

True Calling: Evangelism and the Message of Discipleship

*Declare his glory among **the nations**, his marvelous works among all **the peoples!***

Psalm 96:3

Introduction: The word *evangelism* is NOT a complicated word to define or parse out, but most believers find it exceptionally difficult to do. It is an **action word**, one that requires movement, words, and interaction. “*Spreading the good news of the gospel by public preaching or personal witness*” is a good, quick, clear explanation, but again, the implications can get fuzzy. One thing we can all say is this: *evangelism is hard, but is inseparable from our mission in making disciples.*

When Paul gave Timothy a farewell address, he included and emphasis on this topic. “*As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*” (2 Tim. 4:5) Perhaps we see that list and we would rather endure suffering than what is described as WORK. Why did Paul describe evangelism as **work**? Shouldn’t we be excited and bold to share the life giving message of the gospel? Often evangelism is like our view of the work of deep cleaning in your house: it’s a great thing, important, and needed, but we simply hope someone else does it. **What is so hard about evangelism:**

- **Purely faith driven venture** – When Jesus gave this mission to His disciples, He knowingly sent them (and us) to give a message that was dependent on Him opening minds and the Spirit bringing the power to believe:

*“Then he **opened their minds** to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that **repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed** in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 **You are witnesses of these things.** 49 And behold, I am sending **the promise of my Father upon you.** But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high”.*

Every bit of this is an exercise of faith, trusting the power of our sovereign God to work and trusting the power from on high through the Holy Spirit. Trusting in the unseen is always more difficult for us, so by definition the mission to evangelize is both faith driven and hard.

- **High possibility of rejection** – When Jesus sent out the 12 disciples to proclaim “The Kingdom of heaven is at hand”, HE equipped them to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons (Matt. 10:7-8), which we all could admit would be pretty great in our evangelism arsenal. However, even with these miraculous and effective tools, He still prepared them for rejection (10:14) to be among wolves (10:16), to be persecuted (10:17-18) and to be hated (10:22). When we give the complete gospel, of sin, offense to God, being under God’s wrath, and the possibility of forgiveness, that will often be welcomed with disdain, and most all of us have a disdain for being disdained!
- **The life squeeze** – If you are at all like the Bakker family, there are times during the year where you are simply trying to hang on the merry-go-round of life without falling off (and I’m talking about the old school type, when sitting in the middle was cool and flying off and cracking your head was normal ---- ahhh, the good ol, pre-liability days!). We are running kids around like an Uber service, jobs are full, responsibilities are high, and extra time is limited. Between family,

work, and church, life does not typically present a lot of margin to think about sharing the gospel in a meaningful way over time with someone.

- **Misnomer of personality** – Timothy was timid, or at least prone to fear, which meant Paul had to **stir him up to fan into flame the gift of God which he had been given** (2 Tim. 1:6). Timothy struggled like most of us: he could get discouraged, feel ashamed, and lose motivation in the midst of an overwhelming call. That is why Paul reminded him of his calling and to, again, **‘do the work of’**, NOT necessarily **“exercise the gift of”**. Even for Timothy it was work, whether or not he was naturally bold, decisive, outgoing, or the classic “people person”. Whether you are an introvert, extrovert, public speaker or one that sweats at the thought of having a conversation, evangelism must be something we work at.
- **Cold Heart conundrum** – Perhaps the biggest reason we struggle is a heart issue, one that becomes self-absorbed, earth-bound, and possessing a small view of God. Or perhaps we do not have an understanding of God’s heart and desire for us in terms of reaching and going.

The goal this morning is not a **guilt or shame** you into doing something, nor is it going to conclude with a proposal of some new program for evangelism. Often big programs or memorized scripts, though well intentioned, lead NOT to a changed mindset or heart, but a checking of the box of doing something to assuage our guilty conscience. No, we are after holistic thinking, God centered living, and worship based motivation. Evangelism is less about an event and more about a way we think and act, where our church becomes a *mobilized force of hundreds of people who leverage their spheres of influences, unique personalities, creativity, prayerfulness, abilities, diverse gifts, and hard work to reach not just Simi Valley, but the nations and all peoples with the gospel.*

This morning, we will begin to look at the mission, motivation, mandate, and message of evangelism, which is simply an inseparable reality in making disciples.

The Mission of Evangelism

When a venture is started without a clear goal, it can devolve into meandering activity. If you start a hike into the woods without a destination or path, trouble is sure to follow. When you start marriage without an understanding of what marriage points to and is for, it can become a series of reactions and selfish decisions, comparing to everyone around without clarity of what actually breeds success (this goes for parenting as well). In evangelism, there must not only be a goal of **discipleship** to follow, but also a greater **goal or purpose** for which we would engage, beyond simply feeling better that we did something.

A. The Goal of ALL OF LIFE: *The Glory of God*

“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”¹

This gives us clarity of purpose, a goal for life, and meaning behind everything that happens. If this is true, it means that life is NOT about us but about SOMEONE greater than us, AND in achieving the end by which we were created, we will find ultimate enjoyment as a result. That’s why John Piper made a key addendum to this well-known truth by saying, *“The chief end of man is to glorify God **BY** enjoying*

¹ From the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*

Him forever", which means there is an intimate connection between the *goal and the means of achieving it – enjoying God. This reality lived out will shape our marriages, parenting, church, view of work, discipleship, and evangelism.*

But does it hold up Biblically? That is the question we should ask for any theology, philosophy, or methodology by which we live and make decisions.

WHY DID GOD CREATE MANKIND:

Isaiah 43:6-7 *"I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*

WHY DID GOD CHOOSE ISRAEL TO BE HIS PEOPLE AND POSSESSION:

Jeremiah 13:11 *"For as the loincloth clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me **a people, a name, a praise, and a glory**, but they would not listen"*

WHY DID GOD CONTINUALLY REDEEM ISRAEL:

He rescued Israel from the bondage of Egypt to show His mighty power (Ps. 106:7-8), spared them in the Wilderness again and again (Ezekiel 20:14), did not reject them even after they rejected Him and asked for a king (1 Samuel 12:20-22), and why He brought them back after Exile:

Isaiah 48:9-11 *"For my name's sake I defer my anger; for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. ¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another."*

WHY DID JESUS COME AND SAY AS HE WENT TO THE CROSS:

John 17:1 *"Father, the hour has come; **glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you***

WHY WILL JESUS COME AGAIN:

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10 *"They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰ when he comes on that **day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among** all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed."*

This is why God does all things, and defines what sin is (*"For all have sinned and fall short of the **glory of God** – Rom. 3:23*), and what the goal of life is in light of the glory of God:

1 Corinthians 7:35 *"I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to **secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.**"*

1 Corinthians 10:31 *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.**"*

If the goal of OUR life is NOT the glory of God, it will not be a life of worship or one that pleases the Lord, thus we will NOT have true motivation to reach the nations or make disciples, but will move from activity to activity, wondering why our lives are NOT fulfilling, satisfying, or joyful. Ultimately, we cannot **recommend** to others what we do not **cherish** ourselves, nor can we **proclaim** truly what we do not **prize**. If all of our lives are centered on the glory of God, then our minds will be focused on God Himself, and if they have a Godward focus, then our sin will be revealed, and thus Christ will be magnified as the One who can reconcile us to God Himself. All of life is to glorify God through joyful dependence which leads to enjoyment IN HIM forever.

B. The Goal of Evangelism: *To see God glorified throughout the world*

Notice that the goal of evangelism is NOT people focused, but God centered. This is not a matter of mere word wrangling, it moves it from a works based, man-centered venture to one that reaches the altitude of God's glory. Here is how John Piper stated the goal of evangelism for the church:

*"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. **The ultimate goal of the church is worship.** The only reason missions exist is because worship does not. Worship is ultimate and missions is penultimate. **Because God is ultimate, and man is penultimate.** When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God and of the Lamb, **missions will be no more.** It is a temporary necessity. **But worship abides forever.**"²*

To know how to worship God, we must understand His heart, what HE LOVES and desires.

1. God LOVES the Nations

Psalm 96:1-3, 10 *"Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! ² Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. ³ **Declare his glory among the nations,** his marvelous works among all the peoples! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! ¹⁰ Say among the **nations,** "The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity"*

Isaiah 49:6 *"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as **a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth** (cf. Acts 13:47-48)*

God's desire has always been to fill the earth with His glory and to have all nations, which include every tribe, tongue, and ethnicity, to worship Him. Notice the combination of **singing** and **declaring** God's glory among the nations. Worship through song and mission has always worked together. This means that worship not only motivates but gives us the **scope by which we pray and reach**.

2. God DESIRES all to come to repentance (2 Peter. 3:8-10; 1 Tim. 2:4; Luke 24:45-48)

2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, **but that all should reach repentance***

² <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/worship-and-world-missions-a-pastoral-strategy>

If the heart of God is for all to reach repentance, and He has given us a message of forgiveness and repentance, it should color and shape our philosophy of mission, evangelism, giving, and sacrifice.

3. **There is salvation is none one else besides Christ** (Acts 4:12)

Acts 4:12 *"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

4. **The need is great but our mission cannot fail** (Matt. 16:18; 24:14; Romans 15:8-13)

Matthew 24:14 *"And this gospel of the kingdom **will be proclaimed throughout the whole world** as a testimony **to all nations**, and then the end will come."*

Romans 15:8-13 *"For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,*

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."

¹⁰ *And again it is said, "**Rejoice, O Gentiles**, with his people."*

¹¹ *And again, "Praise the Lord, **all you Gentiles**, and let all the peoples extol him."*

¹² *And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."*

*May the **God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing**, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

Notice that when we talk about "missions" in the macro and "evangelism in the "micro", it is NOT a depressing or overwhelming thing, but one that realize that God has already ordained and promised. It is a reason for **hope, for rejoicing**, knowing that God has not only desired the nations to be reached, but given us the power in the Holy Spirit to actually accomplish it. This means that this church should be filled with those preparing to "go" or "be sent" or those that are willing to sacrifice to support those being sent and going. The passion for worshipping God is the same for both.

The Motivation behind Evangelism

So if the goal of life and missions (and thus evangelism) is the glory of God and praise of the nations, what is OUR motivation? The need to examine motivation is obvious, since it differentiates what we will give ourselves to in life and death. If what motivates us is temporal, we will always choose what is comfortable and easy. If what motivates us is what is easy, we will never choose sacrifice. If safety and preserving what we have motivates, we will never risk in this life. So what motivates us when it comes to missions' matters, since it will drive our willingness to embrace sacrifice, risk, and discomfort, each essential for reaching others.

A. Obedience to the Call of God

1. **The Call of disciple making is for every believer** (Matt. 28:19-20)

Now, every believer should be involved in reaching the nations, but NOT everyone will GO to them. Some will be sent, and some will stay. But that does NOT mean we can delegate **making disciples and thus evangelism in our local context**. Every person here who claims to be a follower of Christ should make it a goal to evaluate life, prayerfully consider, and strategize how they best accomplish this command of God in their life. The beautiful reality that we live in today: *the nations are coming to us, as our city and State become more diverse ethnically, and the nations continue to move around the globe*. This does not mean that we stop sending missionaries out, just like we will not stop sending out church planters or pastors. But this is a “both/and” rather than an “either/or”. We send out to nations as well as next door, just as the scope of the Apostles call in Acts 1:8 was in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

B. Outflow of the gospel in our lives

1. **The same love that has changed us overflows to a love for others** (1 John 4:19)
2. **Love for God and others then becomes a foundational motive to share with others**, since God’s love for us is SUPERNATURAL (Matt. 22:37-40; 1 John 4:19), and thus our love for others is SUPERNATURAL (Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 1:14-15)

“We glorify God by evangelizing, not only because evangelizing is an act of obedience, but also because in evangelism we tell the world what great things God has done for the salvation of sinners. God is glorified when His mighty works of grace are made known.” J.I Packer

Our motivation comes when we are living for the glory of God out of a love for God, because of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you reverse engineer this reality, **what implications does this have for UNMOTIVATED EVANGELISM and FERVOR for MISSIONS?**

The Mandate for Evangelism

- A. The Program God left for Making Disciples
- B. The People God left for Making Disciples

The Message Given in Evangelism: *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*