

## TEACHING EVANGELISM

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Every Bible-believing church is interested in evangelism. Our Lord has instructed us to go into all the world and teach the gospel to everyone. The early Church was persecuted, and as they fled for their safety they shared the way of salvation every place they traveled. The great first century export from Jerusalem was the gospel.

It has taken generations, but there is a sense in which our own salvation is part of this continuing ministry. For most of us, someone told us the way to be saved and invited us to trust in Christ. The Holy Spirit blessed these words to a heart made receptive, and we passed from darkness to light, from death to life. Thanks be to God for the glory of His grace.

We, also, would like to be used of God to help others be saved. Our soul is willing. God has blessed us so much. Often we witness with zeal and matter-of-fact bluntness. God uses us to some degree, and we are pleased. It is not unusual for Christians engaged in evangelism to say, "I wish I knew how to present my message better." Turning to the Church, they say, "Teach us."

This is an awesome responsibility, but there can be no denying it: evangelism is one of the important ministries of the Church. God has given the Church leaders for the equipping of the saints for ministry. We are to go into our community as Christians, to tell all that Jesus saves.

There are many ways of teaching evangelism in the Church. I have used Evangelism Explosion, the Four Spiritual Laws, the Romans Road, and just reading a passage like John 3. I know that these methods can be effectively used to teach evangelism, and with a little creativity, they can be modified to meet your theological position.

Here are some practical points to consider in your church's evangelism teaching efforts:

### 1. Use the Gift of Evangelism

If at all possible, have the leader be one who has the gift of evangelism. He or she will love it, and inspire others by passion and example. If we lack such a gifted person, we must use the best we have out of a matter of obedience. Who knows, the Pastor with a teaching gift may train the lay person with the gift of evangelism. It is all right for the student to excel and be better than the teacher in this area. This may be the way God supplies your church with the one gifted in evangelism.

### 2. Classroom Training

There does need to be classroom training. Such training should include the following:

a. Learn a logical presentation of the gospel. We must be convinced that we are sinners and in need of salvation. We need to hear of God's love and justice in sending His Son Jesus to perfectly fulfill the law for His people, taking upon Himself their sin and paying the penalty by His death on the cross.

b. Invite others to confess their faith in Jesus. We need to be encouraged to respond to this truth. Do we really believe that Jesus died for our sin, was buried and rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures? Do we love God for providing for us a Savior? Are we willing to acknowledge that Jesus is our Savior and Lord? The gospel truly received will touch our intellect, our affections, and our will. Some biblical invitations to salvation that Jesus used are:

“And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, ‘Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? How readest thou?’ And he answering said, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all they heart, and with all they soul, and with all they mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.’ And He said unto him, ‘Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live.’” (Luke 10:25-28)

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, ‘Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” (Matthew 4:17)

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

Some of Paul's biblical invitations are:

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9-10)

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

“And [he] brought them out, and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ And they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.’” (Acts 16:30-31)

We do want to help people acknowledge God's saving grace in their life. We are not to be secret disciples, but let our light shine, and take our place in the local church.

c. Practice your presentation. We need practice sessions where we can go over our presentation of the gospel in a setting as near the real evangelistic call as we can make it. This should be taken very seriously. The basic training of a soldier is no frivolous matter. In a similar way, so is the training of the evangelist.

d. Stay focused on salvation. It is important to stay on the subject of salvation when talking to others. It is very easy to forget the main purpose of our visit. Remember how the Samaritan woman tried to get Jesus into a religious dispute rather than talk about her personal relationship with God?

e. There are answers to common objections. Many are afraid they will be asked something that they do not know. It is good to go over common objections to the gospel, and give answers to them in a brief and biblical manner. You will be surprised at the confidence this can give to the person wishing to share the good news with others.

f. Go on evangelistic visits. There can be no substitute for face to face, actually talking to others, about a personal relationship with God. Therefore, every church's evangelistic teaching ministry must include actual visits. Go two by two, or three by three, and talk to friends, neighbors, and church visitors about God's saving work and their relationship to Him. The experienced person does most of the evangelism work in the beginning. As the lessons continue, more and more of the work is turned over to the student.

g. Have a definite period of training. To help people, the training course should have a starting and stopping date. This requires a 3 or 4 month commitment. Each week will include about 2 hours of homework, an hour of class time, and an hour of visiting time. It is important to fulfill this obligation. The only way to fail is to quit.

h. Have attractive literature. If the material you use to present the Gospel can be put into an attractive booklet, it is very helpful. It makes it much easier to present the Gospel, stay on the topic, and be at ease. It can also be left with the unsaved for their further consideration.

i. Trust in God. Only God can save a soul. Therefore, the presentation of Biblical truth, prayer, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit are far more important than our method of presentation. Our Lord said this about the Christian life: "Without me, you can do nothing." This is also true of our evangelistic ministry.

j. Expect difficulty. This is a ministry where the work of God and the work of Satan clash. It is vital for the Christian evangelist to have on the whole armor of God. We must be righteous, know the truth, believe the Gospel, exercise faith, possess salvation, and submit as the Holy Spirit uses us. We need to pray and have the prayer support of others. We seek to do a great work for God. Such work takes faithful servants in the hands of the Almighty.

k. We need to follow up. Whether the person we share God's Word with trusts in Christ or not, there is a great need for follow up. Provide literature about salvation for the one who may be seeking. Provide literature about spiritual growth for the new born babe in Christ. Always try to get people to read the Bible. It is the power of God unto salvation.

We must believe that God is saving souls today. It is God who regenerates the soul, gives the gift of faith, and draws the sinner to trust in Christ. It is our task to tell the Gospel to every person. God can use our efforts for His perfect purpose in bringing others into the Kingdom. Let us be faithful and give God the glory, for salvation is of the Lord!