

Evangelism Overview

Evangelism is proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ. It is part of the ministry of reconciliation that all believers are called to participate (II Corinthians 5:18-20). The source of evangelism is God and not man. All our activities in evangelizing are gifts from God as He uses us for His glory. It is not done to earn favor with God or force personal views on another out of a sinful heart.

We should do evangelism because we love God. As we grow in Christ, we take on more of the characteristics of Christ. As this occurs, we find our hearts transformed in a way that it becomes “not our will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). As we start to evangelize out of love for Christ, we will experience the joy that comes from witnessing to others. This joy also occurs regardless of the outcome of your evangelism as staying faithful and proclaiming the Gospel pleases God.

Another reason to evangelize is because God commanded it. There are multiple verses in scriptures that tell us to preach the good news by sharing the Gospel and making disciples (see Romans 10:15, Matthew 24:14, Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:5, and Matthew 28:18-20). It is not very popular to be “obedient” in the world today with so many people wanting to do what they want when they want. However, obedience is simple with Jesus. *“If you love me you will do what I command”* (John 14:15).

Lastly, we evangelize because it is necessary for the Gospel to be shared in order for others to come to faith and for it to be shared with all people so Jesus will return as our Lord and King. (Matthew 24:14)

Obstacles to Evangelism

There are many reasons why believers do not engage in evangelism, but they typically fall into four general areas:

1. We are fearful
2. We lack faith
3. We lack obedience
4. We lack knowledge

Fear often comes because we don't believe we know what to do. We may be afraid to talk with a stranger or risk changing the relationship with someone. We want to avoid looking foolish or offending someone. We may have even tried to share truth and it ended poorly so we give up for fear of becoming known as “that guy”. You may have heard of the “story” of the car crash that killed four people. Only one is a true believer but they all show up together at the gates of heaven and are asked if they believe. The first two get sent away and the third one is going through the interview. Before it is about to end unsuccessfully, he turns to the last person (the believer) and asks why he never told him the truth. That is what we risk by not getting involved.

Another inhibitor to sharing is a lack of faith in our abilities to close the deal or actually lead someone to Jesus. We aren't sure we can get someone to believe, especially if they have a strong personality, so we skip it. This is wrong because we are not measured on the results, but instead we are measured only by the faithfulness of our effort. God brings about salvation and not us. We should think of ourselves as His instrument and not the determining factor.

Another reason we do not share our faith is because we do not seriously take the Lord's command to go and make disciples. Matthew 28:18-20 states: *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

The last common challenge is because we feel like we lack the knowledge to share the Gospel and we don't know enough about God to represent His word. Those types of excuses create an unwinnable equation where you will never be ready. The Gospel message has been and can be simplified to share in minutes. The story is one of undeserved love and forgiveness. It need not be intimidating, complicated or difficult.

How God is with Us in Evangelism

The Father in Evangelism

A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. John 3:27

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. John 6:44-45

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created. James 1:17-18

Jesus Christ in Evangelism

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Luke 10:1-2

But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. John 12:32,

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:11-12

The Holy Spirit in Evangelism

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Luke 24:46-49

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13