

GATHER TO SCATTER

EVANGELISM TRAINING

WEEK 1: THE MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM AND REASONS WE DON'T SHARE OUR FAITH

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Matthew 4:19 ~ And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

- Christians have a zeal for the lost and a desire that all would come to salvation (Psalm 40:3).
 - Yet many people find it difficult to start talking about the gospel (Acts 4:20).
 - Others don't know how they will respond to objections or hard questions (Luke 6:3; 1 Peter 3:15).
 - Others just lack confidence (Acts 4:29).
- This monthly mini class will teach the foundation for evangelism and give you greater confidence to put it into practice (Philippians 4:9).
- The nature of the class will provide a Biblical foundation that shapes how and why we evangelize, provide opportunities to discuss real situations, and encourage us to share our faith with others.
- Fall Schedule:
 - September 8: The message of Evangelism and the reasons we don't share our faith
 - October 6: The motivation of evangelism and various methods
 - November 3: The nuts and bolts of actually sharing our faith with others
 - December 1: The aim of our evangelism and our dependent prayer
 - January-May: Other themes related to evangelism coming out of our discussions

EVANGELISM ESSENTIALS

- Definition:

Essentially evangelism boils down to explaining the gospel so that God would save sinners.
- Believers do not save sinners, God does.
- God the Father has chosen the means: believers communicate His Word so that God the Spirit would convict the hearts of sinners to find their salvation in God the Son.

- “Evangelism is **teaching** the **gospel** with the **aim** to **persuade**.”¹
 - “Evangelism is **teaching** (heralding, proclaiming, preaching)
 - the **gospel** (the message from God that leads us to salvation)
 - with the **aim** (hope, desire, goal)
 - to **persuade** (convince, convert).²

Essentials: The Gospel is the message from the Bible, not a method

- The gospel includes **God!** His holiness, his perfect character,
- The comprehensive pervasiveness of **sin** both universally and individually
- The explanation of God’s **remedy** for sin (the gracious sacrifice Jesus)
- So it also includes an explanation of **who is Jesus** and why he alone can save
- and a clear call to **repent** (Turn from sin and turn to God), and **believe** this good news by faith that only Jesus can redeem, reconcile, free from sin, justify...

Close but not truly evangelism:³

1. **It isn’t an imposition, making someone get saved** – We present the gospel, God saves some.
2. **It isn’t social change or activism** – God cares for people, too, but social activism doesn’t save.
3. **Merely inviting someone to church** – this is a good thing and may lead to evangelism
4. **Sharing your testimony of faith** – this is also a great tool; a personal account of how you came to understand the gospel... so use this story to expound on the message of the gospel
5. **It is not an event or crusade**– the gospel might be shared, but the event is the setting.
6. **It is not a tract** – tracts are great tools, usually short versions of the gospel that lead us to urge them to respond to the gospel.
7. **Evangelism also is not a partial presentation.** Don’t skip the bad news or the good news! (sometimes people leave out the nature of God, the sinfulness of man, or the response demanded)
8. **It isn’t “apologetics”** (defenses, evidences and debates) – Don’t forget the main message.
9. **It isn’t only righteous living without words** – Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word.
10. **It isn’t conversion.** Evangelism is sharing the good news. God may regenerate some who hear!

¹ J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 26.

² J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism*, 27. **Another definition:** “To evangelize is to declare on the authority of God what he has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” ~ John Cheeseman, et al, *The Grace of God in the Gospel* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1972), 119.

³ Adapted and expanded from Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 2007), 69-82.

The gospel must be clearly communicated so that the listener understands what God's Word says about their sin, and God's way to remedy the situation.

Who evangelizes? Not just for Apostles!

Acts 8:1-4 ~ "And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, **except for the apostles**. Some devout men buried Stephen, and mourned loudly for him. But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and he would drag away men and women and put them in prison. Therefore, **those who had been scattered went through places preaching the word.**

- Churches and individuals have zealously shared the gospel for centuries, which is how most of you came to believe. It didn't stop with the Apostles.
- Though God gives some the spiritual gift, enabling them to be quite effective, all of us have the basic knowledge of the gospel and a person in our life with whom we should pray we can share it.

Success in Evangelism?

- We don't save anyone by our power. Our success is simply being faithful in communicating message of the Gospel (God, man, sin, Jesus, salvation, response)
- "While we must always remember that it is our responsibility to proclaim salvation, we must never forget that it is God who saves.... Our evangelistic work is the instrument that He uses for this purpose, but the power that saves is not the instrument: it is in the hand of the One who uses the instrument."⁴
- 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 ~ "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, **but God was causing the growth**. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, **but God who causes the growth.**"
- 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 ~ "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but **our adequacy is from God**, who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the **Spirit gives life.**"

⁴ J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1961), 27.

WHY DON'T WE SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH PEOPLE?

- A fear of man Psalm 118:6; Matthew 10:28
- A fear of failure Isaiah 41:10; 1 John 2:28
- A lack of scripture memory Colossians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:2
- A misunderstanding of how to share our faith Romans 10:17
- A lack of walking in the spirit, fellowship, gospel understanding, time with the Lord, trust in him, or prayer for boldness?
 - **Developing Boldness like Peter and John in Acts 4:**
 - Preached the Word 4
 - Controlled by Holy Spirit 8
 - Knew the message/witness Jesus 9-11
 - Lived and spoke with urgency, 1 way 12
 - Spent time with Jesus 13
 - United with other believers 13,19
 - Ready to testify to what they had witnessed 20
 - Committed to Fellowship 23
 - Complete trust in God's Sovereignty 24-28
 - Prayed for confidence 29

Excuses we often develop:⁵

- “I don’t know their language” (or I won’t know how to relate to them).
- “Evangelism is illegal” – in some places where Christians still carefully evangelize, it is illegal.
- “Evangelism will get me in trouble at work” – Work while you work, invite people to lunch.
- “Other things seem more urgent” – Are we praying and planning for some opportunities?
- “I don’t know any non-Christians” – an isolation from the world we were sent into (John 17:18).

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the essential gospel?
2. Does evangelism happen over the course of 2 minutes, 5 minutes, 25 minutes, 5 weeks, or 5 years?
3. Should evangelism be planned or spontaneous?
4. How does our culture or subculture make it more tempting to non-evangelize?

⁵ Adapted from Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 2007), 69-82.