more information and training.

III. How do we deal with our guilt for our lack of evangelism?

We have already established the fact that most Christians do not evangelize. We have also seen some of the main reasons for that. However, many believers live with a great deal of guilt over the fact that they do not evangelize.

- A. We do not want to evangelize out of a sense of guilt or because we feel that we have to.

This kind of evangelism will not be motivated properly and will not produce good fruit. You always know when someone is serving you grudgingly.

- B. We want to evangelize because we want to.

The only way that we can move to the realm of desire in this area is to get a better perspective about what is actually happening in the eternal realm. When we share our faith we have the potential to assist people in:

1. Coming out of death into life.

Think of yourself as raising people from the dead. Fishing for fish takes that which is living and brings it into death. Fishing for men takes that which is dead and brings it into life.

2. Coming out of darkness into light.

Think of yourself as opening blind eyes.

3. Coming into an experience of abundant living.

Think of yourself as announcing that they had just won the lottery.

- a. In their marriage
- b. In their relationships
- c. In their personal life

4. Fitting out their place in heaven.

Think of yourself as offering people an extreme, eternal home make-over.

- C. We need to see the difference between bringing people to Christ and bringing Christ to people.

Evangelism is not forcing people in an awkward moment to listen to a prepared speech about God. Evangelism is loving people the way that Christ would love people. It is the love of Christ in our hearts that opens the door for our sharing the Gospel message.

- D. We need to understand that we are not the ones who open and close doors.

We can not push through doors that are closed; we can only proceed through doors that are open. Our responsibility is to pray for doors to open and be prepared to walk through them when they do (Col. 4:2-4).

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

- E. We need to understand that fear is normal but it can be overcome.

Hopefully as we study in the area of evangelism, we will overcome fears and be bold for the Lord.

Lesson 2

Motives for Evangelism

I. **The work of evangelism arises out of the heart and nature of God Himself.**

God's nature is evangelistic or outgoing. Since we are the children of God, we will share in His nature. Notice the definitions of God found in the Bible and how they all speak of this same nature.

- A. God is Spirit (John 4:24). God is effulgent, pervading, and impossible to contain.

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

- B. God is Light (I John 1:5). God is ever penetrating, diffusive and dispelling darkness.

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

- C. God is Consuming Fire (Heb. 12:29). God, like fire, is never satisfied, burns passionately and always hungers for more.

For our God is a consuming fire.

- D. God is Love (I John 4:16). God is always reaching out to include more and more as objects of His love.

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

1. God has a love for the world of mankind (John 3:16-17; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4-7; 5:2; I John 4:7-11).

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:16-17

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the

exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4-7

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

I John 4:7-11

2. We should be motivated by that same love (II Cor. 5:14-15).

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

II. The work of evangelism finds its impetus in the commission given to it by Jesus Himself.

The commission that Jesus gave to the church included the following elements:

- A. Preaching the Gospel to every creature and every nation under heaven (Mark 13:10; 16:15; Luke 24:47).

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

- B. Witnessing of Christ to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

- C. Bringing healing and deliverance to all those in such need (Mark 16:16-18).

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

- D. Baptizing all those who respond to the Gospel (Mt. 28:19).

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matthew 28:18-20

- E. Making disciples out of all those who were converted (Mt. 28:19).
- F. Teaching the converted a lifestyle of obedience to all of God’s commands (Mt. 28:20).

All of these elements are the essence of evangelism. Someone is not truly evangelized until they are settled in the faith, committed to a local church and functioning in their God-ordained gifts.

III. The work of evangelism is further fueled by the condition of mankind apart from Christ.

- A. Apart from Christ, all people are sinners and are under the sentence of death (Rom. 5:12; Heb. 9:27).

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned... Romans 5:12

- B. Apart from Christ, all people are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1).

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Ephesians 2:1-3

- C. Apart from Christ, all people are children of wrath (Eph. 2:3).
- D. Apart from Christ, all people are alienated from the life of God (Eph. 4:17-18).

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart...

- E. Apart from Christ, even upright, moral and decent people are lost and need to be saved (Rom. 3:23; John 3:3).

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... Romans 3:23

- F. Apart from Christ, all people are destined for eternal damnation (Rev. 20:10-15). All those who do not come into a right relationship with God prior to their death will end up in the lake of fire after their death for eternity.

IV. The work of evangelism is inspired by the message that it bears.

- A. Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; I Cor. 8:4-6).

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" John 14:6

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12

- B. The message of the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

- C. The message of the Gospel is a message of reconciliation and hope (II Cor. 5:18-20).

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

- D. The message of the Gospel opens the door to abundant life (John 10:10b).

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

V. The work of evangelism must be motivated by God's desire for all men to be saved (II Pet. 3:9).

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

This heart is seen in the following:

- A. God's challenge to Abraham (Gen. 12:3).

I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

B. God's challenge to Israel (Ex. 19:5-6).

God's choosing of Israel was for them to be a priesthood nations mediating God's purposes to the rest of the world.

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.

C. Solomon's prayer of dedication (I Kgs. 8:28-30, 41-42, 59-60).

And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.

VI. The work of evangelism must be activated by the realization that the commission of Christ will only be fulfilled by believers in the church age.

A. God does His work through His people—the church, not angels (Mt. 16:18; II Cor. 5:9-21; I Pet. 1:12).

B. The message of the Gospel must find its voice in God's people (Rom. 10:13-15).

For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

C. The church must reach the world prior to the Second Coming of Christ, because after that there will be no more opportunity (I Th. 4:13-18; II Th. 1:3-12).

...since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power... II Thessalonians 1:6-9

D. If the church does not do it, it will not get done (Eph. 3:8-12).

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8). We are to do the same. The greatest way to do this is to lead lost people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Lesson 3

Preparing for Harvest

One of the greatest hindrances to receiving the harvest today is the spirit and attitude of believers themselves. Just as in the Early Church there was a struggle for those who had been in the way for a long time (the Jews) to receive the new harvest that God was bringing in (the Gentiles), the church-going people of today can resist the harvest by their very attitude.

Jesus found the same to be true with His disciples. Jesus came preaching a kingdom message that was inclusive of all. It did not matter what their background was or what their customs were, Jesus' gospel was for everyone.

Some wonder why Jesus, who was such an awesome and powerful ministry, did not have more followers at the end of His earthly ministry. Was it because there was something wrong with His message? Was it because Jesus' message was so hard that it repelled the masses? Was there something wrong with Jesus' demonstration of love? "No! A thousand times, NO!"

I. Why didn't Jesus see more evangelistic fruit in His 3 ½ years of ministry?

A. The problem was not Jesus.

The problem was not with Jesus. The problem is never Jesus. The crowds loved Jesus. Jesus was like a human magnet to the hurting, wounded and bruised. Jesus' attitude of openness was inclusive and multitudes were drawn to Him.

B. The problem was with the disciples.

The problem was with the disciples. The attitude of the disciples effectively neutralized the love and compassion of Jesus. The love of Jesus drew people, but the negative, divisive, bigoted, narrow, and exclusive spirit of the disciples ran those same people off.

We are living in a day when God is sending forth messengers to preach the true Gospel of the Kingdom which is beckoning men to come. The harvest is getting very ripe and it is time for the Church to arise and reap. But is the Church a ready harvesting instrument? Is the Church going to be able to rise to the occasion? Or will we be like the disciples who neutralized what Jesus was trying to do?

II. What were the attitudes of the disciples that hindered the harvest from being reaped?

The attitude of the disciples can best be seen in some of the early instances in their experience as disciples.

A. Matthew 14:13-16 (See also Mark 6:36 and Luke 9:12)

When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.¹⁴ And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.¹⁵ When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.” ¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

The people who had been following Jesus and listening to His messages were hungry and in need. What was the response of the disciples? They told Jesus to “send them away.” The disciples were a referral service. They didn’t want to deal with people with real problems; they only wanted to work with the people who were whole. Jesus said to the disciples, “You give them something to eat.”

B. Matthew 15:21-28

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.” ²³ But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.” ²⁴ But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵ Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” ²⁶ But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” ²⁷ And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Jesus was testing the faith of a Gentile woman who was pleading with Him to help her demon-possessed daughter. In reality, the attitude of the disciples was being tested. Rather than taking up this woman’s cause, the disciples revealed the prejudice in their own hearts and told Jesus again to “send her away,” or as the Knox translation says, “Rid us of her!” The disciples are not interested in dealing with the demon-possessed. They weren’t interested in people who were non-Jews.

C. Matthew 17:14-21 (See also Mark 9)

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, ¹⁵ “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.¹⁶ So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.” ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I

bear with you? Bring him here to Me.” 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” 20 So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

The disciples were trying to cast a demon out of a boy. Their ministry was at stake here. When they failed miserably, Jesus saved the day and ministered to the boy. The disciples asked Jesus why they could not cast out the devil. Jesus let them know that ministering in this way required a life of prayer and fasting. Were the disciples interested enough in the lost and demonized of this world to give up a meal or two for them? Not at this time. The harvest will not be truly touched with the arm of the flesh. It will take the power of the Spirit working through the surrendered life. It will not be touched with a spirit of complacency, but with hearts of passion for the lost.

D. Mark 10:13-16 (See also Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 9:37-42; 18:15-17)

Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.” 16 And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.

The disciples failed another test. Here they seemed to have a low regard for small children. They seemed to think that bringing adults to the Lord is more important than children. Perhaps the reason for this is that they were interested on sitting on thrones and children are not of the voting age necessary to put them on these thrones. They were not interested in ministering to people who could not give them a lot in return.

E. Mark 10:35-45 (See also Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 9:33-34; Luke 9:46-48)

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” 36 And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” 37 They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory”... 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The disciples were arguing about their favorite subject, who would be greatest and who would get the chief seats. They were not concerned about serving; they were only interested in ruling. They were not interested in humble service; they wanted to sit and be served. As long as they had this attitude, they would not be able to minister to the ones that God would send to them.

F. Mark 14:3-9 (See also Matthew 26:6-13)

And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. 4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply. 6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7 For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. 8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

The disciples got real nervous when a woman who was known to be a harlot interrupted their meeting and made a huge scene in their nice little gathering. People do not always respond to the Lord in predictable ways. They are not used to our forms and our "sacred cows". The disciples cared more about their comfort and forms than they did about the soul of this poor woman.

G. Luke 9:49-56

Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side." 51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

The disciples believed that they were the only show in town. They were the only true church and everything had to come to and through them. If others were trying to reach people, the disciples must work to stop them. They had a sectarian spirit that kept them from cooperating with other reapers for the sake of the harvest. The

disciples had the attitude that “if they are not for us, they are against us.” Jesus reversed this and said, “If they are not against us, they are for us.” One church or one group of churches will never reap the harvest. We need each other, desperately.

H. Luke 19:1-7

Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” 6 So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. 7 But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.”

Jesus was criticized for associating with sinners. In fact, over and over again this charge was leveled against him (Luke 7:36). I’m sure that Jesus would say, “How can you reach sinners if you never interact with them?” So often our teaching on being separate from the world system has helped us to isolate ourselves from the people of the world. Jesus was a friend of sinners. Not a friend of their sin, but He was a person that was always relatable to them and approachable by them.

I. John 4:9, 27

9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans...27 And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”

The disciples demonstrated prejudice and a spirit of favoritism. They didn’t like the Samaritans and they were not afraid to say so. In fact, they were quite shocked that Jesus did not share their opinions in this matter. The disciples thought that their Gospel was for one race of people. Prejudice is an enemy of the harvest.

J. John 12:1-8

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. 2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. 4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, 5 “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and

had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. 7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

The disciples were again shocked at the unusual behavior of a woman who had been touched by the ministry of Jesus. They seemed to be more concerned about money than about people. They valued possessions more than the harvest. They somehow forgot that people are the most important thing in the world. They are the only things in the world that are eternal and as such will spend eternity in heaven or hell based on their relationship to Jesus.

These were the followers of Jesus. These were those who were going to be commissioned to build the church and preach the Gospel to the world. But they were not ready harvesters. Their attitudes kept the harvest away.

III. How did the disciples' attitudes change after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

When you read the Book of Acts, it is clear that God did a real work in each one of the lives of the disciples of Jesus. In the Book of Acts, these men were willing to lay down their resources and their very lives for the harvest (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-35).

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common... Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. Acts 4:32-35

God wants to do the same thing in the Church today. He wants to change our hearts. He wants to make us into ready harvesters. He wants to impart to us the Spirit of Jesus that is filled with love and compassion for the lost.

IV. What are the attitudes that we must cultivate to be ready for the harvest?

There are ten things we must do to be ready harvesters.

1. We must love the sinner the way God does (John 3:16).

God does not expect us to love sin, but, at the same time, He wants us to love the sinner. When we love the sinner, it does not mean that we condone their sin. Loving the sinner does not mean that we participate with them in their sin. However, if we are going to win the lost we must love the lost as Jesus loves the lost.

2. We must adjust priorities putting people ahead of possessions.

As Christians, we must denounce the spirit of materialism and the god of money. We must realize that all of the resources that God has given to us are not given to us for our pleasure alone. We must not feel that keeping our nice things nice is our only priority in life. We must be willing to get our new carpet dirty with the muddy shoes of the unsaved.

3. We must ask God for His heart of compassion.

We are not just interested in a feeling of pity. We want God to give us a heart of compassion that will motivate us to get personally involved in meeting the needs of others. We can't just "send them away." We have got to allow ourselves to be equipped to meet the needs of those that God sends to us (James 1:27; I John 3:17).

4. We must maintain a servant spirit.

No matter how long we have been Christians, we must never outgrow our servant spirit. We must continue to seek for ways to serve, not ways to be served. We must not be seeking to rule or to be recognized, but we should only be thinking of how to get the job done.

5. We must become a feeder of new converts.

Every Christian should be able to disciple a new convert. The elders and church leaders can only minister to so many. Don't always be sending people away to be fed. You feed them. Learn how to do it. Put some time and effort into it.

6. We must deal with personal prejudice and favoritism.

In Christ there is neither male nor female, slave or free, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, black, red, yellow or white. All are precious in His sight! James tells us that we cannot be a people of faith giving glory to God when there is prejudice in our midst.

7. We must be patient with new converts.

It takes a while for them to learn the language, to learn our forms, for the hemlines to go down, for all the changes to take place. Accept them as they are and let the Holy Spirit deal with them. Certainly we need to address sinful areas, but let's make sure we know the difference between sin and a simple violation of our traditions, forms and unique Christian culture.

8. We must get a vision for children and young people.

Most people who get saved do so before the age of 20. The youth of today are the church of tomorrow. Determine never to minimize the conversion of a child who has the potential of living a full life for the Lord. Children can be so moldable and are full of such potential in God.

9. We must encourage all harvesting.

It doesn't matter if the harvesting is attached to your name. It doesn't matter if we do not fully agree on each and every point. The other churches in town are not against us. They are on the same side!

10. We must get serious about the harvest.

Pray, fast, intercede, and get radical! We can't be complacent about the harvest when we understand the destiny of those who do not know Christ.

Lesson 4

What is an Evangelist?

I. What are the biblical words that form the basis for evangelism?

There are three main Greek words that are used in connection with this ministry in the New Testament. They all come from the same root word. They all come from the Greek word from which we get our English word “evangelist”.

A. To announce good news (*euaggelizo*)

Euaggelizo literally means “to announce good news or glad tidings”. This word is descriptive of the ministry, the work or the activity of evangelism. This word is often translated “preach” (Luke 16:16; Acts 5:42; 8:4; 17:18).

The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. Luke 16:16

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. Acts 5:42

Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Acts 8:4

B. The good news or the gospel (*euaggelion*)

This word means “the good news or a good message.” It is the word that is most often translated “gospel.” This word is descriptive of the message that an evangelist brings. Although many things can be good news, this word is especially applied to the good news of God’s saving grace made possible by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:14; Acts 13:32; 20:24; Rom. 1:16; 10:15; I Cor. 4:15; Eph. 1:13).

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:14

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. Romans 1:16

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15b

C. A preacher or a messenger of good news (*euaggelistes*)

This word means “a preacher or messenger of good news.” This word is descriptive of the person who brings or announces the good news and is usually translated

“evangelist” in the New Testament. This word is only found three times in the New Testament. It is used of Philip (Acts 21:8), it is used in the list of the fivefold ministries (Eph. 4:11), and, finally, Paul instructs Timothy, an apostle, to do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5).

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ... Ephesians 4:11-12

We might visualize the distinction between these words in the following chart:

Greek Word	Word Meaning	Descriptive of the:
<i>Euaggelizo</i>	To announce good news	Activity or Work
<i>Euaggelion</i>	Good news or a good message	Message Given
<i>Euaggelistes</i>	A preacher or messenger of good news	Person Speaking

II. What are the different expressions of evangelists as represented in the Bible?

A. Jesus was an evangelist.

Luke’s Gospel seems to be that of Jesus as the Evangelist. The word “*euaggelizo*” occurs ten times in the Gospel of Luke and it only occurs one other time in the rest of the Gospels—the Gospel of Matthew.

Luke gave a summary of this ministry of an evangelist in relation to Christ in Luke 4:18-19.

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.

Here Luke lists six things that were going to characterize Jesus’ ministry as the evangelist.

1. Preaching the gospel.
2. Healing the brokenhearted.
3. Preaching deliverance to the captives.
4. Preaching recovery of sight to the blind (Mt. 11:5).
5. Setting at liberty them that are bruised.

6. Preaching the acceptable year of the Lord.

The acceptable year of the Lord had to do with the Year of Jubilee and the year of release in Israel. In the Year of Jubilee all debts were canceled and lost property was restored to its original owner (Lev. 25:8-34).

Luke portrayed the preaching of the gospel as being the primary purpose for Christ's being sent. (Luke 4:43; Luke 7:22; 8:1; 20:1).

Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." Luke 4:42-43

B. Jesus sent His disciples out to evangelize (Luke 9:1-2, 6).

Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick...So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

C. The Early Church continued the work of evangelism.

1. They went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4; 11:20).

Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

Acts 8:4

2. They preached in villages and towns (Acts 8:25, 40).

So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. Acts 8:25

D. Jesus appointed certain people to be evangelists (Eph. 4:11; Acts 8:4-25; 21:8).

Apart from Jesus, Phillip is the only one in the New Testament who is actually called an "evangelist" (Acts 21:8).

On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

Therefore, we can use the life and ministry of Phillip as a model. On the basis of his life, we see that the evangelist is:

1. A traveling ministry.

2. A ground-breaking ministry.
3. A Holy Spirit led ministry.
4. A ministry having the ability to preach and communicate the Gospel.
5. A ministry that can expect signs and wonders (healing and deliverance).
6. An expert soul-winner (private).
7. A harvesting ministry (public).
8. An example of the practice and methodology of evangelism.
9. An equipper of the local church.

All of the five ministries of Ephesians 4 share this function. The evangelist does not evangelize the saints, but the evangelist equips the saints to evangelize.

E. All believers have been called by God to the work of evangelism and to be a witness for the Lord (Mt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:8).

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

III. What does it mean to be a witness?

- A. To be a witness is to be ready to give testimony of what you have seen and heard (Acts 4:18-20; I John 1:1-4).

So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:18-20

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us--that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. I John 1:1-4

- B. To be a witness is to live a life that attests to your confession (I Th. 1:5-7).

This is a life that is able to say, “Follow me as I follow the Lord” (I Cor. 11:1; I Tim. 4:12).

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. I Thessalonians 1:5-7

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. I Corinthians 11:1

- C. To be a witness is to let our light shine though the good works that we do (Mt. 5:16; Acts 10:36-39).

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ--He is Lord of all--37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Acts 10:36-39

- D. To be a witness is to share the gospel message when the door of opportunity is open (Luke 21:13; Acts 4:33; 13:31-32; Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:2-4).

And [pray] for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:19-20

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Colossians 4:2-4

Lesson 5

Sharing Your Faith

I. What is the most powerful means of sharing your faith with others?

Your personal testimony is the most powerful tool in witnessing to your faith in Christ (Rev. 12:11).

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

A testimony is a public affirmation of an experience. If you have had a genuine experience of Jesus Christ, you should be willing to give testimony of it. People can argue with you concerning many things, but they cannot argue with you regarding your testimony, "Once I was blind, but now I see" (John 9:17-34).

They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 24 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." 25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." 26 Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" 28 Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." 30 The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." 34 They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

- A. You should write out your testimony in a succinct form.
- B. You should practice sharing your testimony in 10 minutes or less.
- C. You should include the following elements:

1. Your life apart from Christ (do not glorify the life of sin).
2. What brought you to a point of decision for Christ.
3. The changes in your life since receiving Christ.
4. Your experience of water baptism and the baptism of the Spirit.
5. The challenge of separating from the old life.
6. The importance of your identification with the local church and other believers.

II. What is the “Roman Road” that serves as a basis for sharing your faith?

Several key passages in Romans are often referred to as the “Roman Road.” The truth contained in these verses can assist you in sharing your faith with others.

A. Romans 3:23

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Truth Contained:

1. All people on earth are sinners.
2. Sin separates us from God and keeps us from fulfilling our destiny.

B. Romans 6:23a

For the wages of sin is death...

Truth Contained:

1. The penalty for sin is death.
2. The death that is referred to is both physical and spiritual.
3. Eternal death is separation from God.

C. Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Truth Contained:

1. God set His love upon us in spite of our sinful condition.

2. Because of God's great love for us, He provided a plan for our condition.
3. God in His holiness could not simply ignore our sin.
4. God sent Jesus to pay our debt and die in our place.

D. Romans 6:23b

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Truth Contained:

1. Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. He became our sinless substitute.
2. Because of what Christ did, God offers to us a free gift of eternal life.
3. In order to receive that gift we must reach out and accept the gift.

E. Romans 10:9-10 and Romans 10:13

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:9-10

For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." Romans 10:13

Truth Contained:

1. When Christ died on the cross He made it possible for us to receive the forgiveness of sins.
2. This gift of salvation is given to those who acknowledge their sin, call on the name of the Lord Jesus and accept him as their Savior and Lord.

III. How do I encourage people toward an actual "decision" for Christ?

While not everyone will be ready for this step, there will be some people that are ready to make a decision for Christ. When you discern that they are ready you can walk them through some basic steps based on the above scriptures. Ask and, if necessary, briefly discuss the following questions before you pray.

- A. Do you realize that you are a sinner (3:23)?
- B. Do you realize that Jesus died on the cross for your sin (Rom. 5:8)?

- C. Are you willing to repent of and turn away from your sins (Acts 17:30)?
- D. Are you willing to receive Christ into your life as the Lord of your life (John 1:12)? Do you understand what that means?
- E. Are you willing to come under the authority of the Word of God? Do you have a Bible? Have you ever read the Bible?
- F. Are you willing to begin a new lifestyle under the direction of God's Word?
- G. Are you willing to do it now (II Cor. 6:2)?

IV. How can I lead people in the “sinner’s prayer”?

Many people who come to this point do not really know how to pray or they do not really know what to say in this kind of prayer. By assisting them in praying you can help them be more specific with God.

- A. Have them repeat a prayer along these lines:

Dear Lord,

Today I realize that I am truly a sinner. I realize that my sins have separated me from God. I call upon You as the only One that can save me. I thank You that You love me and that You sent your Son to die in my place on the cross. I repent of all my sins and all of those things that have separated me from You. I am willing to put away my sinful ways and live the way that You have designed for me to live. I acknowledge You as the Lord of the universe and the Lord of my life. I believe that Christ died for me and rose again from the dead. I want to live a life that pleases You in every way. Help me to know what to do. Help me to do what I know is right to do. Thank You for saving my soul.

- B. Ask them to pray to God additionally in their own words.

As they pray listen to what they say because it might help you to discern their understanding of what they are actually doing.

V. What are some immediate things that I should do with those with whom I have prayed?

- A. Praise the Lord with them for their new found salvation. Help them to understand that this experience is based on faith in Jesus Christ and in what the Word of God says not on their feelings.
- B. Talk to them about the importance of water baptism to seal the work that they have just begun and to assist them in overcoming sin in their life.

- C. Make sure that they have a Bible and encourage them to read the Gospel of John over the next couple of days. Ask them to take notes on what they feel that God is saying to them as they read. Let them know that you will be calling them.
- D. Talk to them about prayer and communing with God.
- E. Talk to them about the importance of gathering with other believers for support and encouragement.
- F. Warn them that Satan and even their relatives and friends may try to talk them out of what they just experienced.
- G. Ask them if it would be alright to call them regularly for a while.

VI. How should I follow-up on them in the days following?

- A. Call them the next day to find out how things are going. Check to see if they are reading the Gospel of John. Pray with them every time you talk to them.
- B. Call them on Tuesday to invite them to the mid-week service. Tell them that you will save a seat for them. Talk to them of the importance of becoming familiar with the Word of God and receiving teaching.
- C. Call them on Saturday night and encourage them to come to the prayer meeting with you and to remind them about the service on Sunday. Invite them to lunch following the Sunday service. All of these things are going to help them change the patterns of their life.
- D. Talk to them about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let them know that any time they are ready to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit you are ready to assist them.
- E. Give them your phone number and encourage them to call for any reason.
- F. Encourage them to come with you to one of the many small groups.

VII. How should I encourage them in the longer term?

- A. Stress the importance of fellowship with other believers.
- B. Introduce them to other believers with whom you feel they may have an affinity.
- C. Assist them in being able to attend activities for their age or lifestyle group.
- D. Encourage them to take initiative to make some new friends.

Lesson 6-7

Letting Your Light Shine

I. What was Jesus main form of evangelism?

While Jesus preached to the crowds and taught publicly, His main form of evangelism was ministering to the needs of people who were hurting. A summary of his ministry is found in Acts 10:38.

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

II. What was a primary purpose for Jesus' coming into the world?

Jesus came with the world in His heart.

A. He came to seek and to save that which was lost (Mt. 18:11; Luke 9:56; 19:10).

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19:10

B. He came to reveal to the world the love of the Father (John 15:9; 17:26).

As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. John 15:9

C. He came to put a face on God and love the people of the world the way the Father would love them (John 1:18; 14:9; Col. 1:15).

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. John 1:18

He who has seen Me has seen the Father... John 14:9b

D. He came to bring light and life to the heart of every man (John 1:9).

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. John 1:6-9

Jesus method of showing the love of the father was to lay his life down for those who had need.

III. What is the primary purpose for the church in the world?

- A. The Church of Jesus Christ has been given the same commission as that of Jesus—to seek and save that which is lost.

It is something that we all acknowledge, we write about it, we discuss it among ourselves, we teach seminars on it, we pray about it, we sing about it, but we don't really do it!

In addition, we have changed the great commission to something that no longer resembles the pattern that Jesus gave to us. His challenge was **to go into the world** and bring the light of the Gospel to those held captive by Satan. Instead we have built fortresses, polished our theology, debated doctrine, perfected our singing and worship and **invited the world to come and join us**. This is the Old Testament pattern of evangelism (“Come, behold the works of the Lord”).

Jesus did just the opposite. I am thankful that He did not just dump a load of tracts on us and invite us to the great cathedral in the sky. No! He came to us when we were not inclined to come to Him. He came to where we were, living among us, showing us the light of God's love. It is a good thing He did. The gap was too great for any of us to get to God. We could never bridge it.

Somehow we have lost our way from the original purpose. We have separated ourselves from the world to such a degree that we have no influence. We have begun to view the world as our enemy and as such we have lost much of our ability to relate to sinners and those in need of deliverance.

- B. God wants us to carry on and fulfill the ministry of Jesus.

What Jesus started, we are to complete. We have the Spirit of the Lord upon us and we are to channel that divine anointing and energy to be used toward touching the world through acts of love and kindness so that the people of the world can see the Father's heart of love.

- C. God wants us to be careful to fulfill the greatest commission of all—LOVE.

The challenge for us today is to pattern ourselves after Jesus, the greatest evangelist of all time. The New Testament **great commission** or command to us is to found many times in the Bible. We are to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, and we are to “love our neighbor as ourselves” (See: Mt. 19:19; 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37; Rom. 15:1-2; Jam. 2:8). This is the royal law of love. This is the most repeated command in the New Testament.

1. We have done well in our loving God.

By and large, most churches have worked extra hard on the first commandment to love God.

2. We have not done nearly as well on loving our neighbor or we have been confused over what it means to love our neighbor. We have misinterpreted this command to justify self-love.

Love in God's mind is an active thing, not a passive thing. Love is something that is demonstrated not just discussed.

Jesus "loved His neighbor" by going about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.

Jesus answered the question "Who is my neighbor?" with the story of the "Good" Samaritan.

As Christians we seem to have lost this aspect of Christianity. Somehow we have felt that if we truly serve the lost that somehow we are approving of the lifestyle of the lost. But the New Testament is very clear.

- a. We are to love our enemies (Luke 6:27-36).

But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. 29 To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. 31 And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. 32 But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. 36 Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

- b. We are to feed and bless them (Mt. 5:43-48).

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?

Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

- c. We are to do good to all men (Gal. 6:10).
- d. We are to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).
- e. We are to let our light shine (I Pet. 3:8-12).

IV. What is the light that we are to shine before all men?

What is this light that we are to shine upon those who sit in darkness? Matthew tells us very specifically. He says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.” (Mt. 5:16)

A. The light that we are to shine is our good works.

Like Dorcas we are to be “full of good works and charitable deeds” (Acts 9:36). The people of the world will see these works and they will be drawn to the Lord.

Perhaps we are too much the products of grace to focus on “good works”. Martin Luther was strong on grace. The battle cry of the reformation was *sola gratia* (by grace alone), *sola fidei* (by faith alone), and *sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone).

Luther was reacting in his day to a man working his way to heaven by works of righteousness. He did not like the Book of James. He called it the “straw epistle” because of its emphasis on works.

But James was a pastor. He was tired of hearing about how much faith people had. He wanted to see their “faith” in a more tangible way. He felt that if people had the faith that they claimed to have, there ought to be a visible demonstration of that faith.

Perhaps the world is looking for the same demonstration from the Church. Perhaps they are tired of empty statements concerning God’s love and they are looking for a living demonstration. Maybe they are tired of tracts that say God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their lives and they would like to see that love in action. Maybe they need to see some “living epistles”.

As Christians we must be careful that we love not just in word or in tongue but in deed and in truth (I John 3:18). We don’t want to deceive ourselves that somehow we can love God who we have not seen and yet hate our brother who we have seen. John says, “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar” (I John 4:20).

Actually if we understand God's grace properly, we would understand that God's grace has come to us so that we can pass on that which we have received (Eph. 2:8-10).

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

B. The light is not what we have often thought it to be.

I would like to share some areas where our thinking needs to be challenged concerning our true emphasis as believers and the power of "doing good" as a Gospel witness.

These are areas that can be strongholds in our thinking that keep us from what God wants us to do. Our thought processes can become a barrier to us.

1. Prosperity and Faith for Abundance

We like to believe that God wants to bless us and as we exert our faith we can tap into God's abundance and experience miracle supply.

There is a truth to this, but II Corinthians 9:8 helps us to understand that God gives us extra grace, extra supply and abundance for the purpose of doing "good works".

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance... for every good work.

II Corinthians 9:8

Often we pray for abundance so we can increase and get bigger and better. God would feel much better about blessing us if He knew that we would use it to be channels of that blessing to others (Abraham).

Those who are rich in this world's goods are to be rich in good works, willing to give and to share with those in need (I Tim. 6:17-19).

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

2. Theological Exactness

We have done well in the theological arena, splitting hairs and debating over issues at times of little or no consequence (much like the Pharisees who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel). The Pharisees were accurate in their teaching, but their life demonstration was weak. This is why Jesus instructed people to listen to what they said but to not follow what they practiced (Mt. 23:1-3).

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God’s Law. You won’t go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following them. They talk a good line, but they don’t live it. They don’t take it into their hearts and live it out in their behavior. It’s all spit-and-polish veneer.

– MSG

All of our great theology, however, has done little to win the world to Christ.

Paul wrote to Titus to remind him what is more important (Tit. 3:8-9). He said,

This is faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are profitable to men. But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

Paul told them to avoid disputes and strivings over the law. The “law” was their scripture. I often wonder how much of what we spend so much energy debating would be considered by Paul to be useless.

Why do groups like the Mormons do so well? Is it their impressive doctrine?

3. Praise, Worship and Spiritual Sacrifices

We have had a great understanding of our New Testament role as priests unto God. We have focused on perfecting the God-ward aspect of our priesthood. We have worked hard on the spiritual sacrifices of praise, worship, thanksgiving and joy.

But the writer to the Hebrews gives us a more balanced view of our priesthood. The priest had a God-ward ministry to stand before God as a representative of the people. But the priest was to come out of the presence of God and represent God to the people.

Spiritual sacrifices have a God-ward aspect, but they also have a man-ward aspect (i.e. our time, our talents, our substance and our good works).

Therefore by Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. [We tend to stop here] But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Hebrews 13:15-16

We need to work on the man-ward aspect of our priesthood and become just as perfected in this area as we have in our worship.

4. Church Attendance

We have worked hard to establish in our people's minds that if they are going to be good Christians, **they need to attend meetings**. They are not to miss church or forsake "the assembling of themselves together".

We have at times done this to the extent that our Christianity can be measured by our church attendance alone. If we attend church we are good Christians. If we fail to attend regularly we are poor Christians.

In this concept, the only difference between believers and non-believers is what they do on Sunday mornings. Leading people to Christ has become synonymous with inviting people to church.

Hebrews 10:25 is a passage that we use to get people to attend services. But when you read this entire passage you come up with a more balanced picture.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some.

Hebrews 10:24-25

We have developed a Christianity that **needs meetings** rather than a Christianity that **meets needs**. The purpose of our meetings should be to stir us up toward good deeds. Christians can spend all of their time attending revival meetings, listening to tapes and watching Christian TV and have no time to interact with the lost.

5. True Spirituality

We have tended to judge a person's spirituality by the "Mary Model". People that sit at Jesus feet, who pray hours a day, who prophesy in believer meetings, who "speak in tongues more than ye all" and who fall out under the power are deemed more spiritual.

While the “Mary Model” is to be seen as the better part, there is another vital part of Christianity that “Martha” modeled. It is model of service and selfless giving. Martha has got a rather “bad rap” in most Christian preaching. Our Christianity does not have to be an “either/or” situation. It should be “both/and”.

James defined true spirituality or “pure religion” as visiting “orphans and widows in their trouble and keeping oneself unspotted from the world.” (Jam. 1:27)

In Isaiah 58:6-11 God indicates the kind of fast that he has chosen.

Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, “Here I am.” If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

6. Studying the Bible

We can spend a great deal of time as Christians studying the Bible and getting to know the Word. This is good, but not for the purpose of getting puffed up in relation to our Bible knowledge. The purpose of our study and preparation in the Word is to thoroughly equip us for every good work.

Knowledge puffs up, but loves edifies.

We tend to study to become good preachers and Bible expositors, however, the fruit of our Bible study should be good works.

All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, [Why?] that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. II Timothy 3:16-17

7. Government Involvement

Our relationship to governments has sometimes been more like the Jews relationship to the Romans. We have been a difficult people to rule over at best. We have become quite good at criticizing, picketing, boycotting and attempting to

win people over in the ballot box. But how much have we served our governments and helped them meet the needs of our communities.

We have been good at criticizing leaders and those in authority, but have we been willing to serve them. However, if we will “do charitable acts” and “good deeds” we may find a place of favor with government leaders in society (e.g. Volunteering to help with schools, community needs, homelessness, etc.).

Paul talks about our relationship to government in Titus 3:1-8. In verse one he says “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.”

In Romans he indicates similar things (Rom. 13:3).

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise of the same.
Romans 13:3

We win governments over not by organizing rallies and voting out bad politicians. We win them by doing good. We end up on the news programs. Everyone likes this kind of church.

8. Dressing for Success

Sometimes we focus on outward appearances in the church. We have become “good dressers” and real fashion conscious. We have gone to the point that at times the unsaved feel uncomfortable around us.

The Bible is more concerned about how we are adorned spiritually. Women were instructed to adorn themselves with “good works” (I Tim. 2:10). When we adorn ourselves with good works, we will look real good to the world.

9. Faith and Works

While believers are saved by faith and grace, they are saved for the purpose of good works (Eph. 2:10) and every believer should be...

- Fruitful in every good work (Col. 1:9-10).

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

- Zealous for good works (Titus 2:14).

...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

- Rich in good works (I Tim. 6:17-19).

Paul says in Titus 3:14, “And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs that they may not be unfruitful.”

Fruitfulness for us has meant winning souls. But that fruit will not come without our ministry of good works.

10. The Anointing

We have tended to put the concept of the “anointing” into a very mystical realm. We have referred to the anointing in the context of prophecy and operating spiritual gifts. We talk about “anointed preaching”, anointed services and anointed prayer meetings.

The anointing in Jesus life was not limited to prayer, prophecy and preaching. The anointing was upon Him to break bondages, set captives free, minister to the poor and to go about doing good deeds (Luke 4:18-19).

- C. Those who would be leaders in the church are to be patterns of good works (Tit. 2:6-8).

Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

- D. This kind of evangelism will work (I Pet. 2:11-12).

True love is impossible to resist!

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Lesson 8

Loving Your Neighbor

I. What did Jesus teach about loving our neighbor as ourselves?

Jesus' teaching on loving our neighbor is summarized in His story of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25-37).

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" 27 So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." 29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" 37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

A. This story describes the condition of all men apart from Christ.

The man in this story represents the people of the world apart from Christ.

1. They are on a journey downward.
2. They are on a journey away from the city of God.
3. They are on a dangerous road that will eventually lead to death.
4. They are being stalked by an enemy who is seeking to steal, kill and destroy.

B. This story summarizes the function of our ministry to the world.

C. This story teaches us with it means to be neighborly.

This story is told by Jesus in answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

II. What did the thieves do to their victim?

The thieves represent the forces of darkness that are out to destroy lives. Notice that the thieves did three things:

A. They stripped the man of his clothing.

It is interesting that the first thing that Adam lost when he sinned was his clothing. God has provided clothing for the believer. Satan's desire is to take it from us and replace it with clothing of his own.

God's Clothing	Satan's Clothing
Garments of Salvation (Is. 61:10)	Cloak of Bondage
Robes of Righteousness (Is. 61:10)	Covering of Sin
Garments of Praise (Is. 61:3)	Spirit of Heaviness
Armor of Light (Rom. 13:12)	Shroud of Darkness
Beautiful Garments (Is. 52:1)	Ashes

B. They wounded the man.

They abused him, injured him and inflicted him with many wounds with sticks and clubs. These thieves could have stopped with robbing the man, but they insisted on damaging the man's person. Their intent was to kill him. Satan is an expert at bringing pain and death to our lives.

C. They abandoned the man and left him for dead.

Lamsa says, "They left him with little life remaining in him." They left him in a helpless and hopeless condition, totally shut up to the mercy of God and the compassion of others. He had been so thoroughly injured that he could do nothing for himself and apart from grace was doomed to die a slow and agonizing death.

Jesus clearly wants us to understand that people outside of Christ are victims of the devil, they are not our enemies.

III. Why didn't everyone help the victimized man?

The man who was robbed, beaten and left for dead was without hope unless someone would come by to help him. People did come by, but unfortunately not everyone was willing to help. Many saw the condition of the man, but different things were in their hearts and for one reason or another they did not come to the man's assistance.

Not everyone wanted to get involved. Not everyone wanted to be neighborly. There may have been several reasons why they did not want to get involved.

- A. Some may have failed to respond out of fear of personal safety and a strong desire for self-preservation.

“If I get involved, maybe the same thing will happen to me. Maybe I will be beaten and robbed. It is too risky to get involved.”

- B. Some may have failed to respond out of selfishness.

“If I get involved I will have to change my schedule. It may cost me personal finances. It may cost me my valuable time.” It takes real commitment to get involved with the harvest.

- C. Some may have failed to respond out of prejudice.

Jesus introduced the thought of prejudice when he made a Samaritan a part of the story. Some may fail to respond because they do not deem the injured man to be worthy of their attention. He is not of “their kind,” racially, economically or socially. Unfortunately without clothes it was difficult to know this man’s actual station in life.

- D. Some may have failed to respond out of a cold judgmentalism that suggested that the man probably got just what he deserved.

This argument says that if the man had been more careful, if he had not been traveling alone or if he had made wiser choices this never would have happened. He is simply experiencing the consequences of his own bad choices. Sometimes it is easy to forget that there but for the grace of God go we.

- E. Some may have failed to respond because of a wrong sense of priority and a wrong understanding of “true religion” from God’s perspective.

The Levite may have been thinking that if he helped the man that he would be late for his religious duties. The priest may have been concerned that if he tried to help this man and the man died he would have been ceremonially unclean for a week (Lev. 21:11; Num. 19:16). This would mean that he would not be able to carry on his normal schedule for that amount of time.

- F. Some may have failed to respond because they feel that they have no answers.

They see the condition of the man and they are sure that he is well beyond their own skill and ability to help the man.

Whatever the case, there are always plenty of reasons not to respond. There are thousands of people who can justify themselves with millions of excuses why not to make the effort and why not to get involved.

Notice that the lawyer in this case asked the question of Jesus because he wanted to “justify himself.”

IV. Why did the Samaritan man get involved?

When some are making excuses or hurrying by, there was one man who was different. There was someone who decided that no excuse was good enough not to get involved.

We cannot be sure why Jesus chose to use a Samaritan man as an example of the one who responded except for the fact that he may have been the least likely (in the lawyer’s mind) of the persons who passed by to naturally respond or to have the resources to respond.

Often times it is not the well-trained, the seminary graduate or the people of fame and fortune who respond to the needs of mankind. Often it is just “common ordinary people” who have few resources and little training who actually do the work of ministering.

Sometimes the people that we think should have an answer do not have an answer. Sometimes the people that we think should care do not care. Sometimes the people that can afford to spend resources to attend to these needs do not attend to these needs.

Why? Because they do not have a perfect, sensitive and caring heart.

The difference is the heart. Some people have education, training, financial resources and spiritual giftings, but they do not have a sensitive, caring and compassionate heart.

Perhaps the Samaritan was different because somehow he could identify with the beaten man. Maybe he had been there before. Maybe he had experienced this kind of trouble and was better able to identify with the need. Sometimes we are so far removed from our personal experience of salvation that we no longer empathize with the lost.

The priest and the Levite may have been out of touch with the true human condition. It may have been easier for them to exhort the man, criticize the man or give him a tract on four ways to avoid pitfalls in the future. Unfortunately this is not what the man needed.

What the man needed was simple and not complex.

Sometimes we make ministering to people too complex. We feel that we must have training in psychology or professional counseling, when in reality these needy ones may just need a helping hand, a listening ear and a personal touch.

The Samaritan was not a medical doctor. He was not a trained professional, but he was there. He was on the scene and something had to be done. Often times the best trained people are not where the needs are. The people that are hurting the most are not always sitting in the doctor's waiting rooms. More often than not they are in the gutters, along the sides of the road or in the back alleys where the trained professional never go.

But God has an army of ministers that He is raising up in these days from all walks of life who are familiar with the needs of mankind and who pass the needy every day.

This army needs to be motivated by the compassion of Jesus and released to function in the power of the Spirit to reach those in the highways and byways. This army of ministers needs to follow the pattern of the Samaritan.

V. What did the Samaritan man do?

A. The Samaritan did not do the wrong things.

1. He did not try to over analyze the situation.
2. He did not try to determine why the man was in that condition.
3. He did not try to decide if he was the best man for the job.

B. The Samaritan did the right things.

He simply saw the need and reached out with whatever resources that he had to meet the need. His motto was, "See a need and meet it, find a hurt and heal it."

1. He came to where the man was.

We cannot always wait for the needy people to come to us. In fact, I often find that the truly needy are not the ones who are coming and the ones who are coming are not the truly needy.

I am glad that Jesus was willing to come to where we were in our wounded, stripped condition when we could do nothing for ourselves.

God want us to be relatable. He wants us to be able to touch people where they are. Some of us want people to clean themselves up first. But we must be willing to take men as we find them.

2. He had compassion on the man.

Here is the thing that separated the Samaritan from the priest and the Levite. He had a different heart. He had a heart of compassion. The word "compassion" means to feel what someone else feels and to hurt with those who hurt.

Because the Samaritan had a compassionate heart, he could not keep walking. He had to stop and minister to the man in need.

No other motivation will sustain you in the ministry. Ministering to people is need orientated. We must be able to feel what people feel if we are going to be true ministers of reconciliation.

3. He bound up the man's wounds.

Jesus came to bind up the broken hearted (Is. 61:1). He bandaged the hurting areas and dressed the wounds of Satan's victims. He was willing to touch the untouchable (Mark 1:40-42).

4. He poured in the wine and the oil.

The oil and the wine represent the Word and the Spirit. The wine brought cleansing and the oil brought soothing to the man's wounds.

5. He set the man on his own animal.

He was willing to use his own resources to meet this man's needs (not the central government). He used his own animal, his own wine and oil, and his own money to help the man in need.

6. He brought the man to an inn.

He didn't leave this man on the roadside. He brought him to a place that he could receive ongoing care. He brought him to a place of refuge and healing. We need to bring people to the local church where they can get ongoing care through relationship.

7. He followed up on him.

He didn't stop his involvement with this man until the man was up on his feet and he could take care of himself.

VI. How does this story help us to redefine our mission of evangelism?

A. Evangelism involves loving people.

Jesus said to the lawyer at the end of the story that he was to "Go and do likewise!"

B. Evangelism involves meeting both natural and spiritual needs.

C. Evangelism involves being ready with the gospel to those who are open.

Lesson 9

Discovering Your Field

I. What is the primary vehicle used to win people to Christ?

The primary vehicle that is used by God to win people to Christ is relationships.

- A. Of all those who have come to Christ in their lifetime, approximately 85% of them came through a relative, friend, neighbor or co-worker.
- B. The Bible gives us examples of this process.
 - 1. Andrew brought his brother Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-42).

One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

- 2. Phillip brought Nathaniel to Jesus (John 1:43-46).

The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

- 3. The Samaritan woman at the well testified to all her acquaintances (John 4:28-30).

The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

- 4. Cornelius, the Roman centurion, was instrumental in bringing his relatives and family to the Lord (Acts 10).
 - 5. The Philippian jailor became a vehicle for his circle of family and friends to come to the Lord (Acts 16:25-34).

And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your

household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. Acts 16:30-32

II. What is your personal field to harvest?

Jesus told His disciples that there was a ripe harvest waiting for them (John 4:35). He told them to lift up their eyes because it was right in front of them.

Do you not say, “There are still four months and then comes the harvest”? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

A. Your field is not usually composed of total strangers.

Most of the time we react to evangelism methods that force us to minister to people that are total strangers to us. The truth of the matter is that this type of evangelistic effort is rarely successful. There are several reasons for this:

1. When you have no relationship with a person it is hard for you to present yourself in a believable way.
2. Very few people respond to Christ the very first time that they receive a witness.
3. When we approach a total stranger on a one time encounter we are rarely coming to them at a convenient time.
4. There are the rare exceptions when God will lead you to a total stranger, but it will clearly be a divine appointment (Acts 8:26-40).

A divine appointment is something that God arranges for us. The best biblical example of this is Phillip and his encounter with the Ethiopian man.

Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” Acts 8:26

Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.” Acts 8:29

B. Your field is right in front of your eyes.

Your field includes five primary groups of people.

1. Your immediate household

This includes your parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, or sons and daughters.

2. Your extended family of relatives

This includes aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews.

3. Your physical neighbors

This includes those people who live on the same street as you do. If you walk out of your actual dwelling place, what are the other houses that you can see? These are people that God wants you to get to know for the purpose of testimony and witness.

4. Your work associates

This includes all of the people with whom you work, particularly those with whom you have daily interaction.

5. Your life-course contacts

These are the people that you see regularly because they:

- a. Fill your car with petrol.
- b. Take your money when you buy groceries.
- c. Teach your children in school.
- d. Fix your plumbing as needed.
- e. Mow your lawn.
- f. Treat your illnesses.
- g. Serve you in your favorite restaurant.
- h. Ride with you in a cycling club.
- i. Are members of the same country club.
- j. Participate in the same charity.
- k. Sit next to you in class.
- l. Etc.

Sometimes it is good to frequent the same place intentionally to build a relationship with the same people.

III. What are some important insights regarding ministry to relatives?

One of the reasons that God saved you is so that you can be an instrument of the Lord to reach your family. He saved you in order to reach your family through you.

- A. Jesus commanded the man who had received a miracle touch and was delivered from demons to testify to his family (Luke 8:39-40).

Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

B. There are many instances of household salvation in the Bible.

1. Noah and his family (I Pet. 3:20)
2. The Israelite and his family (Ex. 12:22-23)
3. Rahab and her family (Josh. 2:12-14; 6:25)

"Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

Joshua 2:12-14

And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. Joshua 6:25

4. Zacchaeus and his family (Luke 19:8-9)
5. Lydia and her family (Acts 16:14-15)
6. Crispus and his family (Acts 18:8)
7. Stephanus and his family (I Cor. 1:16)

C. There are some tips that will help us when ministering to our immediate family.

1. Make sure that your own experience is genuine (Acts 2:38-40).
 - a. Repentance
 - b. Water Baptism
 - c. Spirit Baptism
 - d. Separation from ungodliness.

In other words be the kind of Christian that stirs up thirst in others.

2. Demonstrate it before you preach it.
3. Be confident in God's desire to save your family.
4. Clean up any offenses from the past making restitution where needed.

5. Pray and fast for God's grace and heart and a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.
6. Become a servant in the home looking for opportunities to demonstrate love.
7. Wait for God to arrange an opportunity.
8. Focus on open hearts and open doors.
9. Ask God to help you identify the person who is the key to unlock the family.
10. Visualize family members as though they are already saved (Rom. 4:17b).
God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did...
11. Invite them to non-threatening church functions.
12. Be ready to share your testimony and the gospel when the time is right.

IV. What are some things that we can do to be a witness to our neighbors?

A. Be the initiator of positive contact.

1. Do not wait for them to come to you.
2. Make an effort to meet them.
3. Meet them with gifts (Pro. 18:16).

A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.

Giving a gift works wonders; it may bring you before important people! –NLT

4. Remember their names and the names of their children.

B. Be observant to potential needs.

1. Listen for hints of needs in conversation.
2. Watch what is going on around you.

C. Be a good neighbor.

1. Be willing to share your stuff.
2. Watch over their stuff.
3. Work together on projects.
4. Avoid correcting or rebuking them for activity that bothers you.

D. Do things to bring neighbors together.

1. Get involved in your neighborhood association.
2. Help put together a block party.

3. Have a party at your house.

V. What are some ways to minister to total strangers?

There will be very few times that a total stranger will respond to the gospel the first time we talk to them. In this case we must see ourselves as one in chain of people who will ultimately witness to them.

- A. Sometimes we are sowing and sometimes we are watering the seeds (I Cor. 3:5-8).

Who is Apollos, and who is Paul, that we should be the cause of such quarrels? Why, we're only servants. Through us God caused you to believe. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. 6 My job was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God, not we, who made it grow. 7 The ones who do the planting or watering aren't important, but God is important because he is the one who makes the seed grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters work as a team with the same purpose. Yet they will be rewarded individually, according to their own hard work.

- B. We can follow the example of Rebekah who ministered to Eliezar (Gen. 24:15-20).

And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. 16 Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. 17 And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher." 18 So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. 19 And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." 20 Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

1. She did not know Eliezar.
2. She served him (Gen. 24:18).
3. She served him speedily (Gen. 24:18, 20).
4. She served him energetically and tirelessly (Gen. 24:20). She ministered to all ten camels.

Lesson 10-11

Evangelism Models

In recent years many Christian leaders have been rethinking the area of evangelism. The main reason for rethinking this area is that over the last number of decades there seems to be very little evangelism taking place in most established churches.

Many have felt that new methods were needed in the area in order for us to get back to the primary purpose for the church's existence.

I. What are some of the main models for evangelism that have been put forth in the last few decades?

A. Confrontational Evangelism

1. This is the more traditional approach to evangelism programs in the church. In this case people are usually instructed in a basic track on which to run and how to share the gospel.
2. This type of evangelism has many faces.
 - a. Door-to-Door
 - b. Street Witnessing
 - c. Street Preaching
3. The weakness of this type of evangelism is that it is very risky for most people and requires more of an extroverted personality to be successful. In addition, it is often not based on any previous relationship and follow-up is often lacking.

B. Tract or Booklet Evangelism

1. This type of evangelism can take on a couple of forms.
 - a. It may involve the simple passing out of tracts or leaving tracts in key places.
 - b. It may involve reading a tract or booklet to or with an interested party.

These booklets may be as simple as the two question test for "Am I Going to Heaven?" Or they may be more complex relating to some specific need or problem.

2. This type of evangelism is often coupled with other forms or models of evangelism.

C. Crusade or Event-Driven Evangelism

1. This type of evangelism is sometimes referred to as “mass evangelism.”
2. This type of evangelism can take on many forms.
 - a. Concerts
 - b. Dramatic Productions
 - c. Stadium Preaching
 - d. Power Teams
 - e. Children’s Programs in Parks
 - f. Television or Radio Programs
3. The keys to the success of this type of evangelism are the advance preparation for the event and the follow-up on those who respond.

D. Lifestyle or Friendship Evangelism

A key book that promoted this type of evangelism is by Joseph Aldrich called *Gentle Persuasion*. The introduction says a lot about the book in the phrase, “Love them until they ask you why.”

1. The focus of this form of evangelism is building a friendship relationship with the lost.
2. It involves being a friend and demonstrating the Christian life in front of them making them thirsty for the Gospel.
3. This form of evangelism puts much of the focus on the object of our efforts asking the right questions.
4. The weakness of this approach is that it often takes a long time and is limited in its ability to handle many people at the same time.

E. Spirit Led Evangelism

This evangelism model is built off of the idea that as Christians we are to be led of the Holy Spirit and we are to walk in the Spirit.

1. The focus of this form of evangelism involves developing a sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit in one’s life believing that the Holy Spirit will direct us to the prepared people.
2. This form of evangelism is based to a great extent on Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian man in the Book of Acts (Acts 8:26-40).

3. This form of evangelism anticipates “divine appointments.”

Divine appointments are encounters that have been arranged for us by the Holy Spirit. As we walk in the Holy Spirit we believe that God will cause us to cross paths with people that have been prepared by God for us to engage in conversation.

4. This form of evangelism requires a vigilance to look at each daily encounter as a possible set up by the Lord and following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

F. Power Evangelism

1. Power evangelism focuses on the importance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit operating in conjunction with our witness. Think of how these gifts might be helpful in the process of evangelism.
 - a. The word of wisdom
 - b. The word of knowledge
 - c. Faith
 - d. Discerning of spirits
 - e. Prophecy
 - f. Miracles
 - g. Healings
 - h. Tongues
 - i. Interpretation of Tongues
2. The model for this form of evangelism is the ministry of Jesus who used signs and wonders to create a platform for preaching the gospel.
 - a. Jesus sent his disciples out to preach the gospel, to heal the sick and to cast out demons (Luke 9:1-2).
 - b. Paul used signs and wonders in many places to open the door for the gospel (Acts 14:3, 8-12).
3. This is similar to Spirit-led evangelism in that it requires a close relationship with the Holy Spirit and boldness to step out in faith at the prompting of the Holy Spirit.
4. This form of evangelism cannot be the only form of evangelism and must be coupled with other forms, because we cannot initiate miracles or the other gifts of the Spirit on demand. However, having a faith expectation for them is always appropriate.

G. Prayer Evangelism

This form of evangelism is practiced in several ways, all of them making prayer the powerful tool of evangelism.

1. In some approaches the offer of prayer to people forms the basis of the evangelistic encounter. Here prayer requests are solicited and follow-up is made.
2. In other approaches prayer is used to break up the ground and prepare the harvest for the evangelistic encounter. In this case, sometimes prayer is associated with a person, a city or a region. This would include things like prayer-walking your neighborhood.
3. In another approach prayer booths can be set up at fairs and other functions where prayer is offered to people upon request.

H. Seeker Sensitive Evangelism

1. This form of evangelism makes the corporate gathering of the local church the main tool for evangelism.
2. This form of evangelism is concerned about making the corporate gathering of the church non-threatening to the unsaved in the hopes that their involvement in the gathering will lead them to an openness to the gospel message.
3. In this form of evangelism a major part of the work of the people is to invite people to the corporate gathering of the church where they can be exposed to Christianity.
4. The weakness of this approach is that it tends to water down the Holy Spirit dynamics of the corporate gathering.

I. Servant Evangelism

1. Servant evangelism focuses on posturing ourselves as servants in relation to the unsaved.

It involves practical, non-threatening demonstrations of the love and goodness of God expressed in ways that are meaningful to and appreciated by the unchurched.

2. The key to this type of evangelism is identifying needs and ministering to those needs.
 - a. This can function on a personal level (best to operate in twos).
 - b. This can function on a small group level.
 - c. This can function on the local church level.

3. Many types of projects have been identified that are easy to fulfill. These are activities in which almost anyone can participate regardless of age (children and youth love to participate) or spiritual maturity.

Servant evangelism projects are designed to “show God’s love in practical ways with no strings attached.”

- a. Some projects can lift individuals and serve a need in their life. Examples include:
 - Washing windows in cars or businesses
 - Cleaning bathrooms of businesses
 - Raking leaves
 - Tutoring school age children
 - Mentoring moms
 - Getting involved in a community program
 - Assisting with a handicapped child
 - Babysitting for a single mother
 - Meeting urgent needs
 - Washing cars
 - b. Some projects can lift the community and serve obvious needs. If the church was missing from the community would anyone care? Example include:
 - Adopting a school, fire station or police station.
 - Adopting a park.
 - Doing community service (picking up litter)
 - Providing water at various functions.
 - Meeting a community need.
4. In this method of evangelism it is important to have printed cards or material to identify the church.
 5. In all of these acts of kindness there are several rules of engagement.
 - a. The acts are done “to demonstrate the love of Jesus in a practical way.”
 - b. No money can be accepted for any work that is done (not even a donation).
 - c. The service must be something that meets a felt need.
 6. There are some appropriate statements that describe this model.
 - a. Find a need and meet it. Find a hurt and heal it.
 - b. Small things done with great love builds bridges to the lost.
 - c. Random acts of kindness can help people see God in a new way.

II. What is the best model of evangelism?

This question can be answered in a couple of ways:

A. They are all good.

1. Paul indicated that we should use any and all means to preach the gospel (I Cor. 9:19-23).

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. –NIV

2. Most of our efforts will be a combination of many of the models listed.

B. The best one is the one that suits you or the one that you will actually use.

Note to teacher: Go back through the various methods and indicate how they all tie together.

Lesson 12

Keys to Successful Evangelism

I. What are some of the keys to successful evangelism on the local church level?

The following are some important keys for pastors and leaders that will help to keep the local church evangelistic.

- A. Keep evangelism in the forefront of the church. We must keep the main thing the main thing.
- B. Sow seeds of evangelism in the hearts of the members continually. This has to do with preaching and teaching in every department of the church.
- C. Do church in a way that makes it easy for the lost to come.

This means making it easy for people to interface with the church and the message of the church. Each church should seek to be seeker-sensitive and user-friendly without compromising its message or spiritual DNA.

- 1. Friendliness of the people.
 - 2. Clear signage inside and outside of the church building.
 - 3. Cheerful service attendants from the parking lot to the altar.
 - 4. Language, terminology and services that are relevant to all.
- D. Make sure that hungry people are given an opportunity to respond.

This means having regular altar calls with trained altar workers.

- E. Develop an assimilation process that is simple but effective.

This means the church must be mobilized to reach and follow up on interested parties.

- Visitor Packets and Information Cards
- Touch Cards
- Effective Altar Workers
- Immediate Follow-up (prayer and materials)
- Turning points Class
- City Care Calling
- Encounters
- Regular Water Baptisms

- Small Groups
- Partnership Class
- Partnership Interviews
- School of Ministry

II. What are some of the keys to successful evangelism on the personal level?

As an individual believer it is also important to keep the fires of evangelism burning in our hearts.

This means that each believer must...

A. Approach the lost in a biblical way (Acts 8:26-40).

This means that we must...

1. Be sensitive to the Spirit willing to move against reason and comfort.
2. Be available to anyone. Never rule someone out by your natural perception of them.
3. Be willing to take the initiative in conversation (See Appendix A: Engaging the Lost in Conversation).
4. Be tactful and listen carefully to their responses.
5. Be clear in your message and presentation of the Gospel.
6. Be gentle but decisive as you lead them to a point of decision.
7. Be prepared to follow-up on those who respond.

B. Approach the lost with a positive belief system.

This means that we must...

1. Believe in the power of the Gospel message (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 1:18).

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Romans 1:16

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. I Corinthians 21:18

2. Believe in the seed itself (Mark 4:26:29; I Peter 1:23).

And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Mark 4:26-29

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. I Peter 1:22-23

3. Believe in God's laws of sowing and reaping.

- a. There is no harvest without sowing (Eccl.11:4).

He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.

If you worry about the weather and don't plant seeds, you won't harvest a crop. –CEV

- b. Sowing requires hard work (Ps. 126:5-6).

Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

- c. The more you sow the more you reap (II Cor. 9:6).

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

- d. Eventually the sown seed will produce (Gal. 6:6-10).

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

- e. The one who sows is not always the one who reaps (John 4:36-38). However, they both can rejoice equally in the harvest.

And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.

- 4. Believe that God will work with you (John 6:37; Mark 16:20; Acts 16:14).

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. John 6:37, NIV

And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Mark 16:20

Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. Acts 16:14

- 5. Believe God to lead you to the ripe harvest (John 4:35).

Do you not say, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

- 6. Believe that God will fill your mouth with His words (Ps. 81:10; Ex. 4:12).

I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. Psalm 81:10

Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say. Exodus 4:12

- 7. Believe that unbelievers want to be saved.

There are certain common things that everyone is searching for.

- a. Everyone is looking for a sense of purpose or significance.
- b. Everyone is interested in personal peace.
- c. Everyone is searching for meaningful uplifting relationships.
- d. Everyone deals with issues of guilt and broken relationships.
- e. Everyone is concerned or even fearful about what happens after death.
- f. Everyone is hungry for a spiritual encounter with their creator.

The exciting thing is that all of these things are answered in Christ and the Church.

Appendix A: Engaging the Lost in Conversation

The following discussion starters are taken from a book by Wendell Smith, *From Zero to Eternity in 60 Seconds Flat*.

Indirect Statements

Sometimes we can influence people indirectly and not have to speak to them directly at all. As we carry on another conversation in their hearing, some of the following statements can produce life-changing testimonials, and in just a few seconds we can make a difference with a scripture or a thought that might lead someone closer to faith.

Some of these statements include:

- “Wow, if I didn’t know better, I would think that the whole world is turning to Christ!”
- “It seems like everyone is going back to church these days.”
- “That movie about Christ was amazing. He did all that for us.”
- I heard that the movie *The Passion of the Christ* could possibly become the best-selling movie in history.”
- “A lot of people are considering returning to their faith, especially Christianity.”
- “I think a lot of people are thinking about spiritual things today.”
- “I have heard people talk about Jesus Christ like He was a real Person.”
- “Across the world, more people are coming to Christ today than ever before in history.”
- “I heard that Christianity is the fastest-growing religious faith in the entire world.”
- “I was reading this scripture the other day...”
- “I was just praying and asking God to make Himself real when...”
- “I’ve never seen a church like that with so much life and joy.”
- “I’ve never experienced the power of God like that.”
- “Did you know that the MVP of that game is a born-again believer?”
- “I think he met the God of the Bible.”
- “They got healed through the name of Jesus.”
- “God sure is good, isn’t He?”
- “I heard that person got healed by the power of God.”
- “Miracles still happen today! I heard of one just the other day.”
- “Christianity is not a religion – it is a relationship with a very special Person. Jesus Christ is still alive today!”

Direct Comments

The name of Jesus is a powerful witnessing tool, but as you prepare to share the gospel in a short amount of time with someone, sometimes a more direct approach is best.

We can often simply make a short, straightforward statement to people and trust God to influence them for the kingdom of God. God will honor His Word, and as the name of Jesus is lifted up, He will draw people unto Himself.

Here are some direct comments:

- “I like you – you should go to my church!”
- “You look like you would make a good believer.”
- “You should be a Christian!”
- “You’re not too far from the Kingdom of God.”
- “The Lord was sure good to give you such a beautiful family (or baby, house, or car)!”
- “What a wonderful Creator God is!”
- “Isn’t God good?”
- “God was showing off when He made this place!”
- We may never meet again, so I want you to have this.” (Then share the gospel as if it were a gift.
- “May I give you a gift? God bless you.”
 - “I’d like you to have this.”

Direct comments that work

I’m a Christian, and if God can change my life the way He has, I know that He can help you with your problem. – Leon Sandberg

You know, there’s more to this life than you think. – Rick Greene

When talking with other moms about their kids and what they will grow up to be, I sometimes say: “When you think about your children’s future, do you ever help them plan to go to heaven?”
– Jennifer Kraker

Questions

Another way of introducing the gospel into a conversation is through a direct question. Asking a question can be a very effective way to open a conversation. It usually demands a response of some kind, and most people will cooperate and give an answer.

Here are some examples of great conversation-starting questions:

- “Who do you believe was the greatest person in history?”

- “Who do you think has made the single greatest impact on people’s lives and in the world?”
- “If you died tonight, are you sure you would go to heaven? Why? Why not?”
- “I am praying for people today. Is there anything I can pray for about you?”
- “Is this your first trip to _____? Don’t miss the church at _____!”
- “Do you know of any good churches around here?”
- “What do you think when you hear people talking about God?”
- “When was the last time you went to church?”
- “If you could ask God for one miracle in your life, what would you ask Him for?”
- “What is the greatest need in your life, and how do you plan to meet it?”
- “Where do you think you’ll spend eternity?”
- “Who is the most important person in your life and why?”
- “How would you define absolute truth?”
- “What words would you use to describe God? What words would you use to describe man?”
- “What has kept you from believing in God?”
- “What has kept you from attending a church?”
- “I believe the Lord wants me to tell you...”
- “God wants you to know...”
- “What do you think God thinks about that?”
- “Have you ever had a prayer answered by God?”
- “Who do you call on when you are in danger?”
- “Can you suggest a good church that I can go to in this area?”
- “Jesus changed my life. Who changed yours?”
- “I noticed you have a crucifix (or a cross or some other religious statue or object). What personal significance does that have for you? Why do you have that in your car (on your bumper or shirt)?”
- “I noticed you did something to help you have good luck. Would you be nice enough to tell me why you believe that way?”
- “Do you believe there is life after death?”
- “What kind of person will continue living with God? Do you think that you are one of those kinds of people? Why?”
- “Do you think heaven really exists?”