

Evangelism – Saved to Save Others

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise”
(Proverbs 11:30).

Introduction

What does the word “evangelism” mean to you? Do you think of large crusades, huge tent meetings, loud gospel bands attracting crowds, and speakers blaring advertisements of special meetings? For so long, we have associated these things with evangelism, and we have almost forgotten the primary purpose and meaning of the word.

The Purpose and Meaning of Evangelism

Where do we go to find this purpose and meaning? Our greatest example has always been Jesus, our Savior. He not only taught us what evangelism meant and how to do it, He practiced it. *“And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities”* (Matthew 11:1).

Jesus Teaches Us the Meaning

Jesus’ entire ministry was devoted to reaching the lost: *“For the son of man is come to save that which was lost”* (Matthew 18:11). The religious leaders of His day did not understand this, but Jesus kept repeating it for their benefit, and ours too:

- 📖 He ate with publicans and sinners after calling Matthew (Levi) to be one of His disciples (Matthew 9:12-13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31-32).
- 📖 He told them a parable of the lost sheep (Matthew 18:11-14).
- 📖 He went home with Zacchaeus after calling him down from the tree (Luke 19:9-10).

Jesus expected us to continue this task after He was gone. The Great Commission is clear: *“And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15).

How is This Possible?

When we look at the task of winning the lost, the job seems impossible, especially for simple, ordinary folks like you and me. Did Jesus REALLY mean what He said? Yes! He even gave us lessons on how it was to be done – “on the job training” so to speak.

- 📖 Jesus sent His disciples out two by two (Mark 6:7). He knew they would need encouragement and help along the way, so He gave them a simple plan for accomplishing this: work together. *“And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel,*

and healing everywhere" (Luke 9:6). Jesus was giving them training in His work, before He left them on their own to continue it. But He never left them without help.

- 📖 The last instructions Jesus gave the disciples before He went back into heaven reminded them that this was still His whole plan for the remainder of their lives. Luke 24:45 is enlightening: *"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."*
- 📖 In the next few verses, He once again explained to us all what evangelism is about: *"And said unto them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high'"* (Luke 24:46-49).
- 📖 They were supposed to tarry in Jerusalem to receive "power." What kind of "power?" Most of the time, "power" is associated with faith to perform miracles or some awesome act seen by others as supernatural. But this is not correct. *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8). This "power" is the promised Gift of the Holy Ghost. One purpose and function of the Holy Ghost is that we have the "power" we need to be a witness for Jesus. This includes power to win the lost by teaching them to observe all He commanded in His Word.

Who is Involved?

Jesus meant for everyone who knows Him to share that knowledge with everyone they meet or have a chance to talk to.

- 📖 Revelation 22:17 tells us, *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* The Spirit of God inspired John to write, hoping to inspire the church of the Living God to invite everyone who wants salvation to come to Christ. Now that the church is full of the "power" to witness, we have no excuse.
- 📖 Pastors need to be aware of the need to train converts to win souls for the kingdom. This is not a job just for the ministry, it is for *everyone*.

How Do I Take Part in Evangelism?

Many people would love to become personal evangelists, but they have no idea how to go about it. Here are seven keys to sharing your faith more effectively, as found in an article by Peter Lowe, in the *New Man* magazine – September/October 1995:

- 📖 **The word "gospel" means good news.** We do not need to apologize or be ashamed of the message we have. We know what it takes to keep someone from spending eternity in hell!
- 📖 **Share the benefits first.** This follows an idea presented by David Wilkerson, called the "lamb chop method" of evangelism. If you see a dog with a dirty, rotten bone, you would not go up to him and try to remove the bone. If you did, he would only growl at you, try to bite

you, and hang on to his bone even harder. What you should do, is throw out a nice juicy “lamb chop” in front of the dog, and see how quickly he will drop his torrent old bone for the nice juicy one.

- 📖 **Do not downplay the cost.** Jesus did not make light of the value of salvation. Remember the parable of the “Pearl of Great Price?” When you find something as valuable as salvation for your soul, it is worth whatever it costs. Present Jesus and the price He paid on Calvary, and people will willingly give up anything and everything to follow Him. *“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me”* (John 12:32). Claim that promise!
- 📖 **Pray passionately.** Passionate praying is specific. Make a prayer list of ten people about whose salvation you are most concerned. Then talk to God about them. When you have done this, go and talk to those people about God. Prayer is essential to soul winning.
- 📖 **Speak their language.** This is not talking about your dialect or language (such as English, Twi, French, etc.). It means the way you explain to people. Do not talk to unbelievers in the language of the church. Many people have never heard or understood about repentance, water baptism, or many other things that are common words to a believer. Talk to them in a way that they will know exactly what you mean. Translate the message of Jesus to fit today’s world.
- 📖 **Be passionate about your faith.** “Passion” is defined by *Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary* as: “intense or violent emotion.” Be sold on what you are trying to sell others. They will see your convictions before listening to your arguments.
- 📖 **Evangelism is for your benefit too.** Philemon, verse 6 says, *“That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.”* Our faith grows by expression, so if we want to keep our faith, we have to share it!

Results and Rewards of Personal Evangelism

The Results: The desired result of effective evangelism is to bring the convert to a place of decision. Not all will accept the message of Jesus Christ, but they must be brought to a place where they have to make up their minds if they will live for God or continue living in sin (Acts 17:32-34).

The Rewards: The practice of evangelism towards unbelievers will also bring some results to the one doing the evangelism. These results are rewards.

- 📖 Paul told Timothy that he would save himself and those who heard him (1 Timothy 4:11-16).
- 📖 We actually speed up the coming of the Lord the second time when we continue to win souls everywhere we go (Matthew 24:14).
- 📖 Soul winners will shine like the stars forever (Daniel 12:3).
- 📖 When we evangelize, we actually save souls from death (James 5:20).

Jesus always had a plan. He fulfilled His part and sent His Spirit to give us the “power” to fulfill our part. What is the final result? That Jesus may be known, loved, honored, praised, and made

Lord of His chosen people. What a great task! What a glorious opportunity! What a blessed hope!

Conclusion

If we know someone is dying with only a few days to live, we get concerned. But if we know someone who has the cure for their disease, would we not rush to give it to them? Why do we not take our responsibility as soul winners this seriously? Paul gave us an idea of how important soul winning is when he wrote the church at Corinth: *“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some”* (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Most of us, (at one time or other), have failed to take an opportunity to tell someone about Jesus. We would be much quicker to do this if we really believed that lost souls will spend eternity in a literal, burning hell (Revelation 20:15).

You cannot win the whole world. But you can win one. Jesus never asked us to win the whole world alone. He asked each one of us to win one, and to keep on doing that until all those around us who are lost have heard the gospel and have come to a place of decision. Then each of those should win one. The whole world can be reached, one soul at a time. Our job is for “each one to reach one.”

Study Questions

1. What is the purpose and meaning of “evangelism?” Support your answer with Scripture.

2. List three (3) examples (with Scripture reference) of Jesus teaching us the meaning of winning the lost.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

3. List three points (on the job training) with Scripture reference, that Jesus gave His followers to help them understand how to win the lost.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. Who is supposed to be involved in world evangelism? Support with Scripture.

5. List and briefly explain the seven (7) keys to sharing your faith as mentioned in this lesson.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

6. List (with Scripture reference) four (4) rewards of personal evangelism.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____