

UPON THE ROCK

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Upon the Rock is published bimonthly for the purpose of setting forth sound biblical material concerning first-principles and evangelism. We strive to print articles that are informative for Christians and non-Christians

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The Importance of Evangelism

By Brandon Britton

The Dead Sea is perhaps the most unique body of water on the face of the Earth. It is the lowest point on the earth, not covered by ice, some thirteen hundred and seventy-one feet below sea level, and falling. It is thirty percent salt, which is more than eight times as "salty" as the ocean! The Jordan River empties into this sea, but it has no outlets. It takes in, but it does not give out. It is referred to as "dead" because no fish or aquatic organisms can live there. Why do I mention the Dead Sea? Because it reminds me of a statement that one of my instructors in preaching school made concerning personal evangelism. He told my class, "Personal evangelism, in a live church, is not a 'program,' it is a way of life." I wonder how many congregations are becoming "dead" like the Salt Sea, because they too, only take in and never send out? It has been said that the church which does not evangelize, will fossilize. Does this describe where you worship? Has your local congregation been receiving a steady flow of blessings from the Lord, only to hoard them up and fail (or refuse) to pass them on to others who are without? If so, then you already know the importance of evangelism, because you have seen firsthand the consequences of failing to obey the Great Commission. Perhaps you are not convinced. If that is the case consider a few other reasons why evangelism is important.

It Is Important Because Jesus Said It Was

One of my favorite worship hymns is the song "Why Did My Savior Come To Earth?" Although there are numerous reasons that can be given, one particular reason is a vital part of the subject of this article. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). To put it another way, Jesus was Heaven's missionary,

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

Hear - (Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24-27).

Believe - (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:15-16).

Repent - (Acts 2:38; 17:30; Luke 13:3).

Confess - (Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:36).

Be baptized - (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27).

Live faithfully unto death - (Rev. 2:10).

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sent to evangelize the human race. When He began to introduce Himself to the public and begin His ministry, He emphasized that evangelism was the primary aim of His work. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:17-21). If this work was important enough for Him to leave Heaven and then spend His life engaged in it, then who can argue that it is not important?

It Is Important Because Jesus Commanded Us To Do It

When we consider the commandments of the Lord, there are some that are easier to keep than others, and some that we would prefer to keep over others. Commands like, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15) or "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) are not that difficult, especially since they primarily benefit us. Other commands, like, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" (Matthew 5:44) or "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:13-15) are not so easily kept because they are about giving and doing for others rather than for self. The command to evangelize falls into this same category. Evangelism

requires me to be more concerned with the soul of another person than with my own comfort, well-being, time constraints or interests. Nevertheless, it is a command.

After purchasing the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28), the first real command He gave to the disciples was one of evangelism. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19,20). This command continues uninterrupted to this generation. The question we must ask ourselves is, can we knowingly refuse to obey a direct command from our Lord and still expect to be in His good favor? The answer is so obvious it doesn't require an answer. That is why evangelism is important.

It Is Important Because It Is the Lifeblood of the Church

For nearly eight years I have worked with the East Hill congregation here in Pulaski. During that time, we have had an average of eleven deaths per year. Multiply that by eight years and we have lost nearly one-fourth of our membership (our average attendance is three hundred fifty) to death (not factoring in those who move away or fall away) in less than a decade. Just to "maintain" our current membership, one person must be converted to Christ each month of the year, and that is just to stay the same. Growth would require much more than that. As a side note, we must be careful not to mistake "swelling" for growth. Sometimes congregations grow numerically due to Christians leaving other congregations and placing membership, but THIS IS NOT GROWTH. What will happen to the church that does not evangelize? The same thing that would happen to a family that did not reproduce. It will die. What if Adam and Eve had not reproduced after their kind? God created them miraculously,

Evangelism Gives You the Hope of A Grand Reunion

Think about this as this article closes: Because some took the time to teach you (evangelism), your soul was saved when you obeyed the gospel. Further, because you are now saved, you have a spiritual family in Christ (all of whom were won through evangelism). Still further, because your soul was won for Christ, you now have the opportunity to rear your family in the Lord. Your children are taught, not only by you at home, but also by your spiritual family on a weekly basis. And because of all of this: You have the hope of a wonderful reunion in heaven someday with both your spiritual family and your physical family! How did all this start? It probably started something like this: "Would you like to study the Bible together?" or "Would you like to come to church with me this Sunday?"

What has evangelism done for you? It has literally saved your soul, and has the potential to save the souls around you. Evangelism is like a chain with several links: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). Someone taught you, you are to teach others who will then, in turn, teach others.

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then left it with us to carryout His commission to broaden its borders: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19,20). When I do not obey this commission, I am limiting the priceless fellowship of my family in Christ.

Evangelism Has Helped Your Physical Family

When I first came to Towne Acres in 1995 our first daughter was four months old. On Wednesday nights she was the only child in the entire building. In fact, out of the entire Wednesday night class, I was the closest to her in age! I understand that it is the duty of parents to make sure their children develop spiritually, however, the church can and should play a key role in that development. I remember being discouraged at the thought of my daughter being the only child here as she would get older and be the only one in her Wednesday night class. This surely showed a lack of faith on my part, because today we now have classes for all ages. In fact, we had to add on to the church building a few years ago just for more classroom space! On Wednesday nights, there are now as many children as adults. The church needed to open the door to the community, and evangelism was the key.

What a joy it is to see children develop relationships with other children whose parents are trying to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Our children's Bible class teachers assign them memory verses, expect their lessons to be done, and teach our most precious possessions the unsearchable riches of Christ. I cannot even put into words all the ways the church has helped my family grow spiritually. The more evangelism, the more help I receive from my spiritual family.

but then He charged them to go forth and multiply (Genesis 1:28). Likewise, the church of Christ had a Divine beginning, but it is perpetuated by Christians producing more Christians through evangelism.

Have you ever worshipped in a building that would hold hundreds, but was only occupied by a few dozen? While there may be a number of factors that leads to a congregation disappearing, the most influential is a lack of evangelism. Eventually everyone will grow old and die and unless they have converted others, the congregation will grow old and die too.

It Is Important Because of the Value of One Soul

I remember hearing a preacher tell a story about a men's business meeting in which a member suggested the preacher be paid based on the number of people he baptized into Christ. The quick witted evangelist replied, "You couldn't afford me." Initially the hearers took this as an arrogant reply, until he added, "Jesus said one soul is worth more than the whole world (Matthew 16:26)." This is perhaps the main reason evangelism is important. Anything that is important to the Lord should be a priority to us, but why was it worth His coming to earth and dying? Because of the value of one soul. Certainly anything the Lord commanded must be taken seriously, but why did He command it? Because of the value of one soul. We all love our local congregations and want to see them prosper and grow, but what makes that growth so significant? Each new member represents another soul that has been saved from sin.

There have been others who have won untold numbers more to Christ than me and I am sure some have won less, but there is one thing I look forward to that motivates me and reminds me of the importance of evangelism. I live in anticipation of the day when I am walking

around taking in the beauty of heaven, freed from the constraints of mortality, basking in the glory of the Lord Himself, and someone taps me on the shoulder and says to me, "Thank you for telling me about Jesus." I know there will be some people that I will be searching for to tell them the same.

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The Role of Elders in Evangelism

Larry Reynolds

From the beginning of time God had a plan to redeem man from sin. The plan was foretold by the prophets and was fulfilled in Christ. While Christ was on the earth he was relentless in His efforts to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). At the age of twelve He was found teaching in the temple. He would announce that He was doing His Father's business. He would spend much time teaching and instructing the twelve apostles, equipping them to take the gospel to the entire world. The apostles went forth in a very zealous manner proclaiming salvation in Christ Jesus. Men would sacrifice their living and their own lives to proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of their boldness and determination, the gospel was spread to the entire known world. The plan was from heaven, but God used human beings to take the message to the lost world. What a debt we owe these men who were willing to sacrifice so that we would have access to this precious gospel today.

We read in the New Testament that as the church grew and matured men were selected as elders in their local congregations. There are three terms used for this same service in the church. These words

church, think nothing of passing lost souls without any offer of assistance.

Dear reader, we must remember where we were before somebody took the time and effort to teach us the way of salvation. If we would want someone to help us when our soul is in spiritual peril, how can we not feel a desire to help others? The following once described your condition: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Evangelism saved your soul!

Evangelism Gave You A Spiritual Family

On numerous occasions in my twelve years as a preacher, during some of the most difficult times of peoples' lives, I have heard this phrase: "I don't know what I would have done without the church." The church is our spiritual family, and as such, help us through the peaks and valleys of life. Perhaps the best example of what the church should mean to a Christian is the apostle Paul. Listen to the tenderness in his voice as he expresses his love and gratitude to his spiritual family: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, **For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now**" (Philippians 1:3-5). Paul most like lost a great deal of fellowship with his physical family the day he obeyed the gospel. The fellowship of the church was very dear to him. What would he have done without the church?

Evangelism makes the church, and your spiritual family possible. Jesus, a perfect Sacrifice, died to purchase His church (Acts 20:28),

Where Would You Be Without Evangelism?

Mark Reynolds

To a Christian, the very thought of where we would be if someone did not take the time to teach us the gospel, is something that makes us shutter and shake. There is great value in the public preaching of the gospel, but nothing can take the place of one person who knows, and has obeyed the gospel, teaching it to another person who needs it. One preacher compared preaching to the masses with throwing a bucket of water over a collection of empty bottles in the hope that some of the water will find its way into the bottles. Personal evangelism is taking the bottles one at a time to the faucet to fill them.

In this final article of this issue of *Upon The Rock*, our aim is to motivate every Christian to evangelize by asking the question, “Where would you be without evangelism?” In short you would be without salvation, without a spiritual family, without help for your physical family, and without the hope of a reunion with those you love.

Without Evangelism Your Soul Would Be Lost

If this article began and ended with this point it should be enough to impress upon our hearts the importance of evangelism. If I would not want my own soul to be lost for eternity, then simple compassion should cause me not to want anyone else to be lost. In a recent article in our local newspaper a man was interviewed after saving a young girl’s life. In one of his answers he said: “I have two daughters of my own, and if they were ever in need of help, I would hope that someone would save them.” Most would never dream of passing up a person whose life was in danger, but many even in the Lord’s

describe a man who is older and experienced in the faith (i.e., an elder); a person who is a decision- maker, a manager in church affairs, and a leader (i.e., bishop); and one who maintains a careful watch for the spiritual needs of all the members of the flock (i.e., pastor). These terms give us a clear understanding of the work that they are to do in the church. The elders are to lead the flock by their example and teaching of the word of God. They must have an understanding that the work of the church is to do the work of Christ. They must remember the mission of Christ is to seek and save the lost. Someone has observed that sometimes we can get so busy in “church work” that we neglect to do “the Lord’s work”. We need to ask ourselves if the things we are doing are designed to reach the lost. We must make sure that we are about the Father’s business.

Elders have a great responsibility to protect the flock. “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31). When one of the members goes astray they must seek to restore the erring and bring them back into the fold. Jesus gave the following parable that illustrates His love for the lost sheep. “What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing” (Luke 15:4,5). An elder must be aware when one, or more, of the sheep is absent from the fold and will diligently seek to restore that sheep. I can reflect back on my own personal life and thank God for the elders who watched and cared about my soul. If it wasn’t for them, I could be lost today!

Elders can encourage evangelism by first making sure that they themselves are attempting to reach the lost and then by encouraging their preacher and other members to do the same. Elders can be involved in mission trips and return to their home congregations and

encourage them to go on the next trip. When this occurs you will find the local church grows in their love for the lost. When the elders and brethren see the power of the gospel and how multitudes are begging for the truth. It will change their lives to never be the same.

Elders can also encourage members to be involved in evangelism by having classes on personal evangelism. These classes should be designed with class time and actual involvement in teaching someone. We can have the knowledge but unless we put it into practice it does little or no good. Another idea would be to have the congregation involved in campaigns and having the experienced person take someone with them that is lacking experience.

Elders are in a key position as leaders in the Lord's church. They must be men of vision and of faith. They need the vision to see the opportunities to carry God's gospel to the lost. There are over 6 billion people living in this world. While we sleep the devil is at work planting the seed of evil. Jesus said, "Do not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest" (John 4:35)! They need to be men of faith, trusting the word of God to save. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). We are to plant the seed and let God give the increase.

May elders encourage evangelism by (1) Being an example, (2) Being concerned, (3) Taking heed to all the flock, and (4) Trust the power of the word.

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Committed Feet

The Great Commission begins with the word "go" (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). In a time when we can reach around the globe in a split second with myriads of high-tech communications, we rarely reach next door to speak to our neighbor about his soul. We have almost lost the ability to converse with one another face to face due to the impersonal communication highway. If we are to win souls to the cause of our Lord, then we must be committed to taking the gospel to the lost. Let us not be guilty of praying that God open doors of evangelistic opportunity for us, and then expect someone else to walk through it. Someone has well said that we cannot expect the world to come to us simply by building a church building and putting up a sign that reads "the church of Christ meets here." We must go "everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Certainly we should take advantage of every form of media and technology available to get the gospel into the hands of those who have never heard it, but nothing beats face to face, "personal" evangelism. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15).

These are some vital characteristics that we must imbibe if we are to be successful in evangelizing our world. May we look for opportunities, sympathize with the plight of the lost, prepare ourselves to lead souls to Jesus, reach out with hands of care and concern, bow before the throne of God in prayer that our efforts bear fruit to His glory, and commit ourselves to going where God opens doors of opportunity. May God grant us the wisdom, knowledge and opportunity to reach every creature under heaven with His word!

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students of the word (2 Timothy 2:15) so that at any time we can point a lost soul to Jesus.

Caring Hands

The old adage continues to be true, “People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.” While some may be reluctant to open up to a direct discussion about religion and matters pertaining to salvation, many times doors can be opened by seeing to the needs of those around us. Part of “pure and undefiled religion” is caring for those who are in need (James 1:27). Even our Lord recognized the necessity of seeing to the physical needs of the multitude: “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat” (Mark 8:2). “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). Perhaps in exhibiting care for their needs, a door may be opened to teach the gospel to those who are lost.

Calloused Knees

Those who fail to invoke God’s blessings and guidance in reaching out to the lost are doomed to fail. If we are to be successful in leading souls to Jesus, then we must bow the knee to the Almighty in prayer, and that often. Like the early church, we should pray that we may speak the word of God with all boldness in the face of opposition and persecution (Acts 4:29). We should pray that God open doors of opportunity through which we may walk with the glorious gospel of Christ (Colossians 4:3). A successful soul-winner appreciates and avails himself of the awesome power and privilege of prayer. “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Psalm 55:17).

The Role of Deacons In Evangelism

Phil Gear

“For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 3:13). There is no higher service than that offered to Jesus Christ through his church, and it is a great privilege to perform that service in the capacity of a deacon.

As used in this study the word “deacon” means “servant” or “minister”, and speaks of those who have been designated by the church to fulfill some specific responsibility. The qualifications given by the Bible show that it takes a special man to fulfill this ministry. “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Timothy 3:8-12). When a deacon meets these qualifications and then discharges his responsibilities faithfully, he purchases to himself a “good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

The faithful deacon understands the vital importance of the work he has been given. He knows he is involved in the greatest cause in the world—that of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He does everything within his power to be true to that cause. He prays about it diligently and gives it his utmost effort. The word “deacon” comes from a word that literally means “through the dust”. The idea is of one who kicks up dust, running to carry out his assigned work.

So what is the deacon's role in evangelism? To be sure, he has the same responsibility as any Christian to spread the Gospel of Christ. If he has the talent to publicly preach and teach the word of God, then he must be doing so. He must look for opportunities to invite friends, family, and neighbors to study the Bible or attend worship. He can pass out tracts, enroll students in a Bible Correspondence Course, pray for the success of the evangelistic work that is done, *etc.* But he would do all of these whether he was a deacon or not. Does he have a special role in the realm of evangelism?

Certainly he does if the congregation, through its elders, has assigned him the task of overseeing some specific evangelistic effort. He will diligently work toward the conscientious completion of that assignment. He will do everything he can to recruit others in the congregation to help in this work, and so involve as many as possible in the evangelistic work of the church.

But what if the deacon's assigned area of work does not bear directly on the work of evangelism? That fact would not excuse him from concern for the souls of men and women and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. He still must play an important role in this vital effort.

The deacon has the responsibility to support all evangelistic efforts of the congregation in any way possible. He will be faithful in attendance at Gospel Meetings, Vacation Bible School, *etc.* It is tragic to see deacons who are lax in their support of these efforts. It is discouraging to all involved when men in positions of influence, such as deacons, allow the things of this world to keep them from being present when the Gospel is preached. This poor example is no help to the work.

Compassionate Hearts

We live in a society that in many respects seems to have lost any sense of compassion and concern. Many "pass by on the other side" when it comes to dealing with their neighbors (cf. Luke 10:30-37), and many in religion treat the lost in the same fashion. When we come to grips with the truth that those outside of Christ are lost, that those who are part of man-made denominations are lost, that those who become unfaithful to the cause of Christ are lost, we ought to be moved with compassion to reach out to them with the word of God. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). Our hearts should break when we see a soul lost in sin. May we have the heart of the apostle Paul: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1). Remember, you, too, were once lost and in need of someone to reach out to you with the soul-saving gospel!

Competent Minds

In order to be successful at soul-winning, we must know what God would have one to do that his soul might be won to Christ. Some lean upon this idea too much, thinking that they do not know enough to teach others the gospel. That line of reasoning is merely an excuse. Every Christian has a responsibility to teach others: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers..." (Hebrews 5:12-14). We must have a proficient knowledge of God's word so that we may be prepared to instruct others in the way of Christ. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). We have no one to blame but ourselves if we "do not know enough" to evangelize the lost. Let us be diligent

many are trimming back money from the mission budget to accommodate more and more inward workings, we need a reminder of the true purpose of our being the called out of God. The church exists to win souls to the Lord that God might receive the glory (Eph.3:20-21). In times when the church has held to its primary purpose multitudes were added by the Lord to his church (Acts 2:47). We must get back to evangelizing the lost, spreading the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We don't need self-styled church growth "experts" and seminars to teach us how to reach the lost. We simply need to go back to the Book of books to see how the early church grew at such a phenomenal rate. When we imitate the characteristics of these pioneer soul-winners, we will help the church to grow wherever we may be. Just what are the necessary tools to being a successful soul-winner? Let us note what belongs in the toolbox of every Christian who desires to bring souls to Jesus.

Concerned Eyes

Opportunities to reach and teach the lost are almost limitless, if we but take the time to look for them. Perhaps we feel we can escape our responsibility to evangelize the lost if we avert our eyes and act as if we have no idea the lost are all around us. Jesus reminds us, "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35). We must open our eyes to the magnitude of the task ahead of us, realizing that the majority of those in the world are separated from God (Matthew 7:13-14). The successful soul-winner sees lost souls everywhere he looks, and is cognizant of the value of the soul (Matthew 16:26). Evangelizing the world for Jesus begins with every Christian first looking for opportunities to teach the gospel.

The deacon has the responsibility to set an example of evangelism for his family, of which he is the head. "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well" (1 Timothy 3:12). His family needs to see him place the eternal welfare of souls at the top of his priorities. When his children see him giving up something he enjoys to use that time to lead others to Jesus, they learn what is really important.

The deacon has the responsibility to live a righteous life that leads others to Jesus. He must let his light "so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). The deacon's qualifications stress the importance of Christian living. He must be grave (serious about life and Christianity), not double-tongued (truthful and honest in what he says), not given to much wine (understands the dangers of alcohol and does not indulge), not greedy of filthy lucre (not obsessed with money). In other words he must be a serious, honest, sober, and generous man whose life will "adorn the doctrine of God" (Titus 2:10). He will live as a Christian should at home, on the job, in the neighborhood, and anywhere else he might be. This will make the evangelistic efforts of the church much more effective. People are more likely to respond to the Gospel if they see its good effects in the way its members live. And if one in a position of influence, like a deacon, fails to live up to those standards it is extremely damaging to the work. You too often hear it said, "If that's the way Christianity's leaders live, I want nothing to do with it."

The deacon must "hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (1 Timothy 3:9). "The faith" refers to that which God has revealed in his Word. The deacon must have a deep knowledge of the Bible. It is harmful to the church to appoint a man to such a position who is ignorant of the Scriptures. He may have been a Christian for many years, but if he hasn't grown in "the grace, and in the knowledge of

our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). he should not be a deacon, even if he is a good person. He must “hold” the mystery of the faith. He cannot back away from it for any reason. He understands the Bible and will not compromise it. He will teach only the truth. He will neither instigate, nor support, programs that get people to church at the expense of the standing for what is right.” A deacon must be knowledgeable and committed to the word of God.

Evangelism should be the concern of every member of the Lord’s church. If we do not involve ourselves in the teaching of the word of God opportunities will be lost, and so will precious souls. Much of this vitally important work is to be done by godly deacons who “kick up the dust” in their anxious desire to get the work done. Let us thank God for godly men who will serve as deacons and show genuine concern for spreading the Gospel.

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The Role of Preachers In Evangelism

A.J. Cox

Jesus stated His purpose for coming to the earth in Luke 19:10 when He said, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” When Jesus called His disciples to follow Him to become fishers of men He was calling them to participate in that great work (Mark 1:16-20). The primary work of the church, therefore, is to seek and to save the lost, and this is accomplished through evangelism or the spreading of glad tidings (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21; 2:2; 15:1-4).

Preachers can play a vital and important role in the work of evangelism in the congregations where they labor. When Paul, the

Conclusion

As a mature preacher, teacher, and writer I have heard just about every excuse known to man in an attempt to exempt “ordinary members” of the church from evangelizing. And to speak frankly, there isn’t much credibility in any of them. If someone has the ability to learn and obey the gospel, they have the ability to teach it to someone else. The refusal to prepare oneself for the most rewarding experience of a Christian (namely, leading another soul to Christ) speaks volumes about the heart of the professed disciple; professed because they violate the very meaning of the word disciple! The real case is this: Our churches have been infiltrated (and sometimes taken over) by the unconverted who in turn refuse to convert others! Every believer knows that he/she has the responsibility of winning others to Christ. When it comes to evangelism and the excuse, “I didn’t know it was my job!” – That dog won’t hunt!

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The Evangelist’s Toolbox

Patrick Morrison

The mission of the church must be the same as that of her Lord and Master. Jesus stated his mission in these words, “For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The work of the church has become lost amid financial seminars, weigh-down workshops, softball and basketball leagues, and the like. We have become so self-centered and self-serving in the church that we have neglected the one thing we are here to do—win souls for Christ! In a time when many congregations are spending more on internal programs of work for the church than they are mission efforts, when

terms we have no problem understanding what and who a disciple is. A disciple knows, at a minimum, that something is required of him!

What is required of the disciple? Actually that question can be either legitimate or not so legitimate depending on the attitude of the querist. Without trying to answer this question in the fullest sense, we will apply this question to the issue of evangelism and ask it this way, “As a believer, does God expect me to react to the gospel message by teaching others (evangelizing) of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ?” Now take two paces back and look at this question! Pause! Reflect! Think! “Does God expect me to react to the gospel message by teaching others of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ?” The answer is actually quite simple and anyone who reflects carefully on it can get the right answer! God expects every believer to teach others about Christ to the extent we have opportunity!

What passage do we cite to prove the proposition just stated? First, if someone needs a proof text for this proposition, their heart is not right; they are a legalist and not a disciple! Would a soldier have to have direct orders to save a comrade in arms from an enemy’s bullet? Would a trained medical worker require direct orders before administering first aid to an injured stranger? Would a mother need specific directions before attempting to heal the wounded heart of her child? Secondly, love is at the heart of the gospel; it was the motive behind the sending of God’s only Son (John 3:16). Furthermore, love of God and our neighbor is an ageless principle which Jesus restated during His ministry (see Matthew 22:36-40). If we love our neighbor as ourself we will take every step necessary to see that our neighbor has the opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ. To refuse to provide such an opportunity is proof positive that we do not love our neighbor as our self! As indicated previously, someone would have to have help to misunderstand this reasoning.

greatest evangelist of the Christian era, wrote to his young protégé Timothy he admonished him to “do the work of an evangelist” and to “fulfill thy ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5—ASV). What was involved in that work? In Paul’s letters to Timothy preachers can find much that will guide them in how they can best contribute to evangelism in the local church.

Preachers Can Remind The Brethren About Their Evangelistic Duties

In his first letter to Timothy Paul warned that some would depart from the faith and would make marital and dietary restrictions that God did not make (1 Timothy 4:1-5). After correcting these false ideas he told Timothy, “If thou *put the brethren in remembrance* of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained (1 Timothy 4:6; emphasis added). Similarly, Paul later wrote, “Of these things *put them in remembrance*, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Timothy 2:14; emphasis added). Part of being a good minister of Jesus Christ is putting the brethren in remembrance of certain things.

The preacher who does not regularly remind the brethren of their evangelistic duties is slack and negligent in his responsibilities. A preacher should remind the brethren that everyone stands in need of forgiveness (Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:14). A preacher should remind the brethren that God desires all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). A preacher should remind the brethren that the gospel is God’s power to save (Romans 1:16). And a preacher should remind the brethren that Christ has commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). Our nature is such that we stand in constant need of being reminded and encouraged to do what is right.

Preachers Can Set An Example In Evangelism

It is important for Christians to be able to look to certain individuals as examples to follow. Jesus gave us an example to follow (John 13:15; 1 Peter. 2:21). Paul admonished the Corinthians to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Those who are overseen by elders are to follow the faith of their shepherds (Hebrews 13:7). One of Paul's more familiar exhortations to Timothy is "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). As an evangelist, Timothy was to serve as an example for the believers in all facets of life and service. Similarly Paul wrote to Titus, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:7-8).

Certainly one of the areas in which a preacher is to serve as an example is in evangelism. A preacher who calls the brethren to evangelize who does not practice evangelism himself is like the scribes and Pharisees who said but did not do (Matthew 23:3). His exhortations to evangelize will lack credibility and will go largely unanswered. Preachers should also remember that they would likely see better results from the brethren when they are shown how to evangelize, and not merely told what to do. There is no substitute for a good example.

Preachers Can Equip The Brethren For The Work of Evangelism

One of the ways that preachers can equip the brethren for the work of evangelism is by grounding them in the truth. In order to spread the glad tidings we must know the glad tidings! Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). A knowledge of the inspired scriptures will enable

Quite frankly, it takes help for someone not to understand this fundamental principle! But as is often the case, there is plenty of "help" of this ilk available! Centuries ago there was Calvin who has "helped" millions upon millions of people to think that they had to wait on God to do some miraculous deed before they could be saved. His doctrine yet lives but is hardly recognizable in the mixed up denominational dogmas extant today. Then more recently, others have been "helped" by the advocates of "cheap grace." As used here, "cheap grace" is the flawed concept that God will essentially accept ANY effort toward response to the gospel. "Pray the sinner's prayer!" or "Just receive Jesus into your heart wherever you are!" or "Believe and receive!" are the confusing and contradictory voices that one hears. Yet the simple truth is this: None of these voices are of God! They all come from men who want to "help" you misunderstand the first simple truth of the gospel, i.e., you have to do something in response to God's message.

Why must we do something in response to the gospel? Simply stated, just because God said so! Before leaving this earth, Jesus told His apostles that they were to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28.19-20). Note carefully what the apostles were to do; they were to "make disciples." Now look at the word *disciple*. It takes very little intelligence to see that there is a connection between *disciple* and *discipline*. In fact, the disciples are the disciplined and the disciplined are the disciples! The disciples were not and are not merely hearers; they are hearers who respond in obedience (i.e., the disciplined)! Jesus warned of confusing mere hearing with true discipleship when He said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matthew 7.21). If we allow Jesus to define His

“I Didn’t Know It Was My Job”

Jim Bullington

Employers and parents rent their clothes every time one of their employees or children say, “I didn’t know it was my job!” There are times, few and far between, when this excuse is an actual reason. However, when it comes to evangelism, NO believer can legitimately make this claim! To state this fact positively, every believer knows that he/she has the responsibility of winning others to Christ. This article will demonstrate biblically why such must be the case.

The believer as used in the preceding paragraph is someone who has been saved from eternal hell by the marvelous grace of God. His or her salvation was effected by deliberate and willful acts culminated by rendering obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ (see 2 Thessalonians 1.7-8). Without exception, the obedience of each believer involves the telling and hearing of the gospel story - the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15.1-4). The reaction of the hearer to that story determines the eternal destiny of that person just as it did on Pentecost when those who had blood on their hands heard the truth about Christ. Some, but not all, of them were “...cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2.37). The model of salvation in this text (Acts 2) should be burned into the memory of all who even pretend to be Bible students; it is here that one sees the realization of God’s plan of salvation mapped out even from eternity.

The first thing we learn from Acts 2 is that those who are convicted (cut to the heart) by the gospel innately understand that there is something that they must do. To put it in the common vernacular, the ball is in their court. They realize that God has done His part and that any lapse or failure is a failure for which God is not accountable.

the man of God to be completely furnished or equipped for every good work. Certainly evangelism is one of these “good works.” This means that a man is not equipped for the work of evangelism if he does not possess a knowledge of the scriptures. Further, without the pure gospel of Jesus Christ true evangelism is impossible. If a corrupted message is employed in the work of “evangelism” the result will be something other than a Christian. Paul admonished Timothy to “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 1:13). Likewise he wrote, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:1-4). A commitment to the preaching of sound doctrine is perhaps the single greatest contribution to evangelism that a preacher can make.

Preachers can also equip the brethren for the work of evangelism in practical ways. Preachers very often have the benefit of formal training and skills that they have acquired during many years of ministry. Many brethren lack the methods, techniques, and confidence that preachers take for granted. A preacher can conduct, or encourage, an evangelism training program where he is laboring. He can also mentor members of the church by involving them in personal evangelism. A preacher may invite members of the congregation to accompany him during visitations, door knocking, and bible studies. And he may enlist members to help in answering Bible correspondence courses. These are just a few of the ways in which a preacher can share his experience and encourage evangelism in a local church.

Conclusion

Evangelism is truly the greatest work in the world. A preacher can play an important role in encouraging and enhancing personal evangelism in the local church. Through his preaching and by his example an evangelist can do much to equip the brethren for the work of seeking and saving the lost. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

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