

Evangelism - Part 4

The Practice of Evangelism

November 10, 1996

- Acts 26:12-17

12 "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,¹³ "at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.¹⁴ "And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'¹⁵ "So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'¹⁶ 'But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.¹⁷ 'I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,¹⁸ 'to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' NKJV

- Review & Introduction

Having considered the total depravity of the human race and its complete helplessness in rectifying the situation we then moved on to see what actually happens when someone becomes a Christian. It was obvious from the Scriptures that there was a process to God's drawing someone into His kingdom. Then last week we looked in simple detail at the very content of the Gospel. It began with a proclamation of our sinfulness both by nature and by choice and ended with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord according to the Scriptures.

With all of this as a foundation, today and next week we move on to the practical presentation of the Gospel. What do we actually say to someone when we are sharing with them? Where do we begin? Should I even say anything? This week and next week should be filled with practical steps to consider when the opportunity for evangelism occurs.

- Identify the Deportment

Matthew 19:16-22

16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"¹⁷ So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."¹⁸ He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, " 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'¹⁹ 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "²⁰ The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. NKJV

- Given that the drawing of a sinner into a salvation relationship is a process that God performs, the very first step that we should undertake is to correctly identify where in the process an individual currently is. In this great example, our Lord is confronted with one asking the way to be saved. First, the Lord gives him the law in a very brief, concise manner. The response of the man indicates that he believes he will work his way in to heaven. In what many might think to be a blown evangelistic opportunity, our Lord considers the man and accurately identifies his deportment. His manner of behavior is that he loves himself and loves his belongings. Our Lord doesn't give him the gospel message but confronts him with law and more law to attempt to drive him to an understanding of a need for salvation.

- Opening Eyes

Romans 3:20

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. NKJV

- The gospel means good news. The need for good news presupposes an understanding of the bad news. The content of the bad news is that we are sinners. However, the world hates the word "sinner" and will hold it in contempt. In our culture, the word sinner is considered a joke and not taken seriously. Well how then do we convince them of the bad news? It is by the law that we know what sin is. Paul says later in Romans, that he would not have known what sin was except by

the law.

- Not only does the law spotlight or point out sin, the law aggravates sin (Romans 5:20). Sin is provoked by the law. Legalism or the addition of more and more law doesn't produce righteousness, rather, the addition of more and more law just provokes sin and you wind up with more and more sin.
- When you give the law, you are talking about God's holy perfect standard that all of us have violated both corporately in Adam and individually on our own. This may invoke a sinful response from the person.
- There are ethical absolutes for behavior in the law of God and there are ethical absolutes for attitudes. If someone is living with their boyfriend, we tell them that that is wrong and displeasing to God. If a man is harsh with his wife, we tell him that is wrong and that he should stop. Another method of delivering this law is the means by which we conduct ourselves. The way we live or obey the Lord is a means of delivering law. Both our words and our behavior is a means of delivering the law to sinners.

- **From Darkness to Light**

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. NKJV

- As Paul said earlier the light is something proclaimed. What is it that gets proclaimed? The gospel. The message that has the power of God for salvation is the death, burial, and resurrection according to the scriptures of the Lord Jesus Christ nearly two thousand years ago.
- In this verse here in 1 Peter we see that the Lord calls sinners out of darkness. The content of the calling is the gospel. When sinners step into the light all deeds are exposed and for the first time they see spiritual things, they see their own sinfulness, they realize their need for grace and they call upon the Lord for forgiveness.
- Don't waste time trying to get blind people to see things that they cannot see. Before you give a blind person light, their eyes must be opened so that light has its revealing effect. If their eyes are open already, don't waste time with more and more law; now is the time for light.

- **From Power of Satan to God**

Romans 10:10-13

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." NKJV

- The means of moving to this last position before God, is that they call on our Lord for forgiveness, they cry out asking that the atoning sacrifice of Christ would be given to them and they ask that the Lord would by his grace allow them into his eternal kingdom and be their Lord. We don't try to get people to "make a commitment to the Lord" or "ask Him into our hearts" or "give their lives to the Lord." We are unable to make commitments eternally, we are in need of new hearts for the old one is made of stone and we are dead in our trespasses and sins. We have no life to give, rather, we are in need of being made alive.
- If they cry out this way, we know with all confidence that our Lord's righteousness will save them to the uttermost. The way we know that this work has truly been done of the Lord is by perpetual fruit bearing. Those who are truly born again, will manifest the work of God in them and will produce godly fruit until they are in His presence.
-