

# Evangelism - Spreading the Good News

Joshua Yancy  
Madison, Wisconsin  
October 22, 2018

Good morning and welcome to the Four lakes church of christ. As many of you know I'm not the regular minister here. Baxter is doing a gospel meeting at Rice lake. Looks like they were going over some interesting topics. As you all know we've been studying Why we believe in God, Why we believe the bible exists, and next week we'll be looking at why we believe Jesus is the son of God. With us focusing on those topics in this series I thought it would be good for us to take some time to talk about how we communicate those ideas to others so today we'll be talking about Evangelism. We'll look at what it means to evangelize, why we need to do it, and then spend the bulk of our time looking at how we go about it. We'll be looking at Acts chapter 8:26-40 page if you want to be turning on over there.

## What is evangelism?

First to make sure we're all on the same page let's define what evangelism is. Evangelism is the act of spreading the Gospel. The gospel the Good news of Jesus Death, Burial, and Resurrection. The reason this is good news is that because Jesus came and died for us we can live forever with God and Jesus in heaven. We're going to look at the passage I mentioned earlier a little out of order so let's start at Acts chapter 8 34-36.

**34 And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and (K)beginning with this Scripture (L)he told him the good news about Jesus. 36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! (M)What prevents me from being baptized?"**

Here we see a great example of Phillip sharing the good news with the Eunuch. In this section of the passage we pick up seeing the Eunuch asking Philip some questions about the old testament passage he'd been reading. In verse 35 we see that Philip was directly sharing the good news about Jesus. This is exactly what we are to today today when we talk to those around us. We are to share the good new about Jesus and what that means for our lives. There are many characteristics of this good news that make it different than any other message we might hear in the world today. In Luke 2:10 we see one of the first times outside of prophecy that the good news is spread about Jesus being born.

**10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all (Q)the people. 11 For (R)unto you is born this day in (S)the city of David (T)a Savior, who is (U)Christ (V)the Lord.**

The thing I found interesting here is that this greatest message in the world is for all the people. There is no discrimination as far as who this good news is to be delivered to. If in contrast we think about good news elsewhere in the world it doesn't apply to everyone and not everyone has reason to be happy about it. For example I may be happy when the Packers lose a game of football but not everyone in this room feels the same way about that news. Or let's say one of your coworkers gets a promotion you were hoping to get. When they tell you about it that's good news for them but

necessarily good news for you. However the Gospel is good news for us all because we all have the same opportunity at Salvation so it is crucial that we share it with others.

The gospel is also timeless it applies to us today just as much as it did in the first century to those who heard it. It gives us the ability to be saved just as much as it did first century Christians. Romans 1:16 tells us:

**16 For (A)I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is (B)the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew (C)first and also to (D)the Greek.**

This again reinforces that the gospel is for everyone including us today. I would hazard a guess it's hard for most of this in this room to come up with other examples of good news that would apply to everyone in every country in every time period. That just adds to how amazing the gospel is for us.

The last thing I wanted to mention about the Gospel is that it spawns action for those who hear it. Most good news is something we just hear may be happy about move on with our lives. The gospel however should we choose to listen to it compels us to do something to have a proper relationship with Jesus the one who made the sacrifice for us. That's how amazing the news is. If we can explain it to someone and God helps them hear then we don't have to embellish the news. That's because it's so powerful.

### Why is evangelism important?

You may be thinking to yourself then if this news is so good and there are many who believe it why do I need to spread the news myself? Doesn't everyone already know this? Aren't there others who are spreading this good message. Unfortunately not enough. (Add stats about evangelism.) The church and those who know as well as believe this good news are declining. That is something we as Christians must not allow to continue.

We can pick back up as we continue in Acts in verse 38

**38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, (N)the Spirit of the Lord (O)carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.**

The first point for us to observe together is ultimately that sharing this good news is what leads those who hear to be baptized. We see that Philip ultimately baptized the Eunuch after the Eunuch understood the good news about Jesus and what it meant for him. We should be passionate about wanting people to be saved in the world today. Let's take a look at

2 Corinthians 5:11-15 18-21 and notice how God expects us to be.

**11 Therefore, knowing (D)the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But (E)what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. 12 (F)We are not commending ourselves to you again but (G)giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. 13 For if we (H)are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ (I)controls us, because we have concluded this: that (J)one has died for all,**

therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, (K)that those who live might no longer live for themselves but (L)for him who for their sake died and was raised.

18 All this is from God, (Q)who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us (R)the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling[b] the world to himself, (S)not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us (T)the message of reconciliation.20 Therefore, (U)we are ambassadors for Christ, (V)God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.21 (W)For our sake he made him to be sin (X)who knew no sin, so that in him we might become (Y)the righteousness of God.

First from looking at this passage we can see we are to persuade others because we are ambassadors of Christ. We should want other to be reconciled to God so that we and those we share the news with might become righteous in God. We should want to save souls! Each soul is valuable in Matthew 16:26 we learn there is nothing more valuable than a Man's soul. Hebrews 9:27 tells us that everyone will die. If we put those two verses together we realize that we will all die and our soul will be what's left. So we should be passionate about saving ourselves and others.

### **How are we to spread the good news**

Now let's discuss making this happen. Hopefully at this point we're all on the same page about what evangelism means and why it's important to share the good news with others. Let's go back to the text to see how Phillip handled this. Let's back up to verse 26-33

26 Now (A)an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south[a] to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an (B)Ethiopian, a (C)eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, (D)who was in charge of all her treasure. (E)He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, (F)"How can I, unless someone (G)guides me?" And (H)he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

(I)"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter  
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he opens not his mouth.

33 In his (J)humiliation justice was denied him.  
Who can describe his generation?  
For his life is taken away from the earth."

Here we see that Philip took hold of an opportunity he was given. He ran to a chariot note that he ran to catch up and take hold of the opportunity to spread the good news. You're probably thinking to yourself "but an Angel told him exactly what to do but in actuality if we look at verse 26 he was first just told where to be at the right place and the right time. Thinking back on your life how many times has God put you in the right place at the right time? In verse 29 he's then told to approach the chariot. We also have been given our command to spread the good news to others so in reality we have pretty much everything Philip had here.

Since we aren't directed by an angel to specific people at specific times how are we to recognize an opportunity? To me this is simple once you know anyone well enough to know they haven't heard or followed through on the good news then you have an opportunity! Now we all know it's more complicated than that but it's a good starting point. We can look around us and see opportunities to share the good news with Friends, Family members, strangers, as well as looking for ways to meet new people. Anytime you're having a conversation with anyone there's a potential for telling them about Jesus. Overtime you can learn how to work that into the conversation better and ask the right questions. Ultimately we must open our eyes and be willing to take these opportunities that we are given for conversation.

More specifically I think to times when people ask my why I behave different. There's been multiple occasions where people have taken note of the fact that I don't talk like others (not talking about my southern accent here) or why I don't go out doing the same things as other people. These are a great segway into talking about Jesus and how he affects my life. The key here is actually living like a Christian so that others can see us leading by example. So I challenge you to be thinking about the opportunities that have presented themselves to you in the past week and how those could've ended differently.

As I reflected on that question myself I thought about why I hadn't taken hold of opportunities to share the good news about Jesus with others. I think the single biggest thing was fear. We can be afraid of sharing the gospel for a lot of reasons. Lots of times we don't want to offend people. We're not sure how people around us will react to what we have to say. The main thing to think about here is there isn't that much that's offensive when talking about Jesus's sacrifice. Most people would agree we make mistakes where people have to forgive us. An initial conversation around Jesus doesn't have to be pointing out where the person we're talking to is in the wrong right off the bat. It can be very positive and is hopefully just an overflow of how happy we feel to know Jesus. To me that takes a lot of the pressure off through the initial conversation.

The next thing I think we often fear is being asked a question that we don't know the answer to. This can happen in lots of situations in life. This always makes me think of imposter syndrome. **Impostor syndrome** is a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud". The thought that usually goes through my mind is what if the person I'm talking to asks me a question taht I don't know the answer to. They'll think I'm not a good Christian or worse yet think what I'm saying isn't true and not ever listen again. There's a couple of flaws I have to remind myself of with that line of thinking. The first is that how "Good" of a christian I am isn't tied to how good I am at talking to others it's about me doing what I'm commanded. We also aren't going to know the answer to every question ever posed but there's ways to handle that. For example that can be a good pivot to you

know I need to study that question myself would you be interested in seeing what the bible has to say about that topic together?

Oftentimes this fear leads me into thinking of excuses. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking someone else can talk to these people or is better than me at it so I'll leave it to them. What if Philip had responded with excuses like you really expect me to be able to catch a chariot? I don't know that guy what if he's afraid of me? There's other people that I'm closer to who would be easier to reach? If he'd made those excuses and turned away from the opportunity the Eunuch may never have been converted. There's not a one size fits all way to work through the excuses that might come to your mind but there's two things I've found effective. The first is meditating on why we share the good news. We've already talked about why we do it so let's keep that in mind when our brain throws excuses our way. The other thing I try to keep in mind is what if no one had approached me and shared the good news with me. Where would I be today? I know that's a hypothetical question but it's a potentially scary one as well. Do I want to leave those around me without the security we have because of the gospel?

So we've hit the highlights of how to overcome our fears and avoid excuses what are strategies for effectively sharing the gospel. We've been setting up a good foundation with what we've been studying the past couple Sunday's. We should strive to know our audience. When Paul was talking to the people of Athens he met them where they were. Explaining to them why they should believe in the one true God.

Acts 17:22-31

**22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus(A) and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.(B) 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship(C)—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.**

**24 "The God who made the world and everything in it(D) is the Lord of heaven and earth(E) and does not live in temples built by human hands.(F) 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.(G)26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.(H) 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.(I) 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'[a](J)As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'[b]**

**29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill.(K) 30 In the past God overlooked(L) such ignorance,(M) but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.(N) 31 For he has set a day when he will judge(O) the**

**world with justice(P) by the man he has appointed.(Q) He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”(R)**

We should recognize the same in those we are sharing the gospel with. It doesn't do us much good to go straight to the bible if the person we're talking to doesn't believe in the bible. Paul had a very different strategy throughout the book of galatians when talking about and too some of the Jews. He didn't need to validate that the bible was from God he instead needed to convince them of who Jesus was. He explained why Jesus was better than Moses or Abraham and does that in even greater detail in Hebrews. Lots of times we have to ask questions to understand where someone we are talking to is. If they are religious we might ask if they are saved and if so how were they saved. There are lots of tools out there to help us be more effective communicators of the gospel.

The important thing more than the exact tool or process you use is just having a plan in mind. When the opportunity arises what are you going to do? What questions might you ask. Where will you lead the conversation? I think of times as a kid where I really wanted something I would devise a strategy for convincing at least one of my parents I needed a certain toy. I wasn't very good but the point still stands that we know how to plan and spreading the good news is no different. Rather than going through plans that may or may not be effective I thought I'd point you to some tools to take a look at for yourself. One is the Evangelism made simple workbook. There's both a teachers guide and student workbook that are good for leading both yourself and the person you're studying with through a foundational bible study. You start out by studying why we know God exists, who God is, understanding who Jesus is and talking about how we are saved. There's 13 different lessons to work through. You can also look to attend a fishers of men workshop. They get very detailed into practicing how to spread God's word through 1:1 bible study. You may already have a plan that works well for you and if you do I encourage you to share it with others here. Sometimes you might feel comfortable with talking to people but find that you often hit roadblocks and challenges that prevent you from moving further with someone. It's valuable to reflect and ask yourself are you defending a position or guiding through the bible and letting the person come to their own conclusion.

Once you have a plan in place it gets easier to share the gospel the more you do it. This can be by teaching others like we've been talking about or looking for lower stress situations to try this out. You could talk it through with other people here at church for instance and have them ask you questions to make sure you're ready. You could also teach a bible class here to learn how to handle questions you may not be ready for. Something I've found effective is to even record myself and watch how I did. A lot of times just going through the act of something once as a dry run can make you feel a lot more comfortable in the situation.

The last thing I'll leave you with is that we should all focus on having the right attitude as we share the gospel. We are planting the seed and God gives the increase so we should make sure we're doing our part but also not feel the weight of the world. The right attitude of joy and wanting to share it will help ease some of the pressure we might feel

and also hope us focus during distracting times. Ultimately we know that if we are diligently serving and praying God will help us through.

### **Conclusion**

As we've studied today it's important for us as Christians to be sharing the good news about Jesus. He lived a perfect life, died as the sacrifice for our sins and was resurrected. This means that we can spend an eternity in heaven with him and with our Father. If you're here and you haven't become a Christian and want to be a part of God's family you can respond to the invitation. If you are a Christian and feel you haven't been doing everything you should or need prayers of encouragement from the congregation feel free to respond to the invitation now as we stand together and sing.

Email comments to [joshua.yancy@gmail.com](mailto:joshua.yancy@gmail.com)