

Sent to Share: Living the Great Commission Evangelism 101

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

This week, we’ve been learning about discipleship—what it is, why it’s needed, the cost of being a disciple and making disciples, and the discipline and accountability required. Today, we’re focusing on evangelism—what it is and why it's necessary. Let’s start off by looking at what evangelism is.

Question: What is evangelism?

According to Oxford dictionary evangelism is the spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness. The Greek word for evangelism is *euaggelizó* which means to announce good news.

So, when you get good news, what is the first thing you want to do? Share it with someone, right? As disciples of Christ, that is what we are supposed to be doing with the Gospel (good news) of Christ. We are supposed to be sharing it with others. This is the final instruction that Jesus gave to His disciples before ascending into heaven and a command we must still follow.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT) - Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 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.”

When we accept Jesus as our personal Savior, we also accept the responsibility of being a disciple. Think of yourself as God’s employee—and the Bible is your job manual. It lays out what God wants you to do. **Matthew 28:19-20** is oftentimes referred to as the Great Commission, but do you know what that means. A commission is an **instruction, command, or duty** given to a person or group of people. Jesus was commanding His disciples to evangelize to all the nations. This verse is ultimately the foundational mission of Christianity. It urges the true followers of Christ to share the Gospel and help others become followers of Christ.

Question: What is the good news that we are supposed to be sharing?

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. 2 It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. 3 I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. 4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

The Good News of Christ is that Jesus, who lived a sinless life, paid the ultimate price for us, sinners. He laid down His own life and died so that we could be reconciled with Him. Sin separated

us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**) and there was nothing we could do to fix it. Jesus took our punishment – death – to give us a new life. **2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Now that we know what evangelism is and the assignment that Jesus left for His disciples, **who is responsible for completing this work?** Is it just the assignment of the Bishop? The Elders? Ministers? Seasoned saints? No, this commission was given to the disciples of Christ.

2 Timothy 4:5 (NKJV) *But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

So, what is an evangelist? The Greek word for evangelist is *euaggelistés* which means ‘one who brings good news.’ This is something that the ENTIRE body of Christ is called to do, the work of an evangelist. Now does that mean that we are all called to be an evangelist, NO! However, we are called to share the good news which is the work of an evangelist.

This command is not something that we can just lay on “the church” as an institution to do alone. Although the church should be evangelizing and sharing the good news, that does not negate the instructions that Jesus left for each of us individually. We ALL have the duty to share the good news with those around us. There are some people who will never set foot inside the four walls of a church. There are some people that the Bishop will never have a chance to speak to. But those same people may encounter you. Are you not going to share the good news with them? Keep in mind, when Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28, the church hadn’t been established yet. The first church didn’t form until Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost.

When I first joined FWPC and became active in the ministry, I heard about something Pastor Flanagan would ask at the start of meetings. He would ask: What’s our business? They would respond: Soul winning. He would then ask: How’s business? The second question was rhetorical and meant to get people to reflect on their effort to win souls. I want you all to think about those same questions as well. How’s your soul winning going? It’s okay if it’s not where you would want it to be. The fact that you are here attending VBS shows that you are committed to doing what God has called you to do.

Question: Why do we need to evangelize?

There are many reasons why we should evangelize, but I want to highlight three of them for you all today.

Reason 1: God Commanded Us To

Why do you think God commanded us to make disciples of all nations? How else will the people hear about the good news if we don’t share it with them. **Romans 10:14-15** says “*But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15*

And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

If we don't share the Good News, who will? As God's chosen people (1 Peter 2:9), we are His spokespersons in the world.

2 Corinthians 5:20 *So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!”* Do you know what the work of an ambassador is? Ambassadors are the official representatives of their government, acting as the face of their nation on the international stage. Just like earthly ambassadors represent their home country, we represent Heaven here on Earth. As ambassadors for Christ, we must share His good news with others.

Reason 2: We Love Our Neighbors

Matthew 22:39 *‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’* If you truly love someone, wouldn't you want them to know the truth that could save their life? If you had the cure to cancer, would you not share it? If you knew there was danger outside, would you not warn them? What kind of person would you be if you did not let them know? Not someone who really loved or cared for others. That's crazy right? So why not share the Gospel—the message of eternal life? We are being gatekeepers when we don't share the good news with others. We are not being good ambassadors if we do that.

1 Corinthians 9:16 *Yet preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn't preach the Good News!*

Sharing the Gospel is an act of love. **John 13:35** says, *“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”* Are we really disciples of Christ if we don't love one another? When we share the Gospel with others, we are essentially helping them to find hope, peace and purpose in life because we are connecting them back to their creator and the source of our lives.

Reason 3: We love God.

Ultimately, our love for God should be the reason we go out and evangelize to others. At the end of the day, our desire should be for God to be honored and glorified on this earth. How else will people know what they ought to do if we, the disciples of Christ, don't go out and teach them? Jesus already told us, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments”* (**John 14:15**). *And the first and greatest commandment is to “...love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.”* (**Matthew 22:37-38**)

In **John 21**, Jesus asks Peter three times: “Do you love me?” and His response to Peter was to feed my sheep. Today, He's asking us the same. If we love Him, we'll do our part to feed His sheep and fulfill the mission He left us.