

GATHER TO SCATTER

EVANGELISM TRAINING

WEEK 7: CREATING A CULTURE OF EVANGELISM: THE GOSPEL AS PART OF THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

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 Pet 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.
- Schedule:
 - Fall 2024: Message, Barriers, Motivation, Methods, Action, Aim, Prayer
 - February 2: Hospitality, Christian Love, and Evangelism
 - March 2: Creating a Culture of Evangelism: The Gospel as Part of the Life of the Church
 - April 6: START: Questions to Get a Gospel Conversation Started

EVANGELISM ESSENTIALS

Definition: Essentially evangelism is explaining the gospel so that God would save sinners.

- 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

Additional Resources for Evangelism as a Church Culture:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-to-create-a-culture-of-evangelism/>

<https://www.9marks.org/article/spurgeon-on-building-a-culture-of-evangelism/>

“The Gospel Blimp”: <https://vimeo.com/290533027>

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

THE GOSPEL MADE VISIBLE ²

Love for One Another

John 13:34-35 ~ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love for one another.**”

John 17:20-21 ~ I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that **they may all be one**; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, **so that the world may believe that You sent Me.**

Philippians 2:14-16a ~ Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will **prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent**, children of God above reproach **in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation**, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.

Matthew 5:14-16 ~ You are the light of the world...**Let your light shine before men** in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- Love for one another confirms we follow Christ.
- Our unity shows the world that Jesus is the Son of God.

Proclaim What Christ has Done in You

- A church that desires to reach the lost will train their members to know the message and impact of the gospel. Our people are hungry to grow in the truth and because they know the heart/mind transformation in their own life, they will want to share it with others.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ~ ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you **out of darkness** into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for **you once were not a people**, but now you are the people of God; **you had not received mercy**, but now you have received mercy.

The Gospel in Everything We Do: The church doesn't make all of its ministries focused on evangelism, it already reflects the proclamation of the gospel in the equipping ministries:

- Baptism: A picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-7)
- Lord's Supper: A proclamation of the death of Christ until he returns
- Prayer: A dependence on God
- Singing: An outward expression of the internalized word and work of God
- Giving: A commitment to the advance of the gospel ministry
- Preaching: A devotion to the Word of God which changes hearts
- Making Disciples: An active mission to preach the gospel and form new churches.

² See J Stiles Mack, *Evangelism*, chapter 3. Summarized also at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-to-create-a-culture-of-evangelism/>

A CULTURE OF EVANGELISM

- “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country....” should become for the church: “Ask not what evangelistic program your church can set up for you, but how you can initiate evangelism that the whole church can join.” Or pray with and join others initiating!

1 Corinthians 3:5-8 ~ What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.

- Each of us use our gifts for the edification of each other (Eph 4:11-16) and evangelism of the lost
- Each of us is naturally committed toward sharing the gospel as **a way of life** and in **every part of our life**
- A healthy church that has a culture of evangelism “is **grassroots, not top-down**. In a culture of evangelism, people understand the main task of the church is *to be the church*. We’ve already seen that church practices are a witness in and of themselves. Certainly the church supports and prays for outreach and evangelistic opportunities, but the church’s role is not to run programs. The church should cultivate a culture of evangelism. The *members* are sent out to share the gospel.”³
- Hence, we “gather to scatter.”
- Each of us is to **use our gifts** faithfully, **pray** together for opportunities with the people we want to see trust in the Lord, **help** each other in our efforts practically,

Programs:

- “How can we reach the poor in our community?” “Can we do a soccer tournament to reach the Spanish-speaking community?” “Can we start a prison ministry?” “5k at the river?”
- The answer to the questions above might be yes, but program thinking often leads us to produce better programs rather than produce disciples.
- We want to stay on mission- making disciples. That’s the aim.
- As a general rule, the best evangelistic programs
 - (1) facilitate relationship building between church members and unbelievers;
 - (2) emerge from the ground-up, rather than imposed by the leadership from the top-down.⁴

³ J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism*, 65.

⁴ Caleb Greggsen and Sam Emadi, “Building a Culture of Evangelism Takes Time, So Be Patient and Get to Work,” <https://www.9marks.org/article/building-a-culture-of-evangelism-takes-time-so-be-patient-and-get-to-work-2/>

A PICTURE OF UNPROGRAMMED EVANGELISM

- **Ron** has a coworker **Jim** he's been meeting with for lunch, sharing his testimony, talking about what he's learning at Theology Class. He invites him to see a movie with **Bill** and some guys from church and afterwards they all talk about the gospel-implications afterward, and they pray together before they go. Ron and his wife **Rose** invite Jim and his family for dinner with **Sue**, a single lady at the church, who testifies about the strength and comfort God has given her through many recent surgeries. Bill texts Jim to have coffee and they talk about many of the questions Jim has now about why and how the people from this church love the Lord like this. Jim's wife, meanwhile, gets together with Sue because of her own ailments. A few months later Jim's family start coming to church and hearing the gospel in the service, in conversations afterward, and are encouraged at various points of fellowship. The next week they hear **3 testimonies and baptisms**. **Shane** puts together a block party near where Jim lives, and reads Psalm 40 to encourage those who find life to unstable. **Shane's teenager** invites Jim's son to come to youth group and they hit it off. Jim and Carol are now getting together regularly for an impromptu evangelistic bible study with **another couple** (who invited them to lunch after church) and God is opening their eyes to the glory of Christ in salvation. And all the while there was never a program.
- It's not just Ron, but **dozens of gospel-bearers** which encourage Jim and Carol to put their trust in Christ.
- Such a culture is easier to observe than to describe. But here are a few defining characteristics:⁵

1. Every member understands and can articulate the **gospel**.
2. Leaders and members **regularly sharing the gospel** with people in their network of relationships.
3. The church regularly **prays** (as individuals and corporately) for the evangelistic efforts of others.
4. The church **trains** people to share the gospel winsomely.
5. Members informally **gather** to talk about their evangelistic conversations, receive feedback and encouragement, and pray for the lost.
6. Members try to build intentional friendships with their **friends' lost friends** so that they can be yet another influence in the life of an unbeliever.
7. The church endeavors to care for all its members and **love one another** in such a way that the gospel is made visible to outsiders (John 13:35).
8. The evangelistic **programs** that happen are chosen for their ability to facilitate and strengthen relationships between members and unbelievers.

Where do I Start?:

- Hospitality, play dates with other moms, block parties, evangelistic bible studies, work lunches, birthday parties...college visits, weekly coffee and prayer with an open seat, invitation to church event.

⁵ Caleb Greggson and Sam Emadi, <https://www.9marks.org/article/building-a-culture-of-evangelism-takes-time-so-be-patient-and-get-to-work-2/>