

# PRACTICAL EVANGELISM

## “How Do I Tell the Story?”

### Introduction – Why must I tell the story?

*As you may recall, the basic Gospel is this: our relationship with God was broken by sin and we are all condemned to die because of it, Jesus came and paid our penalty by dying for us, we must accept His payment and allow Him to guide our lives. When we do, He transforms us through the Holy Spirit.*

*Why must the saved tell the story? Why do we give testimony to His saving grace? There are many answers: because He commanded us (imperative), out of thankfulness, because we love Him, because we love the lost. But there is one reason that we are going to concentrate on today. It has to do with **making** Jesus Lord in our lives and the transforming work He does in us through the Holy Spirit.*

1 Peter 3:15-16

15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. NIV

*Jesus will transform us, whether we like it or not. When we set Him apart in our hearts as Lord, we are cooperating with the transformation process. Our lives will begin to take on the character and stamp of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we are living in a Christlike manner, people will ask us why. Why must I tell the story? Because people will ask for the reason of the hope that we have. [Isn't evangelism hard?]*

*Note that this is in the context of Lordship (implying discipleship) and good behavior. Our living testimony gives weight to and invites a presentation of our verbal testimony. [Having one without the other would be hypocrisy.]*

I. In evangelism, it is imperative that we:

A. Recognize that the field is ready to harvest.

John 4:34-35

34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. NIV

Matt 9:37-38 NIV

37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

*When we look at evangelism like Jesus does, we will see that there is a shortage of workers not seekers.*

B. Respond to a disciple's responsibility.

Matt 10:1

He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. NIV

Phil 2:14-16

14 Do everything without complaining or arguing,  
15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe  
16 as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. NIV

*We are the Lord's answer to the worker shortage. We must walk in the authority he gives us and shine as stars as we hold out the word of life. [We're talking Gospel here, not "positive believing" or tithing doctrines!]*

C. Reach out with the love of God to reconcile the lost.

1 John 4:9-16

9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.  
10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.  
11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.  
12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.  
13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.  
14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.  
15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.  
16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. NIV

*The gospel story is a love story! We are confident of the love God had for us. We love Him because He loved us. We testify of this love by bearing witness that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. It is on God's love that we rely when we relay this message!*

II. Evangelism is intentional, we must:

A. Pray-

1 Tim 2:1-8

- 1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-
- 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.
- 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior,
- 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
- 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
- 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men-the testimony given in its proper time.
- 7 And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle-I am telling the truth, I am not lying-and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.
- 8 I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. NIV

*If I must pray for everyone, then it stands to reason that I can pray for anyone. There is a difference between praying for "all my neighborhood" and praying for "Mike, who lives next door." Let's purpose to have prayer targets in our spheres of influence. Let's be specific about people we know who we want to see in the Kingdom. The reality is that we haven't met or seen one person that God doesn't want in the Kingdom!*

#### B. Prepare

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, NIV

Matt 22:1-4

1 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying:

2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

4 "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' NIV

*The answer I give for the hope that lies within me needs to be tailored to the individual asking. Our hope is multifaceted. One answer does not a wedding banquet make!*

#### C. Proclaim

Rom 10:14-15

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

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!" NIV

### III. A Gospel illustration – The Bridge

Us, God  
A great chasm of sin  
Death in the pit  
Good works don't get us across  
Jesus paid the price and made the bridge to God.  
We must respond.

*How do we tell the story? We must live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and obey His commands. We must see as He sees and recognize that the field is ready to harvest. We must respond to our responsibility as disciples and move out into a hurting world in the authority that He gives us. We must reach out with the love of God to reconcile the lost. We reach out in prayer. Having planned and made the supper ready, we boldly proclaim the gospel, the King's invitation to the wedding supper of the Lamb.*