

Seminar 2 - Personal Evangelism

Opening Devotion

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. (John 12:20-22)

Who introduced you to Christ? Describe the circumstances of your conversion.

Part 1. Understanding Evangelism

1. What Evangelism Isn't

- a. Saying *anything* about God
- b. Imposing your Beliefs on others
- c. Sharing your Testimony
- d. Working for Social Justice or activism
- e. Apologetics
- f. Anything else that we do apart from actually telling people the Gospel!
 - *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:14-15, 17)*

2. What is Evangelism?

- a. Telling people about the good news of the life and work of Christ, applying it to their condition, and then calling them to respond.

b. “Teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade”¹

■ *Teaching the Gospel*

- We must communicate Christ, his work, and his reign (Jesus is Savior and King), and why that matters.
 - (Individual View)- God, Man, Christ, Response
 - (Cosmic View) Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation

■ Aim to persuade

- We do have a goal in mind when we evangelize: we want people to believe this message
 - **John 20:30-31.** *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
- Keeping our aim in mind helps us to be compassionate, understanding, gentle, respectful, and loving towards those we speak with, knowing that they face either eternal life or eternal destruction.

3. Why We don't Evangelize

Question: What are some fears or obstacles you face that are hindering your evangelism?

Some common excuses:

- a. *I Don't feel confident I can communicate the gospel.*
- b. *What if they ask a question I can't answer?*
- c. *I don't like to talk to people I don't know.*
- d. *I'm not outgoing enough.*
- e. *I don't have any non-Christian friends.*

¹ Definition from j. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism* (Crossway, 2014), 26-27

- f. I don't want to make things awkward or lose friendships*
- g. I don't want to offend anyone.*
- h. It seems wrong to force my views on others.*
- i. I don't want to get in trouble or face persecution.*
- j. I am not allowed to evangelize at work (or school).*
- k. If I share the gospel, I'll have to act more like a Christian and I'm afraid I'll look like a hypocrite.*
- l. I don't like arguing.*
- m. I'm just going to hope other people ask me.*
- n. I don't feel called to evangelize*
- o. I don't have time.*

Part 2. Doing Evangelism

1. How to Evangelize (manner)
 - a. Accuracy
 - b. Clarity
 - c. Humility
 - d. Sincerity

2. How to Evangelize (the P.E.S.T. Method)
 - a. Prepare -pray, grow in knowledge, memorize scripture, look for opportunities, foster relationships.
 - b. Engage - Go! Build real relationships. Ask questions about real life. If you can talk about important things you will find an easy path to spiritual things.
 - c. Share - communicate the gospel in a method you know well. Invite them to believe
 - d. Trust - Leave the results to God. Don't try and force someone into a decision

3. How to have a Conversation (John 4)²

- a. Start a Conversation with someone
 - i. Jesus started a conversation up with a Samaritan woman. Not someone he would usually speak with or be expected to speak with as a Jewish man.
 - ii. You may have to actually practice this. Take some pressure off yourself that you have to evangelize and just start a conversation with a stranger. Talk about anything, but train yourself to get comfortable talking with people. Increase your confidence.
- b. Adjust your life patterns to make conversation possible
 - i. Jesus went through Samaria instead of crossing the Jordan and going around from Judah to Galilee.
 - ii. If you want to evangelize, you need to change your habits and thinking.
- c. Chat about everyday life
 - i. Jesus asked for a drink of water
 - ii. Most conversations start out light. Notice that Jesus didn't keep it light. He asked about real life stuff. I contend that if you talk about important things, you will soon find an avenue for spiritual things.
- d. Ask Questions
 - i. Jesus asked her to find her husband. He knew what was going on in her life and he could have said so plainly, but instead he asked a tough question that got to her heart.
 - ii. Questions are easy.
 - iii. Ask questions that you genuinely want the answer to. Listen with empathy towards the person. Seek to understand their thoughts, experiences, or opinions. Don't ask gotcha questions.
 - iv. If you know the gospel well and you listen so as to understand where someone is coming from, the Holy Spirit will guide you as to how to share the gospel.
 - v. Eventually they may ask you questions. That is a sign they are engaged in the conversation.

² Much of the following material was adapted from the article <http://evangelism.intervarsity.org/how/conversation/6-conversational-evangelism-tips-master-himself>. Accessed March 2017.

- e. Listen to Questions, then answer the question behind the question
 - i. The Samaritan woman asked whether the Jewish temple or the Samaritan temple was the right place to worship. Jesus doesn't get bogged down in debating the finer points of theology or religious practice, he gets to the heart: true worshippers worship God in Spirit and in truth.
 - ii. Try not to get caught up in arguments
 - 1. Ask them, "why is that so important to you?" or "Why do you ask that?", or ask them their opinion on the matter.
- f. Share Jesus
 - i. Jesus reveals to her that he is the Messiah, and that changes everything.
 - ii. Ask yourself "How is Jesus good news to this person" (contours of the gospel)
- g. Bringing it to a close
 - i. You can probably tell when someone has checked out of a conversation. Let them go. But if they are still engaged, continue as long as you are led by the Spirit.
 - ii. If you can, ask the person what their response is. "So what do you think?" "What questions do you have?"
 - iii. Make yourself available to have subsequent conversations. Invite them to read through the Gospel of Mark and get together to talk about it. Invite them to your Life Group or a Sunday morning service. Offer to pray.
 - iv. If through the course of your conversation(s) someone expresses that they are a believer or want to be a believer:
 - 1. Ask them what they mean. In some way have them explain the gospel. They must correctly understand the gospel message (even if they can't articulate it well), if they are to be saved by it.
 - 2. The proper response is for them is to (1) repent and (2) believe.
 - 3. Pray with them

Question: how is this helpful? What questions or comments do you have?

4. Who to Evangelize³

- a. *“To plant the Kingdom and see it grow and bear fruit, two things are absolutely necessary: good seed and good soil. If the two come together, the results are great fruitfulness.”⁴*
- b. The Bible is not silent on what kinds of people are likely to be good soil for the gospel
 - i. Bad people:⁵ *“I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance”* (Luke 5:32)
 - ii. Poor people: *“Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?”* (James 2:5).
 - iii. Young People: *“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 18:3).
 - iv. Those searching for God, perhaps in the occult or other religions: *“Seek, and you shall find”* (Matt 7:7).
 - v. Uneducated and powerless people: *“But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong”* (1 Cor 27).
 - vi. The insignificant, the discriminated against: *“God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God”* (1 Cor 1:28-29).
- c. Scripture also tell us what kinds of people tend to be less receptive to the gospel
 - i. Intellectuals, people of influence or high social status: *“For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth”* (1 Cor. 1:26).
 - ii. People who already consider themselves ‘good, moral’ people: *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance”* (Luke 5:31-32).
 - iii. Wealthy People: *“How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God”* (Luke 18:24-25).

³ For the following insights I am indebted to: Neil Cole, *Organic Church*. Jossey-Bass, 2005.

⁴ Ibid, 65

⁵ *“bad people make good soil--there’s a lot of fertilizer in their lives.”* Ibid, 72

- iv. This said, none are too far for God's hand to save because of his grace, and we should not avoid sharing the gospel with anyone because we don't think they will accept. Rather, the Scriptures and experience demonstrate that generally the kinds of people who accept or reject the gospel are fairly represented by these lists.
- d. Who is in your circle of influence? To whom has God put you in proximity?
- i. Children
 - ii. Extended family
 - iii. Friends
 - iv. neighbors
 - v. Co-workers, bosses, clients
 - vi. Classmates and teammates
 - vii. People with shared interests
 - viii. Acquaintances that you see often (waitresses, bank tellers, nearby business owners, the coach of your child's team, that woman you always see at Starbucks, that guy who works out at the gym at that same time you do.)
 - ix. Strangers

Question: *Considering your circle of influence, who stands out to you as good soil?*

5. Do the work of an evangelist
- a. Prepare to evangelize
 - b. Find a way to be around unbelievers and build real relationships with them.
 - c. Constantly fill your mind with the gospel
 - d. Practice evangelism as a spiritual discipline
 - e. Pray for the lost

Question: *What is the next step for you? What are going to do with this on Monday?*