

Introduction

If you are around true believers long enough, sooner or later you will hear someone talking about the need for evangelism. This is a word that is almost never used outside of Christian circles. But what are we actually talking about and why should we talk about it?

Q – What comes to your mind when you hear the word evangelism?

The word evangelism is almost an entirely Christian word. Although the word can be used for any zealous effort in propagandizing for a cause (Collins dictionary) it is almost always used in the context of Christianity. Here are two ways in which evangelism is defined:



1. In Christianity, evangelism (or witnessing) is the act of preaching the gospel with the intention of sharing the message and teachings of Jesus Christ. (Wikipedia)
2. The activity of persuading people to become Christians, often by travelling around and telling people about your beliefs

Q - Why should we talk about this subject?

1. Because Jesus commanded us to evangelise!

We have what many call the “great commission” in Matthew 28:18-20. This was the last thing that Jesus told his 11 apostles:

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

Q – What 4 things did He tell them to do, and what did He promised them whenever they did it?

In his book, Mark gives an account of the same thing, but there is something different:

Mark 16:14,15

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Q – What is the main difference between what is stated in Matthew and what is recorded in Mark?

Did you see the difference? In Mark, we read that every person should hear the gospel. But Matthew is even more specific. We are told to make disciples of every ethnic group (Greek ethnos), to baptize them and then to teach them. This means that every person should at least hear the gospel, and that God wants representation from every ethnic group in heaven!

2. *Because evangelism is the reason that Jesus came into the world!*

The reason that Jesus died on the cross was to save us from our sins. This was his main aim and focus. In this next passage, Jesus has just called Levi, a tax collector, and told him to follow him. In those days, tax collectors were known for overcharging the people and were considered notorious sinners. Notice the difference between the attitude of the “religious” and the attitude of Jesus:

Luke 5:29-32

Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."



Our attitude should be the same as his. In Luke 15 the Pharisees and scribes complained because Jesus received sinners and ate with them. Jesus spoke three parables in response to their complaint. In each of these parables, He is expressing a different idea and attitude that we should have. Read each parable and see if you can catch the different mindset that Jesus was dealing with. Here is a hint for each parable:

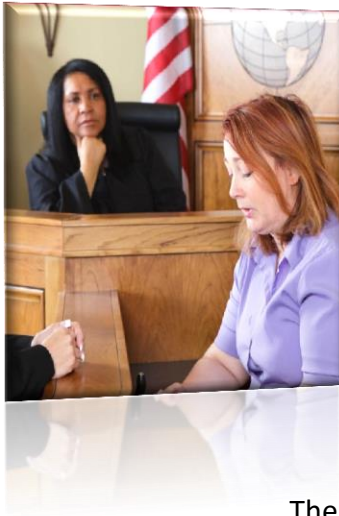
- Parable of the sheep – Isaiah 53:6
- Parable of the lost coin – value
- Parable of the Prodigal Son – attitude

Were you able to understand what Jesus was telling them? The lost sheep reminded them that God is looking for those who, like sheep, have wandered astray and are worth going after. The lost coin told them of the value of the unbeliever. These coins were more than likely something like our wedding rings, so you can appreciate how important they would have been to the woman. In the parable of the prodigal son, the main point of the story was the attitude of the brother, who was only thinking of himself!

The bible also used the word witness to describe what his disciples were to do.

Q – What is a witness?

This may seem like an obvious question, but it is a very important one when you are called upon as a witness. In English, a witness is:



1. A person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place (Oxford Languages).
2. In law, a witness is someone who has knowledge about a matter, whether they have sensed it or are testifying on another witness' behalf (Wikipedia)

In Greek the word is "*martus*", which means one who is a spectator of anything. It is where we get the English word martyr. So when the bible speaks of believers as witnesses, they are those who have seen, have knowledge of a matter and can testify to something as being true or accurate.

The bible speaks of the 12 Apostles as being witnesses of all that Jesus said and did. They spoke about and taught everything that they saw Jesus say and do:

Mark 3:13-19

And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:

Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

They were eyewitness of His glory and majesty:

Matthew 17:1-5

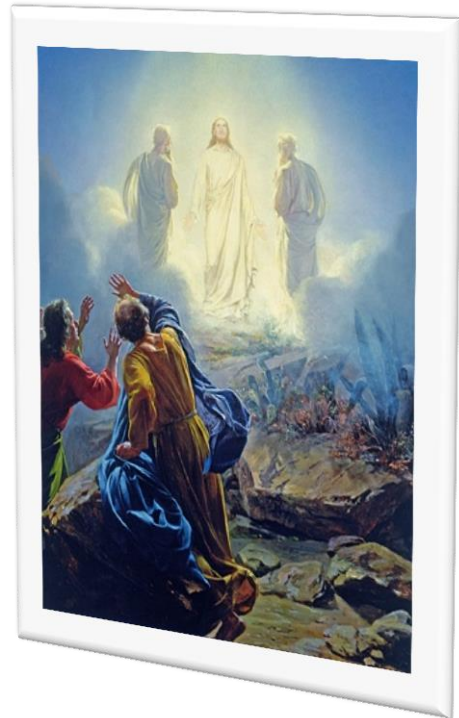
Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

2 Peter 1:16-18

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.



1 John 1:1-3

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

As believers in Christ and children of God, we are also witnesses and called to speak of what Jesus has done in our lives:

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

This verse speaks of three characteristics of a witness for Christ:

1. One who honours Christ as Lord in their heart - (*but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts...*)
2. One who is ready to respond when asked of Him - (...and always be ready to give a defence...)
3. One who had true meekness and humility – (...with meekness and fear...)

So, God has given all believers a command to be witnesses and to speak of all that Jesus had done in our lives. Next, we will consider this amazing message that saves people from their sins that we call “the gospel”.

The Gospel – What Is It?

The word “gospel” has many meanings and is used in many ways these days. For example, when someone wants to affirm that what they are saying is absolutely true, they would sometimes say, “this is the gospel truth”. You may visit a church or concert in order to hear a particular style of spiritual songs called “gospel” music. The first four books of the New Testament are called the “gospels”. But what does this word mean?



In the bible, the word gospel is the Greek word *euaggelion* and means good message, good tidings or simply stated, good news! Most of the time the New Testament describes this as simply, the gospel. However, there are a few places where other words are added that further describe this “gospel”.

Q - What do you think is meant by these?

1. The gospel of **the kingdom** (Matthew 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14,15)
2. The gospel **of Christ** (Mark 1:1; Romans 1:16; 15:19, 29; 1Corinthians 9:12,18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 9:13)
3. The gospel **of God** (Acts 20:24; Romans 1:1; 15:16; 2 Corinthians 11:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:2,8,9)
4. The gospel **of peace** (Romans 10:15; Ephesians 6:15)

Simply stated, when we speak of the gospel, we are speaking about the good news about Jesus. He is the **King** and we can become part of his kingdom. He is the **Christ**, which means anointed one, that has come to take away the sins of the world. He is **God** revealed in flesh, who came among us and experienced what we have gone through. He is the one who offers us **peace** with God!



But before we can begin to speak of the good news, we must understand the bad news. This is the news that lets us know that we are all lost, and deserved to be punished because of the problem of sin. All have sinned!

Romans 3:9-20

What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written:

"THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE;
THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS;

THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS AFTER GOD.
THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE;
THEY HAVE TOGETHER BECOME UNPROFITABLE;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, NO, NOT ONE."
"THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN TOMB;
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY HAVE PRACTICED DECEIT";
"THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";
"WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS."
"THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD;
DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR WAYS;
AND THE WAY OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."
"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:23

Q – What about babies? Are they without sin?

Q – Are some sins worse than others?

What is sin?

It is clear in scripture that all sin is the same in the sense that sin separates us from God. You only need one drop of blood on a white garment for it to become dirty. However, the bible does tell us that some sins are worse than others. Consider this verse:

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.



Q – What is the difference between sins of the flesh and sins of the spirit?

What answers did you come up with? Sins of the flesh are things that we can see and are to do with the body, like drunkenness or sexual immorality. Sins of the spirit are things that are hidden and are more subtle and dangerous, like impure desires and unholy thoughts. Sins of the spirit usually lead to sins of the flesh.

Let's go back to an earlier question, what is sin? Here are three definitions from the Merriam-Webster dictionary:

1. An offense against religious or moral law
2. An action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible (it's a *sin* to waste food)
3. An often-serious shortcoming: (fault)

In the bible, the word *sin* is a general word which simply means to miss the mark. Therefore, any wrong doing is considered a sin. But there is another word, *transgression*, which in Hebrew (*peshah*) means revolt or rebellion, and in Greek (*parabasis*) means going over, or crossing the line. In other words, I crossed the line, I rebelled, therefore I sinned.

There is one other word, *iniquity*, which has great significance. In Hebrew it is the word *avon*, which means perversity, depravity and evil. In the Greek the word *adikia* means injustice, moral wrongfulness, unrighteousness of heart and life. This word speaks of the heart and motive of a person. It means that because I am perverse, depraved morally wrong and unrighteous in heart and life (iniquity), I rebel and cross the line (transgression), I miss the mark (sin).

Is there a penalty for sin? Is God simply going to allow us all to get away with sinning and even rebelling against him? How many people have committed terrible crimes like murder, rape, abuse and so forth? What about victims of fraud, or scams that have taken the hard-earned money of so many people? If He is a God of justice, then there must be a day of judgment in which everyone will give account for what they have done in this life.

Ecclesiastes 12:14

For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

Acts 17:30,31

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."



2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

So, what is the penalty for sin? We will consider this question next.

The Gospel - What Is The Penalty For Sin?

The word gospel means good news. But as we stated in our last lesson, before we can begin to share the good news, we must understand the bad news. That bad news is that all have sinned! Now we must consider the next important question; what is the penalty for sin? The answer to this question is found most clearly in the book of Romans:

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Q - What is meant by wages? And what is meant by death? Is he speaking of physical death, or something else?

In order to understand the penalty of sin, it is important to consider what is called "original sin". Let's consider what happened to Adam:

The warning:

Genesis 2:15-17

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Q – What was Adam told not to do and what would be the penalty if he disobeyed?

The transgression:

Genesis 3:1-6

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Q – What did the serpent do? How was Eve deceived? Was Adam deceived?



The result:

Genesis 3:7-13

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."



Q – What was the first thing that happened to them? Why did they sew fig leaves to cover themselves? Why did they hide themselves? Did they die?

The sentencing:

Genesis 3:14,15

So the LORD God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this,
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.
And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel."

Notice that there is punishment that applied to the actual serpent, which is the instrument that the devil used to deceive, and to the devil himself, who is the actual deceiver.

Q – What is the serpent's punishment?

Q – What is prophesied concerning the devil?

Genesis 3:16

To the woman He said:

"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;
In pain you shall bring forth children;
Your desire *shall be* for your husband,
And he shall rule over you."

Q – What is the woman's physical punishment?

Q – What is prophesied concerning her?



Genesis 3:17-19

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

"Cursed *is* the ground for your sake;
In toil you shall eat *of* it
All the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,
And you shall eat the herb of the field.

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread
Till you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken;
For dust you *are*,
And to dust you shall return."

Q – What is Adam's punishment?

Notice that nothing happened to anyone until Adam sinned, and the sin of Adam affected he and his wife immediately. In fact, Adam's sin affected all of creation and all of mankind:

Romans 8:18-23 (NLT)

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.



Romans 5:12-14

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come.

When Adam sinned two things happened. There was immediate spiritual death, which meant that he was now separated from God and could no longer stand in His presence. Adam, and all of his descendants after him, were separated from God. Spiritual death resulted in the misery and sinfulness of mankind. This immediate spiritual death resulted in eventual physical death, affected all of creation, brought sickness and corruption to the earth, and is the reason why there is a need for a new earth.

So, the wages (or payment) of sin is death (both physical and spiritual). But what is the good news?

The Penalty: Hell

In our society, hell has become trivialised. We use it as a curse word (damn you to hell!) or as a means of describing things that are difficult (my job is hell!). Some even suggest that hell is on earth.

Q – Why do you think that people use the word hell so often?

So, what does the bible actually say about hell, and in particular, what did Jesus say about hell? Here are the words that are usually translated hell in scripture:



1. **Sheol** – This is the Hebrew word translated hell from the Old Testament. According to the Smith bible dictionary; “It really means *the place of the dead, the unseen world*, without deciding whether it be the place of misery or of happiness.”

- a. It first means the “state of death” or the grave; the eventual resting place of all men:

Job 21:13

They spend their days in wealth,
And in a moment go down to the grave.

Psalms 6:5

For in death *there is* no remembrance of You;
In the grave who will give You thanks?

- b. It also refers to a place in which people *exist* and are *conscious* after death, and where the wicked are punished and the righteous are rewarded:

Psalms 9:17

The wicked shall be turned into hell,
And all the nations that forget God.

Psalms 49:15

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave,
For He shall receive me. Selah

2. **Gehenna** – This is the word that is used most often in the New Testament. It was a deep valley, south of Jerusalem, where all of the filth, rubbish, and dead animals of the city would be taken. In this place, whatever could be burned would be burned, and any flesh would rot by worms. This is where king Manasseh made children pass through the fire as offerings to the god Molech. In this place, the worm never died and the fire never went out. When Jesus used the word hell, this was the word that He used:

Mark 9:47,48

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into

hell fire—where 'THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.'

Matthew 10:28

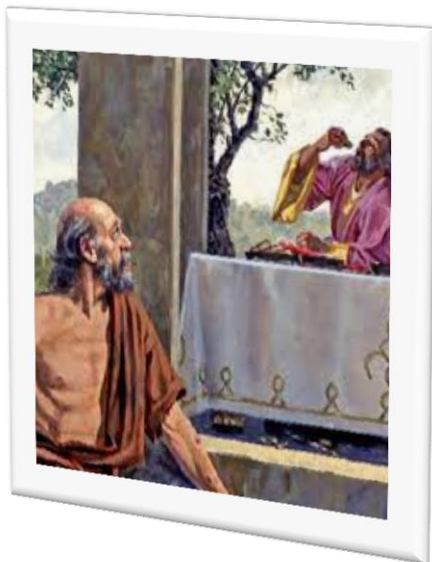
And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

3. **Hades** – the unseen world. The realm, or state of the dead. Easton's bible dictionary describes it this way: The righteous and the wicked are separated. The blessed dead are in that part of Hades called paradise:

Luke 23:43

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Now let us consider the story Jesus told of a rich man and a man named Lazarus:



Luke 16:19-31

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"Then he cried and said,
'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

But Abraham said,
'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

"Then he said,
'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

Abraham said to him,
'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

And he said,
'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

But he said to him,
'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

Q – What is the condition of the rich man who is now in hell?

Here are a few things that you may have picked up on:

- He was in torment
- He could see
- He recognised Abraham and Lazarus
- He could speak
- He had memory
- He could not go to where Lazarus was
- He could think – he thought about his brothers



4. **Tartaros** – Here is a word that is only used once in the entire bible - this is a Greek word that meant a dark, gloomy place of punishment.

2 Peter 2:4

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

But what is the real emphasis? What are we really being told? The real issue in scripture is "Where do you end up?" In his book, "the Road to Hell", David Pawson describes 5 dimensions of final punishment:

1. **Physical discomfort** – to be separated from God will be painful!

Matthew 25:41

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...

2. **Mental depression** – to be separated from God will drive you crazy!

Matthew 22:13

Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

3. **Moral depravity** – to be separated from God is to be separated from goodness!

Matthew 24:51

...and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion **with the hypocrites**. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25:30

And cast the unprofitable servant into the **outer darkness**. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

4. **Social desolation** – to be separated from God is to be left on your own!

Luke 13:28

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and **yourselves thrust out**.

5. **Spiritual death** – to be separated from God is to be without worship, angels, and in contrast, to be with the devil and his angels.

Matthew 25:41

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the **devil and his angels**:'



When it comes down to it, the wages of sin is a very huge penalty, and all of us deserve to be paid. This is the bad news! Perhaps we can finally get to the good news?

The Good News!

In order to convince a person to come to Christ, they must understand their need of the gospel, which is why up to now we have been learning about the problems of sin and judgment. Now for the good news! Jesus came to save us from our sins! A sinner is condemned because he deserves it, but whoever puts their faith in Jesus Christ is made righteous because Christ died for him!

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This verse makes it clear that salvation (eternal life) is a gift, which means:



1. It cannot be earned:

Ephesians 2:8,9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, **and that not of yourselves**; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

2. It is not deserved:

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you *He made alive*, **who were dead in trespasses and sins**, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

3. It is not cheap:

Romans 5:6-8

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us.

This gift, from the one Man (Christ), is very different from the offence from the one man (Adam):

Romans 5:15-21 (New Living Translation)

15 - But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ.

Q – What is the difference between Adam's sin and God's gift?

16 - And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. **17** - For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. **18** - Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

Q – What is the result of Adam's sin, and the result of God's gift?

19 - Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous. **20** - God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. **21** - So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Q – Why was the law given?

Salvation is not just fire insurance! There is so much that we receive in this life as well as in the next. Here are a few passages of scripture that tell us of the benefits of eternal life:

Q – Can you spot 5 benefits of justification from these verses?

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Q – As well as eternal life, what is promised in these next verses?

Mark 10:29,30

So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.

We are also told in scripture that we have an Advocate:

1 John 2:1

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Q – What is an advocate?

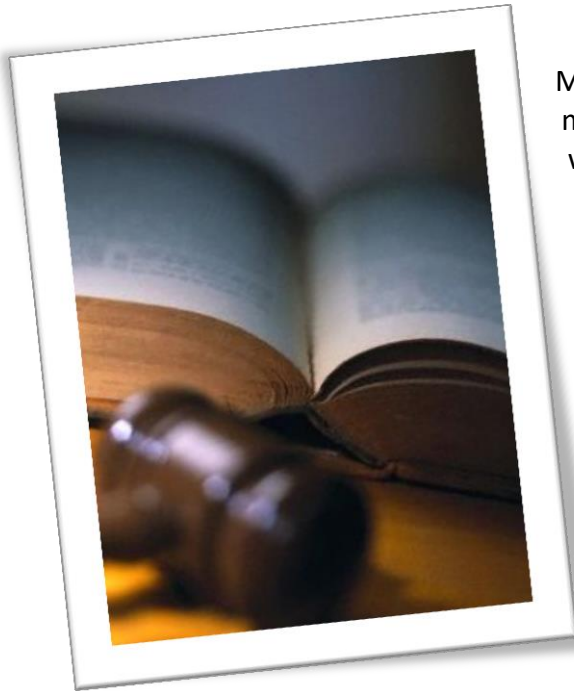
Romans 8:34

Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Hebrews 9:24

For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

So, there are two big questions to answer. First, how does a person receive this gift of eternal life, and finally, how do we go about telling others about this free gift. We will deal with these two subjects in our next lessons.



How Do I Receive Eternal Life? (part 1)

Many Christians think of salvation as simply the means of getting into heaven, so the target is to get them into the kingdom; a bit like getting them “across the line”. But the bible teaches that the goal is not to simply get them “into heaven”, but to cause them to become disciples. In other words, we aim to take people who are on the way of condemnation and turn them to the way of salvation.

Jesus had an amazing conversation with a man named Nicodemus, who was a religious leader and a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night, probably because he wanted to have a private conversation with him and perhaps through fear of the Jews, who may have persecuted him. Here is how the conversation went:

John 3:1-21

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."



Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Q – What does it mean to be born again?

Jesus often used practical examples to illustrate spiritual truths. The idea of the “new birth” is an excellent example of the process of becoming a child of God.

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly

things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

There are several things that Jesus told Nicodemus that applies to all people. Here are a few questions that are very important to answer:

- What does it mean to be born of water and of the Spirit?
- What did Jesus say was his reason for being sent into the world?
- Why did Jesus say that men are condemned?
- What happens to the one who comes to the truth?

When is a baby born? Some say when it comes out of the womb, others site the cutting of the umbilical cord; yet others would point to the moment that the baby takes its first breath. Actually, birth is a process in which all of these are necessary for a healthy child. The "new birth" is also a process in which four things are necessary for healthy disciples to start their journey with Christ:

- Repentance
- Faith
- Baptism
- Receiving the Holy Spirit



All of these can be summed up in one verse in the bible:

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you be **baptized** in the name of **Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the **Holy Spirit**."

Let's begin with **repentance**. In the original Greek text, the word that we translate repent is *metanoēō*, which means to think differently or afterwards, that is, reconsider. In other words, to change your mind.

Q - Is repentance the same as regret or remorse?

What is true repentance? Repentance that leads to salvation is always, first and foremost, toward God. It recognises that God is holy, righteous and true, and I am not.

Psalm 51:2-4

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin *is* always before me.
Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done *this* evil in Your sight—
That You may be found just when You speak,
And blameless when You judge.

Paul speaks of something that he called godly sorrow:

2 Corinthians 7:10,11

For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* clearing of yourselves, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Q – What is the difference between godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world?

- True repentance involves **cognition**, which simply means that I recognise that I am at fault for my actions and even for my responses to the things that have been done to me
- True repentance is always **specific** – what do I want to be forgiven of? Over and over in scripture are examples of persons who confess their sins.
- True repentance will touch the **emotion** and is never casual, but serious and thoughtful. It means that I think about my sins and make a genuine effort to confess and forsake them.
- True repentance involves **volition**, or in other words, it is something that I want to do.

If we really want to help people to become disciples of Jesus, the first thing that we must help them to do is to understand the need to confess their sins and repent. This is the beginning of the birthing process.

How Do I Receive Eternal Life? (part 2)

The second part of the process of the new birth is **faith** (in Jesus Christ): which is something that is often talked about yet often mis-understood.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified through **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord **Jesus Christ**,

FAITH

Here are a couple of questions about faith to consider:

Q - Is faith blind? In other words, should we put our faith in something or someone without any evidence or reason to do so?

Q - If I believe in something deeply or fervently, will my faith cause it to happen?

Have these questions caused you to think more carefully? The Britannica Dictionary gives a simple definition of the word faith as: "Strong belief or trust in someone or something". Here are a few things that are important to know concerning faith and in particular, faith in Jesus:

1. **Faith is always in something or someone.** To have faith in faith is to think that my belief will cause the thing to happen. For example, if I believe that I am the greatest singer in the world, my faith will make me the greatest singer in the world. Unfortunately, even if you think this way, your faith will not improve your voice!
2. **Faith is never blind.** There is always a reason why we put our faith in something or someone.
3. **Faith does nothing by itself.** It is the object of our faith that is active. If I put my faith in someone that cannot deliver, it will not happen! This is because no matter how much I believe in that person, that person does not have the ability to give me what I ask for. Therefore, my faith in that person is in vain!
4. **Faith brings a response from God.** Our faith in God is the basis in which God responds on our behalf:

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

5. **Faith in Jesus is the key to salvation**, because He is the only one capable of saving us from our sins.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Acts 4^{""}:12

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

6. ***Faith in Jesus is based on historic fact.*** He died for me and rose from the dead

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

7. ***Faith in Jesus demands a response.*** We must decide whether we are going to trust Him or not.

Matthew 10:32,33

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

So, in order to enter the kingdom of God, we must first confess our sins and repent. Then we put our faith in Jesus, who is the only one who can save us, because He paid for our sins by dying on the cross in our place. Next, we will consider the third part of the Christian birth, baptism.

How Do I Receive Eternal Life? (part 3)

In answering the question “How do I receive eternal life?”, we have already looked at two things that a person must do:

Repent – which means to change your mind, recognising that I have sinned against God and no longer want to do so. It means that I confess that I have sinned and am willing to turn from them.

Faith – not just faith in general, but faith in Jesus. In other words, the belief that only Jesus can save you from your sins

Now we want to consider something else that must happen in order to receive eternal life:

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Q – What is baptism? Why do some baptize babies?

So, what does baptism really mean? For a start, the word baptism is a very wet word.

Definition – to make whelmed (to cover completely, overturn, overthrow, plunge deep, submerge, overpower, overburden, ruin, destroy, to pass over in such a way as to submerge it), to fully wet.

Baptism is a sign:

1 Peter 3:21

There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Baptism is a physical event with a spiritual effect:

Acts 22:16

And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

Q - Does something actually happen to a person who is baptized?

Why do we baptize?



1. Because baptism is something that Jesus commanded us to do to all that call on His name:

Matthew 28:19,20

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

2. Because Jesus gave us an example to follow:

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

3. Because baptism is an essential part of the birthing process:

John 3:5,6

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

When Peter was asked "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He told them to repent, be baptized, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is one more thing that he told them that we will consider in our next discussion.



How Do I Receive Eternal Life? (part 4)

Before we get to the final part of the birthing process, let me remind you of a few things that we have discussed:

- In order for a person to be “saved” they must understand their need – in other words, they must accept that they are a sinner before God and desire to be forgiven for the specific things that they have done.
- We must understand that to bring someone to Christ is a process that should take place immediately, not over a long period of time.
- This process consists of 4 things, three of which we have covered:
 - Repentance
 - Faith
 - Baptism

Now we will consider the final part of the birthing process, receiving the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to “receive the Spirit?” Whenever this expression is used in the New Testament, the word receive is the Greek word *lambanō*, which mean “taken in” or “taken hold of”. So, when the disciples told people to receive the Holy Spirit, they were telling them to “take in” or “take hold of” the Holy Spirit. This phrase is only used a few times in the bible:

In this passage, Jesus speaks to his disciples after His resurrection and before his ascension:

John 20:21,22

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, when the people asked the disciples what to do, this was Peter’s response:

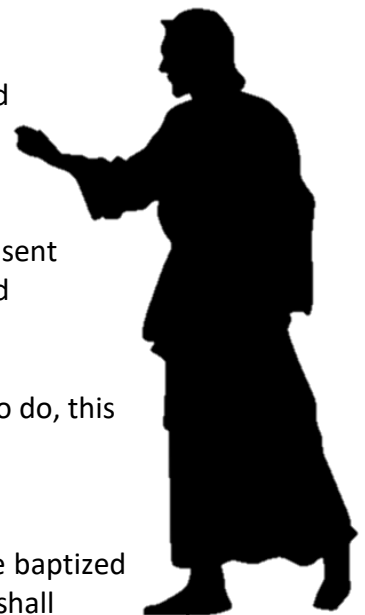
Acts 2:38

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In this passage, the gospel has been preached for the first time to the Samaritans and the apostles are sent to them so that they could receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:14-17

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen



upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

In his travels, Paul came to Ephesus and was able to help 12 disciples. This resulted in all of Asia hearing the word of God:

Acts 19:1-10

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all. And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

This passage in particular raised a few questions:



- Why were they baptized a second time?
- They spoke with tongues and prophesied – is it therefore necessary for everyone to speak with tongues and prophesy?
- Were the apostles the only ones who could lay hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit?

Q – There is something very important that is common in each of these accounts. Can you figure out what it is?

The answer: in each passage the Holy Spirit is given to key people, which results in the spreading of the gospel and the advancement of God's kingdom:

- Jesus spoke to the 12 apostles and they were the first to preach in Jerusalem
- The 12 Apostles spoke to the people of Jerusalem, which resulted in the gospel spreading throughout all Judea
- Philip, a deacon and evangelists, shares the gospel to the people of Samaria, which is the next region outside of Judea
- Paul shares with 12 men from Ephesus (now Turkey), and from them the gospel goes into all of Asia.

What does this mean? We need the power of the Holy Spirit in order to do and live the way that God intended us to live. Listen to what Jesus told His disciples just before He was crucified:

John 16:7-15

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

Q – What did Jesus say in these verses that the Holy Spirit would do for us?

Here are a few things to consider:

- The message that they preached included receiving the Holy Spirit right from the beginning, as soon as they were baptized. **Should we tell unbelievers the same thing in our message to them?**
- They expected something tangible to happen. **Should we expect the same to those that we baptise?**
- It is a gift, which means that it is something that you cannot earn, buy or work for.

Summary:

- The early Christians were encouraged to receive (take in or take hold of) the Holy Spirit as soon as they were baptized.
- Receiving the Holy Spirit is important for lives to change and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God
- Jesus explained to His disciples the importance and necessity of the Holy Spirit.

In our next lesson we will look at how to receive the Holy Spirit and will consider what happens when He comes.

How Do I Receive Eternal Life? (part 5)

If it is true that the Holy Spirit is a gift that is essential for believers and that we are encouraged to receive the Spirit, then here is a very important question that we all must consider:

Q – How does a person receive the Holy Spirit?

Every Christian needs two baptisms, so that he/she is born of water and of the Spirit. Water baptism deals with your past; it washes your past away. It leaves you clean and empty! It can be dangerous to be left clean and empty:



Luke 11:24-26

"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds *it* swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with *him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first."

It is important for a person to get cleaned up and then filled. Get the sins out, then filled up with something else. The second baptism deals with your future; we need something to replace the pleasures of sin. Sin does have pleasure, but it is not lasting or fulfilling. If you get rid of sin but not replace it with something else, you are in the middle and often become legalistic, judgmental and miserable! Once a person has died with Christ and have been buried with Christ, they now need to be raised with Christ to a new life by entering into the same power that raised Christ from the dead.

Romans 6:4-6

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Romans 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

John 6:63

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.

John 7:38,39

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

In the New Testament, whenever someone received the Spirit, something happened and those present knew about it. Someone once said that it was as definite as having an attack of the flu. Whenever you have the flu, you know it and everyone around you know it as well!

Q - Are we told to receive Jesus?

The answer to this question is very interesting. When Jesus walked on earth, people received or rejected Him and His disciples. For example:

Luke 19:1-6

Then *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that *way*. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully.

Matthew 9:10-13

Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what *this* means: 'I DESIRE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Matthew 10:40

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

However, from the day of Pentecost onward, when the disciples preached, they told everyone to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Jesus prepared His disciples to receive the Holy Spirit before He died:

John 7:37-39

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke

concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus told them to receive the Holy Spirit after He died and before his ascension:

John 20:22

And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

But after the day of Pentecost came, they told people to receive the Holy Spirit:

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Why are we told to receive the Holy Spirit and not Jesus? Because the Holy Spirit is the person that was sent to take the place of Jesus on earth. Hear what Jesus said to His disciples before He went away from them:

John 16:4-7

But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. "And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

Receiving the Holy Spirit is an essential part of becoming a Christian:

Romans 8:9-11

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

So, how can a person receive the Holy Spirit?



#1 - By the laying on of hands

In the New Testament, the normal way to receive the Holy Spirit was through the laying on of hands:

Acts 8:14-19

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

But not always. The gentiles received the Holy Spirit without anyone laying hands on them:

Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

What about Apollos?

Acts 18:24-28

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Q - Can anyone lay hands on someone to receive the Holy Spirit?

We have at least one recorded instance in which someone who was not an apostle laid hands on someone to receive the Holy Spirit:

Acts 9:10-18

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." So the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street



called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

How does a person receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?

#2 – By praying

Receiving the Holy Spirit was often accompanied by prayer:

Acts 1:14

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 8:14,15

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.



How does a person receive the Holy Spirit?

#3 - By a positive response

They must receive Him. What does it mean to receive?

- A person must want it.
- A person must accept it.
- A person must grasp it.

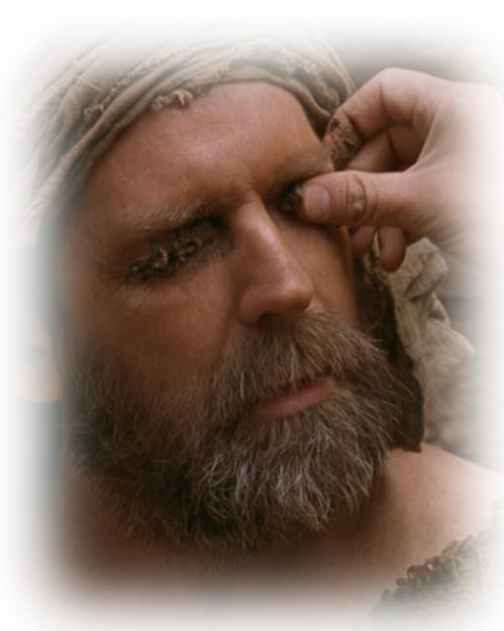
Here are some examples of some who received:

Acts 3:1-5 – A lame man who was healed

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the

temple, asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

Q – How do we know that this man expected to receive something?



Luke 18:35-43 – A blind man who received his sight
Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God.

Q – How do we know that this man expected to receive something?

Here are also some examples of some who would not receive:

Acts 7:57,58 – the Jews that stoned Stephen:

Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Q – How do we know that they did not receive his testimony?

Acts 22:17-23 – the Jews who seized Paul:

"Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance and saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.' So I said, 'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.' " And they listened to him until this word, and *then* they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a *fellow* from the earth, for he is not fit to live!" Then, as they cried out and tore off *their* clothes and threw dust into the air,

Q – How do we know that they did not receive his testimony?

So how do you know if you have been filled with the Holy Spirit?

#1 – Overflow

If you have an empty glass and then begin to fill it with water from the tap, how do you know when it is full? When the water overflows, then you know that the glass is completely full. Let's look again at what Jesus said in John 7:

John 7: 37-39

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus was speaking of the Spirit of God that would flow like water. When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, something of the Spirit should be evident. It may take a bit of time, but when it happens everyone will know that it happened.

Sometimes there may be an overflow of joy or peace, while another time wisdom or understanding. In any case, when the Holy Spirit fills a person, they begin to manifest the nature of the one that has filled them; they become holy!



#2 Indicators

There are several ways that we respond physically when there is an overflow. When there is an overflow of pain we often yell and jump. When we are both happy and sad, we often cry with an overflow of emotion. When there is an overflow of the Spirit there is often a physical response that indicates a change.

Q – How did they know that Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit when she visited Mary?

Luke 1:39-45

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in

tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

- Tongues is one of many spiritual gifts that we should desire and encourage for new believers.
- Prophecy will always glorify God with a message for others.
- Prophecy is a greater gift than tongues, as it builds up many.

#4 – Spiritual Character

When a person yields to the influence of a spirit, they take on the characteristics of that spirit. Here are a few examples:

Luke 13:11-13

And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise *herself* up. But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

Q – What spirit did this woman have and how did it manifest itself?

Matthew 9:32,33

As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

Q – What happened when the spirit was cast out of this man?

In the same way that an evil spirit causes an individual to become evil, when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, they begin to do the works of God:

Q – In these three passages, what did the Holy Spirit cause them to do?

Luke 1:67

Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Acts 13:52

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The real evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is a changed life. The Holy Spirit will always glorify Jesus and produce the life of Jesus in a believer:

John 16:12-15

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

How do we know if a person is speaking from the Holy Spirit? The true test is that ultimately any word from God will bring glory to Jesus.

1 John 4:1-3

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

Summary:

- Every believer needs to be baptized in water and in the Spirit. Clean the house, then fill it with good things.
- The early believers encourage everyone to receive the Spirit as part of becoming a Christian.
- We receive the Spirit by the laying on of hands, by prayer and by responding positively as we receive Him.
- We know that a person has received the Holy Spirit when there is:
 - An overflow
 - Indicators
 - Spiritual Gifts
 - Spiritual Character

When a person repents, (changes their mind toward sin) has faith, (in Jesus to save them) is baptized, (washed from their sin) and receives the Holy Spirit (who empowers), then we can truly know that they have entered into eternal life.

How To Share the Good News

How to we help others to come to the knowledge of Christ and be saved from their sins? There have been many who have preached on the street with what some have labelled “hell fire” messages. There have also been various crusades in tents and stadiums that have had some success. If you live in the western world, you have probably had someone knocking at your door wanting to talk to you about religion in one way or another. Are these methods good or bad? Should we take to the streets with a p.a. system, or pass out loads of tracts?

Q – What has your experience of “street evangelism” been like?

Q – What to you feel like when someone comes to your door asking you about faith in God?



Let's begin this new subject with a brief review of what we have considered so far:

- The gospel is good news
- The bad news is that we are sinners
- The penalty for sin is eternal judgment
- The gift of God is eternal life
- How to receive eternal life?
 - Repentance
 - Faith in Christ
 - Baptism
 - Receive the Holy Spirit

Now we want to explore this question: how can I share the gospel with others?

Q – Is there someone that you would really like to come to know Jesus as saviour? Have you tried to share the love of Jesus with anyone close to you?

What the bible tells us about evangelism may be a bit different from what some have done in times past. Here are 5 things to consider when sharing the good news of Jesus Christ:

#1 - Be ready – in his letter to the church in Rome, Paul wrote that he was ready to preach the gospel:

Romans 1:15

So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

Q – What do you have to do to be ready to preach the gospel?

Let's look again at what Peter wrote in his letter:

1 Peter 3:15,16

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

There are several things in these two verses that show a readiness to share the gospel:

- ***Sanctify the Lord God in your heart*** - simply means to put Jesus first, as the ruler of your heart. Being ready means allowing Jesus to rule!

Matthew 6:9

In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

Q – What does “hallowed be Your name” mean?

- ***...everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...*** - means two things:
 - That you are close enough to other people for them to see that you have hope in you.
 - That you are living in such a way that they want to know about the hope that is in you.

Matthew 9:10

Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

Q – Why did sinners sit down with Jesus and His disciples?

- ***Meekness*** - means that you are not overpowering, rude, or haughty, but instead you are mild, gentle and humble in your manner and approach.

James 3:13

Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.

Q – What is the difference between a meek person and a weak person. Are they the same?

- **Fear** – suggest a reverence for God and an understanding the importance of the message and of representing God well.

Hebrews 12:28

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Q – If fear is a bad thing, why are we then told to fear God?

- **A good conscience** - is one that does not accuse you of wrongdoing. A clear conscience makes you bold:

2 Corinthians 1:12

For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

Q – How can we keep a clear conscience?

All of these are what we are told to work toward in order to be ready to preach the gospel. But are these standards too high to achieve?

Q – Can a new believer or an immature believer share the good news about Jesus?

#2 - Be salt – Jesus spoke of His disciples as being the salt of the earth:

Matthew 5:13

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

Q – How are we as believers like salt? What happens to us when we lose our saltiness?

Colossians 4:6

Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.



Q – What does it mean to season our speech with salt?

#3 - Be light – Jesus also said that His disciples were the light of the world:



Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Q – In what way are Christians like light?

#4 - Be wise – Wisdom is one of the keys to winning people for Christ:

Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous *is a tree of life,*
And he who wins souls *is wise.*

Daniel 12:3

Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to righteousness
Like the stars forever and ever.

Q – Why does it not say, “He who wins souls is knowledgeable”? Isn’t knowledge important?

#5 - Be intentional – This is something that is most neglected. We are often making a lot of effort toward people who are not ready to receive the gospel, or we “preach” with no aim. Here is something to consider in the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13:3-9

Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Q – Where do you suppose the sower threw the most of his seed?

Being intentional means that we are actually focusing our evangelism in a specific way or direction. Whenever the concept of being a witness is used in the New Testament there is usually an inference that it begins with people that we know or are familiar with. For example:

The Samaritan woman told everyone that she knew about Jesus in her entire town:

John 4:28-30

The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

Paul would always start his ministry in a place where there were Jews:

Acts 17:1

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

Jesus gave His disciples a pattern for being His witnesses:

Acts 1:8

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Notice that they were to go first in Jerusalem (their main city), then Judea (the region outside their city), next Samaria (nearest in location and culture to them), and finally to the rest of the world.

Q – As an individual, who should I target? Or in other words, who do I want to see saved, or who do I know that may be open to the things of God?

Here are a few people to consider:

- My family members
- My close friends
- My work colleagues
- My neighbours

What about our church as a body of believers? We are called as a collective body to be ready to preach the gospel, to be salt, to be light and to be intentional in our witness.

Q – As a church, who should we target?

Here are a few things to consider:

- Our neighbourhood – what can we do to be salt and light in our neighbourhood?
- Our city – how can we have an impact on an entire city? Is it important to work with other Christians when preaching the gospel?
- Our connections globally – what can we do to have an impact on a global scale?

In our next section we will consider what we can do practically to “preach the gospel”.

What can we do to share the gospel in a practical way?

#1 - **Earn their friendship** – *How can you be salt if no one knows you?*

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 18:24

A man *who has* friends must himself be
friendly,
But there is a friend *who sticks* closer than
a brother.



Proverbs 27:9

Ointment and perfume delight the heart,
And the sweetness of a man's friend *gives delight* by hearty counsel.

Q – What makes a good friend? Do I have a close friend that does not know Jesus? Should I make friends with unbelievers?

#2 - **Invite them** – *How can you be salt if no one knows that you are there?*

John 1:40-42

One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

John 1:45,46

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

John 4:28-30

The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

Q – What can we think of to invite our friends, family and work colleagues to?

#3 - **Do works of service** – *How can they see your good works if you are not working?*

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

1Tim 5:9,10



Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

1 Tim 6:17-19

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Tit 3:13,14

Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

1Pet 2:11,12

Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.



The bible speaks of something called “dead works”:

Hebrews 6:1

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God...

Hebrews 9:13, 14

For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Q – What is the difference between good works and dead works

#4 – Get involved in the community - *How can you have a voice in your community if you are not in your community?*

Philippians 2:14-16

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or laboured in vain.

Matthew 5:43-45

"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.



Q – How can we become involved with our local community?

"Love is the only thing that can turn an enemy into a friend..."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

These are only a few suggestions as to how we can become a witness to others in a practical way. Here are a few other practical suggestions:

1. Host a gospel concert, fate, or other event and invite the neighbourhood
2. Send your worship team to a local pub night and perform gospel songs, then invite locals to an event at the church.
3. Offer to clean the streets or renew an area of town that is in need of a makeover.
4. Invite unbelievers to dinner, or to a church dinner.
5. Conduct a sporting event and invite unbelievers to compete against your Christian team.
6. Meet a need (feed the homeless, help displaced people, etc.)
7. Go to an open area and put on a high-quality gospel concert as a taster, then invite the onlookers to an event.

These suggestions are to help you to think outside of the box. Can you think of more? The main idea is that we have an amazing message of salvation that is available to all. Jesus wants this message to be preached to every person:

Mark 16:15

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

And he wants disciples from every ethnic group on the planet:

Matthew 28:19,20

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

So, let us do our best to share this good news with everyone that we can, using wisdom and being considerate and understanding to all.

Q – Are you ready to do it?