

The Biblical Gospel & Evangelism

Washer & Leifer – Denmark 2009

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[music]

Let's look in the book of Luke, the last chapter, chapter 24 verse 45.

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."¹

We are talking about evangelism and it is an extremely important topic. It is something that flows out of true piety and true devotion to Christ. It is also something that flows out, well, kind of secondary. Our devotion to Christ will always include also a love for men, a love for all kinds of men, a love for our brothers and sisters in Christ and a love even for our enemies.

And one of the greatest expressions of that love should be to tell them about the one who is the very center, foundation and goal of our life and that is Jesus Christ. The believer is a person who must express his faith. He must share his faith.

Now it says here, in verse 45 it says, "He opened their minds to understand the Scripture."²

¹ Luke 24:45-59.

² Luke 24:45.

I find this very important that we see here that prior to the Great Commission, prior to speaking about sending them out, prior to even speaking about the filling of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit, he opens their mind to understand the gospel.

Many people do not evangelize because they do not understand the gospel. You see, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest catalyst to any, any exercise of piety. What do I mean by that? You want to be holy. What should you do? Study the gospel. You want to be more like Christ. What should you do? Study the gospel. You lack motivation in your Christian life. What should you do? Study the gospel.

Anyone who truly has an understanding of what God has done for them in Christ will be motivated to evangelize. It is too great of a story not to tell.

So many people do not evangelize because they do not understand the gospel. Others evangelize even though they do not understand the gospel. There are so many people today sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and it is not what they are doing. There are many evangelists, preachers, television preachers who call themselves evangelists, but they are not evangelists because their minds have not been opened up to understand the gospel.

The gospel cannot be reduced down to four spiritual laws or five things God wants you to know. If you are going to be effective, that is useful to God in evangelism, you must understand the gospel. Many people consider the gospel of Jesus Christ to be like Christianity 101 and once you get past that you go to deeper things. There is nothing deeper than the gospel. Do you understand it? Do you know the gospel?

I sat with a group of students years ago and I asked them, I said, “Why did Christ die?”

And they said, “Because of our sin.”

I said, “But why did Christ die?”

“Well, because of our sin.”

“Ok, why did he have to die because of our sin?”

“Well, I mean, because sin is bad and sin is this and sin is that.”

They didn’t know that Christ had to die for our sin because of the character of God, because it all comes down to who God is, that if God is a just God he cannot merely pardon men. His justice must be satisfied and that occurred on that cross when Christ died. How did he die?

Well, he was nailed to a tree. They stuck a lance in his side.

No, the lance came after his death.

He died having experienced the wrath of God, being crushed under the full weight of God's judgment against the sins of his people. He satisfied God's justice and now God can be both just and the justifier of the wicked.

So, you see, when we talk about going out and doing evangelism, we need to understand that most people that we send out on the street to do evangelism don't even understand the gospel. So before we have a great class motivating people on how to do evangelism, we need to have several lessons on what is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why did Jesus die? What does it mean? Why is his resurrection important? What is repentance and faith? What is the true gospel call? How is applied to men? These things aren't taught very much, but they ought to be.

Now we don't have time to go through all of that to talk to you today about evangelism, but I want to hit just a few things here in this text.

“He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”³

The gospel, according to verse 46 is centered in, around the person of Jesus Christ, his death on that cross and also the resurrection from the dead on the third day.

Then he goes and says, “Repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”⁴

The gospel call is not now that you have heard the gospel message would you like to pray and ask Jesus to come into your heart. That is not the gospel call. The gospel call is the same that Christ spoke when he first came to Israel and that is repent and believe the gospel. Turn from your sins and throw yourself upon Christ as the only sure hope of salvation. Christ, his merit, his virtue, his work.

I feel, honestly, kind of scattered right now because there is so many things that I want to teach you about this, but we must go on.

Now he says this. “You are,” in verse 48, “witnesses of these things.”⁵

Now, there is something very important about a witness. They, of course, were eye witnesses of these things. You and I are not eye witnesses of these things. If someone comes to you claiming to be an eye witness of certain spiritual realities, you should write them off as a hoax. We are not eye witnesses of Christ's death. We are not eye witnesses of his resurrection. But we are witnesses. It is not in this case. These men had not just heard information. They had experienced what happened on that cross. They knew Jesus Christ.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Luke 24:45.

⁵ Luke 24:48.

In the same way, even though we were not there, in order to be an effective witness for Christ this has to be a reality in our life.

I get joy out of sharing the gospel with people because I get joy out of the gospel. The gospel message means something to me. It means everything to me. And so when I share it with people I am sharing it as a witness. I have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. I have come to understand that my salvation is found only in this message of what Christ has done for me. It is a part of my life. I am not just handing out a tract. This is everything to me. My whole life is built upon the truth of this message. And if this message is false, I am of all men most to be pitied.

What I want to encourage you to do is to go deep into the gospel, to drink it down deeply, to study it, to meditate upon it, to read good books with regard to the gospel and there are not many at least written in modern times. But it is more than just going out and handing out a tract. It is more than just going through a few little things. It is about sharing something that is become the thing in your life. And people know the difference. They know the difference.

Your eloquence, your brilliant mind will still betray you. They will know whether this really means something to you or not. You are to be witnesses.

Now, we are not only witnesses with our life. We are witnesses with our mouth. If Jesus had only lived a good life, if Jesus had only healed people, he would have never been crucified. He would have never been rejected. Jesus did not get in trouble until he opened up his mouth.

It is the same with us. We are to be witnesses. We are to speak. Although not all of us have been called to be evangelists, we should all evangelize. Although all of us are not prophetic in our message, there is a sense in which every one of us should be prophetic. We should speak. We should not hold our tongue. We should speak correctly. We should speak with a right attitude, but we should speak.

Now why don't we? Primarily fear, but fear that comes out of self love, a desire for self preservation, a desire for people to like us, a desire for people to think well of us. It is all about us. It is about self preservation, self promotion and we need to be very, very careful.

Now, but I want to say this. I have preached on the streets quite a bit. It is not easy for me to do, not at all. But I do it. I felt like the Lord led me to do it when I have done it. It is not easy. But I also want to tell you this. I am not going to put that burden upon another person. I am not going to take street preaching as a badge of spirituality or that I love Jesus more than other people. Not everybody is called to jump up on a park bench and start preaching, though some of us have. Not everyone is a bold, bold, bold witness in the sense of standing out in the public domain and crying out the gospel, but every one of us should be a witness in the way that God wants us to be.

But let me tell you this. No matter what that way is, it will involve you opening up your mouth. The idea, I think, of Saint Francis of Assisi that said preach the gospel everywhere, use words when necessary, I understand what he is trying to say, but that is very misleading. You must be a witness with your life. You must do good deeds so that men will see them and glorify your Father who is in heaven, but if that is all you do, you are not a witness.

Every person with which you come into contact, you ought to be praying, crying out to God, thinking about how can I witness to this person. But don't think about it too much because you will think so much about it that they will end up walking away and you still haven't opened up your mouth.

Lord, you never have to ask this question. Lord, do you want me to share the gospel with this person?

He has already answered that.

Now, you may pray for wisdom with regard to how. But he does want you speaking.

Now, you say, "But I have no power."

Well, that is not the problem. Now if you were to give yourself to preaching and while you were preaching and while you were sharing the gospel you were bothered that you had no power, that is different. But your first problem is not that you have no power. Your first problem is that you have not bended your will to God's. You think more about self preservation and you need to open up your mouth and start talking. And if you open up your mouth and start talking, God will help you.

But let's go on to this other statement here that is very, very important.

He says, "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."⁶

I wonder how many people died and went to hell while they were in the city praying for power from on high. I wonder how many people died and went to hell.

A lot.

Well, then why did he send them back into the city to wait until they were clothed with power from on high? Because in order to be effective witnesses that is what they needed.

Now there is a balance and it is very important to maintain. And, excuse me for jumping around, because I am trying to force about seven different lectures into an hour. Some of you need to witness a lot more with what you have and some of you maybe need to cut back on ministry a bit and form up what you don't have.

⁶ Luke 24:49.

Young ministers will often run around crazy. I have done it, doing all kinds of activities and then when they get older they realize that much of what they did just went up in smoke. There needs to be a balance between being zealous for evangelism and doing things, serving the Lord and also a realization that I am not where I should be. I lack in many things and I need to tarry before the Lord and before his Word.

You know, there are men in this world that can teach on a lot of things. And they are great scholars and they are great Bible preachers.

My brother Charles, guys like, you know, that are known for expository preaching, John MacArthur, guys that are scholars and full of zeal like John Piper. I am not in any of those categories.

But just look at this for a moment. I preached one sermon. Having tarried before the Lord, I preached one sermon and that one sermon has gone around the world a hundred times.

Now the point is you don't have to do a lot of activity a lot of times. Sometimes it is more important just to wait upon the Lord, to cry out for his power, for his wisdom, his strength. I preached a message for one hour, a message no one wanted to hear and everybody hated me when I walked out of the place. It was not my best sermon I have ever preached. It is not super scholarly. It is not super eloquent. But God used it more than years or other things I have done.

The point that I am trying to make so clumsily is that you need to be a person who first and foremost tarries before the Lord, who waits before the Lord, who studies Scripture before the Lord, who listens for his voice, who depends upon him.

You know, when you train a dog to hunt which isn't probably something a lot of you do, but when you train a dog to hunt, the type of dog that you want is a very active dog. I mean, the problem is not getting the dog to do something. The problem is getting the dog to stay still.

That can happen with us. We are wanting to run around doing all kinds of things, but are you willing to tarry before the Lord? Tarry before the Lord.

You know, conferences like this are very dangerous what I am doing here and what I am going to do in Holland for me spiritually because things are planned so rigidly to do so much teaching. Am I going to have time today to spend a couple of hours before God?

That is taken away from me, the most important part of my life.

Isn't amazing when we all gather together for spiritual conferences we take away the most important thing that all of us need and that is just tarrying before the Lord.

Honestly, I tried to get up and do it, but I was such a zombie it is like I just fell back into bed.

You see, he said, “Go to Jerusalem and tarry. Wait upon me.”

And, of course, it was preceding the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit these men were changed. I know that I have been regenerated and I know that God has given me the Holy Spirit, but there is a sense in which every day of my life I need to tarry before him. I need to feed on his Word. I need to cry out for greater and greater manifestations of the Holy Spirit. When I am walking down the street I need to walk down the street praying. I need to be discerning.

A mind set on the things of God, a mind that waits upon him can accomplish so much more than a mind that just runs all over.

Let me just give you an example before I go back to our text.

Have you ever heard of Frank Lambach? Anybody? Frank Lambach? Well, you need to.

Anybody ever heard of the Philippines?

Ok.

[off mic voice]

Really? Have you ever heard of Frank Lambach? My Where at in the Philippines?

[off mic voice]

Mindanao? What part?

[off mic voice]

I have been in Davou and...

[off mic voice]

Ok. All right. I was in the jungles of Mindanao for a while. It is very beautiful, a lot of big spiders.

Well, when I was in the Philippines I would ask people, especially older people, “Have you ever heard of Frank Lambach?”

“Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.”

Have you ever heard of Frank Lambach?

Oh, yes, I went to a school that was actually it was named, it was his name.

And on and on and on.

Who is Frank Lambach? Frank Lambach basically taught all of the Philippines to read. He taught all of the Philippines to read so that the Philippines could read the Bible.

Now the unique thing about him is if you read his little journal that he kept, do you know what the greatest...? This man was responsible for the Bible and the understanding of the Bible to get into more people's hands in the Philippine islands than just about anybody. It is phenomenal his life, how many people were converted and everything through him.

Do you know what his number one goal in life was, what he shot for every day of his life? He said he never attained it, but this was his goal. He wanted to spend one day of uninterrupted thought about Christ. That is what he worked at harder than anything else in his life. One day of uninterrupted meditation upon the person of Christ.

Now have you ever heard the statement, he is so heavenly minded he is no earthly good?

Well, most of us are so earthly minded we are no heavenly good.

Here was a man who his greatest desire was even while he was doing all this work, translating, teaching countless students, everything else his whole thing was to dwell before Christ and be before Christ, to be meditating upon Christ. That is the way we must be as evangelists. We must be people who are saturated with the Word of God, saturated with the person of Christ that evangelism isn't something that like an accessory, something we add to our life like a buckle on a pair of shoes. It should be just the outflow of our life.

I was in Virginia a few weeks ago and I walked into a little store in kind of a really... you probably won't know what this word is, "Hillbilly area," really backward in the woods store, kind of scary.

I pulled in there to get something to drink and I walked in. There are about 10 people in the store. And so I walked in there and I go up to the counter. Right when I go to the counter this man came up on the other side with big thing of beer on both sides. He is going to buy him some beer. I think his name was Billy or something like that.

And he walked up and right before he got to the counter the lady who was waiting on me and goes, "Hey, Billy. How is it going? How are you doing?"

And everybody in the store kind of turned around, a bunch of people. And he goes, “Oh, I am doing all right. I won’t be long on this earth. I am going to be leaving it soon and I know when I leave here it is not over, but I don’t know where I am going.”

Now I didn’t sit there. I didn’t walk into that place necessarily to witness and I didn’t think, you know, when he said that, ok, what do I do? Probably I should think more, because I just shouted out, “Well, Billy, I know exactly where I am going.”

And everybody in that store turned around and looked at me.

And I said, “I’ll tell you where I am going. I am going to heaven when I die and this is the reason.”

You see, you walk into a store, but maybe that morning you prayed, “God, open doors, open doors, open doors.”

He will open. Don’t pray open doors because he will open doors and then you will have to apologize or ask forgiveness that night when you don’t go through the doors he asked you to open.

But it is an expression of your life.

When I pastored in Peru and when I go back to Virginia if we start a church there, we are going to have days when we go out and do evangelism and stuff because it is good. But that is just kind of like a primer. It is kind of a thing to help people remember this is what we need to be doing. But that is not the way I want evangelism necessarily to be done in our church. I want it to be done by people on their jobs, housewives at the supermarket. It is an expression of our life.

You see that.

Now, how many of you every day are crying out for greater and greater manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s power in your life? Good.

Do you see how important that is? That is what we should be doing? Will not our Father give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him?

That doesn’t mean we... that the Holy Spirit doesn’t indwell us, but we are asking for greater and greater manifestations of his power because we cannot be witnesses as Jesus is teaching us here without the power of the Holy Spirit in our life. We need the Holy Spirit. We need grace. We need to live in constant dependence upon God, constant communion with him and then evangelism will flow out from that.

Now, I want to share with you the prayer of the evangelist, ok?

Let’s go to Colossians chapter four.

If you pray this sincerely, not as a method or a gimmick, but this is the desire of your heart, it will change evangelism as you know it in your life.

He says in verse two of chapter four, “Devote yourselves to prayer.”⁷

Well, we can all stop there, can’t we?

“Devote yourselves to prayer.”⁸

How do you do that? You do it by doing it. He doesn’t necessarily say devote yourselves to good praying, great praying, powerful praying. He says devote yourselves to prayer. How do you learn? How do you learn to ride a bicycle? Do you read a book?

How many of you know how to ride a bicycle? Raise your hand. Ok, some of you don’t. Some of you do, ok. How did you learn? Did you study a book on how to ride a bicycle?

You got on a bicycle, didn’t you? You got on a bicycle.

Fortunately, to learn how to pray we must pray, but fortunately, we also have a book to teach us how to pray by studying the prayers that are in the book.

But devote yourself to prayer. Devote yourselves to prayer. Devote yourselves to prayer. Get on your knees and talk to God. And develop such a relationship that when you get off your knees nothing has changed. You are still crying out to God. You are still thinking thoughts of God. You are still depending upon God to the point where when you see someone coming toward you... Say a brother in Christ is coming toward you, without even thinking you are already lifting prayers to God.

Lord, I need wisdom. Lord, direct me here. Lord, what can I do?

You walk into a store. You are praying. I pray for this person that is waiting upon me. I pray for this store. I pray for everybody who walks in.

Brother Charles was telling us about telling me about a friend of his and I am an acquaintance of his who when he would get in his car and leave his home and he would drive down the road he would pray for every neighbor as he was going down the road. And I think most, if not all of them, have been converted over the years.

It is walking, devoting yourselves to prayer.

Now some of you may say, “Well, I really don’t pray much on my knees, but I just pray all day when I am walking around.”

⁷ Colossians 4:2.

⁸ Ibid.

No, you don't. You don't. Because it is the testimony of all the works I have ever read on prayer that the only way to learn to practice the presence of God is by meeting with God, by setting out time to meet with him. And it is from there, it is from there that you learn to practice the presence of God and pray without ceasing, ok?

“Devote yourselves to prayer.”⁹

Now, he says this.

“...keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”¹⁰

Just real quickly something you might want to look at here. Prayer is a way of keeping alert. As you pray maybe what I will do sometimes is look through that day, my own weaknesses, weaknesses I saw in my sons, my wife, my daughter is only two so I really can't tell when she has got weaknesses.

But I look at those... I think about it. I meditate on it and ask and try to close up those gaps in prayer.

Lord, today I was too quick with my tongue. Lord, I have been alerted to that. Please protect me. I need to pray for grace in that area. Lord, I saw my son today. He was given over to foolishness too much.

It is being alert in prayer, watching for people, watching for yourself, lifting it up to God where you see that there are open gaps where the devil could do a great work and a great deal of harm.

But he says, “Praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word.”¹¹

Now, most people... how many of you have ever shared Christ with somebody you didn't really know, a stranger? Is it not true that the hardest part of doing that was the first words came out of your mouth? And after those first words got out of your mouth then it really wasn't that hard. It was that first, how do I... you know, how do I do this? I mean, how do I do this?

Well, maybe you are trying to knock down a whole bunch of doors that you don't have the power to knock down.

Are you praying every day, “Lord, open up a door for the Word”?

Are you praying, “Lord, in this day open up a door for the Word, in relationships I have with people, as I go out”?

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Colossians 4:3.

Even today, Lord, we are going out to do some evangelism. How many of us have prayed, "Lord, open up a door with someone. I want to go through it. I want to share the gospel. Open up the door"?

You see, witnessing is supernatural. God can do so many supernatural things.

I was praying one time saying, "God, Lord, just open up a door."

I went to the mall and all these kids out in the back, you know, like a bunch of shopping centers all together and all these kids are out in the back in their cars and they are drinking and smoking and everything else and I was praying, "Oh, God, open up a door. Open up a door."

And I will never forget. There were three boys sitting on this bench right beside the sidewalk and I am walking, "Lord, just open up a door, open up a door."

And I walked past them and got about right here and one of them jumped up, fell on his knees, threw his hands up in the air and screamed, "Who can save me? Who can save me?"

Well, that is a door.

I was getting ready to get on an airplane one time coming... it was in Amsterdam actually. I had been preaching in Romania and I got on the plane in Amsterdam and I was praying, "Lord, I am really tired."

It was one of those really bad prayers, you know?

"Lord, I am really tired, but if you want me to witness to someone, open up the door."

So I go and I sit down. I sit down beside this gentleman that seemed rather, you know, very intellectual, very... I sat down beside him and started talking to him for a second.

And then he says, "Well, what were you doing?"

I said, "Well..."

Well, I asked him, I said, "What do you do?"

And he said, "Well..." He worked in the government in Washington, DC and he used to be the former aid of George Bush, senior and all this kind of stuff, very important man.

And he said, "What do you do?"

And I said, “Well, I was preaching the gospel in Romania.” And I said, “Do you go to church anywhere?”

He goes, “I am Dutch Reformed.”

And I said, “Oh, Dutch Reformed, ok, I know some theologians from the Dutch Reformed movement,” and things like that. And I said, “But do you know Christ?”

And he said, “You know, it is funny you should ask that. I am Dutch Reformed, but I don’t go to church or anything and I have never really understood what Christianity is all about. We’ve got about six hours. Could you even explain to me Christianity is all about?”

I am thinking, “I had to open my big mouth.”

Now that doesn’t always happen that way, but I am telling you. God can give you supernatural open doors.

Now, but be careful. Don’t get beside someone on a plane and not even attempt to witness to them because there wasn’t some supernatural manifestation.

I sat down beside a guy coming here and I said, you know, “Hello, how are you?”

“Fine.”

Good.

“What do you do?”

“Engineer.”

Ok, good.

“My name is Paul.”

“I don’t care.”

You know, but finally you are going, ok, this nut isn’t going to crack.

You know, you go, “Do you to church anywhere?”

And the guy just starts, you know, trembling.

I got to witness to him for maybe 45 seconds before he just totally had an explosion and just kind of melted down there in his seat. He didn’t want to talk at all.

I made some attempt, ok? I didn't need a supernatural choir of angels coming down to tell me at least I need to try to witness to this man.

Now, you say, "Well, that is easy for you, you know, that is what you do."

No. it is not easy for me.

One of the greatest thing I ever heard one time came out of Ray Comfort. Ray Comfort will witness to... he witnessed to a dog. He will witness to a wall. He will witness to anything. But when he shared that it really made him nervous to witness, it really isn't easy.

And I thought, well, if it isn't easy for him and he does it, it isn't easy for me, I will do it, you see?

But praying for an open door and look at this. Again, we are talking about a lifestyle.

"Devote yourself to prayer... praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak."¹²

So look what he is saying.

If you got up every morning and part of your prayer life was this: Lord, open up a door that I may speak forth the mystery of Christ and give me grace that I might speak it clearly as I ought to speak.

God will bless that. God will answer your prayer.

And you are sitting there. You know, sometimes I have prayed that and I have not been sincere. I am like I really don't want to witness to anybody right now. I am tired. But God opens up doors and gives us opportunities to witness.

Now, I just want to share some practical things really quick. They are very important. I have seen a lot of street preachers lately and especially when I went down to Peru this last time. A lot of our guys are street preaching and I had to really pull them aside and say, "Look, I don't like what you are doing. I like your street preaching and everything. I like that you are out here, but I didn't like what I saw when I saw you up on that park bench."

Why?

They were preaching, but they weren't connecting with the people. They were trying to be Jonathan Edwards or they were trying to be George Whitefield, a mass of people

¹² Colossians 4:2-3.

waling by. They are standing up on this thing and they are screaming at everybody, “Repent,” and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah and going on and saying, “You are going to hell and all these different things.”

Listen to me. The gospel is to be explained. You live in a secular society. You stand up on a park bench somewhere and start screaming out, “You are all a bunch of sinners. You are going to hell.” Here is the problem, though. What you are saying is true. But there is no context in which you are working. When Whitefield got up he was basically speaking, yes to bums and thieves and robbers and wicked men, but in the context of people who knew something about God, righteousness and so on and so forth.

If you jump up on a park bench in the middle of whatever city we are going to and just start screaming at people, they may throw things at you and you maybe able to boast about the fact everybody was against you, but how effective were you at communicating the gospel?

So when we went out preaching in Peru I said, you know, “Let me preach.”

And, again, I am not the greatest street preacher in the world. I got up on a chair. We took a chair because if you bring your own chair the policemen can’t make you get off of it. Brought our own chair and got up there and just the fact that here is this big gringo standing there in the middle of a park in Peru, people kind of looking. I stood there for a moment.

I said, “How is everybody doing?”

Fine.

Well, I am here today to share with you the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, I know... because, see, I knew. Automatically people were getting ready to...

No. I said, “I know what you are thinking. Crazy man standing in the middle of a park teaching people about religion. I beg, just give me a few minutes, just a few minutes.

“Now, you believe in God. I know you do. I believe there is a God. Ok, a god. Now let’s go from there....”

Do you see what I am doing? I am not just up there preaching so that I can walk back and tell everybody, “Well, yeah, I am a street preacher and everybody got mad at me and I am really spiritual.”

I want to reach these people. I just don’t want to get up there and scream. I need to know where they are at, who they are. And so I get up there and then I start preaching. And I said something about sin and a guy over there laughed. Right when I said something about sin, he laughed.

Now I could have gone, “Yeah, you are laughing now. You won’t be laughing in hell.”

That is not what I did. I went... as soon as he laughed, I caught it out of the corner of my eye and I go, “You laughed.”

And he kind of went like...

I said, “I saw you laugh. Don’t you deny it. I see you. You laughed.”

And it... what it did is it drew him into me. Right then we built a relationship. We laughed together. I said, “No you stay here. You have got to stay here now because you have already offended me. So if you leave now I am really going to be offended. Ok? Are you going to stay? Ok, you are going to stay.”

The point is, you don’t preach because you want to preach. You preach because you want people to be saved. You want God to be glorified.

Now, that is in street preaching. Now, here is another thing. I found this out. Before I was a Christian, let’s say I am walking across campus, ok? Walking across campus and I am not a Christian. And there is a park bench and someone is seated on the park bench. And I was tired so I would walk by like this and this park bench, I would sit down, normal. After I would sit down these chairs would... after I would sit down, you know, there would be another person seated there already and I would just sit down, “How is it going?”

“All right.”

“What are you doing?”

“Working on my homework.”

“Yeah.”

I would just talk.

I discovered that after I became a Christian and I knew I needed to witness to people, I would be walking across the campus and I would see somebody on a park bench and I would just freak out. I would start getting nervous. My palms would get sweaty and I would be like, “I have got to witness to him.”

By the time I walked towards him like this he is thinking, “Oh, my gosh, I am ready to be attacked by a mad man.”

It is all this stuff heaped upon me that is not really... it doesn’t create any power or anything. It just creates these burdens.

So I thought, you know, one of the best ways to be a witness? Write this down. Is to be normal. So I got to the point where I would, again, just...

“Anybody sitting here?”

“No.”

And then I would talk.

And, you know, as I talk to somebody usually an opportunity opens up to witness. But here is something that is very important. Don't try to trick people into letting you share the gospel with them.

You know how you are sitting there and you are just kind of trying to sneak in somehow the back way to be able to turn the subject over about... to get everybody talking about Christ, what kind of one liner can I use.

Here is one of the things I do. I sit down and talk to people and if something opens up, praise God. If it doesn't, I learned this from John MacArthur and I think it is very, very helpful.

I say, “Hey, you know, I have enjoyed talking to you. I have a question for you. I am a Christian and the Christian faith is very important to me. I believe in Jesus Christ and he has really changed my life. I believe he is the Son of God and Lord. Have you ever understood the gospel? Have you ever heard of the gospel?”

“Yeah, I have heard of it.”

“But have you ever understood it?”

“No.”

“Would you give me five minutes, just five minutes of your time and let me share with you the gospel of Jesus Christ?”

And a lot of times I will say things like, “You know, the reason... one of the reasons I want to do this is because you know all of those TV preachers and all those characters, circus clowns asking for money and everything.”

I said, “Do you like that?”

“No, man, I hate that.”

Well, that is one of the reasons I want to share with you because so many people think that is what Christianity is and that is not what Christianity is at all.

And, you know, I have had people tell me, “You know, I really don’t want to hear what you have got to say,” even after a nice conversation.

But I have had a lot of other people say, “Yeah, sure.”

One of the neatest things you can do is just be honest.

“Hey, would you give me five minutes just so I... I would like to share with you about the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is so simple, straight forward, no tricks, nothing.”

Now, do you know why a lot of people, at least some people like my messages on the You Tube? It is for the same reason a lot of people followed David when he was being chased by Saul. They didn’t really love David and they really didn’t love David’s God. They just hated Saul.

There is a lot of people out there just with kind of an axe to grind against religion. They want to be really radical and they hear me and think I am radical. Then they meet me and they realize this guy isn’t at all like what I thought. I thought he was a fire breathing dragon.

You know, when I preached a lot of the sermons that you have heard are sermons that I preached while the whole room was filled up with a bunch of older preachers who preached a gospel that was wrong and they should have known better and a battle was on. It was a fight.

When I witness to somebody, it is not like that. I don’t try to hurt somebody, crush somebody’s spirit.

I remember. I think, wasn’t he a Quaker, Foxe? He was debating another brilliant man, a Christian, was debating Foxe on a certain matter of Christianity and he really cornered Foxe in front of everybody and showed that Foxe was wrong.

And Foxe goes, “Well, I guess you are going to crush me.”

And the opponent said, “My dear brother Foxe, I would never crush the light that is in you.”

When there is... I am witnessing to a person, I don’t care if it is a prostitute, a homosexual, whatever it is. I am not intending to crush them. I want to demonstrate the love of Christ to them. I will talk to them about their sin. And I will hope to show them the heinous nature of their sin. But if I want to do it in such a way that respects at least the fact that they are a creature made by God.

I also want to be their servant.

I don’t have the right to some degree to just sit down and interrupt people.

Let me give you an example. I was in Ohio. This was years ago, back in 19... probably 1985 in Ohio, Trinity Baptist Church, I think it was. And we were going door to door and we were witnessing. Well, I was walking like this and we visited this one house and there is the next house.

So I walked in. We went around this big tree and I got ready to go like this. There was an old man sitting up on the porch. I got ready to go around the tree and the pastor grabbed me by the shoulders and pulled me back behind the tree.

And I am like, "What are you doing?"

He goes, "Don't go up there."

I go, "What?"

"Don't go up there. That man he is mean. We tried to talk to him before and nobody talked there. Don't go up there."

And I am like, "He is a little old man. What can he do to me? I think I could take him in a fight."

You know, it is like, "You don't want me to go up there?"

He goes...

I go, "Look. Stay here, ok?"

So I went up there and he is sitting there like this. Boy, he was just all bowed up and he was just ready for a fight, you know?

So I sat down in front of him.

"How are you doing?"

"You don't care."

"Maybe I do. Maybe I don't. How are you doing?"

I started asking him questions about him for like an hour and 15 minutes it went on. And I was really enjoying it because the pastor had to stand behind that tree.

But I am just asking him questions. Found out his wife died. His kids basically abandoned him. They lived across the country. He had nothing, but his home there all alone. He sat out on the porch all day, everything else. Found out about his World War II career, everything.

About an hour and 15 minutes into that conversation of me just asking him questions, being a servant, because, you see, everybody wants to talk about themselves. And nobody wants to listen to him.

After about an hour and 15 minutes he goes, “Well, all right.”

I said, “All right, what?”

He said, “You listened to me for over an hour. Now what do you got to tell me?”

So I sat there and I shared the gospel with him. I said, “This is what I came up to tell you.”

One of the things... be very careful about being quick with people. Be very careful.

Now we might go out today and just hand out tracts and everybody kind of think we are kooky and just go on. But if the slightest crack opens, first of all, just be normal. Just be normal. Because, look. The cards, the deck is stacked against you when you go out there. They are going to think you are a cult. They are going to think you are some kind of bunch of weird people or something.

The thing is don't prove that they are right. Talk to them. Share with them. Do it in a way that is direct, truthful, but also kind.

Witnessed to a guy, I am a homosexual.

Ok. He is trying to make it the point of the conversation. You know what he is trying to do. Don't allow it to happen.

I talked to him about Christ.

Well, you think homosexuality is a sin.

Well, yeah, but it is not the biggest sin.

Right there you got him because all he has ever heard from Christians is homosexuality is the worst sin you can possibly commit.

Now, it is not the big sin. As a matter of fact, it is just the result of another sin that we have all committed.

Well, what is that?

“Although they knew God they did not honor him as God nor give thanks.”¹³

¹³ Romans 1:21.

Because they would not honor God in their life, God let us go. He let me go, you go. The way you went was different than the way I went, but we both went into sin.

Now I had to repent of my sin. Are you going to repent of yours?

Because, see, now I am not telling him something that he has to do that I didn't have to do. I am not giving him a sacrifice that he has to make that I didn't have to make.

I can say, "Look, I had just as strong a bondage. It was a different kind of sin, but it was just as strong a bondage and I had to let it go to be saved. So, sir, I am not asking you to do anything or give up anything I didn't have to give up."

Asking God to give you wisdom to help you to witness, ok?

Does anyone have any questions?

Is anyone afraid to go out and witness?

One, well, there is an honest man.

Well...

[off mic voice]

Change of voice:

Sometimes people say it is difficult to start the conversation, but I think it is more difficult to end. I mean, now that I am aware of this what people call decisional regeneration I think they call that, so how do we allow our conversation with a lost person ends?

Change of voice:

It depends. If they don't want to talk and they want to shut everything off, I am not going to force the conversation to keep going. I am not going to be rude.

For example, if I get on a plane, I sit down and try to talk with someone about the gospel and they don't want to hear it, I am not going to keep prodding them.

Why? Because I am just giving them ammunition and they get off the plane and they go sit in the bar with their friend and say, "Man, I am glad I got off that plane. Some evangelical nut wouldn't shut up and just kept prodding me about his beliefs."

All right, so I am not going to keep prodding him when he shuts the conversation down. What I am going to do is honor that, be very kind to him and when he gets off the plane it

is going to be like a man with heaping coals on his head who is ashamed that he treated me that way even though I treated him with dignity.

So, you know, I am not going to prod a conversation and just keep it going.

If the person has been very interested and want to know more, but in no way has God been working to the place of bringing them to conversion, then I say, "Look, hey, would you like to exchange phone numbers or just give me your email or I will give you mine."

Or... and try to maintain that contact.

A lot of times I will ask him, "Hey, you know, there is a few small books I would like to just send you for free if you would read over them," something to keep the contact going.

If they are, you know, like where I have had people at times say, "Look."

A guy on a plane I was witnessing to about three years ago and after about 20 minutes he said... he just started crying. He said, "What do I got to do? I want to be saved. I have never seen my sin like this before. I am going to hell. I want to be saved."

So then I just simply said, "Well, let me ask you a question. The Bible says repent and believe. Just lets look at what God has done in your heart at this moment. Is there evidence of repentance?"

And we went down there and he goes, "Yes."

And I said, "You lack one thing. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

He said, "Just trust him? I can see that. He died for me. I trust him."

And then he kind of goes, "I am saved."

And so, give me your email, things like that. It just... each conversation is different.

What I am not going to do is try to get somebody to pray some prayer at the end of my conversation. I am going to see how God is working and then lead them in that.

[off mic voice]

You mean a person crying out and asking Jesus to come into their heart?

[off mic voice]

Change of voice:

I think sometimes when we say, “Oh, we are not going to get them to pray a prayer,” people might think, “Oh, well, so you don’t... you are saying you can’t do that at all?”

Change of voice:

Well, well, I think that you have to do it very, very cautiously. Over the last few years that I have been witnessing to people I have almost had no one pray and ask Jesus to come into their heart or anything like that. It does say, “Who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” But I am working in the South where they are oriented towards calling on the name of the Lord means praying and asking Jesus to come in. And that is not the same thing.

So I have to work diligently to make them see is there evidence of... have you repented?

And yes I have.

Do you believe?

Yes, I really believe. I believe he has done this.

See, when that is sure, you know... Have you called upon the Lord? Have you asked him to save you? Are you believing him?

And that type of thing. I try to keep it totally and completely away from this thing of, ok, you repent now, you believe now, so now you lack just one little thing. Now you have got to pray and ask him to come in.

That is not true. Right.

[off mic voice]

Change of voice:

There is actually one person who has been critical of you and not for the sake of defending yourself, but the issue of he was quoting you and he was saying, we are saved and saved by faith alone. And then you go on to say, “And that faith is preceded and followed by repentance.”

And he was trying to refute you saying, “That is a self contradictory statement.”

And we want to be right in saying that really that the faith we are meant to have is a repentant faith, that the two go together, that if you turn to Christ you turn away.

Change of voice:

Well, let me put it this way. According to his logic, then if I only said we are saved by faith and faith alone that would still be a contradictory statement. We are saved by believing or by faith and it is a work of grace, that would be a contradictory statement.

See, his problem is what he doesn't understand is that faith and repentance are the result of regeneration. They are a work of grace, a result of grace. Therefore if I tell someone to repent of their sins it is no different than telling them to believe. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is a work unless that belief is the result of regeneration. Repentance is a work unless it is a result of regeneration.

That is his problem.

[off mic voice]

Change of voice:

I am sure, Paul, that you would say that every true faith is a repentant faith and every repentance is permeated by belief.

Change of voice:

Yes.

Change of voice:

Exactly and I think that was the content of your... what you affirmed with that expression and everybody ought to understand that.

Well, time has gone and may I ask you to close with us in prayer?

Change of voice:

Sure.

Change of voice:

And pray for [?].