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# MARSHALL BAPTIST NEWS

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#### WE WANT TO MAKE IT HARD TO GO TO HELL FROM MARSHALL COUNTY.

I shared that phrase a couple of weeks ago when I was preaching at one of our member churches. I wondered how it might be received because it sounds bold, even a little harsh—but it's resonated in my heart again lately. I haven't used that phrase in a decade or so, but several years ago, when I was planting a church, a group of us were talking about reaching people and making disciples. Someone said they hoped their church would be so passionate about evangelism that it would be rare for someone to go to hell because of the church's Gospel impact in their city.

That stirred something in me. From that day, I set a goal for our church: "We want to make it hard to go to hell from [our city]." That became the mantra of our church planting group.

Now, in this season of ministry, as I serve a family of churches in our association, the area has expanded. My goal hasn't changed—it's just grown: **We want to make it hard to go to hell from Marshall County, Alabama.**

The reality is sobering --thousands of people all around us are lost. And I know you believe as I do that the Gospel is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), but, unfortunately, too many have never heard the Gospel in a clear, compelling, or consistent way. **THAT MUST CHANGE.**

#### THE URGENCY OF EVANGELISM

Some are looking at events around us as precursors to Christ's return. Some are looking at the world and feeling hopeless. Whatever your viewpoint, the Truth is, we are not promised tomorrow.

Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest" (John 4:35). The harvest isn't just somewhere overseas or in the big cities. It's in your neighborhood, at the gas station, in the classroom, on the job site, and across the table at your favorite restaurant.

And far too many of those people, if they slipped into eternity, would spend it utterly, completely separated from God in a place called hell.

These three things I know: **Hell is real. Eternity is long. The Gospel is urgent.**

I urge us to live with a sense of Gospel urgency-- keeping evangelism and disciple making at the top of our minds and the forefront of our lives.

#### BUILD A CULTURE OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism is more than a program (an "outreach night" or an evangelistic program. It must become part of our CHURCH CULTURE.

**When reaching people and making disciples becomes who we are, not just what we do on certain occasions, then lost people will begin to take notice.**

It's wonderful when people hear the Gospel every Sunday in our churches, but what's even more powerful is when they hear it throughout the week— from ordinary believers living extraordinary lives for Jesus Christ.

**That's when we'll start making it hard to go to hell from our county.**

How do we build that culture? Here are four simple steps:

##### 1. Pray with Evangelistic Urgency

Ask God to break your heart for lost people. Pray regularly and specifically for neighbors, classmates, coworkers, and family members who are far from God. Name them before the throne of grace.

Churches can:

- Make prayer gatherings focused on the lost, not just the sick.
- Encourage "Who's Your One?" lists.
- Share testimonies of answered prayers for salvation.

##### 2. Preach the Gospel Clearly and Often

Never assume the Gospel is known — even in the Bible Belt. Especially now, many are growing up without a clear biblical framework or Gospel understanding.

**Pastors**, every sermon, every Sunday, should proclaim the hope of Jesus clearly enough that a first-time guest can understand how to be saved. Evangelism culture begins in the pulpit.

##### Ask Yourself:

- If a lost person came Sunday, would they hear how to be saved?
- Do my people know how to share the Gospel because they hear it every week?
- When is the last time I shared the Gospel, and with whom? (ouch)

##### 3. Normalize Personal Evangelism

The more people share the Gospel, the more natural it becomes. When we celebrate Gospel conversations—regardless of the outcome—we emphasize that faithfulness matters.

##### Equip your church to:

- Learn a simple Gospel-sharing tool (like 3 Circles or Romans Road).
- Share weekly stories of Gospel conversations in small groups or services.
- Regularly invite others to church, meals, or Gospel-centered events.

##### 4. Live Like Jesus Is Real

Let's be honest—sometimes we aren't effective in reaching people and making disciples because our lives don't reflect the message we proclaim. But when our neighbors see joy, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness in us, they are far more likely to want to know the Jesus we talk about.

That old saying still rings true: **You may be the only Jesus someone ever sees and the only Bible they ever read.**

##### Ask:

- Are our churches known more for what we're against than for what we're for?
- Do our words and attitudes reflect Christ when we're away from church?

##### Imagine This...

**Imagine a day when no one in Marshall County can say they've never heard the Gospel.**

What a joy that would be! Imagine they've heard it so often, from so many people, in so many ways, that they can't escape it. They see the Real Jesus demonstrated in Real Ways.

Imagine they've seen it lived out—in our joy, our love, our hope —so clearly that it's nearly impossible not to be drawn to Jesus.

That's what we're after.

That's why we exist as a Marshall Baptist Association: To Encourage Pastors, Equip Leaders, and Engage Churches in the Great Commission.

And that's how we can work together—to make it hard to go to hell from Marshall County, Alabama.

Dr. Eric Taylor, Associational Mission Strategist  
Marshall Baptist Association