

“Our Watchword is Evangelize!”

Luke 24:45-49

Intro. – Are we *on or off task* here at Christ’s Church in Eaton? The phrase *on/off task* is used in elementary education today. It is used to describe actions which do little to accomplish stated purposes. For instance, a student is considered *off task* when he/she is not engaged in the learning process. A class is *off task* when it no longer accomplishes progress towards its goal. A teacher is *off task* when they no longer pursue lesson aim(s).

A church can be *on/off task* just as clearly; so, again I ask, Are we on task here at Christ’s Ch. in Eaton? In order to answer this accurately, we must know our purpose. Winning lost souls and building won souls is that purpose clearly stated in Matthew 28. A key word describes this purpose – EVANGELISM. Evangelism is the heart of this church’s purpose.

With all this in mind, it is my firm conviction that most churches think they know what evangelism is, but few actually live it out. Our text will help each of us get more *on task* if we simply will let it.

Purpose: to better understand why evangelism is our watchword

The following four points will affirm how and why this is the case:

I The Church’s MESSAGE (vv 45-47)

- in this last post resurrection appearance, Christ makes clear what the message of evangelism was to be:

A. A Message of Repentance

1. Two Greek words are used in the New Testament for *repentance*: 1) μετανοεω 2) μεταμελομαι
 - a. preposition “meta” = basic idea of change
 - b. “noeo” = mind and “melomai” = emotions
 - c. the difference -- μετανοεω has a higher content including both mind/emotions while μεταμελομαι includes just emotions.
 - Illus. – park a car in front of a fireplug while going into a store, but suddenly you see a cop. You have a change of mind, but, this not repentance, it is remorse the cop is present and you can’t break the law parking in such a manner...
 - Illus. – significant to note the Bible records the “remorse” of Judas Iscariot... uses term μεταμελομαι!
2. μετανοεω is used in our text = entire *turn* to Christ
3. Change of mind/emotions... everything arising from sorrow for sin and leading to changed life
4. This is part of evangelism’s message – message of repentance!

B. A Message of Forgiveness of Sins

1. The Greek word for forgiveness αφεσις – literally means “pardon, release &/or cancellation.”
2. Evangelism’s message is one of pardon, release and cancellation from sin...
3. The very thing that separates man from God... can be completely removed...!

C. A Message Preached in Jesus’ Name

1. Evangelism’s glorious message was authored and made possible by Jesus the Christ.
2. He died, though sinless Himself, to pay the penalty for our sins...
3. He resurrected proving this glorious message is one of HOPE and not of empty promises:
 - Illus. – hope makes the difference you know... 2 rats placed in identical tubs of water... One tread water for ½ hr, but the other treads water for over eight hrs. The difference? A rope was held just out of reach, giving a sense of hope...

With such a glorious message, it should be easy to see why evangelism must be heart of every local church!

II The Church’s MANDATE (v 47)

- what our Lord reveals is the extent to which we must share this message = evangelism’s mandate:

A. To All Nations

1. Instructed to begin in Jerusalem, the Apostles were also told to evangelize the world...
2. No longer was there to be the exclusiveness held by the Jews under the Law – grace had come and all nations were to be told about it.

B. Must be Heeded

1. A local church's response to evangelism's mandate will be most clear to all students of the Word!
2. Weakly and sick are the churches who have no evangelistic outreach beyond themselves!
 - a. a church concerned only with evangelizing their immediate area will literally die on the vine...
 - b. but, a church with ever growing expansion of its evangelism will bear fruit fitting for Christ!
3. This then ought to result in the following:
 - a. our missions' program ought to ever be expanding... to the far ends of the earth!...
 - b. support of faithful US and foreign missions ought to be held as a high priority rather than as a burdensome obligation...
 - c. our missions must reflect our understanding of evangelism's message and mandate!

III The Church's METHOD (v 48)

- though divine in pattern and purpose, the Church is human in practice and service!
- thus, evangelism's method falls into the human realm of the Lord's Church:

A. Through Human Witnesses

1. Apostles witnessed the life, sufferings death and the resurrection of Christ...
2. They now were to go forth and testify of these things to the world with their lives and lips!
3. In like manner, through Scripture we have become "witnesses of these things"...
 - a. our lives/lips must bear the same testimony to the world...
 - b. like Isaiah of old we must respond to God's urgent call of "whom will I send?" with a ready and willing, "Here am I, send me!"

B. Through Human Agents

1. Along the lines of human witnesses naturally comes human agents.
2. Paul writes in Romans 10:14-15 *"How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!'"*
3. All Christians are described as "ambassadors" – 2 Corinthians 5:20 *"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."*
4. All Christians are sent to *make disciples* – this then is evangelism's method!

IV The Church's MEANS (v 49)

- though the method be through human witnesses and agents, evangelism's power rest in God's Spirit!
- evangelism is impossible apart from Holy Spirit; thus, it behooves us to realize evangelism's power!

A. The Promise of God's Spirit Then

1. Prior to the ascension, the Apostles undoubtedly lacked something which would complete them for this great task. Note: they had a scant determination... feeble courage... little understanding...
2. Jesus promised them the miraculous gift of Holy Spirit...
 - a. this turned weak-kneed men into soldiers of the Cross...
 - b. this same power enabled the first Church to grow both in quality and quantity...

B. The Promise of God's Spirit Today

1. By turning to His Word and following those who permit Spirit of God to mold their lives, we too are promised power for growth!
2. Ephesians 3:20-21 makes clear our need to quit relying on our power... and utilize the power available to us in and through His Spirit! – *"Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly*

beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

3. Holy Spirit is the “spiritual dynamic” which will produce quality and quantity = NT evangelism!
He is the means (power) of New Testament evangelism!

Conclusion: This then is New Testament evangelism summarized:

Its MESSAGE is unsurpassable...

Its MANDATE is all encompassing...

Its METHOD is divinely designed and humanly executed...

Its MEANS is all divine...

May God help us to grow and be “on task” local Church we ought to be for evangelism is our watchword:

“Give Us a Watchword”

*Give us a watchword for the hour
A thrilling word, a word of power;
A battle cry, a flaming breath,
A call to conquest over death
A word to wake the church from rest,
To heed the lords most high behest.
The call is given, now all arise,
The watchword is Evangelize!
To fallen men' of our dying race,
Make known the gift of gospel grace.
For the world that now in darkness lies,
O Church of Christ Evangelize!*