

Matt Gray
SESSION 2

Our Recommended Text

Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus by J. Mack Stiles (Crossway Books)

Our Goals

- Gain a greater understanding of key scriptures on evangelism.
- Understand how fear hinders our evangelism.
- Develop biblical convictions about evangelism.
- Develop biblical plans: practices of prayer and evangelism.
- Cultivate a culture of evangelism in SGCL.

“Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. ... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are **ambassadors** for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:11, 17–21)

“Evangelism is teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade.”¹

“Here is how the Amplified Bible might have expanded my definition: Evangelism is teaching (heralding, proclaiming, preaching) the gospel (the message from God that leads us to salvation) with the aim (hope, desire, goal) to persuade (convince, convert).”²

¹ Stiles, J. Mack. *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2014), 26.

² *Ibid*, 27.

I. The Message of an Ambassador

A. The Gospel

“All heaven is interested in the cross of Christ, all hell terribly afraid of it, while men are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning”³- Oswald Chambers

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.” (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

1. Other definitions of the gospel

“The gospel is the good news of salvation for hell-deserving sinners through the person and work of Jesus Christ.”⁴

“The gospel is the joyful message from God that leads us to salvation.”⁵

“The death of Christ is the wisdom of God by which the love of God saves sinners from the wrath of God, and all the while upholds and demonstrates the righteousness of God in Christ.”⁶

“First the bad news: God is your Judge, and you have sinned against him. And then the gospel: but Jesus has died so that sinners may be forgiven of their sins if they will repent and believe in him.”⁷

“The good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him. In his great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect live, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in him. He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ’s sacrifice and that God’s wrath against us had been exhausted. He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again in to a new life, an eternal life with God. Now that’s good news.”⁸

³ Comfort, Ray. *The School of Biblical Evangelism* (Newberry, Florida: Bridge-Logos Publishing, 2004). 18

⁴ Vincent, Milton. *The Gospel Primer* (Focus Publishing, 2008) front matter.

⁵ Stiles, *Evangelism*, 33.

⁶ Piper, John. *Desiring God* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1996) 60.

⁷ Gilbert, Greg. *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2011), 36.

⁸ Dever, 43.

Let's evaluate:

- How well do you know the gospel?
- Could you share the gospel with someone in less than 2 minutes?

B. The Law

"I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived" (Romans 7:9). So it is with the work-righteous and the proud unbelievers. Because they do not know the Law of God, which is directed against them, it is impossible for them to know their sin. Therefore, also they are not amenable to instruction. If they would know the Law, they would also know their sin; and sin to which they are now dead would become alive in them."⁹- Martin Luther

"The trouble with people who are not seeking for a Savior, and for salvation, is that they do not understand the nature of sin. It is the peculiar function of the Law to bring such an understanding to a man's mind and conscience. That is why great evangelical preachers 300 years ago in the time of the Puritans, and 200 years ago in the time of Whitefield and others, always engaged in what they called a preliminary 'Law Work'".¹⁰- Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"I do not believe that any man can preach the gospel who does not preach the Law."¹¹
Charles Spurgeon

People must be taken down deep into the well of depravity before they can come up to the prosperity of God's love.

C. The Modern Gospel

"'I'm doing fine. I don't need God.'"

Many people feel this way because of the modern gospel message. It says that Jesus will help their marriage, remove their drug problem, fill the emptiness in their heart, give them peace and joy, etc. In doing so, it restricts the gospel's field of influence. If the message of the cross is for people who have bad marriages, are lonely, and have problems, then those who are happy won't see their need for the savior.

In truth, the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ is for people with bad marriages and people with good marriages. It is for the happy and the sad. It is for people with problems and those without problems. It is for those who are miserable in their sins, as well as those who are enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season. Those who think they are doing fine need to be confronted with a holy Law that they have violated a

⁹ Comfort, Ray. *The School of Biblical Evangelism* (Newberry, Florida: Bridge-Logos Publishing, 2004).

¹⁰ Comfort, Ray. *The School of Biblical Evangelism* (Newberry, Florida: Bridge-Logos Publishing, 2004). 25

¹¹ Comfort, Ray. *The School of Biblical Evangelism* (Newberry, Florida: Bridge-Logos Publishing, 2004). 90

multitude of times. Then they will see themselves through the eyes of the Judge of the Universe and will flee to the Savior.”¹²

Let's evaluate:

- When you share the gospel, do you use modern methods or Biblical principles?

D. The Ambassador

“You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore, spend and be spent in this work. And go not only to those that need you, but to those that need you most...It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance.”¹³ John Wesley

“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of God upon the earth.”¹⁴ John Wesley

“Not called! did you say? Not heard the call, I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face — whose mercy you have professed to obey — and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world.” William Booth

II. The Motivation of an Ambassador

A. Judgment

Every lost person that you know is sitting at the base of a dam that is continually storing up more and more water because of excessive rainfall. Just then, and without warning, the dam splits and the full weight of the water comes upon them and crushes them. This is the story for every non-believer. They are sitting underneath God's wrath and it is getting higher with every sin. When they die, the full weight of that wrath will crush them for the rest of eternity without any mercy.

¹² Comfort, Ray. *The School of Biblical Evangelism* (Newberry, Florida: Bridge-Logos Publishing, 2004) 26.

¹³ Comfort, Ray. *The School of Biblical Evangelism* (Newberry, Florida: Bridge-Logos Publishing, 2004) 168.

¹⁴ Comfort, Ray. *The School of Biblical Evangelism* (Newberry, Florida: Bridge-Logos Publishing, 2004). 146

SENT: MOVING FROM FEAR TO FAITH IN SHARING THE GOSPEL

B. Forgiveness

You were once sitting at the base of that dam. But when Christ died, he drank down to every last drop the wrath you deserved. There is no wrath waiting for you, only a storehouse of grace and love from God.

C. Fearfulness

Have you noticed that frightening wall that stands tall between you and non-believers when you are taking up the task of gospel proclamation? What is it? Ah! I call it a smoke screen. It is make believe, consisting of no true substance. What must you do? Push past it and see that it was a mirage!

D. Inspiration

- Who are you reading?
- Who are you watching?
- Who are you listening to?