

Week 22

Evangelism + Missions

Key Verses

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

+ Introduction

Often when people hear the word "evangelism," they immediately think of Billy Graham, a known evangelist that traveled the world and preached in stadiums filled with people. And when people hear the word "missions," they think of people who have sacrificed their westernized lifestyle of comfort to move to the jungles of a far-off country. Neither is incorrect. However, both evangelism and missions are much more practical than those interpretations.

The Baptist Faith and Message states, "it is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations."¹ We tend to make it more complicated than it needs to be. Jesus modeled the practicality of both evangelism and missions by simply living life and being a light wherever He was. It did not matter if He was in the smallest of villages or the metropolis of Jerusalem during a festival; Jesus was always about people. And in their most simplistic application, both evangelism and missions are about people.

+ What are Evangelism and Missions?

Evangelism: "The proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers."²

Missions: "The church's responsibility to bring God's love and the Christian gospel to all people through evangelism, education, and ministry."³

Evangelism is the central component of the church's mission, which involves telling others the gospel of salvation with the goal of leading them to repentance and faith in Christ.⁴ It does not need to be overcomplicated. However, it does need to be intentional.

Evangelism is the responsibility of every believer to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by a verbal witness (our talk) backed up by a Christian lifestyle (our walk) and by other methods that fall in line with the gospel of Christ.

Some have suggested that evangelism need not take the form of direct verbal witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. However, no one in the New Testament came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ merely by observing Christians and their lifestyle. A verbal presentation of the gospel is necessary and essential to God's plan for the spread of the gospel and the expansion of the church.⁵

ROMANS 10:13-17 *For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

¹⁴ *How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher?* ¹⁵ *And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.* ¹⁶ *But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message?* ¹⁷ *So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.*

Do not be intimidated by the term “preacher” at the end of verse 14. The word does not indicate someone’s vocation as a preaching professional. It simply means someone who has a message to proclaim.⁶ There are definitely times when you simply live out being a Christian, and there are spiritual seeds planted, and the light of Christ can shine. But there does need to come a time when the gospel message, the good news of Jesus Christ, is actually shared and heard.

Notice the phrase Paul uses from Isaiah 52:7, “*how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.*” The feet are used for movement. Jesus traveled throughout Israel proclaiming the good news of salvation, repentance, and freedom. He was not stationary but mobile. Jesus walked and talked the good news both literally and figuratively.

Jesus also commissioned His disciples to be mobile and not stationary with this good news of the gospel.

ACTS 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

That is the essence and foundation of evangelism and missions. It always starts where you are. The disciples were in Jerusalem; it needed to start there. But they could not stay there and become stagnant. If they had chosen to do so, history and the Bible would have been different. Remember that Saul (later known as Paul) was on the road to Damascus to arrest the Christians there who were living out what Jesus had said in Acts 1:8. Damascus is 136 miles north of Jerusalem, which is north of Galilee and Caesarea Philippi. They used their feet to take the message of Jesus out of Jerusalem, to the ends of the earth, one mile (or kilometer) at a time.

✦ Who is involved in Evangelism and Missions?

Everyone. That is the short answer, now to expand the answer. It is the responsibility and opportunity of every Christian to participate in evangelism and missions. This does not mean that you must stand on a street corner and proclaim the good news at the top of your lungs. Nor does this mean you have to sell all your belongings and move to a far-off country.

It means that as you go about your day, look for opportunities to share the good news. Every person who has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior should be involved in evangelism and missions in some form or fashion. The biblical roots of evangelism are deep. The church understands its responsibility in evangelism as the fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose. Evangelism is not merely a program; it is an assignment Christ assigned to His church. Our task is to be witnesses of what Christ has done for us so that others might come into a relationship with Jesus Christ.⁷

Throughout the New Testament, there were both men and women involved in evangelism and missions. Lydia (Acts 16) heard the proclamation of the gospel as Paul was fulfilling his duty and privilege of being on mission, evangelizing as he went. Lydia then became a believer and worshiper of God who showed the gift of hospitality, opening her home to others. The Samaritan woman (John 4) that Jesus "evangelized" at the well at noon one day also became involved in evangelism and missions.

JOHN 4:39 *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."*

Did you notice how uncomplicated it was for the Samaritan woman? She did not have to get into a theological debate. She did not have to get trained at a seminary. She simply shared her testimony, her story of what happened when she encountered Jesus Christ. That is evangelism and missions. She went to the people in her town, starting where she lived.

Paul was highly trained in the Hebrew scriptures and the Law of Moses. He was a leader among the Pharisees. But when he encountered Jesus, his life was transformed, and he considered it a duty and privilege to be on mission with God involved in evangelism. Paul traveled throughout the Roman Empire, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Paul went one step further, planting churches along the way, thus deepening the message beyond his generation.

In an article by Neil Cole, Paul's impact through obedience to his duty and privilege are explained:

In Asia alone, the NT mentions Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Colossae, and Hieropolis. Ephesus was really a city full of churches meeting in homes, and from that work, all the others were started. So, while starting upwards of 20 churches in one's life is impressive, what is far more impressive is how many daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters were birthed from those. When Paul left earth at the end of his life, he not only left some church plants, but he also left the DNA of a movement that would eventually spread to the

extent that even the Roman Empire itself would surrender to Christianity. History was changed in dramatic fashion through this one man's obedience.⁸

✦ Where do Evangelism and Missions take place?

Everywhere. Again, that is the short answer, but now let us expand on that answer.

It starts with sharing your story where you are. Jesus mentioned in Acts 1:8 to start in Jerusalem (Houston), Judea (Texas), Samaria (United States), and the ends of the earth (the rest of the world).

This does not mean you have to travel throughout the city of Houston, the state of Texas, the 50 states, or seven continents. It would be impossible for each individual to accomplish that task. The church was birthed in the New Testament to accomplish this task. The Great Commission clearly assigns both evangelism and missions to the church, with missions understood to be the strategy for taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.⁹

Evangelism and missions can be done anywhere. Perhaps the greatest mission field is in your own family. Or, maybe it is your neighborhood or workplace. Wherever you see people, there is your mission field. It could be as simple as asking someone what they did over the weekend. Typically, they would ask you the same question in return, which allows you the opportunity to say you went to church. That takes a very natural conversation in a spiritual direction. Always start where you are in the most natural of ways, both conversationally and practically.

But of course, we are charged with taking the good news to the ends of the earth. We can do that through the church. In fact, if you give to our church in a financial way, you are part of the mission of this church. Second Baptist Church is all about missions. It is not a stretch to say that everything we do as a church is about evangelism and missions. Dr. Young often says, "We are here for those who are not here yet." But we also realize not everyone is able to come here to our church building. Therefore, we go to them in a variety of ways.

Every week in our Bible Study classes, the good news of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. In our worship services, Jesus Christ is lifted high that He may draw any in attendance unto Himself. Each week at SBS, the good news of Jesus Christ is spoken and taught to our students. Events at Second have an evangelistic emphasis. Even our fitness classes proclaim the good news of Jesus.

The Winning Walk ministry proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ on radio and television throughout the United States and other parts of the world. You are part of that simply by being a part of Second Baptist Church.

Our church supports missions locally, throughout the state, nationally, and internationally. You are part of that mission effort. Currently, our church supports prayerfully, physically by serving, and/or financially, 78 local missions. We support 17 local missionaries. We support seven missionaries in the United States and nine internationally. There are 20 International Ministries we support and two based in the United States. We are focused on missions in a very real and practical way.

It does not have to be complicated. Your obedience and stewardship to this church allow you to broaden the impact of evangelism and missions throughout this world.

✦ How are Evangelism and Missions practiced?

Evangelism and Missions should be practiced with love and compassion for the lost. It should not be harsh and condemning but done relationally and practically. Do not overcomplicate the process.

The best way to share your faith is simply by sharing your testimony with others. Tell your story. It is often helpful to write it down and practice saying it aloud in 2-5 minutes. Think about who you were before Christ came into your life, when and how you accepted Christ, and what your life looks like now. Use these five steps to effectively prepare your testimony in an evangelistic way:

1. During your story, let listeners know what you learned about Jesus:

- Who Jesus is
- What He accomplished on the cross
- What He offers us
- What He calls us to do (believe and repent)

2. Use words everyone can understand. Propitiation, justification, and only-begotten may be fine words for a Bible Study or theological textbook but may sound like christianese to someone unfamiliar with Christian terminology. Keep your vocabulary simple and easy to grasp.

3. Be ready to share your testimony concisely. Sometimes our window of opportunity to share is up in two minutes- be ready for any and every situation!

4. Practice sharing your story. Describe how you felt during specific times and give people details of the who, what, and where of important parts of your story to visualize it.

5. Be ready with good follow-up questions. "What do you think?" "Have you ever thought about your sins before?" "Do you realize Jesus can forgive you of your sins too?"

✦ Conclusion

Evangelism and missions are not for religious professionals alone. Every Christian is given the opportunity and the responsibility to share the gospel and to tell others how they came to know Jesus Christ. It is no coincidence that the word gospel starts with "go." Every Christian has the opportunity to go and to share their faith wherever they may find themselves. Our job is not to worry about where or who but to be faithful in every opportunity that God gives us to share our faith. As a Christ-Follower, you are already on mission with God; be the light of the world you already are in Christ Jesus.¹⁰

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- ¹ Charles, S. Kelly Jr., Richard Land, R. Albert Mohler Jr.; *Baptist Faith and Message*, LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN; 2007; p. 121.
- ² Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), p. 1241.
- ³ *Baptist Faith and Message*, LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN; 2007; p. 123.
- ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 122.
- ⁵ *Ibid.* p. 123.
- ⁶ www.biblestudytools.com/lexicon
- ⁷ *Baptist Faith and Message*, LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN; 2007; p. 122.
- ⁸ <https://www.churchplanting.com/how-many-churches-did-the-apostle-paul-start/>
- ⁹ Charles, S. Kelly Jr., Richard Land, R. Albert Mohler Jr.; *Baptist Faith and Message*, LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN; 2007; p. 123.
- ¹⁰ Charles, S. Kelly Jr., Richard Land, R. Albert Mohler Jr.; *Baptist Faith and Message*, LifeWay Press, Nashville, TN; 2007; p. 125.