

THE

SOUL WINNING

LIFE

30 DAYS OF DOING BIBLICAL EVANGELISM

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The Soul Winning Life: 30 Days of Doing Biblical Evangelism

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PREFACE

Ephesians 5:14, *“Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

The work of being a soul winner is to be one who calls the dead to life. Literally, in the preaching of the gospel, the dead in sin can come to life in righteousness. Some religious folks have a problem with the term “soul winner” because they say no one can “win” a soul except God. However, God (through King Solomon) is the one who gave us the title and the responsibility that comes along with it; Proverbs 11:30 (KJV), *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”*

The New International Version (NIV) translates the phrase, “winneth souls” as “save lives,” but I prefer the classic King James because it helps us understand that people are “souls” and by preaching to them we “win” them to the cause of Christ. Either way, there is no way around it- God has chosen to partner with humanity to win souls for His glory- we are God’s co-workers (1 Corinthians 3:9).

The gospel preacher is not responsible in saving the sinner as Christ is from the standpoint of being their blood atonement, however, we do have a part to play; one that we will be judged by. Our responsibility is to preach the finished work of Jesus as the disciples preached it. The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel knew of this kind of responsibility because God told him what was expected of him in the Old Covenant. Plus, this is the very passage Paul used twice in the book of Acts 18:6 & 20:26-27 to describe the responsibility he bore as a gospel preacher;

Ezekiel 3:17-21, “17 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 18 When I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 19 But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself.

20 “Again, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before them, they will die.

Since you did not warn them, they will die for their sin. The righteous things that person did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 21 But if you do warn the righteous person not to sin and they do not sin, they will surely live because they took warning, and you will have saved yourself.”

As Ezekiel knew his responsibility to preach God’s message to the people of Israel, we must know and accept our responsibility to preach the gospel to all the world. Jesus commanded His disciples in Mark 16:15, “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*” Therefore, now is the time to go to the “highways and byways” and call the dead in sin to wake up and let Christ shine on them!

I never feel closer to Jesus and the life He lived than when I go soul winning. I may not be able to live in ancient Israel, travel the country by foot with my best friends or eat Jewish food with my hands; however, I can preach the gospel in the same way they did- in public with Pentecostal power! Don’t believe people when they say, “The methods change, but the message stays the same.” They generally say this as an excuse to hide behind social media advertising and marketing as a substitute to face-to-face interaction with the lost.

If talking to strangers in public places was good enough for Jesus and the disciples- it’s good enough for me! Certainly, we can use the technology of this world to help spread the message of Christ; but there is no substitute for personal interaction. Let us finish what the early church started and preach the gospel to all the nations! Jesus said in Matthew 24:14, “*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*”

Do you want to be a living testimony for the gospel to the nations and see Jesus come back? If so, I’ll see you on the streets!

HOW TO USE THE BOOK

1. Read a lesson each day consistently for 30 days.
2. Prayerfully consider the reflection at the end of each lesson.
3. Put into practice the three actions listed each day.

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DAY 1: THE GOSPEL DEFINED

Romans 1:17, *“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”*

The Greek word for “gospel” in the New Testament is, *“euaggelion,”* which means, “good news.”

The gospel is the “good news” concerning God’s glory and humanity’s salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. No one can be saved from the wrath of God without believing in the gospel.

In today’s passage Paul wrote that the righteousness of God is revealed to all who believe and have faith in the gospel. The only way sinful people can be made “right with God” is by having faith in the “good news” of Jesus Christ’s work of salvation. The Bible teaches that because of Adam’s sin, all have been born sinners (Romans 5:19). However, when Jesus (God the Son) came in the flesh and died on the cross for sinners, He made a way for all to be saved.

Paul wrote in Romans 5:18, *“Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.”* Adam’s “one trespass” was the act that resulted in God’s wrath and Jesus’ death on the cross for mankind’s sin was the “one righteous act” that saved us from the curse of sin.

Here are seven things to remember concerning the gospel; first, after Adam sinned all mankind was born under the power of sin (Romans 5:18). Second, as people sin in their own free will they reveal their heart is wicked and deserving of God’s judgment (Romans 3:23). Third, Jesus came to earth as a man and died on the cross for mankind’s sins (Romans 3:24-25). Fourth, when Jesus rose from the dead He proved His sacrifice pleased God the Father and that having faith in Him is the only way to receive forgiveness and

salvation (Acts 17:31).

Fifth, since Jesus ascended to heaven His disciples have been preaching His gospel (good news) to the entire world (Mark 16:20). Sixth, everyone who believes in Jesus' gospel is saved and made righteous (Romans 1:17). Seventh, God commands all born again disciples to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to others so that they can be saved (Matthew 28:19-20).

The greatest miracle of the gospel isn't that Jesus rose from the dead, but that God would so love a sinful world that He would send His only Son Jesus to die in their place so that we would not perish, but have eternal life. Therefore, let us never forget that the gospel is all about God's love! John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

REFLECTION

Do you believe the gospel?

ACTION

1. If you haven't been saved yet, place your faith in Jesus' work on the cross, as the gospel teaches and confess Jesus to be the Lord of your life.
2. All of us, who believe the gospel and are saved, should study the gospel and seek God in prayer to understand it better.
3. Let us all know the gospel, live the gospel and preach the gospel to others!

DAY 2: THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL

Romans 1:16, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”*

The nature of the gospel is the power of God for everyone’s salvation, both for the Jew and Gentile (non-Jew). The power of the gospel doesn’t come from the paper it is written on, but from the Holy Spirit when it is either read or spoken. There is nothing that can compare to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Blaise Pascal wrote, “The gospel to me is simply irresistible.”

When sinners hear the gospel and freely open their hearts to understand and believe it, they are freed from Adam’s curse of depravity. And when they confess Jesus is Lord by faith they are saved from God’s judgment and made a new creation.

Consider the six biblical terms that describe the powerful things Jesus accomplished in the gospel when He died on the cross. (1) *Redemption*: To “buy back or release from legal obligation.” Jesus bought back and released mankind from the curse of sin and the law by dying on the cross (Galatians 3:13). (2) *Reconciliation*: To “bring peace between two parties.” Jesus’ suffering on the cross brought perfect peace between God the Father and repentant mankind (Romans 5:10). (3) *Atonement*: To “bear the sins of others to bring forgiveness.” Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was the sacrificial payment for all the sins of the entire world (1 John 2:2).

(4) *Salvation*: To “save from destruction.” Jesus saves and grants eternal life to everyone who believes in Him (Romans 1:16). (5) *Justification*: To “make right or just.” Jesus makes sinners righteous and just in the site of God the Father when they put their faith in His sacrifice (Romans 4:25). (6) *Sanctification*: To “make holy or separate by cleansing from sin.” The blood of Jesus cleanses and separates from sin all those who confess their sins and put their

faith in Him (Hebrews 10:29). Because of Jesus' life changing gospel we now can receive redemption, reconciliation, atonement, salvation, justification and sanctification!

REFLECTION

Have you experienced the full power of the gospel?

ACTION

1. If you haven't believed all the aspects of the gospel, confess each one over your life. For example, "I am redeemed, bought with a price, by the blood of the Lamb!"
2. Take some time to study the fullness of the gospel by reading the verses associated with the terms above.
3. Share the powerful work of the gospel with others!

DAY 3: HOW THE GOSPEL IS SPREAD

Romans 10:14, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them.”

The gospel has been ordained by God to be spread by disciples preaching to the lost. The word “preach” in the Greek is, “*kērussō*,” which means, “to proclaim or make known.” It’s the disciple’s duty to preach the gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15). Charles Spurgeon wrote, “I remember one who spoke on the missionary question one day saying, ‘The great question is not, ‘Will not the heathen be saved if we do not send them the gospel?’ but ‘Are we saved ourselves if we do not send them the gospel?’”

Every born again follower of Jesus is commanded to proclaim and make known the gospel of Jesus Christ to sinners.

Some people may think that preaching the gospel is only the job of paid pastors on Sundays. However, Jesus made it clear that all the disciples were to be preachers and that we are to always pray for God to raise up more laborers in the harvest of lost souls (Matthew 9:37-38). Everyone who participates in preaching the gospel to others is considered a “preacher or gospel proclaimer.”

Paul also wrote in Romans 10:15, “*And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’*” Paul reminds the Christians in Rome that the gospel preachers must be sent. This sending is in line with Jesus’ Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. Every Christian should be trained and discipled in their local church to do the “work of an evangelist” as Paul taught in 2 Timothy 4:5.

The elders gifted in evangelism in the local church are to raise up every disciple to be an effective preacher of the gospel so the lost

might be saved. Every time a new gospel preacher and disciple maker is mentored and sent out, the Kingdom of God is revealed and multiplied upon the earth. Gospel preaching and disciple making is the literal fulfillment of what Jesus meant when He taught us to pray to the Father, *“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”* (Matthew 6:10).

Think about it, if all the angels in heaven rejoice over just one lost soul being saved, how important do you think it is for us as disciples to make new disciples to preach the gospel? That is why Paul said that the feet of the preachers are “beautiful” because they bring the “good news” to the lost! Life is short and eternal souls are in the balance. I challenge you today to be trained and sent out to preach the gospel!

REFLECTION

Do you have beautiful feet because you bring the gospel of Jesus to the lost?

ACTION

1. Do whatever it takes to be trained as a preacher of the gospel.
2. Start sharing your faith with the lost as often as you can.
3. Pray that God will use you to make disciples that make disciples so the gospel can be spread around the earth.

DAY 4: THE PENALTY OF NOT SHARING THE GOSPEL

1 Corinthians 9:16, *“For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!”*

The penalty for not sharing the gospel is woe, intense sorrow and shame on the day Jesus judges His church. Paul, like Jesus, was a grace and truth preacher (John 1:17). He made sure to always emphasize the gracious nature of God and His judgment to come (Ephesians 2:8-10 & Philippians 2:12). Some Christians wrongly believe that after they became a Christian they will no longer be judged, however, the Bible teaches that Christians will be judged.

Though the Christian will not be judged according to their salvation, they will be judged according to the works they did as a disciple. One of the judgments we will face will be based on our obedience or neglect to preach the gospel to the lost (1 Corinthians 1:11-15).

The “Great White Throne Judgment” will be when Jesus separates the sheep from the goats and sends all those who don’t have their name written in the Lamb’s Book of Life into the lake of fire (Revelations 20:11-15). Afterwards, at the “Bema Seat of Christ,” Jesus will reward or rebuke His people based on their obedience to His commands.

Paul described this “Bema Judgment” in 2 Corinthians 5:10, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat [Greek, “bema”] of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”* We as Christians will be judged after the lost are punished at the Great White Throne and will be either rewarded for our good deeds or shamed for our bad

works.

The greatest illustration given in the Bible of the consequence for not sharing the gospel with those who are perishing comes from Ezekiel 33. God commanded Ezekiel to be a spiritual watchman over the people of Israel. God said that if he was faithful to warn the people of the judgment to come their blood would not be on his hands. However, if he failed to warn about the coming judgment, their blood would be on his hands (Ezekiel 33:1-9).

Paul used this same expression in Acts 20:26-27 in regards to preaching the gospel when he said, “*26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.*” David Jeremiah once said, “We know exactly what needs to be done to advance the gospel and fulfill the Great Commission. The question is, ‘Will we do it?’”

Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 that the Christian’s works would be judged by fire and if our works were done in obedience to Jesus and His commands our works would remain and appear as precious metals. However, if what we did in this life was not what Jesus commanded, we would be saved as only one escaping the flames, but our works would be burned up like wood, hay and stubble! Therefore, don’t be disobedient to God’s command to preach the gospel- go into the entire world and make new disciples!

REFLECTION

If you faced God’s judgment today, would the blood of people’s souls be on your hands because of your spiritual laziness in not preaching the gospel to them?

ACTION

1. Repent and ask God to forgive you for the times you did not preach and share the gospel when you had the opportunity.
2. Pray and ask God to make you aware of the times you should preach.
3. Preach, pray and plug away until Jesus comes back!

DAY 5: THE FOUR MAIN PARTS OF THE GOSPEL

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

The four main parts of the gospel are God, man, Jesus Christ and faith. (1) *God*: Created man (with free will possessing the power of “self-identity & freedom”) for a loving relationship with Himself (Genesis 1:26, 3:8-9). (2) *Man*: Willing sinned and separated himself from God and came under the just wrath of God (Romans 3:9-24). (3) *Jesus Christ*: Died on the cross and bore the judgment of God for sinners so that by His resurrection all might live and not perish (Romans 5:8-9). (4) *Faith*: By putting one’s full trust in God and confessing Jesus as Lord, a person is restored to fellowship with God and free from the wrath their sins justly deserve (Romans 10:9-10).

When you, as the gospel preacher, can truly understand each main part of the gospel message it will become easier to share it with others.

One of the pitfalls to avoid is complicating the message with unneeded details. For example, while preaching the gospel someone may want to discuss evolution and dinosaurs. However, a simple response like, “We can discuss God and science at a later time,” will help you stay on track and allow the person to truly understand what they need to do to be saved. Also, another pitfall is to only present one side of the gospel message. Some preachers continually emphasize the sinfulness of man, but neglect the great love and sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, thus, the people are only left condemned and are not really encouraged to be saved. Other preachers will give sinners a false sense of security because they don’t properly teach the wrath of God against sin and try to emotionally draw people to God.

Don’t only preach the parts of the gospel that are likeable to the people around you; preach the whole counsel of Scripture- from the

love of God to the sinfulness of man. Augustine once wrote, “If you believe what you like in the gospels, and reject what you don’t like, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself.” Therefore, the balance is to preach the fullness of God’s grace and truth. The Bible states in John 1:14 that Jesus came from the Father “full of grace and truth.” Go ye and do likewise!

REFLECTION

Do you understand the four main parts of the gospel?

ACTION

1. Read and study the verses pertaining to each of the four main parts of the gospel.
2. Pray and ask God to give you a clear understanding of each part.
3. Preach a balanced gospel like Jesus did- one that is full of grace and truth!

DAY 6: DIFFERENT GOSPEL PREACHING METHODS

Mark 1:14-15, *“14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news.’”*

The gospel message will never change, but the methods in which it is shared can vary from person to person and generation to generation.

The best way to develop methods to effectively preach the gospel message is to look to Jesus in the gospels and follow, “The Way of the Master.”

Here is a brief list of the ten different methods Jesus used in the gospel of Mark to preach the gospel; (1) Casting out demons in Mark 1:23-28. (2) Performing miracles in Mark 1:33-34. (3) Fellowshiping and sharing meals in Mark 2:16-17. (4) Telling parables to the crowds in Mark 4:1-34. (4) Meeting physical needs in Mark 6:39-44. (5) Rebuking sin in Mark 7:9-13. (6) Ministering to children in Mark 10:14-16. (7) Giving people the cost of discipleship in Mark 10:21-31. (8) Serving people in Mark 10:43-45. (9) Debate and confrontation in Mark 11:29-33. (10) Sharing about the end times in Mark 13:4-37.

We must always remember that the “method” is not the “message.” Meaning, simply praying for people, giving away food and loving the children is not the gospel itself- it is a method to open the door to preach the gospel. The gospel is the “good news concerning God’s glory and humanity’s salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.” Therefore, if we do all the methods mentioned above and don’t preach the gospel, people will still go to hell and their blood will be on our hands.

We then should always be sure to make the gospel message the

most important part of the method. After the sick are prayed for the gospel must be preached. While children are being loved and prayed for we can teach them to put their faith in Jesus, so that when they're old they will never forsake God's commands. And after the hungry are fed, let us preach to their hungry souls about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins.

Remember to let the Holy Spirit lead you to use the method that works best in each situation and preach the gospel (Romans 8:14)!

REFLECTION

Which methods is the Holy Spirit leading you to use?

ACTION

1. Ask God to give you the methods you're to use to preach the gospel.
2. Always remember to include the gospel message in all your methods. Reject the popular quote from Francis of Assisi, "Preach the gospel everyday; if necessary, use words." The Word of God is necessary for people to be saved (Romans 10:17)!
3. Be open to try new methods because God is a God of creativity!

DAY 7: FOUR COMPONENTS OF GOSPEL PREACHING

Matthew 4:23, *“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”*

The four main components of gospel preaching are; (1) God the Holy Spirit, (2) The Word of God, (3) The Preacher and (4) The Sinner. The most important aspect being the Holy Spirit, for without Him neither the Bible nor the preacher has power.

Remember what Jesus said in John 16:13-15, *“13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”* In other words, the Holy Spirit makes real the presence, person and words of Jesus. Also, Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:6 (NLT), *“He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.”*

The ability to be ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the life of new covenant both come from the Holy Spirit.

Here is a basic outline on how to preach the gospel; first, the preacher should ask the Holy Spirit to give them a heart for the lost and lead them in prayer for sinners to be saved (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Second, the preacher should also eagerly desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit’s power and be used in His gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1). Just like how Matthew described Jesus’ work in today’s passage. Third, the

preacher should read and study the Word of God so they can be a good workman of the Lord (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17).

Fourth, the preacher then should be led by the Holy Spirit to find a lost person to preach the gospel to (Luke 19:10). Fifth, when the preacher encounters the sinner they should make a genuine attempt to build a friendship with them. For example small talk, share a meal, express shared values and the like (Matthew 11:19). Sixth, the preacher should be sensitive to hear what Scriptures and spiritual gifts to use when preaching. Consider the example of Jesus with the woman at the well in John 4:1-26. Seventh, the preacher should end the time of sharing the gospel with an invitation for the sinner to pray and accept Jesus (Romans 10:9-11). Eighth, after the time of preaching the preacher should disciple the new believer (if they accepted Jesus) or pray that they will accept Jesus at another time (if they rejected Him).

Certainly, the “how” of preaching can change from person to person and the “methods” can come spontaneously from the Holy Spirit; but the most important thing is that the gospel preacher always says and does what the Holy Spirit leads them to say and do. George Whitefield said, “Other men may preach the gospel better than I, but no man can preach a better gospel.”

REFLECTION

Do you believe the Holy Spirit can use you to effectively preach the gospel?

ACTION

1. Develop a consistent pattern of daily prayer and study of God’s Word to be a thoroughly trained workman for the Lord.
2. Eagerly desire to be used in the gifts of the Holy Spirit when preaching- they are the greatest tools for evangelism.
3. Be led by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel and lead people to Jesus Christ.

DAY 8: THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

Revelation 15:4, *“Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”*

The God of the gospel is both fully loving and completely holy. Some people choose to focus only on one attribute; however, it is clear from the Bible that God is both. For example, those preachers who only see God’s love; emphasize forgiveness, mercy and compassion, but neglect to preach about God’s righteous judgment and punishment (Hebrews 10:26-27). On the other hand, those who only see God’s holiness constantly talk about God’s wrath and hatred of sin, but they neglect to share God’s amazing grace, unfailing love and great patience towards sinners (2 Peter 3:9).

As gospel preachers we cannot be unbalanced in God’s attributes, we must properly preach both. Horatius Bonar said, “The more fully that the gospel is preached, in the grand old apostolic way, the more likely is it to accomplish the results which it did in the apostolic days.”

The true gospel of Jesus proclaims that God is both completely holy and altogether loving; neglect one of these two defining attributes of God and you no longer have the God of the Bible, the God of heaven and earth. You are left with a make-believe god that is powerless to save because he doesn’t exist.

The loving nature of God can be seen from the beginning of creation in Genesis when He created mankind in His image to enjoy fellowship with them in the Garden of Eden; to the creation of the new heavens and new earth in the book of Revelation where forever dwells with His people face-to-face. The Bible proclaims in John 3:16 that it was because *“God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son;”* God’s love was so great it caused Jesus to leave

heaven and die on a cross. John declared in 1 John 4:8 that, “*God is love*” because love is not just what He gives, it is who He is. Paul also wrote in Romans 5:8 that, “*God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” It is clear that God loves all of His creation.

The holiness of God can also be seen in every encounter God has with His creation from Adam to Armageddon. God cursed Adam and Eve and cast them from the Garden after they sinned, He flooded the entire world in Noah’s day, judged cities like Sodom and Gomorrah, struck down Ananias and Sapphires for lying to the Holy Spirit and He has promised to send all unbelievers to the eternal lake of fire with the devil and His angels in Revelation 20:15. Because of God’s supreme holiness, angels fly around His throne and proclaim, “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory*” (Isaiah 6:3).

Behold the beauty of our God’s great love and the terror of His holiness. May every gospel preacher preach both God’s love and holiness with great passion and power!

REFLECTION

Do you believe God is both loving and holy?

ACTION

1. Study and develop a biblical understanding of God’s love and holiness.
2. As you preach the gospel emphasize both of God’s two main attributes and how they relate to Jesus and the cross.
3. Remember, God sent Jesus in *love* to die for our sins because His *holiness* required sacrifice to appease His righteous judgment (Hebrews 9:22).

DAY 9: FOUR RESPONSES TO THE GOSPEL

Mark 4:14, *“The farmer sows the word.”*

The four responses to the gospel are based on the four kinds of hearts Jesus mentioned in Mark 4:13-20, which are; (1) *Rejection*: from a hard unbelieving heart, (2) *Backsliding*: from a shallow heart, (3) *Sinful*: from a heart overwhelmed with sin and (4) *Acceptance*: from a believing and accepting heart.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus taught that the preacher of God’s Word is the farmer, the Word of God is the seed and the hearer’s heart is the ground. The hearer decides what kind of heart they will have not only in receiving the gospel, but how they will daily live for the gospel.

First, the unbelieving heart is compared to seed falling on a path. Once the seed falls on the path, Satan comes like a bird and eats the seed. This is likened unto someone who does not believe the gospel and refuses to try to understand it or receive it. They lose the chance to get saved and remain lost (Mark 4:15).

Second, the shallow heart is compared to someone who receives the Word of God like a seed falling in rocky places or in between the cracks. They believe the gospel and are saved for a short time but when the sun comes out they quickly wither and die because they have no root. Jesus said that the sun of affliction that causes them to go back on their commitment is the trouble and persecution they face as a disciple (Mark 4:16-17).

Third, the sinful heart is compared to a seed falling among the thorns and weeds. The seed has growth but it doesn’t develop and grow properly because the weeds eventually choke it out. Jesus said this person believes for a time but because of the “weeds” of worry, the deceitfulness of money and the desire of sinful things, they get

choked out (Mark 4:18-19).

Fourth, the good soil is compared to those who hear the Word of God, accept it and produce good fruit thirty, sixty and hundred times what was planted (Mark 4:20). Everyone who hears the gospel has the chance to except it and produce good fruit, but they must choose to believe the gospel and daily abide in Jesus (John 15:1-4).

In all the situations, it's not the preacher nor the Word of God that determine the results- it is the free will of man. Our job as preachers is not to try and make "believers" but rather to go and preach the gospel like a farmer planting seed and let people make their own choice. Richard Cecil wrote, "He who sows, even with tears, the precious seed of faith, hope, and love, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him, because it is the very nature of that seed to yield a joyful harvest." Start planting the Word of God!

REFLECTION

Will you be faithful to plant God's Word as seed everywhere you go?

ACTION

1. Ask God to guard your heart from giving up because of troubles or getting choked out because of sin.
2. Be faithful to preach the Word of God whenever you have the opportunity.
3. Pray that God will prepare people's hearts and send you to those who are ready to accept Him!

DAY 10: THE GOSPEL & THE OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 53:5, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

The gospel, which is, the good news concerning God's glory and humanity's salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, didn't start in the New Covenant but rather it has its beginnings in the book of Genesis. The revealing of God's redemption plan started in Genesis 3:15 when God said to the serpent, *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

From beginning to end, the Bible is one extensive narrative explaining in detail the need for the gospel, the power of the gospel and the end result of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, Jesus is concealed in the mystery of the Jewish laws, sacrifices and in the roles of the priests, kings and prophets. In the New Testament, Jesus is revealed and is seen as the fulfillment of all the Jewish laws, sacrifices and leadership roles. In the Old Testament the gospel is concealed in types and shadows and in the New Testament the gospel is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Scholars note, "The Old Testament, written hundreds of years before Jesus' birth, contains over 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled through His life, death and resurrection. Mathematically speaking, the odds of anyone fulfilling this amount of prophecy are staggering. Mathematicians put it this way: 1 person fulfilling 8 prophecies is 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 and 1 person fulfilling 48 prophecies is 1 chance in 10 to the 157th power. And 1 person fulfilling 300+ prophecies... only Jesus!"

Though all the Old Testament books, especially Ezekiel and Jeremiah, spoke about the new relationship God was going to have

with His people, the most famous prophecy about Jesus comes from Isaiah 53. Isaiah wrote his prophecy around 700 years before Jesus was even born. When most people read it today they think it was written after Jesus' crucifixion- that is how accurate it is.

As a result, when Paul wrote Ephesians 1:9-10 he taught us how to see the gospel through the Old Testament, he said, “*9 He [God the Father] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment— to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*” Therefore, as you read the Old Testament do so through the lens of Jesus Christ and the gospel and understand the “mystery” of God’s will for all of humanity.

REFLECTION

Can you see Jesus and the gospel concealed in the Old Testament stories and prophecies when you read them?

ACTION

1. Take time to read Isaiah 53.
2. As you read the Old Testament write down the times you see Jesus concealed in the text.
3. Pray and ask the Father to use you to reveal Jesus and the gospel to the world!

DAY 11: JESUS & THE GOSPEL

2 Timothy 2:8, *“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.”*

Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end of the gospel and He fills every part of it. If I could summarize the gospel in just one word it would be, “Jesus.” There has never been any person like Jesus, nor could there ever be anyone like Him in the future. He is the only unique one-of-a-kind Son of God sent by the Father to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). A.W. Tozer wrote, “Jesus is not one of many ways to approach God, nor is He the best of several ways; He is the only way.”

Jesus is the eternal divine Word made flesh (John 1:1), the Creator of all things (John 1:3), the source of life and light in the world (John 1:4), the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15), the head over every power and authority (Colossians 2:10), the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16), the Lamb of God (Revelation 7:17) and the Judge of all the earth (Matthew 25:31).

There is no one like my Jesus.

Here is the in-depth ten-step version of the work of Jesus concerning the gospel; (1) His incarnation (birth), (2) His sinless life, (3) His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, (4) His burial, (5) His resurrection, (6) His ascension, (7) His sending of the Holy Spirit, (8) His promised second coming, (9) His judgment of all mankind and (10) His eternal kingdom to come on the earth.

The three-point summary of Jesus’ salvific work was His; (1) Death, (2) Burial and (3) Resurrection. The in-depth version fully represents God’s plan of salvation from start to finish and the summary represents the simple confession someone must make in faith to be saved. Paul wrote in Romans 10:9-10, *“9 If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your*

heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

When you know Jesus through the gospel, you will know peace with God the Father and you will want everyone else to know and experience it too!

REFLECTION

Meditate on the awesomeness of Jesus Christ- who He is, what He did and will do!

ACTION

1. Repent if you have ever taken the name of Jesus in vain (even in the slightest way)- for He is our great God and Savior (Titus 2:13).
2. Read all the verses in this lesson and grow in your knowledge of who Jesus is and what He did (2 Peter 1:8).
3. Ask the Father to use you to teach others about Jesus and the gospel!

DAY 12: THE GOSPEL & THE BOOK OF ACTS

Acts 5:42, “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.”

Preaching the gospel (aka, “the good news”) of Jesus Christ is the central theme of the entire book of Acts. The name “Acts” comes from the shortened name, “The Acts of the Apostles,” which was written by Luke, a doctor who traveled with Paul.

The book of Acts is the historical record of how the first disciples went into the world to preach the gospel and make disciples.

The book of Acts can be summarized from the words of Jesus found in Acts 1:8, *“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.”* The word “witness” in the text refers to those who testify to the validity of someone’s claims. Consequently, the first disciples were to go into the entire world and testify about Jesus by preaching the gospel.

The summary of their gospel preaching (testifying) is as follows; (1) *Receive the Holy Spirit*: The disciples received the Holy Spirit to be Jesus’ witnesses in Acts 2:1-14. (2) *Jerusalem*: The gospel is preached in Jerusalem in Acts 2:14-7:1-60. (3) *Judea & Samaria*: The disciples move into the Judean and Samaritan villages and cities in Acts 8-12. (4) *Ends of the Earth*: Led primarily by Paul, the gospel goes to the gentiles and to the whole world via the Roman Empire (Acts 13-28)!

The disciples preached the gospel everywhere despite being martyred, persecuted and mocked. When they suffered, instead of complaining, they actually prayed for more boldness to keep preaching the gospel with signs following (Acts 4:23-31). Though their preaching caused them to be despised in man’s eyes, they kept

preaching the gospel from house to house and town to town publicly because they were pleasing in God's eyes (Acts 5:42). Plus, everywhere they went; signs, wonders and miracles were seen as commonplace (Acts 5:15-16). And sometimes practically entire cities heard the gospel preached at one time in mass evangelism (Acts 13:44)!

Chuck Colson said, "The disciples' decision to obey Jesus after the ascension proved to be a pivotal point in history. The world was never the same again!" May we preach the gospel and make disciples with the same passion and dedication as the first disciples did and see the book of Acts in our generation!

REFLECTION

Do you want God to use you to preach the gospel like the disciples did in the book of Acts?

ACTION

1. Take time to meditate on the powerful stories found in the book of Acts.
2. Ask God to use you to do the same things the first disciples did.
3. Preach with the power of the Holy Spirit and believe God to do what He did in the book of Acts!

DAY 13: THE GOSPEL & PAUL

1 Thessalonians 2:4, *“On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.”*

Other than Jesus, Paul is the most significant person in the New Testament concerning the gospel. In his book to the Romans, he writes the most in-depth treatise on the subject. He boldly writes in the first verse of Romans that he was, *“set apart for the gospel of God.”*

In Romans 1:16 he writes, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”* Then in the very next verse he explained the blessing of the gospel, *“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed— a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”*

In Romans chapter 1 he described the gospel and his calling, in chapters 2-3 he speaks of the need of gospel, in chapters 4-7 he teaches how to receive the gospel by faith, in chapters 8-11 he discussed the power of the gospel is for all the nations, in chapters 12-15 he wrote how to practically live out the gospel and in chapter 16 he described those who lived their lives preaching the gospel.

In every chapter of Romans the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to explain and give sound teachings in regards to the great message of the gospel. Paul wrote that we will be judged according to the gospel in Romans 2:16, he said enemies try to stop the gospel in Romans 11:28, Paul considered it every Christian’s duty as Christ’s priests to preach the gospel in Romans 15:16, Paul said it was his joy to preach the gospel to those who had never heard it before in Romans 15:20 and Paul taught that God established and matured us through the gospel in Romans 16:25. Therefore, from start to finish, it was all about the gospel for Paul.

Not only did Paul write an entire book devoted to the gospel, he also made mention of the gospel in every one of his thirteen books!

Why? Because as the verse above states, Paul lived his life to please God, not man.

Paul gave his life to proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ whether people liked it or not. He wasn't sent by God to be a man-pleaser but rather a soul-winner and disciple-maker!

F.F. Bruce wrote, "Paul's claim [was] that the message he preached was the authentic gospel of Christ. It [was] this... salvation was provided by God's grace and that faith was the means by which men appropriated it." May we all learn from Paul's obedience to the gospel and be passionate preachers of God's amazing grace!

REFLECTION

Do you want to be a man-pleaser or a gospel preacher?

ACTION

1. As you read the letters of Paul look for references of the gospel.
2. Ask God to use you to preach the gospel with passion and perseverance like Paul.
3. Base your life on pleasing God, not man.

DAY 14: THE GOSPEL IN CHURCH HISTORY

Galatians 1:6-7, “6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.”

The gospel message has been the most fought against and counterfeited message of all times- yet it has been the fastest growing message of all mankind. Sadly, just fifteen years after Pentecost the gospel message was tested in many different ways because of its tremendous growth rate.

Paul in today’s passage was forced to write a letter to the Roman province of Galatia and sternly rebuke the false gospel of Jewish legalism (Galatians 3:1; 5:12). Jewish legalism occurred when Jewish followers of Christ mixed Jewish laws with the grace of God. The second false gospel the early church had to overcome was Gnosticism. The Gnostics were people who mixed the pagan philosophy of dualism (God is both good and evil) with the teachings of Jesus. They denied Jesus had a real body when He came to earth and taught when someone was born again they didn’t need to live moral lives. John rebuked them in 1 John 2:4 when he wrote, *“Whoever says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.”*

After the first disciples died around 100 A.D., their disciples had to preach and face extreme persecution from the Romans who accused them of “atheism” because they refused to worship their many gods. The persecution in Rome climaxed during the reign of Diocletian in 303-313 A.D. when he murdered over 20,000 Christians by burning them, crucifying them and putting them in arenas to die by gladiator sword and wild animals.

Roman persecution stopped in 313 A.D. when the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and made Rome a

Christian nation. The rash national acceptance of Christianity soon made way for another enemy of the gospel called, “The Roman Catholic Church.” For two hundred years the Church of Rome began to organize all the Christians under their leader, the Bishop of Rome (aka, “the Pope”). Around 1100 A.D., the Church of Rome persecuted all those who did not do things their way- including other Christians (this was known as, “The Inquisitions”).

Over the next 400 years in the “Dark Ages” the Church of Rome reduced the gospel of Jesus to a series of man-made sacraments that only the priests could perform. During this time there were gospel preachers, but they were few and were heavily persecuted. For example, when John Wycliffe in the 1300’s tried to translate the Bible from Latin to a common language, he was excommunicated and threatened with death. After he died of natural causes, priests dug up his body and had it publicly burned!

Thankfully when Martin Luther (a German Catholic priest), along with others like Huldreich Zwingli, “protested” the Church of Rome and broke off in 1517 A.D., the gospel was free to flourish again. This event was called, the “Protestant Reformation.” The name protestant was given because they protested the lies of the priests and the word reformation was used because the church reformed itself to the time before the Roman Catholic Church had control. After the Protestant Reformation the gospel transformed and inspired nations. Many of the first settlers that came to America did so for religious freedom. As the United States formed, so did powerful churches and movements such as the Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians. In the early 1900’s the fire of Pentecost came again in Los Angeles at the Azusa Street Revival. Since then signs, wonders and miracles have become normative to the gospel again! C.S. Lewis wrote, “History is a story written by the finger of God.”

May we never forget the lessons of the past and always remember to hold to the pure and uncorrupted gospel of Jesus Christ!

REFLECTION

Are you willing to preserve the gospel of Jesus Christ in your generation?

ACTION

1. Ask God to rid you of any compromise, sin or false beliefs.
2. Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel with others.
3. Pass the gospel torch to others until Jesus comes back!

DAY 15: THE GOSPEL IN MODERN TIMES

Acts 19:20, *“In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”*

Never before has the gospel spread faster and more effectively across the world than right now.

Like in the book of Acts, the gospel net is spreading wide and growing by the power of God. Just in the last few years we have witnessed the fastest growing segment of Christianity, Pentecostalism, growing in ways only past generations could have dreams about!

“Currently, every month 15,000 in India are baptized as new believers in Jesus Christ. In China, there are now about 80,000,000 evangelical believers – growing at a rate five times that of the general population. Over 30,000 conversions on average take place a day in China- around 360,000 new disciples a year!

In 1900, Korea had no Protestant Church; it was deemed ‘impossible to penetrate.’ Today, six new churches open every day in South Korea, and it is site of nine of the world’s largest churches – some with more than 800,000 members. Today Korea is 30% Christian with 7,000 churches in Seoul alone. Millions of Buddhists have come to Christ.

Of over 400 million Latin Americans, more than 50 million have become evangelical Christians. By the end of this decade, a majority of the people in Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador will be evangelical believers. Chile, Costa Rica and Bolivia are about 40% Bible-believing evangelicals.

In Africa the church is on fire. It’s the first continent to become majority Christian (over 50%) in a single century. Over 25,000 new believers per day mark the growth of the Church. More Muslims in Iran have come to Christ since 1980 than in the previous 1,000 years combined. Before Khomeini’s revolution in 1979, there were about

2,000 Iranian believers. After years of intensified persecution, there are now more than 15,000.

In October 1993, the Philippines was solemnly consecrated to Jesus Christ in a massive rally around the Quirino Grandstand in Luneta Park in Manila - a rally attended by a million believers. Singapore's churches are now the most evangelistically active in the world, with one missionary sent out per 1,000 Christians." (*Source: One World Missions*). The amazing part of all these stats is that the vast majority of the evangelicals are Spirit-filled, tongue talking disciples operating in the power of God!

Sadly, at the same time of this explosive growth around the world, the United States is at an all-time low regarding those who are truly born-again. Though roughly 40% of Americans claim to be born again, only around 7% actually can be verified. Research shows that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not believe Jesus is the only way to salvation and that the Bible is the sole infallible rule for faith and morals. Just in one decade (2000-2010) it was estimated that 2.6 million people left Christianity in the U.S.! For America to see growth and awakening like the rest of the world, we must preach the gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit!

REFLECTION

Do you want God to use you to preach the gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit?

ACTION

1. Ask the Lord to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and power to preach the gospel like the disciples around the world (Acts 1:8).
2. Pray for the gospel of Jesus to continue to flourish by the power of God all over the world.
3. Pray for America to see revival!

DAY 16: THE GOSPEL CENTERED HOUSE

Acts 16:31, *“They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’”*

Salvation is a personal decision that only can be made by an individual who desires to place their faith and trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has told us in 1 Timothy 2:4 that He, *“wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”* Therefore, it should be the prayer and expectation of every born again disciple for their whole family (“household”) to be saved.

As a pastor, I have seen entire families come to faith in Jesus Christ. I’ve witnessed salvation start with a teenager and then come to the parents- along with all the other siblings. I’ve watched one parent accept Jesus then bring their spouse and kids and the whole family get born again. One time I saw a faithful mother and wife serve Jesus while everyone in her family rejected Him and then “all of a sudden” the walls broke down and everyone in her house came to Jesus! As disciples of Christ, we should never stop believing and praying for God to save our whole household.

If you live in a house with unsaved people, pray and never stop believing for all of them to be saved. For those of us who live in a house where everyone is already saved, believe God to save all your extended family. And everyone should always pray for the lost families in our neighborhoods and on our jobs.

Here are some great ways to have a gospel centered home; first, make family devotions a must each day; teach your children Scriptures and Bible stories. Second, always keep your house accountable to serving Jesus; don’t let pornography, drugs or bad influences in your home. Third, always pray at family meals and gatherings; share something encouraging from God’s Word that will teach, rebuke, correct and train in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Fourth, when lost family members or friends come over, have your children recite their memory verses to them and share the gospel with them; everybody loves to listen to children talk about Jesus! Fifth, do gospel outreaches together with the whole family. I love to bring my kids with me to the parks when I preach the gospel. Sixth, lift Jesus up in your family and He will draw everyone to Himself (John 12:32).

One encouraging testimony of a whole household coming to Jesus comes from a band member of, “Adam’s Road,” Micah Wilder. Before he came to Christ he was a devout Mormon. Micah became a Christian during his mission work for the Mormon Church when a Baptist pastor gave him the gospel. When he came back his family heard his testimony and eventually his parents and all his siblings accepted Jesus!

REFLECTION

Do you believe God desires to save your whole household?

ACTION

1. Pray daily for everyone in your house to be saved if they are not already born again.
2. Pray for everyone in your extended family to come to faith in Jesus.
3. Regularly make time to preach the gospel in your house and together with your family in public to reach other people’s lost family members with the gospel!

DAY 17: THE GOSPEL & PUBLIC WITNESS

Luke 14:23, *“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’”*

Some well-intentioned Christians have said that though all believers are to preach the “message” of Jesus, not everyone is commanded to follow the witnessing “method” of Jesus. In other words, they believe even though Jesus preached on the streets more than any one place- more than the temple or in homes, we can avoid following Jesus’ example and choose whatever way is most comfortable for us.

Everyone agrees that Christians are free to choose whatever evangelistic methods work best for them; whether it be on the job, at lunch meetings, etc... however, the overwhelming example of Jesus’ method on the streets must be followed and obeyed as the first priority by all.

You can’t pick and choose to obey the commands of Jesus that you like and ignore the ones you don’t like because they take you out of your comfort zone. And there is no doubt about it- being a public witness for Jesus is just as much of a command as, “love your neighbor as yourself!”

Notice in today’s passage where Jesus described the gospel will go- to the “roads and country lane,” i.e., “the main streets and country roads!” As a result, we shouldn’t only do friendship style evangelism with those we know, but we should also go out to public places and preach the gospel to strangers. Jesus said in Mark 16:15, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”* And in Mark 16:20 it records, *“Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.”* We need to be like first disciples and preach the gospel everywhere- at the park, at bus stops, in the malls, in front of colleges and high schools- everywhere!

This kind of public witnessing is not only found in the life of Jesus but all throughout the book of Acts and is seen as normative. For example, Luke records in Acts 17:17 that Paul, “*reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.*” A wise man once said, “You can make disciples like Jesus or you can make excuses, but you can’t do both at the same time.” Therefore, if Paul the apostle preached both in religious places and in the public market places- we shouldn’t hesitate to do both either!

REFLECTION

Do you believe Jesus commanded all of His disciples to be public witnesses?

ACTION

1. Repent if you have neglected being a public witness for Christ.
2. Make time to go out in public and preach the gospel.
3. Teach and encourage others to be public witnesses for Jesus.

DAY 18: FIVE EXCUSES NOT TO STREET WITNESS

2 Timothy 4:5, *“But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”*

Here are the top five excuses people make to not be obedient to Jesus’ command to street witness. Below the excuses are biblical responses.

5. Being a public witness isn’t effective like it was in Jesus’ time. There are better ways with social media, church plays and friendship evangelism.

Biblical Answer: In John 14:23-24 Jesus taught that if you love Him you will obey His commands. Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-20 to go into the entire world and preach the gospel and make disciples. Therefore, we must preach like the prophets of old—whether people listen or not. God told Ezekiel, *“You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious”* (Ezekiel 2:7) and as watchmen the people will know *“that a prophet has been among them”* (Ezekiel 33:33)

4. I don’t need to be a public witness as long as I witness somewhere.

Biblical Answer: In Mark 1:38 Jesus said, *“Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”* Notice Jesus preached in the villages publicly and in the synagogues (Mark 1:39). Jesus did both indoor and outdoor preaching, however, He never neglected preaching in public.

3. I know “good” churches and pastors that don’t street witness, so I don’t have to either.

Biblical Answer: It reads in Luke 10:1-3, “1 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. 2 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. 3 Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.’” Now imagine if you were with Jesus that day when He sent out the seventy-two into the streets to prepare the way for Him, would you say, “Jesus, the rabbi down the road says I don’t have to do this.” God forbid! It’s really that simple- obey Jesus over man.

2. I’m too scared to talk to people I don’t know, I want to wait until I’m ready.

Biblical Answer: Luke records in Acts 1:8 that Jesus promised to give us power for the specific reason of being His witness. Acts 1:8, “*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.*” Receive the power of the Holy Spirit to be a public witness for Jesus!

1. It’s not my calling.

Biblical Answer: Paul commanded Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:5 to, “*Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*” It doesn’t matter what your specific calling is; everyone is called to do the work of an evangelist.

Now is the time to stop making excuses and be obedient to Christ’s commands to street witness and preach the gospel publicly to strangers!

REFLECTION

Are you willing to be a public witness for Jesus?

ACTION

1. Repent of any excuses you may have not to be a public witness.
2. Pray and ask God to set your life on fire for the lost. Elton Trueblood said, “Evangelism is not a professional job for a few trained men, but is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs to the company of Jesus.”
3. Ask God to give you a heart for the lost like Jesus had in Matthew 9:36-37.

DAY 19: PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO YOUR FRIENDS

John 1:45, *“Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote —Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’”*

One of the most effective ways to see people come to Christ is through your friendships. In today’s verse Philip invited his friend Nathanael to come and meet Jesus. Afterwards, both Philip and Nathanael became Jesus’ disciples!

Dr. Win Arn, an expert in church growth, surveyed 50,000 churchgoers over a 10-year period to find out what the leading cause was for them coming to church. Between 75-90% overwhelmingly said, “I began attending church because someone invited me.”

In contrast to other methods, personal evangelism is still the most effective way to preach the gospel. For example, only 2% have come to church by advertisement, 6% by a pastoral invitation and just 6% by an organized evangelism campaign. On the other hand, 86% came by the invitation of friends or relatives. And from those 86%, 37% (over one third) testified that their coming to faith was directly related to the invitation they received to come to church.

However, the sad part is only 2% of Christians are actively inviting their unsaved friends to church according to Thom Rainer in his book, *The Unchurched Next Door*. Also, Scott McConnell from LifeWay Research wrote, “35% [over one third] indicated that they would be inspired to attend church, ‘if I knew there were people like me there.’” Lastly, 7 out of 10 unchurched people said they have never received even one invitation to church- God have mercy!

We need to pray, preach and invite our friends and family to church. First, we must pray for them by binding the work of Satan in their lives and ask the Holy Spirit to open their hearts to receive the

gospel. Second, we need to preach to them the gospel and not just invite them to church. We should present the gospel to them personally. Third, we should invite them to our church to join the Body of Christ and grow in their faith.

Friends don't let their friends go to hell without hearing the gospel!

REFLECTION

How many friends and relatives can you preach to and invite to church?

ACTION

1. Repent if you have been lazy, shy or fearful in sharing the gospel with your friends and family.
2. Pray and ask God to give you boldness to preach the gospel to those in your life (Acts 4:29).
3. Look for open doors to preach the gospel and invite your friends and family to church.

DAY 20: SIGNS THAT FOLLOW THE GOSPEL

Mark 16:17, *“And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues...”*

When God chose Moses to be His representative, He gave him miraculous signs to verify the message (Exodus 4:1-17). The same is true when Jesus spoke to his disciples to go and preach the gospel to all people; he promised to provide them with signs to display God’s power.

God loves to use signs to confirm His Word and though wicked people may demand them, they are not there for them but for the honest seeker.

A sign is an “indication or proof of God’s power.” God told the prophet Joel that in the last days He would pour out His Spirit and would, *“show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below”* (Acts 2:19). Also, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, *“4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.”* We need to be faithful to God and let His signs come through us to the lost like Paul did in His preaching of the gospel.

The signs Jesus promised from our passage today are; (1) Casting out demons, (2) Speaking in new tongues, (3) Invincibility and (4) Healing of the sick. Mark 16:15-20 then ends with these encouraging words, *“Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it.”*

It’s clear that when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to baptize the disciples in power, with the evidence of speaking in unlearned languages, it was for the purpose of spreading the gospel with signs following (Acts 1:8). Certainly, people with wicked hearts demand

signs to believe like with Jesus in Matthew 16:4, however, these signs are not for them, they are for the genuine seeker to see God is both powerful and personal.

Lester Sumrall wrote, “The gifts of the Spirit are the weapons God gives us to fight and win our battles. We must never underestimate their strength, their power, and their usefulness.” Therefore, every disciple should expect the signs Jesus mentioned in Mark 16 and the spiritual gifts Paul described in 1 Corinthians 12-14 to follow them as they preach the gospel!

REFLECTION

Have you ever witnessed one of God’s signs?

ACTION

1. Describe a time you saw someone healed, speak in new tongues, be invincible or cast out demons.
2. Don’t seek the signs first; seek the sign giver- Jesus Christ.
3. Next time you preach the gospel ask God to display His power for all to see!

DAY 21: THE GOSPEL & THE EVANGELIST

Ephesians 4:11-12, “11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”

In today’s passage Paul taught that Jesus gave the five-fold ministry gifts to the church when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost for the building up of His Body. They are as follows; (1) *Apostles*: Disciples who are sent out to start new churches. (2) *Prophets*: Disciples who speak on behalf of God and give direction to the church. (3) *Evangelists*: Disciples who win souls and rise up new soul winners. (4) *Pastors*: Disciples who shepherd and care for God’s people. (5) *Teachers*: Disciples who explain and guard the truths of the Bible.

The role of the evangelist in preaching the gospel is to train and mentor all disciples in the local church to be gospel preachers.

Some in the church have wrongly assumed that if they don’t have the calling in the five-fold ministry to be an evangelist then they don’t have to do evangelism. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Because Jesus commanded everyone to do evangelism in places like Mark 16:15, it’s the job of the evangelist to train them.

Nothing in this life is more important than preaching the gospel; that’s why the role of the evangelist is so important. Once Jesus said to a potential disciple who desired to go to his father’s funeral before joining with Him, “*Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God*” (Luke 9:60). It might seem at first glance that Jesus wasn’t compassionate, but it was because Jesus loved people so much that He wanted them to know God’s Kingdom business always comes first- lest everything else come to nothing like a sand castle. It was and is Jesus’ pattern to teach all His disciples to be Kingdom preachers- no exceptions and no

excuses!

The word “evangelism” comes from the Greek word “*euaggelizō*,” which means, to “preach good news.” Jesus wants everyone to be trained to preach the good news of Jesus. As a result, the “evangelist” or the “good news instructor” is to teach others to do what they do. Just like the teachers instruct the disciples to know sound doctrine and the pastors care for the church. If your church doesn’t have an evangelist, the pastor can fill in for them until one is raised up. However, I would still recommend getting resources from trusted evangelists that will give you greater depth and instruction. Follow the example of Philip the evangelist in Acts 21:8 and win souls and make disciples!

(Special Note to Those Sensing a Calling to be an Evangelist: Lester Sumrall, a great evangelist of the 1970’s wrote, “Evangelists get discouraged sometimes when they go to a church and fail to get many people saved. The reason is they are doing their evangelizing in the wrong place. You cannot expect to grow corn if you plant the seed around the church altar. Evangelists need to go out and plant their seed where the sinners are, and then they will reap a harvest. We need to pray that God will give us some great evangelists, and that could mean you.”)

REFLECTION

Have you received instruction from an evangelist on how to preach the gospel?

ACTION

1. Seek further training to do evangelism by an evangelist either in person or from their materials.
2. Practice and perfect what you learn from them.
3. Preach the Word of God as often as you can to as many people as you can!

DAY 22: THE GOSPEL & THE PREACHER

Romans 10:15, *“And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”*

The role of the preacher is to be called, filled with the Holy Spirit, trained and sent out to win souls and make new disciples.

All disciples are to be gospel preachers; therefore, all disciples are to be called, filled, trained and sent out to win souls for Jesus!

Consider the following things to be an effective gospel preacher; first, we need to accept our general calling and specific calling. The general calling for everyone to preach the gospel comes at the same time a person is called to be a disciple of Christ. For example when Jesus first called Peter and his brother Andrew He said, *“Come, follow me... and I will send you out to fish for people.”* (Matthew 4:19).

People’s specific callings from God pertain to the exact place He wants them to go. Certainly we are to preach everywhere we go, but we are also called to be preach the gospel in specific places. For example, in Acts 16:9 Paul received a vision to go and preach to a specific people in a certain area, *“During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’”* We should be open to where God is leading us to preach his Word.

Second, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. Jesus taught in Acts 1:8, *“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.”* Therefore, every preacher is commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit just like the first disciples were in Acts 2:4.

Third, the preacher needs to invest in being trained and prepared to effectively preach the gospel. Just like a soldier wouldn't go into battle without proper training and the guidance from experienced leaders, the same is true with evangelism training. The disciple must undergo teaching, on hands training and evaluation by godly leaders. This kind of training is exemplified in the three years Jesus spent with His disciples instructing, releasing and correcting them (Luke 10:1).

Fourth, the local church with their blessing and support should send out the gospel-preaching disciple. Luke records in Acts 13:2-3, *"2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off."* As a result, there shouldn't be any "rogue disciples" in the church, but rather submitted servants accountable to the doctrines and practices of the elders.

Let us all receive our calling, filling, training and be sent out to be world changers, roof breakers and history makers for Jesus!

REFLECTION

Have you been called, filled, trained and sent out by your local church to preach the gospel?

ACTION

1. If you haven't joined a good church yet, pray for God to send you to one.
2. Receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in unlearned languages if you haven't already.
3. Go through the proper steps of your local church to be trained and sent out as a gospel preacher! A.W. Tozer said, "Only a disciple can make a disciple."

DAY 23: THE GOSPEL & PRAYER

1 Timothy 2:1, *“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people.”*

Prayer has preceded every great move of God in history and in modern times. From the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to the modern day revivals sweeping across the nations of China, South Korea and Africa- all have their roots in prayer. Prayer is a two-way communication with God. First, it starts with us making our requests known to God. And then second, prayer is God responding through His guidance, presence and supernatural power.

The truth is we’re not waiting for God to win the lost, God is waiting for us to ask Him to give Jesus the nations!

All great evangelists and soul winners have attributed their success to the power of prayer. Great soul winners in the past such as John Wesley, Charles Finney, D.L. Moody and Lester Sumrall never did anything without first praying and seeking God for His leading and power. D.L. Moody, the great Chicago evangelist and preacher once said, “I’d rather be able to pray than to be a great preacher; Jesus Christ never taught his disciples how to preach, but only how to pray.”

Modern evangelists like Carlos Annacondia, Steve Hill and Reinhard Bonke not only depend upon prayer for power, but they believe that the prayer of intercession made before their crusades is the only way to clear the path for the Lord to come into people’s hearts in power.

Carlos Annacondia, the radical evangelist and spark of the ten year revival in Argentina, referred to spiritual warfare in two parts- first, intercessory prayer was like the aerial assault that defeated the enemy’s power and second, preaching is like the infantry that takes the land and enforces the battle won in prayer! Therefore, I encourage you before and after every outreach to pray with your team.

Make prayer a daily part of your life. As Paul taught in today's passage make petitions, prayers, intercession and then thanksgiving for all people. Prayers and petitions are basically the same thing- they mean to ask God to do things on your behalf for His Kingdom. Intercession is praying on behalf of someone else, especially for their salvation. And thanksgiving is a prayer of gratitude to God because He always does what He promised. Giving God thanks each time you pray, especially for people, will fill your heart with hope for His Kingdom to come and will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I believe when you pray like how Paul commanded, God will move in miraculous ways!

REFLECTION

Do you regularly pray and intercede for the lost to be saved?

ACTION

1. Repent if your prayer life is not where God wants it to be.
2. Make time daily to pray for the lost to be saved.
3. Live a life of prayer and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

DAY 24: THE GOSPEL & THE WORD OF GOD

2 Timothy 2:2, *“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage— with great patience and careful instruction.”*

According to Paul in today’s passage the Word of God has three main functions in preaching the gospel; mainly to (1) correct, (2) rebuke and (3) encourage. I also believe that these three functions give us a good order to follow. First, we can start with correcting people’s wrong thinking so they can truly understand the gospel, then we should rebuke their sin and unbelief, and lastly, we should encourage sinners to come to Jesus and be saved.

God has commanded all gospel preachers to use the Word of God to correct, rebuke and encourage the lost to be saved!

We see this kind of three-part preaching throughout the book of Acts. For example, in Peter’s first sermon on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:15-16 Peter started by correcting their misunderstandings of the current events by saying, *“15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.”* Afterward he rebuked them because of their sin in Acts 2:23, *“This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.”* Lastly, he encouraged them to repent and receive Christ in Acts 2:38, *“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”*

Certainly, the gospel preacher doesn’t always have to follow the three-step pattern. The Holy Spirit is creative and knows the perfect way to reach people’s hearts. At the same time, as a general rule, the gospel preacher should consider following this three-step approach to correctly handle the Word of God.

First, correction speaks to realigning people's misconceptions about God with the truth of God's Word. Sometimes correction involves apologetics (defenses and arguments in favor of the Christian faith) and then when the unbeliever has a properly basic foundation of the truth they can receive the personal rebuke from the Word of God. Second, rebuking someone is exposing their sin and commanding them in Jesus' name to stop sinning.

Third, encouraging the lost comes by commanding people to believe and confess Christ. This kind of encouragement also includes encouraging them to repent and be born again. All three functions of the Scripture will take great patience on our end to do correctly. We must be careful to instruct the lost in each area according to the Word of God and by the leading of the Holy Spirit and not by man's opinions.

Also, the three-fold work of the Word of God doesn't stop being relevant once a person gets saved, it continues in their lives everyday. Charles Spurgeon said, "Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years." May we all be ready in season and out of season to use God's Word to correct, rebuke and encourage!

REFLECTION

When preaching the gospel do you do all three parts equally or do you tend to emphasize one part more than the others?

ACTION

1. Study how to use the Bible to correct, rebuke and encourage.
2. Moving forward ask the Lord to use you to effectively preach the gospel with all three parts.
3. Ask God for patience and wisdom in each situation to be effective in your preaching and instructing of the gospel.

DAY 25: THE GOSPEL & THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 1:8, “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.”

The Holy Spirit has three main roles in preaching the gospel; first, the Holy Spirit empowers the disciple to be a public witness, second, He leads the disciple and third, He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).

The Holy Spirit is not just a “force,” He is a person with the exact same divine nature of the Father and Son. As, the third person of the Trinity, He is worthy of total obedience and worship (Hebrews 3:7).

First, the Holy Spirit empowers the disciple. In today’s passage Jesus taught the Holy Spirit would empower the disciples to be living witnesses. In Acts 2:4 Luke described the experience of speaking in unlearned tongues as the evidence of receiving Jesus’ gospel preaching power. This pattern of being baptized and endowed with power from the Holy Spirit is seen all throughout the book of Acts (Acts 10:45-46 & Acts 19:1-7). Paul further described the benefits of being filled with the Holy Spirit’s power in 1 Corinthians 12-14 when he listed and described the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Second, the Holy Spirit leads the disciple. Jesus said in John 16:7 to His disciples, *“It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”* And in John 16:13, *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”* The preacher desperately needs the Holy Spirit in regards to the gospel because he needs the Spirit to reveal the truth of God to the lost and to guide him in all that he does.

Third, the Holy Spirit convicts the sinner. Jesus taught in John 16:8, *“When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin*

and righteousness and judgment.” Therefore, the world (those who are lost in their sins), desperately need the Holy Spirit too. They need Him to prove and convict them of their sins, show them the righteousness of God in Jesus and let them know about the judgment to come.

Consequently, when preachers are empowered by the Spirit and given His truth and guidance, the Holy Spirit can use them with the Word of God to convict the lost to be born again! Charles Spurgeon said, “A sinner can no more repent and believe without the Holy Spirit’s aid than he can create [the] world.” John said in Revelation 22:17 that the Spirit and the Bride (“the Church”) work together in the great harvest, *“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come!’ Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.”*

REFLECTION

When you preach the gospel do you rely upon the Holy Spirit or do you only trust in your own efforts?

ACTION

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His power with the evidence of speaking in other tongues if you haven’t already (Acts 2:4).
2. Make a conscious effort to rely upon the Holy Spirit’s guidance when you are preaching. Only say what He says.
3. Pray for the lost to hear what the Spirit is saying through the church!

DAY 26: THE GOSPEL & THE SINNNER

Romans 10:9, *“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

The role of the sinner is to freely accept the universal gift of salvation and confess Jesus as Lord. God has given all men the right to freely choose to accept or reject Him (Joshua 24:15). And even though God desires all mankind to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), sinners are commanded to, *“Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded”* (James 4:8). God has made His choice to make humanity savable; now people must individually choose to be saved (Acts 2:40).

When sinners hear the gospel preached they have a free choice to either come to God and be saved or remain in rebellion and condemnation.

Some theologians have falsely claimed that the sinner has no real role in their salvation because whomever God wants to save, He will save by irresistibly drawing him to salvation. They deny that man has a genuine free will or a real choice in the matter- they teach that the choice of salvation is solely dependent on God. According to them, God chooses to lovingly save some and willingly damn others by overlooking them and leaving them in condemnation.

This kind of “fatalistic” thinking makes the gospel a charade because they claim that the sinner is so dead in their sins that they can’t even choose to have faith to believe in Christ, thus, they have to be “dragged” by the Spirit into believing in Jesus. However, this is the exact opposite of the clear and plain teachings of the Bible. Not to mention that this horrible belief system also states that Jesus didn’t die for the sins of the whole world, but only limited His atoning sacrifice for the “elect” and “chosen.” God have mercy!

John Wesley said in regards to this kind of misunderstanding of biblical passages, “Whatever that Scripture proves, it never proved this; whatever its true meaning be... this I know, better it were to say it had no sense, than to say it had such a sense as this. It cannot mean, whatever it mean besides, that the God of truth is a liar. Let it mean what it will, [but] it cannot mean that the Judge of all the world is unjust. No scripture can mean that God is not love, or that his mercy is not over all his works.”

Sadly, this kind of man centered philosophical thinking can easily impugn the character of God from being a loving and merciful Creator, to being a merciless dictator, who joyfully dams His own creation simply because it pleases His sovereign will. In contrast, Jesus clearly taught that God loved the whole world (John 3:16) and wants all nations to be His disciples (Matthew 28:19). Also, John wrote that Jesus is, “*The atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world*” (1 John 2:2). Therefore, I praise God for Jesus’ great universal love and sacrificial atonement!

As a result, when the message of God’s grace and salvation is preached to the sinner all they have to do is willingly choose to obey Jesus and declare Him the Lord of their lives. This simple act of obedience brings them from death unto life, from lost to found and from a child of wrath to a born again child of God! This is not because of anything they have done, but because of what Jesus did on the cross on their behalf (Ephesians 2:8-10).

In light of God’s great love, let us preach the glorious truth of the gospel to sinners, having full assurance that Jesus loves the whole world and desires everyone to be saved!

REFLECTION

Do you believe God loves the whole world and desires everyone that hears the gospel to be saved?

ACTION

1. Repent if you have believed in the false teachings of Christian fatalism (“Calvinism”). Rather consider Arminianism and Molinism.

2. Preach believing that God desires to save everyone.
3. Preach the lost to have faith in Jesus and confess Him as the Lord.

DAY 27: THE GOSPEL & THE CHURCH

2 Timothy 2:2, *“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

The church’s job concerning the gospel is to first connect sinners to the cross of Jesus, second, to train disciples to carry their cross and third, send out disciples to preach the power of the cross to the lost!

Every good church should have elders and deacons who oversee the process of connecting, mentoring and sending out disciples to make new disciples.

Luke recorded in Acts 14:23, *“Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.”* These new elders were to lead the church in making disciples that would make new disciples. Paul commanded Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:10 to appoint deacons to serve with the elders, *“They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.”* Thus, deacons are considered the assistants or the helpers to the elders.

Though the deacons are under the authority of the elders, both elders and deacons are to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3), empowered with the nine spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7) and active in one or more of the five ministerial gifts (Ephesians 4:11). We can see the effectiveness of the first deacons preaching in the lives of Stephen and Philip in Acts 7-8.

In today’s passage we learn that Paul (an apostolic elder) relied upon Timothy (a pastoral elder) to take what He said and pass it down to the governing elders and the deacons; and then to all the disciples. Timothy was an elder that was pastoring the churches in Ephesus with the help of the governing elders and deacons. When he taught the disciples what God had revealed to Paul, he not only was doing his

part, but he also expecting those listening to do their part and pass it down to those around them. This was the way thousands of disciples could all receive the same message before technology, by word of mouth.

Some think word of mouth is a flawed method because it can easily pass down wrong information. However, in the time of the early church, oral tradition was taken serious because eternity was at stake and it could cost them their lives in the Roman Empire. They wanted to make sure they wouldn't die for a lie. That is why Paul said to Timothy to do the teaching in the presence of many reliable witnesses. If someone started to teach false doctrine, the others could easily correct it.

Think of the church connecting people to the cross as the gospel being preached in various ways but mostly through public evangelism and friendship evangelism. Mentoring is discipling both one-on-one and in small group settings; like in Bible study groups or Sunday school style classes. And sending out new disciples to preach is ordaining new elders and deacons to repeat the process and reliably spread the gospel- just like how the early church appointed new leaders.

When we have a church functioning the way God intended it to, we can receive Jesus' promise in Matthew 16:18, "*I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it!*" The ole' timers used to say, "Let's all reach one, to teach one, to reach one and repeat the process until Jesus comes back!"

REFLECTION

Are you committed to a good church with godly elders and deacons?

ACTION

1. Prayerfully join a good church if you haven't already.
2. Get trained up and sent out to preach the gospel.
3. Bring your new disciples to the church to be trained and mentored by the elders and deacons so they can be sent out to preach!

DAY 28: THE GOSPEL & PERSECUTION

Matthew 5:11-12, “11 *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*”

The gospel will always be resisted by some people and result in persecution because Jesus promised that it would. Jesus said in Matthew 10:24, *“The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master”* and in John 15:18 He promised, *“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.”*

If you do what Jesus did, you’ll be treated like how Jesus was treated.

When you go and preach the gospel, some people will love you, accept what you say and follow Jesus’ commands and others will hate you, persecute you and try to harm you. However, we as Christ’s disciples should not fear death or man, but rather we should only fear God. A wise man once said, “Don’t fear a short life, but a wasted life!”

Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”* In other words, we should fear being disobedient to God’s command to preach the gospel more than we fear what people might do to us.

We are to follow the example of Christ who loved His enemies, forgave His tormentors and willingly gave His life for us all. When faced with the plan of God to suffer for His people Jesus humbly prayed, *“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done”* (Luke 22:42). Consequently, Jesus was obedient to the Father even unto death and we should be willing to do

the same. John said, *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters”* (1 John 3:16).

When we face times of persecution, may we have the same humility and love for God to pray what the first disciples prayed in Acts 4:29-30, *“29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”* Whether by life or by death, may Jesus be glorified in us. Let us live by the motto of the Moravian church, “May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering.”

REFLECTION

Are you willing to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ?

ACTION

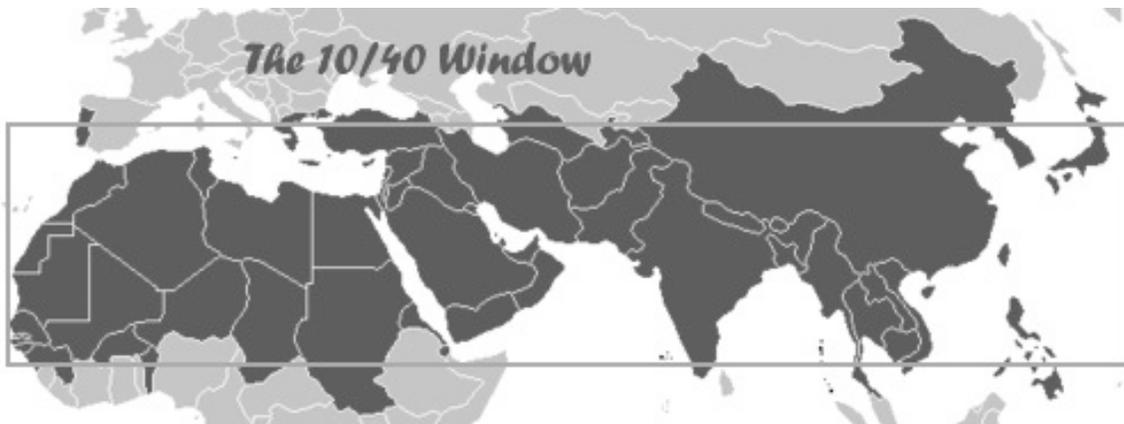
1. Repent of the fear of death or the fear of man if these fears have prevented you from being fully obedient to Christ’s command to preach in public.
2. Ask God for boldness to preach in the midst of persecution.
3. Forgive your enemies for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34).

DAY 29: THE GOSPEL & THE END TIMES

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

According to the “*Joshua Project*,” an online database for Christian missions, there are around 16,791 total people groups in the world and 7,275 are still unreached (about 43%). In other words, there are 7.13 billion people in the world and 2.91 billion (40%) have never heard the gospel one time.

The majority of the unreached people groups (over 6,200) live in an area known as the “10/40 Window.” The 10/40 Window is the rectangular area of North Africa, the Middle East and Asia; it’s approximately between 10 degrees and 40 degrees north latitude.



In today’s passage, Jesus taught that His second coming was directly related to the whole world hearing the gospel.

The most important job the disciple has in the end times is to preach the gospel to every nation, tribe and language!

Here are four ways you can spread the gospel to those who have never heard it; (1) Pray for the governments and the people in these

nations to be open to the gospel. The two greatest hindrances in these nations are Islam and Communism. (2) Pray for the local churches, leaders and foreign missionaries to be granted boldness to preach the gospel despite the hardships they face. (3) Give to mission programs that send missionaries and support local leaders in these parts of the world. (4) Go and do mission trips to reach the unreached.

I believe we are living in the greatest times of harvest ever known to the world- may we not grow weary in well doing, but instead reap the nations for Jesus Christ!

REFLECTION

Are you actively doing something to help reach the unreached people groups with the gospel?

ACTION

1. Repent of the sins of laziness and selfishness if you haven't prayed or supported the work of reaching the unreached people in the world with the gospel.
2. Pray, give and support the gospel around the world. A.T. Pierson said, "If missions languish, it is because the whole life of godliness is feeble. The command to go everywhere and preach to everybody is not obeyed until the will is lost by self-surrender in the will of God. Living, praying, giving and going will always be found together."
3. Reach all those you can around you with the gospel- especially those from the 10/40 window. For example, in Chicago where I live, we are surrounded with people from the Middle East, China and India; let's reach our neighbors!

DAY 30: ONE MORE

Luke 15:4, *“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?”*

Jesus in today’s passage displayed the heart that every gospel preacher should have for lost sheep- just one more. We in the church shouldn’t be comfortable and content with our own salvation while people around us are perishing and headed to an eternal lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

The gospel is not an optional upgrade for humanity’s benefit; it is the only means for our salvation and deliverance from the wrath of God (Ephesians 5:6).

Paul said concerning God’s judgment on sinners in 2 Corinthians 5:11 (KJV), *“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.”* As a result, we should be motivated both by God’s amazing love to save everyone who calls on His name and by the certain expectation of His terrifying judgment, which will consume His enemies (Hebrews 10:26-27).

I would like to end this topic on soul winning with a true story about a man in history who loved the Jewish people and helped save many of their lives during the Nazi Holocaust. His name was Oskar Schindler and he lived in Poland during World War II. He secretly bought Jewish people’s freedom and helped them move away from German held territories. Though he was a rich man, at the end of the war he was poor because he gave all he had to help over a thousand Jews survive and avoid the Nazi death camps.

In the movie, *Schindler’s List*, he is shown at the end of the war taking off his golden pendant (which could have been sold to buy the freedom of more Jews) and saying, “I could have gotten one more person, and I didn’t. And I didn’t!” Over six million Jews lost their lives during the holocaust and he was only able to save around 1,000 people. What if others would have done the same? How many more could have been spared? Thank God for what Oskar Schindler did, but

I wonder how many others just sat by and did nothing?

In light of eternity how much more valuable is the eternal soul of just one person? Today there are literally millions of souls headed for hell right now. How much of your life are you willing to give so that others can know Jesus? I pray that you will join with me in the cause of Jesus Christ and preach the gospel to all those around you because there is always, "*One more.*"

REFLECTION

Are you doing all that you can to preach the gospel to lost people around you?

ACTION

1. Repent of a hard heart if you haven't been giving your all for the lost.
2. Pray for God to give you a heart of compassion that can always see the one lost sheep.
3. Preach, pray and plug away because there is always, "One more!"

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