

“Evangelism”
Destin Church of Christ
September 8, 2019
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Schedule Subject to Change:

- 1 - September 8, 2019 - Help Wanted ... Evangelism
- 2 - September 15, 2019 - What is Evangelism? Acts 8:26-40
- 3 - September 22, 2019 - Why Evangelism? Matthew 5:10-16
- 4 - September 29, 2019 - Guest Speaker
- 5 - October 6, 2019 - Seekers – Vonn Plunk
- 6 - October 13, 2019 - Seekers – Vonn Plunk
- 7 - October 20, 2019 - How to Evangelize: 1 Corinthians 13
- 8 - October 27, 2019 - Methods and Motivation.
- 9 - November 3, 2019 - Getting Prepared and Taking Action
- 10 - November 10, 2019 - Building Courage To Tell Others About Christ
- 11 - November 17, 2019 - TBD
- 12 - November 24, 2019 - TBD

Help Wanted ... Evangelism

A major tendency is for congregations to interpret Jesus's command to go to all the world to mean go to foreign countries to evangelize while ignoring the portion of the world surrounding them. They do this because it gives them feeling of doing the Lords work as their rationale. The real reason is it requires less personal effort to send money than the personal effort to work with the lost in their own geographical area. As long as this interpretation of “Go into All the World” prevails, the Church in the US will not grow.

Nine Reasons Christians Fail to Evangelize:

1. Many don't know what “evangelism” is.
2. We have few evangelistic role models.
3. Some church members aren't convinced about lostness.
4. Some churches have provided no evangelism training.
5. Fear of the unknown halts our efforts.
6. We've “gotten over” our salvation.
7. Pastors aren't taking the lead in evangelism.
8. We don't really know many lost people anyway.
9. We don't care about non-believers.

According to Thom Rainer:

- Too many church members aren't concerned for the lostness around them.
- A lot of churches eliminated evangelism programs due to lack of interest, but didn't replace them with anything.
- We need to be more intentional about evangelism training in our churches.
- Pastor, if your church is not evangelistic, look first in the mirror.

If we want to be effective, we need to ask God to give us the heart that Jesus had for lost people. We see His heart in Matthew 9:36-38.

A. Jesus saw the great need of lost people (9:36).

The disciples probably thought, as they did on another occasion when the needs were overwhelming (Matthew 14:15), "*Send them away!*" But Jesus saw them differently and He felt compassion for them.

Jesus saw lost people as "helpless" (NIV and ESV) or "distressed" (AMP). The word means "troubled" or "vexed." It points to the load of problems that people apart from Christ bear.

Jesus saw lost people as "harassed" or "dispirited" (AMP). The word means, "downcast" or "thrown down." It points to the utterly helpless and forsaken condition of people who are lost in sin without the Savior. *Jesus saw lost people as sheep without a shepherd.*

B. Jesus saw the great harvest of lost people (9:37).

He said, "The harvest is plentiful." This was an important concept that Jesus wanted His disciples to grasp. (John 4:35; Acts 18:10) There was a harvest waiting to be reaped. The harvest doesn't depend on our techniques, but on God's sovereign purpose. He has planned a harvest and He calls us to get involved as reapers.

Jesus said that the harvest is plentiful. It's God's job to open hearts to the gospel (Acts 16:14). It's our job to go into the harvest field and seek to reap a crop.

Jesus saw the great need and the great harvest of lost people.

C. Jesus saw the great need for workers for the harvest (9:37b).

Jesus' viewpoint is that of a farmer who has a great crop ready for harvest, but he doesn't have enough reapers.

The Lord has chosen to save lost people through those whom He has already saved. He could have used angels, who probably would have been more competent than we are. But He chose to use us! The plentiful harvest means that there is a need for more workers.

If you are one of Jesus' sheep, He wants you to see yourself as a worker in His harvest. And if you're thinking, "But I'm not called into full-time ministry," you don't understand. The workers in the Lord's harvest are not just those in so-called "full-time" ministry. Rather, they are those who have tasted of God's salvation telling others of what He has done for their soul.

Jesus wants you to open your eyes and see the great harvest around you so that you will be a worker reaping souls who need the Good Shepherd.

So to be like our Savior, we need to see as Jesus saw: the great need of lost people; the great harvest of lost people; and, the great need for more workers in the harvest of lost people.

We need to do as Jesus did. He ministered to people's needs and He prayed for more workers.

A. Jesus ministered to people's spiritual and physical needs.

Ministry is not a word that applies only to those called into "professional" Christian work. "Ministry" means "service." Every Christian is called to serve Christ. He has given you unique gifts and opportunities. You are to take what He has given you and use it to serve those with whom He has put you in contact.

Matthew summarizes Jesus' ministry by three things (9:35): He was teaching, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. Not everyone is gifted to teach publicly, but in private conversation you should be able to teach others what God has taught you from His Word.

Again, not everyone is called to preach the gospel publicly, but every believer should be ready when the opportunity presents itself to tell others how they can have their sins forgiven and go to heaven (1 Peter 3:15).

Jesus also healed the sick, which authenticated His claim to be the promised Messiah (Matthew 11:2-6). While no one today has a gift of healing, we can pray for the sick and know that God can heal them. (Matthew 25:34-40).

The importance of sharing the gospel of Christ with those who are lost cannot be overemphasized.

Jesus wants everyone to hear the good news of salvation (Mark 16:15-16), and has provided the gospel as God's power to save all who believe it (Romans 1:16-17).

But what is the most effective way to reach people today?

The Institute For American Church Growth asked over 10,000 people this question: “What was responsible for your coming to Christ and this church?” Their replies were:

- I attended a gospel meeting - 0.5%
- I visited there - 1%
- I had a special need - 3%
- I just walked in - 3%
- I liked the programs - 3%
- I liked the Bible classes - 5%
- I liked the minister - 6%
- **A friend or relative invited me - 79%**

George Barna, in his book: “Grow Your Church from the Outside In: Understanding the Unchurched and How to Reach Them”, says the communication method with the best impact is:

- **63% invited by friend**
- 50% invited by pastor
- 48% heard good things about church
- 16% TV advertisement
- 11% church name is appealing
- 9% ad in newspaper/yellow pages

What can we learn from these surveys? If churches are to grow, it will be through the efforts of individual members! Preachers, programs, classes may help, but in most cases they will only maintain the size of the congregation. Such congregational efforts are worthwhile because they can reach people with whom we might otherwise never come in contact. But the fact remains: The greatest potential lies with those people who have some contact with members of the local congregation.

“Let’s never miss an opportunity to share the Gospel.” ~~ Franklin Graham

Our motive is the great love of our Savior, who came to this sinful world, who saw the great needs of lost people, who felt compassion for them, and who served them with the good news of salvation. If you have experienced that salvation, then you’re one of His workers in His harvest. He wants you to see as He saw, to feel as He felt, and to do as He did. Love lost people for Jesus’ sake.

Next Week: What is Evangelism? Acts 8:26-40