

PRACTICAL EVANGELISM “John’s Testimony”

Introduction-

John the Baptist was Jesus’s forerunner. His ministry was to prepare people to receive Jesus as Messiah. By studying the principles of his ministry, we can learn how to better reach people for Jesus. As we examine John, we are going to look at his purpose, his proclamation, and his power.

I. His Purpose – “To make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

A. It was declared prophetically.

Luke 1:5-17

- 5 In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.
- 6 Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly.
- 7 But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.
- 8 Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God,
- 9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.
- 10 And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.
- 11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.
- 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.
- 13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.
- 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,
- 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.
- 16 Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God.
- 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." NIV

Luke 1:67, 75-79

- 67 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:
- 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
- 76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
- 77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,
- 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
- 79 to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace." NIV

Note that the way he was to prepare the people was by preaching redemption and forgiveness.

God's purpose for our lives has also been declared prophetically.

Eph 3:9-11

9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

11 according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. NIV

B. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit to fulfill it.

Luke 1:15

15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.

We also need the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill our purpose in proclaiming Jesus.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." NIV

C. He had joy in the hope of the Lord's coming.

Luke 1:78

78 because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

Luke 1:41-45 NIV

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!

43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

We cannot forget the hope in our witness, the joy in knowing that our Lord is coming back. We need to have expectant joy in the return of our Lord. Not only does our witness need to be, "The Lord has come," but also, "The Lord is coming."

Heb 10:23-25

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching. NIV

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

II. His Proclamation – “To bear witness of the Light.”

John 1:1-7

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 He was with God in the beginning.
- 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
- 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.
- 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.
- 6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.
- 7 **He came as a witness to testify concerning that light,** so that through him all men might believe. NIV

A. He exposed the darkness.

Luke 3:2-6

- 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.
- 3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, *preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*
- 4 As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, **Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.**"
- 5 Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.
- 6 And all mankind will see God's salvation." NIV

John made people aware of their sin and its consequence.

Luke 3:7-9

- 7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"
- 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.
- 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." NIV

If people do not know that they are in need of salvation, they will not be prepared for a Savior. They will have no need for Him. We need to shine the light to expose the darkness.

Eph 5:8-14

- 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light
- 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

10 and find out what pleases the Lord.

11 **Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.**

12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

13 **But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,**

14a for it is light that makes everything visible. NIV

B. "I am not the Christ."

John 1:19-23

19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was.

20 **He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ."**

21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."

22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" NIV

➤ Another Jesus-

2 Cor 11:3-4

3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

4 **For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached,** or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, **or a different gospel** from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. NIV

➤ Another gospel-

Gal 1:6-10

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and **are turning to a different gospel-**

7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! NIV

9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? **If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.** NIV

Whenever we hold back from proclaiming the gospel, it is a sure indicator of operating out of the fear of man. We must seek the honor that comes from God alone.

John 12:42-43

42 Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees **they would not confess their faith for fear** they would be put out of the synagogue;

43 for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. NIV

C. "Behold the Lamb of God."

John 1:35-37

35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.

36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. NKJV

We must lead people to Jesus, not to ourselves or to any other man (church or program!).

III. His Power – He must increase, we must decrease.

John 1:15

John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" NIV

John 3:30 "He must increase, but I must decrease." NKJV

A. He is strong when we are weak.

2 Cor 12:7-10

7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. NIV

B. We can do all things through Him.

Phil 4:13 "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." NIV

C. We can do nothing without Him.

John 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. NIV

What was the result of John's ministry?

John 10:40-42

40 Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. Here he stayed

41 and many people came to him. They said, "Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true."

42 And in that place many believed in Jesus. NIV

We must recognize our prophetic purpose to proclaim the Light of Jesus Christ in the strength He gives us through the power of the Holy Spirit. To effectively witness like John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus must be identified, glorified, and spoken truthfully of in our testimony.

May it be said of us like it was said of John, "All they have said of this man is true." And may many believe in Jesus as a result. Amen!