



Foundations of a Healthy Church

Evangelism¹

Questions for Discussion

- What do you think of when you hear the word “evangelism”?
- What confusion have you seen surround the idea of “evangelism” in church culture?
- Why do you think evangelism is often difficult for churches to have as part of their culture? How might a church address that?

Biblical Definition of Evangelism

- **What Evangelism is Not**
 - Evangelism is *not* an **imposition**.
 - What we believe as a Christian are facts, not opinions.
 - What we’re sharing is not “ours” in the proper sense; it’s God’s truth.
 - When we share the gospel, we’re not imposing anything. According to Scripture, evangelism is sharing the good news, but the fruit comes from God, not our techniques or effort.
 - **1 Corinthians 5:3-5** *What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.*
 - **2 Corinthians 3:5-6** ⁵*Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*
 - Sharing the gospel is not a matter of coercion, only proclamation, persuasion, and love.

¹ Portions of this lesson are adapted from material found in chapter 5 of *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* by Mark Dever (pgs. 127-153)

- Evangelism is *not* your **personal testimony** (alone).
 - Sometimes we think that sharing the story of our own conversion is evangelism.
 - It certainly can be a *part* of evangelism; the most powerful apologetic is a transformed life.
 - However, the gospel is a message that must be communicated and believed.
 - **Question:** What reality about our culture may making this mistake contribute to?
- Evangelism is *not* **social action** or **political involvement**.
 - The horizontal effects of sin are real (and should be addressed), but can obscure the vertical problem people have with God.
 - Often, we mistake good “activity” in the social sphere as evangelism.
 - Evangelism is not pushing a political plan, recruiting for the church, or even meeting felt needs. These things can be a part of our efforts to lovingly engage our society, but they shouldn’t be mistaken for evangelism.
 - Ultimately, societies are changed when God supernaturally works to save individual men and women and brings them into church community.
- Evangelism is *not* **apologetics**.
 - Apologetics is the “process of answering questions and objections people may have about our Christian beliefs.”²
 - Such engagement may be a necessary part of your evangelistic conversations, but it isn’t evangelism itself.
 - Apologetics is responding to the agenda that *others* have set. Evangelism is presenting and following *Jesus’s* agenda.
- Evangelism is *not* its **results**.
 - Another common mistake in evangelism is to confuse the results of evangelism with evangelism itself.
 - It’s easy to think that evangelism is seeing others *converted* rather than evangelism as the task of making the message of salvation known.

² Dever, 9Marks of a Healthy Church, pg. 133

- **What is Evangelism?**

- **Question:** How would you define evangelism?
- *"To evangelize does not mean to win converts...but simply to announce the good news, irrespective of the results."*³
- **Evangelism Defined:** *To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.*⁴

- **Key Scriptures:**

- **Romans 10:14-15** ¹⁴ *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?* ¹⁵ *And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*
- **2 Corinthians 2:15-16** ¹⁵ *For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, ¹⁶to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?*
- Jesus's parable of the soils, Matthew 13:1-23

- **The Gospel Message:**

- **God** - God is creator, king, lawgiver, and judge. Perfectly holy.
- **Man** - Was created in the image of God, but rebelled against God the king through willful disobedience.
- **Christ** - Jesus was the incarnate son of God, he lived a perfect life, did mighty miracles, taught with authority, died a substitutionary death on the cross in our place, and was raised victoriously over sin and death in resurrection power.
- **Response - Mark 1:15** *...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.*
 - *All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)*
 - *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*
 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

- **Question:** How might this definition of evangelism, and the reality that our job is to merely communicate a message, be encouraging to us?

³ John Stott, Lausanne gathering of 1974

⁴ 9 Marks of a Healthy Church, pg. 134, quoting the definition by the Lausanne gathering of 1974.

Developing an Evangelistic Culture

- **Who Should Evangelize?**

- **Matthew 28:18-20** ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- **Question:** How do we know that this is a binding command on *all* disciples?

- **Acts 8:1-4** ... *And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. ³ But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.*

- ⁴ Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

- **Question:** What was unique about those who went about "preaching the word?"

- **Why Should We Evangelize?**

- **Love for God**

- The chief motivation for any good work done by the Christian should be love for God and His glory.
 - John 14:15
 - Matthew 22:37

- **Obedience to God**

- A desire to be obedience to the God who saved us is a Biblical motivation for evangelism; evangelism is commanded.
 - Matthew 28:18-20
 - 1 Corinthians 9:16-17

- **Love for the Lost**

- We are supposed to have compassion on those who are presently outside of Christ.
 - Matthew 9:36
 - John 3:16
 - Romans 10:1

- **How Do We Evangelize?⁵**

- Tell people with honesty and sincerity that if they repent and believe, they will be saved – but it will be costly.
- Tell people with urgency that if they repent and believe, they will be saved – but they must decide.
 - Hebrews 4:7, Psalm 85:7-8, Luke 13:6-9: Jesus was urgent in his teaching.
- Tell people with joy that if they repent and believe the good news, they will be saved. However difficult it may be, it is worth it!
- Use the Bible.
 - **Question:** Why might using the Bible be helpful in evangelism?
- Remember to pray! Pray for open doors, open eyes, open hearts, and open mouths.
- Build relationships with non-Christians.
- Work together with other Christians to take the gospel to those who don't live around any Christians.

- **Building an Intentional Evangelistic Culture**

- We've adopted a paradigm that captures the Biblical process for disciple-making:
 - **Connect** for relationship.
 - **Engage** with the gospel.
 - **Disciple** to maturity.
 - **Send** on mission.
- This Biblical focus helps us guard against mistakes in evangelism, keeps us focused on mission, and helps us to pray and think intentionally about our spheres of influence.
- **CONNECT FOR RELATIONSHIP**
 - **Individual Proximity** – What relationships has God given you in your normal way of life? Think where you live, play, and work.
 - **Church proximity** – What relationships has God placed around our church, even if they're not in our specific spheres?
 - **Callings and Gifts** – What passions or gifts has God given the body that we could leverage to reach a category of people in the community that need Christ?
 - **Gospel Need** – What people need the gospel, even if they're not currently proximate or may require stretching and equipping to reach?

⁵ 9 Marks of a Healthy Church, pg. 141-148

○ **Connection Effort Categories:**

- **Passive Connections.** These are the people you meet in everyday life.
How are you intentionally connecting with these passive relationships?
 - Examples: Grocery store, playground, park, pool, sports, etc.
- **Active Connections.** These are people that you purposefully go out of your way to meet for the sake of the gospel, including through ministry patterns that meet specific needs or invest in certain parts of the community.
 - Examples: Canvassing in Parkwood community, HOA events, community BBQs, English classes, serving Parkwood Elementary, etc.

○ **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS GRID**

	INDIVIDUAL PROXIMITY	CHURCH PROXIMITY	CALLINGS/ GIFTINGS	GOSPEL NEED
PASSIVE (Already present)				
ACTIVE (Requires effort)				

○ Some questions to consider:

- How can you build relationships in each of the squares above, prayerfully asking for gospel opportunities?
- In what patterns could you insert yourself to make relationships in a particular category?
- In what patterns could you start a ministry to build relationships?

○ **ENGAGE WITH THE GOSPEL**

- Once a connection is made, our desire is to testify to the love of Jesus Christ in the gospel.
 - How can you weave “gospel threads” that point to your faith? (Gospel threads are Biblical themes that you bring up through conversation, seeing where the Spirit leads).
 - Are you able to invite your friend to study the Bible with you?
 - Are you offering to pray for your friend?
 - Are you carrying on the conversation over multiple interactions?

- Everyone's evangelistic style is different – and that's okay!
- Hospitality is key. Consider ways to invite people into your home and life such that they see your faith as much as they hear it.
- **Our aim:** To show and share the gospel.
 - **Show the gospel:** Model what it means to follow Jesus through your loving concern, sacrificial service, generosity, and every other fruit of the Spirit.
 - **Share the gospel:** Our lovingkindness isn't sufficient to save sinners. We need to share the message of the gospel to those who are outside of Christ. Do you know the gospel?

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."*

John 3:16-17