

Bible Study on Evangelism – Handout 2
Developing Biblical Understanding

Grace Bible Chapel

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There are several aspects to studying evangelism – why, who, what, where, when, and how. We will be completing the “why,” the “who” and begin the “what.”

Points of discussion:

- Is the Great Commission (Mat 28:19-20) for us today?
 - It was without doubt given directly to the 11 disciples who would become apostles – they, with the addition of Paul, would serve to physically found the church (Acts 1:8; entire book of Acts).
 - The fact that Christ states He will be with them until the “end of the age” (a reference to the end of the church age or to the “Day of the Lord” or the times relative to His second coming) encompasses us. This extends the great commission beyond the bounds of the lives of the apostles.

- How do we apply the great commission to us today?
 - There was a very direct command to “go” for each of these disciples. It was reiterated and specific at the ascension (Acts 1:8). The specific area where Christ directly commanded His disciples to physically go to the then world of civilization cannot be applied practically to us individually today. On the other hand, the general idea of “go” in giving out the Gospel applies to us in our time and our providential circumstances. This will be seen as we study its emphasis in the epistles.
 - These disciples had been personally trained and commissioned by Christ. They were also specifically equipped (John 14:26; Paul -1 Cor 9:1; 2 Cor 12:7). Applying the same sense – we need to be trained in the Word, and have in that training a prayerful sense of commission.
 - A special direction of evangelism is stated to be given by God to some persons and is unique to them. They are compelled and sent by God to a specific people (Gal 2:7; 1 Tim 2:7).
 - The special gift of being an “evangelist” is given by God (Eph 4:11-13).
 - As the epistles are instructions to the church we turn to them for our primary direction:
 - There is no direct reiteration or repeat of “The Great Commission” to the saints in churches in the epistles.
 - There are no commands to evangelize (interestingly) in some of the most specific command sections of the epistles (Rom 12-15; Eph 4:17-6:24; Phil 4:1-9; Col 2:6-4:6; 1 Thess 5:12-22; 2 Thess 3:6-13), there is also no condemnation or commendation to the 7 churches in Rev 2-3 regarding evangelism. This should raise our interest to understand why the priority, in that sense, is missing since these critiques are so valuable in understanding the mission of the church from Christ Himself. On the other hand, there is teaching in the epistles (which we did not get to in handout 1) that show the importance and necessity of evangelism.

- Where are direct commands given in the epistles for individual Christians to evangelize?
 - We are commanded to be ready to make a defense – ie: present the Gospel (1 Pet 3:15-16). There is not a specific command given in broad manner to everyone in the church to go out (in the manner of the “Great Commission” to the disciples) and evangelize. We are to be evangelist at a minimum in our realm and take every advantage of the opportunities God provides us (1 Pet 3:15).
 - We have stated direct responsibilities to evangelize others around us (2 Cor 5:20; 1 Pet 3:15-16; Jude 22-23).
 - There is a blessed responsibility of bringing the message to those who have never heard (Rom 10:14-15; 17; Eph 3:8-12).
 - Paul saw a priestly duty, which is true in all believers, in presenting the Gospel (Rom 15:16).
 - Paul states the Gospel has been made known to all the nations (Rom 16:25-27).
 - Christians are exhorted to imitate the faith of those who “spoke the Word of God” to them – share your faith with others as it was shared with you (Heb 13:7).
 - The ministry of reconciliation is a privilege and responsibility given to “us” which Paul calls the “word of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18-19).
 - Paul proclaims that “we” (accordingly all who are new creations – vs. 17) “are ambassadors for Christ” begging or pleading with people to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20).

- Paul gives himself with no reservation to the spreading of the Gospel (1 Cor 9:19-23), and in that regard serves as an example to us of a Christian's priorities.
- What is the emphasis of evangelism message in the epistles to the churches?
 - The proclamation of the glory of God (1 Pet 2:9; 1 Cor 2:2; Gal 6:14; Phil 3:8-10).
 - The purity of the Gospel message presented (2 Cor 2:17; Gal 1:6-10; 2 Tim 4:2; Jude ; 2 Pet 2).
 - Readiness and preparedness to communicate (1 Pet 3:15-16; Eph 6:15).
 - Evangelistic prayer as an essential (Eph 6:19; 2 Thess 3:1; Rom 10:1).
 - The stewardship, responsibility, and necessity of representing Christ to others (1 Cor 9:19-23; 2 Cor 5:18-20; Rom 10:14-15;15:16; Heb 13:7; 1 Pet 2:9) must take a high priority.
 - There are specific callings for some to special evangelistic efforts (Gal 2:7; 1 Tim 2:7; Eph 4:11-13).
- Why evangelize if God has already determined who will be saved?
 - The Bible clearly teaches divine election (Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13), and that God is sovereign in choosing whom He will save based exclusively on His grace (Rom 9).
 - Immediately after dealing with God's sovereignty in Rom 9, Paul states the need for evangelism in Rom 10:14 "how will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?" Thus we see that sovereignty and divine election does not rule out the need for evangelism.
 - Acts 18:9-11 – Paul is directed by God to certain persons whom He has chosen to hear and believe (John 10:27-28). The same is seen in Acts 13:43-48. God has therefore chosen both the end (who will be saved), and the means (evangelism). It is God's plan and purpose to use men to present the Gospel (John 15:8; 16; 2 Cor 5:19-20) God has left to us "the Word of reconciliation."
 - The primary reason one should evangelize is that Christ has commanded it (Luke 6:46; Mat 10:38). Paul calls this in 1 Cor 1:21 the "foolishness of the message preached," but it was God's choice to use this message, and our privilege to be used.
 - Far from election / predestination being a detriment to evangelism, it is the primary motivation. If it were not for the guarantee that God has those whom He will save and is working in sovereignty by His Spirit, no one would be saved: man **cannot** understand - I Corinthians 2:14; man **cannot** hear - John 8:43; man **cannot** see - John 3:3; man **cannot** come - John 6:44. It is therefore necessary for God to work in the heart (John 3:3-8).
 - Success in evangelism is not dependent on my persuasion or my technique. Success in evangelism is in God's hands. He alone can open the heart. I have the blessed responsibility of being used as an instrument, and have two obligations: being obedient to speak, and bringing the true Gospel (James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:22-25).
 - It is the sinners resignation of himself to the disposal of God that is at the heart of the salvation message (as we shall see). It is no less then the evangelists resignation to the will of God in being obedient to God in giving out the message and waiting on God to give the increase (1 Cor 3:6-7).
 - The Word of God must be accompanied by true conviction that only God can bring, and will bring as He sovereignly chooses (John 16:8; 1 Thess 1:5). In this not only is the Holy Spirit required and essential, but also is the Word of God required and essential (Rom 10:17; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23).
 - It is not our responsibility to guess or know whom God has chosen. It is our responsibility to give out the message (2 Cor 2:16).
 - Even though man's condition is so severe he cannot believe, he is still accountable to God for his unbelief and wicked behavior (John 8:24; 10:25-26 with Acts 2:22-23; John 13:18 with Mat 26:24).

Conclusions from this study:

- All Christians have the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing.
- Some Christians are called to special evangelistic efforts.
- God has determined the ends (who will be saved), and the means (evangelism – corporate & personal).
- The New Testament places great emphasis on personal preparation, and readiness for evangelism.
- Prayer is integral and necessary for evangelism's success.
- God uses the true Gospel (the rightness or biblical accuracy of the message is essential) in conjunction with the Holy Spirit in order to effect salvation in the elect.
- Even though man is not capable of himself to believe, he is accountable. This also becomes a component of the evangelistic message seen in the law, and because of man's compunction to sin.