



Ecclesiology: The Study of the Church

Lesson 30: Who Should Evangelize and Why?

INTRODUCTION

At the outset of this study on evangelism, we should begin by defining what “evangelism” is and isn’t.

1. What Is Evangelism? Evangelism is telling others the good news about what Jesus Christ has done to save sinners and calling them to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.

In order to do this, you must tell others that:

- God is holy (1 John. 1:5). He is the creator of all things (Gen. 1:1).
- All people are sinners who deserve God’s righteous, eternal wrath (Mark 9:48; Rom. 3:10–19; Rev. 14:11).
- Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God’s wrath in the place of all who would believe in Him, and rose from the grave in order to give His people eternal life (John 1:1; Rom. 3:21–26; 1 Cor. 15:20–22; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:26).
- The only way to be saved from eternal punishment and be reconciled to God is to repent of sin and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21).
- This is the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. Evangelism is simply telling others this basic message and calling them to repent of sin and trust in Christ.

On the other hand, evangelism is not:

- **Personal testimony.** Talking about what God has done in your life may encourage Christians and intrigue non-Christians. And there’s certainly a place for this in evangelism. But simply sharing about what God has done in your life isn’t necessarily evangelism. Evangelism is telling others about what Jesus Christ has done to save every sinner who will ever turn from their sin and trust in Jesus.
- **Social action.** When we care for the poor, defend the defenseless, and work for a more just society we may commend the gospel, but we haven’t yet shared it. Evangelism is telling others the gospel. Contrary to the opinion of some, that can’t be done without words!
- **Apologetics.** Defending the faith against unbelievers’ objections can lead to evangelism, but apologetics is not evangelism. Apologetics is a useful tool, but if we’re not careful it can actually distract us from evangelism, which is telling the good news about Jesus Christ.
- **The results of evangelism.** We can share the gospel. We can’t make anyone believe it. Thinking that we haven’t evangelized unless people have been converted is a serious error that can cripple Christians with a sense of failure and guilt. But if we recognize that our job is merely to tell others the good news about Christ and call them to repent and believe, we are liberated to simply preach the gospel and pray for God to change hearts.

1. WHO SHOULD EVANGELIZE?

MAIN IDEA

The Bible calls all Christians to share the good news about Jesus's death and resurrection with those who don't believe in Christ.

DIGGING IN

Now that we've established what evangelism is and isn't, let's consider a few texts that speak to who should evangelize. Acts 8:1–4 gives us a window into the early church's evangelism:

Acts 8:1–4

1. Who was scattered by the persecution in Jerusalem (v. 1)? _____

2. Who went about preaching the word, that is, the good news about Jesus (v. 4)? _____

3. What does this tell us about the early Christians' understanding of who should evangelize? _____

In Matthew 28, after rising from the dead, Jesus leaves His eleven disciples with a final charge:

Matthew 28:18-20

4. What does Jesus command His followers to make (v. 19)? What does that mean? _____

5. Of whom are we to make disciples (v. 19)? _____

6. What are all the things that making disciples involves (vv. 19–20)? _____

7. To whom does this “Great Commission” apply? Who’s responsible to carry it out? _____

8. Why is Jesus’s presence with us especially comforting as we go and make disciples of all nations (v. 20)?

2. WHY SHOULD WE EVANGELIZE?

GETTING STARTED

1. What are some reasons people don’t evangelize? _____

2. What do you think it would take to motivate us to evangelize more? _____

MAIN IDEA

The Bible gives us many different motivations to evangelize, which is something many of us need because we often lack motivation to evangelize.

DIGGING IN

In this section, we are going to consider several biblical reasons why we should evangelize.

First, as we considered in the previous section, we should evangelize because the Bible commands us to.

Matthew 28:19–20

Paul also exhorts the Corinthians to follow his evangelistic example when he writes,

1 Cor. 10:32–11:1

As Christians, our inner beings long to obey all of God’s commands. But in the case of evangelism, it can sometimes be difficult to muster up motivation out of a sheer sense of obligation. Thankfully, God’s Word gives us several other motivations that spur us on to evangelism. Consider what the apostle Paul writes in Romans 9 and 10:

Romans 9:1–3

Romans 10:1

1. Why does Paul have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart? _____

2. Based on Romans 10:1 and what we learn from the rest of the New Testament, what does Paul’s concern for his fellow Jews motivate him to do? (See also Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:1–3; 18:4) _____

3. What motive for evangelism does this text give us? _____

John 15:8–11

4. What are the results of our bearing much fruit through obeying Jesus’s commands? _____

5. How does evangelism in particular bring glory to God? _____

6. How does the thought that our evangelism glorifies God encourage us to persevere in evangelism? _____

Through teaching about obeying Jesus’s commands in general, this passage gives us at least two more motivations to evangelize:

1. to glorify God; and
2. to have our joy in Christ made full through obeying His commands.

There’s one more biblical motivation for evangelism we should consider together.

1 Peter 3:13–18a

7. What are the two main things Peter commands in this passage? _____

8. What has Christ done for sinners who trust in Him (v. 18)? What is the result for those who trust in Christ (v. 18)? _____

9. How should Christ's suffering for us and God's acceptance of us through Christ motivate us to both share the gospel with others and be willing to suffer for Christ's sake?¹ _____

¹ Adapted from Bobby Jamieson, *Reaching the Lost: Evangelism*, ed. Mark Dever, 9Marks Healthy Church Study Guides (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 13–20.