

GETTING READY TO EVANGELIZE

ARE WE REALLY READY???

OVERVIEW

Matthew 28:18 & 19 (NLT) –Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Teach these new disciples** to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

- As with any great task, we must first make ourselves ready before we begin that task.
- We must have a plan of action.
- Are we prepared only to do long distance, impersonal evangelizing?
- Are we creating members or disciples?
- God’s law of harvest at work!
- We can’t do only half the job.

MONUMENTAL TASK

The first thing we must understand is evangelizing for Christ is a monumental task. With any monumental task, those undertaking the task must get prepared.

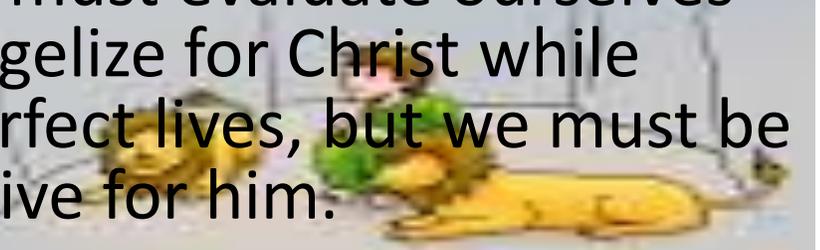
- An athlete must practice and train to get ready for competition.
- Professionally, we go to school to obtain various degrees along with additional professional development and continuing education.
- Militarily, soldiers must be trained and made ready for war.
- Spiritually, Jesus did not send out the Apostles in the limited commission (Luke 9) or the great commission unprepared.
- In fact, every servant God uses throughout scripture has been prepared for the given task.
- Why is evangelizing perhaps the most monumental of Spiritual tasks???

WHO'S OUR TARGET?

- Any good business plan, or plan of action, must identify the target market. Who are we going after?
- If we are going to be successful at evangelizing, we need to take the time and look into our lives, our circles of influence, and list out prospects to evangelize to.
- Sure, we will evangelize to anyone where we see an opportunity, but within our circles of influence we don't have to wait for an opportunity. We can create one.
- What hinders us?? Why don't we try to grab the low hanging fruit? Why do we feel more comfortable speaking about Jesus to strangers?

GOD'S LAW OF HARVEST!

- Genesis 1:12 - ¹² the land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees **of the same kind**. And God saw that it was good.
- The law of harvest speaks for itself. **We can only reproduce what we are.** If we are a true disciple of Christ, then we can reproduce and create another true disciple. If we are only a member of the Lord's Church, but not a true disciple, we can only reproduce another member.
- Therefore in our preparation to evangelize, we must evaluate ourselves and be real about what we are. We can't evangelize for Christ while living an ungodly life. We don't have to live perfect lives, but we must be committed to Christ and give sincere effort to live for him.



CHRIST AND NOT “THE CHURCH”

- We must be careful. Many church evangelistic efforts are designed to simply bring lost people into the church. “Get them in the water!”
- If we are not careful, we will convert people to “the church” and not necessarily to Jesus Christ himself. In other words, the message is “Come join us,” and not “Come to Christ.”
- When this happens, we are going to create a member only. They will enjoy the emotional highs of a worship service, and will bask in the wonderful Christian fellowship at The Heights.
- When Satan attacks, or someone in the church begins to act, speak, or behave ungodly, the member will not want to be a part of “the church” any longer.
- They were never converted to Christ! They were never put on the path to real discipleship that leads to a personal relationship with Christ. We will have failed the spirit of Christ’s great commission.
- Paraphrasing Matt 11:28, Jesus says, “Come unto me, and **“I”** will give you rest” not “come unto the church.”
- We must introduce people to Jesus. How can we stumble here?

FAKE & PHONY

- God's children being fake or phony is a problem when evangelizing. When we represent ourselves as being flawless, perfect, or pure, we misrepresent the truth about the Lord's Church, which are the people in it.
- We don't often do this overtly. We don't say that we are perfect, but we talk like we were born saved and have never sinned, or even that we don't sin anymore, which would also be untrue.
- The people we evangelize to want and deserve realness. When we misrepresent ourselves and the church, those that are baptized will fall away when they begin to see the cracks in the perfection we presented. We must give it to them real and keep it real.
- In Luke 14:28-30 Jesus himself tells us to count the cost. ²⁸ "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? ²⁹ Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. ³⁰ They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'"
- The bible is real. Individual's flaws, sinfulness and wickedness, and embarrassments are all captured in scripture. Do we come up short here by refusing to reveal our true selves? Why?

MAKE DISCIPLES, THEN WHAT??

- The great commission in Matt 28 has two parts to it. We are to go make disciples, then we are to TEACH them the commands the Lord has given us.
- Growth in the Word of God is not an option. It's a commandment. The Hebrew writer in Hebrews 5:11-14 chastises the Christians for not growing.
- We cannot teach what we do not know. We must hear the advice of the Psalmist in the 1st division of Psalms. We must stay in the Word of God, and meditate on it day and night.
- According to John's gospel chapter 1, Jesus himself is the Word of God. We cannot call ourselves a disciple of Christ and not love being in the Word of God.
- Are we preparing ourselves to evangelize and complete the task by teaching the new disciples what Christ and the Apostles taught? We can't do only half the job.
- King Saul did half the job, and he was rejected by God and it cost him his kingship. The Israelites did half the job and didn't completely expel the inhabitants of Canaan, and they remained a problem for them. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira did a half job and it cost them their lives.
- How do we ensure we don't do a half job???

TYPES OF EVANGELISM

IMPERSONAL

- All evangelistic efforts count. None are a waste of time, and all are worth doing. We are to plant God's seed everywhere we go.
- Some forms of evangelism are more effective than others. We evangelize impersonally when we speak to someone we don't know, or where we don't have a relationship like as with a stranger or loose acquaintance.
- Some of us are only prepared to engage in these types of evangelistic efforts. Knocking on doors is a great start, but it's only intended to introduce ourselves and invite the community to our services.
- Some of will knock on a few doors, check the box off, and say I fulfilled the great commission. God is pleased with me. From scripture we see that God requires so much more from us.

TYPES OF EVANGELISM

PERSONAL

- The more effective form of evangelism is personal evangelism. This is where we speak with someone about God's grace through Jesus Christ where we have an existing relationship. The deeper the relationship the more effective the evangelism will be.
- Here is where the rubber meets the road. When we talk about God to people who knew us in our former lives, when someone knows how sinful we used to be, the transforming power of Christ and his gospel comes alive! We can't shy away from these opportunities.
- Paul talks about this in 1 Cor 6:11 - ¹¹ some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
- God has pulled us out of the miry clay of sin, cleaned us up, and now he wants to send us back to those same people so they can see the transforming power of Christ. They'll see that we reason differently, talk differently, and walk differently. And with our old partners in sin, the differences in us will be glaring. This is what God is calling us to do. Are we prepared to do this?

TYPES OF EVANGELISM

IMPERSONAL TO PERSONAL

- I tell my children that in life you are only going to have two or three true personal friends. Everyone else will be an acquaintance of some sort.
- How did our close personal friends become that way? We were willing to share close personal information, or we experienced something personal together. Sometimes we did dirt together. 😊 Of course that was our past selves.
- Likewise when evangelizing, we must be willing to share who we once were. We don't have to go into all the dirty details, but in sharing our old situation(s), we will give someone hope that they also can become something pleasing and useful to God.