

Evangelism

A Privileged Opportunity, Not a Burdensome Calling

The presentation of the Gospel is clearly one of the highest callings we can aspire to. But, often, in the pursuit of this process, we compromise the message or its delivery to get an artificial response. This calling is of God, not of man! God will cause it, not man!

I. What is Evangelism?

- A. It is to literally, “announce, share, or bring good news”
 1. As with any good news, its presentation should not be looked upon as an obligation as much as a **privilege**
 2. Paul clarified he was not ashamed of this “Good News” - Rom. 1:16
 - a. It is the means to salvation before a holy God for sinful man
 - b. It is not (humanly) prejudicial - “to everyone”
 3. The bearer of this news must be fully convinced it is good news
 - a. The witness is not obsessed with what **objectors** think
 - b. If popular consensus goes against our good news, we still hold it and wait till anyone expresses interest and asks - I Pet. 3:15
 - c. The previous passage was in a context of receiving opposition
- B. It is key to note, that whenever the Gospel was given, it was given to willing and even anxious audiences
 1. Take Peter’s message to the crowd in Acts 2:14-41
 - a. It started with a “natural” transition - there was a belief that the apostles and disciples were drunk when they began to speak in different languages
 - b. Peter began by clarifying the meaning of Joel’s prophecy
 - c. It was not till their hearts were “pricked” and they asked that the Gospel was given to them - vs. 37
 - d. Up to this point, the message was one of “**condemnation**”
 2. Take the Ethiopian Eunuch - Acts 8:26-39
 - a. Philip was led to a man searching (reading Isaiah)
 - b. It began with the simple question, “Do you understand it?”
 3. Beware the “Simon” approach - Acts 8:4-25
 - a. This is when the “earthly benefits/results” become the focus more than the eternal message/result
 - b. Simon wanted the power to lay on hands and give the Holy Spirit
 - c. The Gospel and **money** have no “parallel” - vs. 18-21
 - His (Simon’s) “heart was not right”
 - d. The Gospel message is narrow and basic - there is a judgement for sin and only one payment will rescue and that is through Christ alone
 - e. If “salvation’s accessories” become the focus, the message is lost
 4. The Philippian jailor - Acts 16:16-34
 - a. It is not directly mentioned what stirred him to seek the Lord
 - b. When the opportunity was presented, the Gospel was given

C. Evangelism is not the “art of persuasion” - I Cor. 2:1-14

1. Today, there are “pushes” to make the Gospel a “marketable” item
 - a. The goal has become getting them “to the prayer” as if at all costs
 - b. In the process, the message has either been watered down or embellished
 - c. God and His priceless gift are brought to the level of selling a nice **accessory** to one’s life for happiness and greater fulfillment
 - d. The presentation has been emphasized if not more than the message
 - e. Selling tactics are introduced to make the “sell”
2. This is what Paul clearly stated he was not after not did he do
 - a. He did not come with “superiority of speech”
 - (Lightfoot) — b. “not in excellence of rhetorical display or of philosophical subtlety”
 - c. People are not to be persuaded by our scripted presentations or by our mastery of persuasion
 - What you have won them with you have won them to
 - d. “not to know anything among you” - as if to be aware of - he would not be concerned with the wonders and philosophies around him
3. His focus was on Christ and Him crucified - the sacrificial work of Christ
 - This is the core of evangelism; its **focus** ; its drive to communicate
4. Those caught up in winning philosophical arguments will stray from message
 - For what is to be gained if we win; salvation is spiritually discerned (as if in the heart of a man) more than in the mind of a man - vs. 14
5. He was the opposite of a strongly **confident** man - vs. 3
 - a. “Paul had been in prison in Philippi, driven out of Thessalonica and Berea, politely bowed out of Athens. It is a human touch to see this shrinking as he faced the hard conditions in Corinth. It is a common feeling of the most effective preachers. Cool complacency is not the mood of the finest preaching.” RWP
 - b. Acts 18:9-10 - Paul had suffered with fear - it was not a “popular” message he bore nor one flattering to the hearers
6. What his “message” did not contain - vs. 4
 - a. “persuasive words of wisdom” - enticing; words designed to persuade the mind, convince the hearer - it is a mental struggle
 - b. It was not based in philosophy - literally man’s wisdom - his ideas as foundational to his message
7. Its effectiveness pivoted on the acknowledged demonstration of the Spirit
 - a. It would not be in persuasive arguments, but the working of the Spirit
 - b. It would be made powerful as the Spirit made it so - for to be made powerful by man is to deprive the result of its God-designed effectiveness
8. The purpose was just so - what becomes the “**object**” of one’s faith
 - a. It must not be placed in the inspiring acrobats of man’s thinkings
 - b. It is founded in the reality of God’s work on our behalf - we take His word for it over the “words” of any man!
9. There must be an admitted danger in clever and “underhanded” methods in the presentation of our entrusted message
 - a. Evangelism is our fortunate opportunity not the coerced job to ensure converts for Heaven
 - b. We do not talk anyone into Heaven, the Spirit “seizes them” for it

The effects of constant rejections and oppositions

D. Evangelism and ministry is the opportunity of God - I Cor. 3:1-9

1. Paul mentioned his need to talk with them is immature - vs. 3-4
 - a. This was evidenced by jealousy - competitive spirits and factions
 - They each had their own “groups” based upon popular teachers
 - b. This was evidenced by “strifes” and divisions
 - Arguments over methodology and approach based upon opinion
 - c. The thoughts were tending to “success” (as they determined it) would be based upon the **cleverness** of men
 - d. But, these were just “mere men” - God does not want us “impressed” with men, but impressed with God at work in them
 - e. Immaturity seeks and sees only externals while a mature focus seeks and sees the underlying **Cause**
2. Two mentioned, Paul himself and Apollos where simply servants (instruments)
 - a. God was the giver of true “opportunity”
 - b. It was literally through these men that God “gave to every man”
 - c. No credit is given to himself or Apollos for “success”
3. Paul was used to “plant” - he “sowed the Word and truth”
 - a. As Christ illustrated giving out the Word as seed - the sower was not responsible for the results as a farmer cannot make the plant grow - he cooperates with God’s design and is at God’s mercy for “profit”
 - b. Again, we are not given a picture or instruction to ensure its success
4. Apollos was pictured as “watering” - he nourished and helped “root” the truth
 - a. This could be clarifying the truth and building on beginning growth
 - b. Each has a part, neither **determines** what it is
5. God caused and is always the one causing “growth” - if there is no increase it is not because of poor planting or watering - God ensures this
6. Verse 7 clarifies our significance in the whole process
 - a. “God is the whole and we are not anything.” RWP
 - b. The planting and the watering are a legitimate part of the whole process, as the farmer cooperates, as is his work, with the process
 - c. It is our “work” and calling, but we look to cooperate with the “ground” that God provides and sow the “seed” of the truth
7. The planter and waterer are as “one”
 - a. “..essentially in their aim they are one, engaged in one and the same ministry; therefore they ought not to be made by you the occasion of forming separate parties.” JFB
 - b. Do not fall prey to the idea that it is divisible into obvious processes, and to structure your parts accordingly - some will only teach, some will only preach, some will harvest the crop and some will disciple. We are to see our roles as intertwined and prepared to participate in all aspects of the process.
 - c. One calling is not above the other; they are to see the same goal - we are not to be those who “**undervalue**” the work of the others
8. Each is not rewarded in accordance with his success but in accordance with his labor (It is “well done thou good and faithful (not successful) servant”)
 - a. As a farmer receives reward for his cooperation and submission to the labor he is called to do

It was literally through them not because of them

Mt. 23:25

- b. "Reward" - as if in "payment of service" from the "employer"
 - c. The "pleasing" is of God, not of men
9. Look to Whom we work - vs. 9
- a. We are privileged to be called "fellow laborers" with God
 - b. It is His work, we are privileged participants - it is not that we "have to reap the harvest" but should always be viewed that we "get to reap the harvest!"
 - c. "God could accomplish the work entirely Himself, but calls puny mortals (mere worms of the dust) to be as it were His coadjutors, and makes use of us as instruments" J. Calvin
10. It is all, in the reality, "God's husbandry, God's building"
- GBN — a. "All the increase that comes by their labour proceeds from God in such a way that no part of the praise of it may be given to the servant."
- b. We are God's "harvest field" - our personal growth is from Him
 - c. We are His "building" - His work of His architecture - His plan/design
11. As clarified in vs. 10 - it is God's work we do, be careful how we "build" upon His foundations as laid by His servants (workmen)

E. What is evangelism?

1. Acts 16:31 - "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."
 - a. It is NOT believe that He existed and meant well
 - b. It is the staking of one's eternal soul on His work on their behalf
 - c. To entertain the thought that it is any "my work" will necessitate the thought that one can lose it by their work or will cause thought of doubt placing too much attention on their own part (and supposed maintenance) - this is why it is crucial to establish it as God's work
2. "...that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" - John 3:16
 - a. It is key as to where the object of one's faith is directed
 - b. The key to this verse is not so much our believing as to where it is being and has been directed and placed
3. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." - Romans 6:23
 - a. It is the message of God's gift - not "job opportunity"
 - b. It is His gift as to those incapable of earning it and, in reality, those deserving eternal judgment
 - c. This explains the significance of people seeing the depraved, sinful, and helpless state before a holy God!
 - d. Evangelism, the Good News, must begin with the bad news of our condition (the wages properly due our sin)
 - e. If presented as our rightful judgement as a rebellious creation before its Creator, salvation need not be "marketed" as a nice life accessory, but as an eternal necessity to be freed from God's judgment
4. Beware any presentation of "moral improvement" in the gospel message
 - a. God does not want us coming with our plan of action for change
 - b. We come in confession (I John 1:9) of our sinful state, not offering anything else in return for His salvation (we are totally at His mercy!)
 - c. To make it appear as though God wants change of character is to lay the groundwork for a "works based and secured" salvation

Romans 3 is crucial that its message come before the hope message starting in Romans 4

Messages of obedience are for the believer, not the unsaved

- d. Mt. 23:15 - It is possible to have converts to “righteousness” and set standards of identity without reaching the heart (person)
- e. Evangelism begins with man’s dire **need**, not his personal potential

II. A Genuine Love for People is Necessary on Our Part - I John 4:7-21 and Luke 10:25-37

A. Much of modern evangelism is rooted in self love

- 1. I will “win others” for the recognition of others - there was no “bragging”
- 2. I will “win others” for my own spiritual “legacy”
- 3. Many develop and foster the mentality of a salesman - a potential “sale” not an eternal soul

B. Love comes from God - vs. 7-8

- 1. He is the originator of Love - it is His design and purpose
 - a. The popular ideas of love were two-fold:
 - (1). ερος - sensual (getting, lusting) - focus is on receiving
 - (2). φιλια - Mutual love (friends) it gives as long as it receives
 - b. The obscure form of love was brought to attention by the Lord
 - (1). αγαπη - Selfless - focused on giving without proper return
 - (2). It is finding value in the investment in others (as I have received)
- 2. This distinct love defines our “works” **value** - I Cor. 13:1-3
 - a. If one could talk in all languages (even angels) it is valueless without love
 - b. If one has special spiritual discernment and powerful faith to do miracles, it is literally “nothing” if not done for love of God and others
 - Literally, an “absolute **zero**” - RWP
 - c. If one does great works of “charity” and self-sacrifice, the personal profit is none at all (it has no lasting value to one’s self)
 - d. This is why there should almost be a “pleading” for love for each other
 - e. This involves a few key actions on our part...
 - (1). Time is spent on others I should love (we invest in what we love: if we need to develop a loving heart, we must invest!)
 - (2). Learning the needs of those I am to love and participate in the meeting of them (always an alert investigator)
 - (3). A reordering of personal priorities so as to not hinder this love

B. Love defined in action by the originator - God Himself - vs. 9-10

- 1. The essence of love is giving - (manifested - made apparent by God giving)
 - a. He gave the very best - His only son
 - b. Love gives the best (being “cheap” while giving is not love)
 - It is not necessarily the giving of things, but of giving one’s heart
 - c. This is all illustrated in John 3:16 - God love, God gave (for our best)
- 2. He loved us, not because we loved Him
 - a. Love is the initiator, not the responder (not focused on the recipient’s response)
 - b. It is driven by the need not the **worthiness**
 - These are to characterize us! (This separates φιλια from αγαπη)
- 3. God’s love provided the means to “pay the due” of our sins
 - a. This is the heart idea of “propitiation” - appeasement; paying off the debt
 - b. Love is evidenced best when we are given the opportunity to forgive the “debts” of others to us, constantly keeping clear any offenses others may “steer into” against us! - Truly loving the “unlovely”

2. How better to demonstrate (prove) the Spirit of God? - vs. 12
 - a. No “man” has ever truly seen God (as no one will this side of eternity)
 - There is a better way to prove God than the miraculous!
 - b. God’s Spirit in us works its way to completion in our love for others
 - (1). Here is how His love is “perfected” (brought to the goal (intention))
 - (2). His love of us and in us will work its way out to the expression to others
 - c. Think of it like in a family - how can brothers and sisters say they love their parents if they do not love each other?
 - (1). If I love God, I love what He loves (He loves the “brethren”)
 - (2). So how can I say I love God when I cannot “stand” one of His?
3. Again, it is this outworking of His Spirit that gives us confidence - vs. 13
 - a. An unloving or “hateful” believer will struggle with doubts
 - b. God gives us insights into the flaws and error of others to be an active participant in the solution to the problem. The solution does not lie in condemnation or in giving-up on the “brethren” but in the longsuffering with them for their best! (This defines God, this defines those in whom He dwells)
- D. A firsthand account - vs. 14-16
 1. Again, John was an actual witness to the coming of the Lord
 2. The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world (offered, but not all receive)
 - In love, God’s offering was not based upon the world’s response, but on His plan for what was best and needed (as love always acts)
 3. Those confessing that Christ is God, God dwells in them (flesh and blood could not reveal this to us - Mt. 16:17) - so knowing and believing this to be fact, we love - this is the source of being able to continually love without expectation of return
 4. He who remains loving, remains assured he/she is in the God - so it is coming to grips, firsthand also, with knowing I am a loving person
 - Submitting to the opportunities to express God’s love to others through me!
- E. Perfected love versus fear - vs. 17-23
 1. “There is not fear in love” - no dread
 - As others may fear a great man of authority, wielding power over life and death for a person, his children, confident in his love, do not dread him
 2. “Matured” love makes fear “go away”
 - a. Just as we do not shy back from eternity (we come with boldness), the love we demonstrate should not carry with it a “price”
 - b. Just as we do not fear God’s love being subject to “take-backs” neither should our love be “subject to change”
 3. If we doubt the love of God for us, we will be unloving with others (vacuum like)
 - “condemned” people are not likely to be loving!
 4. This is the type of love we ought to emulate
 - (1). If one knows truly they are loved, they have no dread in the relationship
 - (2). We are to seek opportunities to “prove” our love to cause others no reason whatsoever to dread a relationship with us
 5. We do this because we were responders to God’s love, not initiators - vs. 19

- (1). We would not love God at all except that He loved us first
 - (2). I, then, must expect to initiate love (when proven this way, it matures the process and casts out fear based in the doubt of - “what can possibly go wrong?”)
6. How can we say (believe) we love God when we do not love those we can see?

- (1). It is a farce to say one loves God and “hates” his brother
 - (a). To hate is to “detest” or despise - usually based upon a **difference**
 - (b). The natural source of detesting is disassociation - it is not what I like

The living example of what love entails is our Lord in Philippians 2 where he “emptied Himself of Himself”... love is “full” of others and God rather than full of self!

- *Either I will expect others to conform to me or I will expect me to conform to God*
- (c). The heart of love is based on a voluntary submission of the will to treat another as I want to be treated in spite of differences
 - (d). It is the cherishing of another (giving to them “weight”) - the two initial evidences of love are “longsuffering” and “kind” (sensitive to others’ hearts) - not failing to consider their perspective or condition
 - (e). This “hate” is to not “bear with” the “oddities” of others and to then act or speak (originating in the thoughts) ungraciously
- (2). We see our “brothers” but not God
 - (a). To “see” here is to **study** or observe over time (they are obvious)
 - (2). It is human nature to base love on the observable (loving what is admirable and loving, with **pity**, what is not)
 - (3). So, if we cannot submit to love what is observable, how can we submit to love what is not?

- (3). We, then, are commanded: if we would love God, we will love our brothers
 - Again, love is predispositioning my will to see the need for loving in all

F. Our Lord illustrated this concept in Luke 10:25-37

1. The setting was one of highest priorities - being determined/discussed
2. To love God with all the heart and your neighbor as yourself - the “top 2”
 - a. With God, it was clear, but how do we determine our “neighbor?”
 - b. Our Lord gives the example of selfless love for one who could not pay
3. The priest and Levite both passed by, neglecting the man in his need
4. The Samaritan, on a **determined** journey, had compassion
 - a. He saw the man in light of his need, not in light of the inconvenience and the soon to come expense
 - b. He stopped his plans to meet another’s need (as God brought him to him)
 - c. We must see others not as chance meetings, but as God’s appointments
5. If we deal with others strictly on how they deal with us, we will not evangelize
 - a. God dealt with us not to His “benefit” but for ours - this is love!
 - b. We must deal with others for **their** good, not ours

G. So, in reality, evangelism begins with our interest in others

1. We strive to follow the example of Christ in Php. 2:1-11
2. We must not be “driven” by “selfishness”/strife or “empty conceit”
 - As one only interested in those interested in him - see Prov. 18:2
3. “ ..with all humility regard others as of more account than himself,” (TCNT)
4. The only qualifier mentioned is that they not be **ourselves** !
 - Our Lord died for us as enemies, we follow His example - Rom. 5:10
5. We evangelize, not for statistics or even church growth, simply by genuinely caring for others in light of need, not of merit

III. We Have Been Given the “Ministry of Reconciliation” - II Cor. 5:1-21

A. The example is of Paul and his associates in Corinth- vs. 1-5

1. Paul was defending his calling and integrity in the first part of this chapter
2. The end of chapter 4 dealt with distinguishing between the temporal and eternal - he clarifies that we live in temporal bodies now - vs. 1-4
3. Paul then clarifies the source of any “calling” or purpose - God is the preparer
 - All thoughts/philosophies **must** begin here - vs. 5
4. Life is then found in our cooperation/submission to His callings that He has prepared us for in detail - no call or challenge comes in an untimely manner

B. The temporal and eternal are always seen separately with the eternal foremost

1. Our “driving ambition” is to be **pleasing** to our Lord - vs. 9
2. Death and **fear** are not to be “driving forces” - vs. 6-8
 - We walk/live/continue by faith, not by what seems apparent
3. We live with the thought of account before the Judgment Seat of Christ
 - a. We must all appear - lit. to be “rendered apparent” - integrity
 - b. We give account before the judgement seat of what we did - this is in light of verse 9 that we strive to please the Judge, not that this is a judgment of salvation versus condemnation
4. The “terror of the Lord” is the motivator - vs. 11
 - a. It is the reverential reason we do what we do - we love Him and fear Him at the same time
 - b. It is remarked that they/we are “manifest” before God - God sees and knows us for what we really are - God is not mocked
 - Paul was “appealing” to God as witness of his genuineness
 - c. He also “hoped” that his **integrity** was apparent to those around him
 - d. His appeal was to their “consciences” - he was proven genuine
5. Much of today’s evangelism tries to rely on approach and method, undermining or devaluing personal “authority” having the chance to “prove” one’s genuineness to those that are to share this “word of reconciliation”
 - Some expect a “respectable” hearing with no credentials!
6. All this was stated to give them a “**firm** glorying” - in sincerity
 - Others came with flashy appearance and eloquent messages
7. It is the “love of Christ” that “holds us together” - keeps us going
 - It is our love of Him and from Him that makes us do what we do!
8. This is all in light of the fact that Christ died for all of us (who were dead) and now we are alive - since this is the fact of our “matter” then we are not to live for ourselves but for Him Who died for us - vs. 14-15

C. Seeing as how all this is true, we do not look on any other in the “temporal”

1. We do not view others as “according to the flesh”
2. We see them in light of **eternity** (theirs and ours) and see them and ourselves as eternal beings serving an eternal God
3. Those “in Christ” are as new creations (refocused) - vs. 17

D. With all this knowledge and privilege comes “ministry” - vs. 18

1. He has given to us the privilege of the “service” to share the message of reconciliation (ministry is the same basic word for “deacon” - one of serving)
2. It is not based in “fear” nor the ability to, ourselves, be persuasive - we simply clarify verse 19 - what God did to reconcile mankind to Himself - God needed no reconciling, but man did!

All this must be known and considered as we ponder our “ministry of reconciliation using the word of reconciliation!”

3. Our “Word of reconciliation” - vs. 19
 - a. What is the content of our message (witness)?
 - b. That God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself
 - That Christ, as God incarnate, Has brought “restoration”
 - c. This is done recognizing that their “failures” are not held against them
 - That their sins are not “calculated” to their account
 - d. This is the Gospel - our trespasses are not charged to our account but to the account of Christ Who took our sins upon Himself
4. This is our “Word of reconciliation” - the truth of the matter
 - a. Our message does not deviate from this “word” - we do no add to it or take away from it in our “ministry”
 - b. The whole message is summed up in verse 21 - He (God) made Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) to literally become sin for us, that in turn we might be “made” (become) the righteousness of God “IN HIM”
 - c. The message, these days and in the past, has come to include...
 - (1). The necessity of works to obtain and to maintain
 - (2). The necessity of personal righteousness
 - (3). Loyalty to the church
 - (4). A precisely worded prayer
 - d. None of these should adulterate the Good News of Christ’s work
5. We act as “ambassadors” - we speak for someone else - vs. 20
 - a. An ambassador (a good one) seeks not to speak his own words/opinions
 - b. An ambassador is not caught up in the culture of the country he is sent
 - c. So our ministry is “as though” God were making an appeal through us

This message should be reflected in our own “hope”
I Peter 3:15

E. What then are to be the qualities of such a ministry?

1. Focus on being a person of integrity

faith based character –

 - a. Live the message and the results of the message
 - b. We must not have ulterior motives (self-focused) - we speak for the King, but we cannot force and must not strive to force the results
 - c. Seek to “earn the right” to be heard - II Cor. 6:3-4
 - d. Don’t be a “cause for offense” to the discrediting of this ministry
 - Method can ruin message - be yourself (integrity)
2. View others that we meet as “divine appointments”
 - a. This is one of our callings as long as we live in this “tent”
 - b. Each “appointment” in life God has prepared us for - II Cor. 5:5
3. Focus attention on the “fear of the Lord” than the “fear of man”
 - a. The fear of man is a “snare” (trap/entangler) - Pro. 29:25
 - b. Run for the “Judge” not for the approval of bystanders
4. Do not look on others as “according to the flesh” but in eternal light
 - a. Their ranking on earth has no place in their eternal state
 - b. Their merit is not a factor with God as ours was not
5. Love others because of God’s love for us - vs. 14
 - a. Accept a posture of grief rather than condemnation with “ignorance”
 - b. Dwell upon (meditate) God’s greatness, seeking our opportunities to boast of Him and His great works and love to us
 - c. Purposely seek out ways to invest in those you believe you should be a witness so as to work at “steering” your heart

IV. Practical Ideas in the Presentation of the Gospel

A. It should begin (with us) with prayer - Col. 4:2-6

1. "Continue in prayer" - literally devote yourself to it
 - a. It is first the seeking of God's **will** (to be done)
 - b. It is expressing our needs, frustrations and desires to Him
 - c. Specifically to evangelism, it is seeking, foremost, His lead
2. Watch in it - "...watch that your mind may be in a right frame when you pray; and watch, that when your mind is in a right frame you may not neglect to pray." Barnes
 - a. Watchful and vigilant to make sure prayers are not affected by our corrupt wills, or **distracted** minds
 - b. When praying for opportunities to be a witness, be open and expectant that God's opportunities will be varied and may not come in times or manners in which we **expect** them!
3. Pray, seeking God's will and our harmony with it in thanksgiving
 - a. This demonstrates the faith in prayer - the expectation of God acting
 - b. This keeps our focus on the controller of all things

B. Asking for an "open door" of opportunity - vs. 3

1. A "door" is an **appropriate** entrance - intruders come in other ways
 - a. A "locked" door is not to be forced
 - (1). Paul was not seeking to "force" the message
 - (2). We should be poised to share and serve, seeking these opportunities of witness - sharing the Truth
 - b. "Doors" are usually opportunities to share the Truth - "utterance"
 - (1). The mystery of Christ = The Gospel - grace through faith
 - (2). Opportunities may involve **trouble** - "...I am also in bonds"
2. A "door" is an **open** message - presentation
 - a. Make it manifest - make it clear (bring enlightenment)
 - (1). The goal is merely to show what God has done in Christ
 - (2). It can be demonstrated in word and in deed
 - b. We are obligated to share it - "... as I ought"
 - (1). It is to be as a necessity
 - (2). To share it appropriately - messenger need not be offensive

C. Be wise in your dealings (treatment) of unbelievers

1. "Walk about" in wisdom - as if your "barrier guide"
 - Limiting rights/privileges for the sake of **message** - Mt. 5:38-42
2. To walk **out of** wisdom with unbelievers is to...
 - a. Stand in personal condemnation of them
 - b. Become (act) just like them (without distinction)

D. Resourcefully use time, for time itself is wasting - vs. 5

1. Literally, eagerly buy-up (use up) the occasion (season of time)
 - a. As a farmer his planting/harvest time (must not be squandered)
 - b. As a person buying up something on a "super sale"
2. It involves the patience to wait for God-given opportunities and the diligence and resolve (pre-planned) to seize it when it comes!

E. Literally think "**real hard**" before you speak - vs. 6

1. Speech with grace - thoughtful and considerate of the other

2. Let it be “palatable” to the hearer - not just interesting, but in correct proportion to their need and ability to “consume”
3. Be careful the words and phrases used which may make no sense to the hearer
 - a. Terms as “ask Jesus into your heart” will not make sense to most and is not a scriptural term to use!
 - b. If the term “saved” is used, it will need to be clarified - saved from what?
 - c. To tell someone they need to “accept Christ” will either mean nothing to them or will confuse the real answer
4. Terms that should be used and clarified
 - a. Terms such as “repentance” and “confession” are a good place to start
 - These deal with the problem first (sinful/helpless man)
 - b. The goal is to demonstrate/point out the sinfulness and inability of man
 - c. The target of the conversation is the “essence” of saving faith
 - What faith is (the direction of one’s confidence and reliance) and the extent of it as being 100% God’s work and 100% our reliance (Clarify that creation is for God’s glory; this is why salvation is “set up” this way)
5. To “speak as we ought to speak” we must first see where the hearer is “at”
 - a. Do they have no “real” idea of eternity and their need?
 - b. Are they driven by conscience to please God on their terms?
 - c. Have they been offended or hurt by a “religious” person?
 - d. Are they “intellectual” seeing faith as incomprehensible?
 - e. Are they seeking the Truth and are impressively responsive?

Most likely will take more time and investment as God allows us

Most likely will accept Christ immediately

F. Some ideas of what to look for in others

1. Lots of sincere questions - as Nicodemus in John 3
 - a. Nicodemus was still afraid of popular opinion and came to Christ by night to ask him questions
 - b. He was not rebuked by the Lord, but answered the questions with explanation/clarification (he was given time)
 - c. Though, remember, as Paul with King Agrippa, it is still in the hands of the Holy Spirit as Paul could not fully convince him - Acts 26:28
2. People in “dire straights” as the Philippian jailor of Acts 16:31
 - a. The jailor, had the prisoners escaped, would have been put to death
 - He was stopped by Paul, and that is when he asked
 - b. Our Lord “drew a crowd” by meeting genuine needs
 - (1). It may be, that our witness will come by meeting practical needs or by providing comfort to those hurting
 - (2). Many came and heard a message they had not planned on hearing, as they simply sought physical reliefs
 - c. The apostles also had opportunities based upon meeting needs
3. Others watching our responses to life - I Pet. 3:15
 - a. This is easily overlooked - we watch others, failing to remember they are watching and “measuring” us
 - b. Paul was alluding to this in II Cor. 3:2 - he used them as “evidence” of his own genuineness and the genuineness of his message
 - c. This was key as Paul clarified here in Col. 4 that they sustain a “good reputation” with those who are “without”

4. Look for those searching for the Truth - Acts 8:26-40

a. Philip was led to the Ethiopian official

- He was led by the Spirit - we should not think that He does not still lead us to opportunities such as this

b. The official was reading Isaiah 53:7-8

(1). Philip had been led to simply stand near the chariot - vs. 29

(2). It was then Philip heard him reading the Scripture - vs. 30

c. Philip then asked him if he understood - this led to the opportunity

d. What was characteristic of this situation?

(1). As is to always be understood, it was of the Spirit

(2). Philip was not “pushy” but waited for the “evidence” of the opportunity to come - this came when he heard him reading

(3). Even then, he asked him if he understood - questions are always a key “lead-in” to evangelism

5. Be ready for those “what do you think” situations - Acts 13:13-47

a. Paul and his followers sat and listened with the “reading of the Law and the Prophets” in the synagogue on the Sabbath

b. They were asked to share “..any word of exhortation” to the people

c. This drew crowds which ultimately lead to resentment of some

G. Be prepared to converse - Pr. 18:13 (learning the “matter” before speaking of it)

1. Much of today’s society is structured away from true conversing

a. Many avoid, as much as possible, interaction above “small talk”

b. It is a troubling sign of our time seeing so many people unable to talk openly (consistently) and honestly

c. It has become politically incorrect to discuss beliefs of “religion”

d. Even we as Christians have become masters of small talk avoiding issues needing to be addressed and making others comfortable with us to bring them up

- Hospitality is more important than just being friendly, it can become the “open door of opportunity” we are (or should be) seeking (this goes back to the need to love others)

2. Beware the James 2 “work around” - James 2:14-16

a. We do not want to get good at gracious statements and sentiments lacking in genuine content/action

b. We must look upon others in light of their need

3. Prepare for conversing - be strategic in your conversations

a. Small talk can be a powerful tool if used to lead to something else

(1). Questions are handy to have prepared - learn about others with preplanned questions

(2). Over time, we can learn important information of where they are at in life, what they believe, and what are their concerns

b. Be always looking for ways to “test the waters” and responding

(1). Words/statements appropriately timed and phrased - Pr. 25:11

(2). As an investigator, look for clues as to the best approach

(3). Use personal illustrations of faith or Scripture to see how they respond (looking for openings)

The genuine desire for the real Truth is brought about by the Spirit of God

Philip was ready and did “preach to him Jesus” as being the answer from God

The importance, though, is that we are looking!

c. Be genuinely interested in the person with whom you are speaking

Again, the key concept of true evangelism is a genuine concern/interest/love for the other above myself and my own comfort

- (1). This is the key concept of Php. 2:3-4
- (2). Do not seek to be argumentative - "strife" - factious
- (3). Do not seek to be self-serving - building self - "empty conceit"
- (4). Conscientiously seek to keep **self** out of the main focus
- (5). Regard the other as more important - this is only accomplished by our seeing ourselves as of lesser importance

d. "Do not look out merely for your own interests..." - Php. 2:4

I Cor. 10:24 - literally "A man must not study his own interests, but the interests of others. (TCNT)"

- (1). This will take leaving the security of the "**familiar**"
- (2). Most are most comfortable talking of themselves or of topics with which they are familiar
- (3). We can use this correctly by discovering what these are
- (4). Discover and discuss their interests - prayerfully wait for them to reach a point of "**opportunity**"

H. Give time and opportunity to form relationships

1. Let them (give opportunity) to see "the hope within you" - I Pet. 3:15

- a. Be careful your conversations - are they hopeful or pessimistic?
- b. Be careful your **attitudes** - are they meek or proud?
- c. Our strengths and advantages will be found in our distinctions
- d. Many believe advantage is in similarities - these may give us a hearing as in I Cor. 9:22 but our hope will be seen in our distinctives (differences) which prove a different focus and confidence

2. Become "all things to all men" - I Cor. 9:19-27

- a. Paul was "free from all men" - he was under no earthly obligation to be like them or follow their "scruples" in any way
 - As a child might say "you're not the boss of me!"
- b. He had just been clarifying that he did not hold those to whom he ministered under any obligation of "**support**"

Christ was ridiculed because He seemed to have lowered his standards to be around less than well-standard people. Mt. 9:10-13

- (1). He gave out the "gospel" without charge
- (2). He did not hold anyone to his demands in order for him to share with them the Truth
- (3). Often, our personal scrutiny (or scruples) are so high that we overlook true opportunities of sharing the Truth because the individual contradicts our ideals or "comfort zones"

c. He yielded his rights to certain freedoms to "win some" - vs. 22-23

This whole idea carried with it more the idea of taking on the restrictions of others (that he was free from) in order to not be offensive - not letting his liberty be used as a "stumblingblock."

I Cor. 8:9

- (1). Things which could be offensive to him he "overlooked" for the sake of sharing the Truth
- (2). Nowhere does it state that he compromised his own beliefs
- (3). Nevertheless, he restricted his freedoms and took on the "restrictions" of others to gain a hearing
 - Hudson Taylor was a good example of this

d. We must be careful to not place a "**price tag**" on our fellowship

- (1). How will I be used to "win" one with whom I will not talk?
- (2). If the "externals" of another offend me, my perspective is one of judgment, forgetting my original offensiveness before God
- (3). We must expect to sacrifice for the sake of the privilege of being used of God to share the Truth!

The focus of the passage is Paul's use of his liberty avoiding its misuse to the detriment of others and his own missed opportunities

He who runs with a clear aim, looks straight-forward to the goal, makes it his sole aim, — casts away every encumbrance (Heb 12:1,2), is indifferent to what the by-standers say, and sometimes even a fall only serves to rouse him the more JFB

As mentioned in the Galatians references, those declaring another Gospel are to be considered "accursed." To change the focus of the message (one's need for salvation from God's judgment through Christ) is to bring a Gospel of another kind.

- e. "...I may by all means win some." - "It is as if he said, 'I accommodated all customs and manners, that by all means I might save some.'" GBN
- f. His posture of "becoming all things to all men" was to make himself "flexible" to the environments of others not expecting them to accommodate his
- g. Christians, though, have come to be influenced with the world's philosophies rather than influencing with God's truth
- h. This was not the idea. Along this topic Jay Adams wrote, "We have become infected with the disease of contemporary man rather than his healers. We have been influenced more than we have influenced."

3. Keep focus on purpose/calling rather than surroundings

- a. As Paul stated in the final verses of chapter 9, we "run" (strive) to obtain a "crown" from our Judge - it is for His glory, not ours
- b. Everyone striving to "win" must exercise self control
- c. We must not be those "running" without a goal or as a boxer striking useless blows at the air (fighting useless/frivolous battles)
- d. Our focus and purpose are to be seeking to fulfill genuine communication- "Getting God's ideas into somebody's head."
- e. So much of this is done, again, by demonstrating our distinctives **AMONG** them not just **TO** them.

I. We must not be those who sacrifice "substance for form"

- 1. This is where we compromise message for method
 - a. The motive is often well-intended (as if desiring to help the message be more "up-to-date" or not too offensive)
 - b. Paul was clear in the fact that the message was not to be compromised by anyone, including angels - Gal. 1:8-9
- 2. The intent is not to "please" men - Gal. 1:10
 - a. We do not do it to seek favor or to please those to whom we speak
 - No doubt, we hope the message is considered good news, but if our intent is to please them, we may shy away from aspects (such as depravity) and may even distort the message
 - b. We do not seek to make it (the message) make "common sense"
 - (1). It may be best to admit that it is not "common" thinking
 - (2). It is a unique message of what God has done for us not what we seek to do for Him!
- 3. The intent is a clear presentation of God's message to man
 - a. The overall focus of our presentation is the focus of the "making righteous" of Abraham - Rom. 4; Gal. 3:6-9
 - b. The goal to which we are "aiming" is their "believing God" for righteousness (how a holy God is really pleased)
 - c. This must then begin with a clear presentation of the sinfulness of man
 - d. If this point is not accepted or agreed with, their need will not be recognized and the message cannot proceed
 - e. To try to convince a person of the way to be "saved from judgment" they must see that they are headed for judgment
 - f. The approach that "Jesus will improve your life" is off message!

V. "That the ministry be not blamed..." - II Cor. 6:1-10

A. Do not receive the "grace of God in vain" - without affect - vs. 1-2

1. As had been clarified in vs. 21 of the previous chapter that Christ was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him
2. This is the hopeful message of the Gospel (once knowing of the judgment)
3. The benefit of the time is stressed - salvation is here, it is in our day, it is here on this day - now is the time
 - Urgency is stressed, not so much as to potential death and then judgment, but as now being the time of opportunity - it is literally a remarkable "**deal**" for all of us - it is not to be passed-up

B. We, as Paul, do not want to be a "stumblingblock" and hinder the "message"

1. We do not want to be the "**cause**" for an offense (in and of ourselves)
 - a. This is where we seek to be accommodating not seeking to be accommodated
 - b. This is where we remember we are ambassadors - II Cor. 5:20
 - How well do we represent our King and **their** Savior?
 - c. "...the idea of Paul is, that he and his fellow-apostles so laboured as that no one who saw or knew them should have occasion to reproach the ministry, or the religion which they preached; but so that in their pure and self-denying lives, the strongest argument should be seen for embracing it." Albert Barnes

2. We seek to "exhibit" ourselves as God's servants - vs. 4-10

- a. In our "endurance" - cheerful/hopeful patience/waiting
- b. In our "afflictions" - literally our **pressures** - weights
- c. In our "hardships" - our lack, in need of the basics
- d. In our "distress" - in our being "cornered"; "narrowness of room"
 - How we respond when we have no options but "trouble"
- e. In our "beatings" - literally "stripes" or our "blows" for His cause
- f. In our "imprisonments" - when suffering **wrongfully** for the right
- g. In our "tumults" - instability, disorder, confusion - where is our "fixed point of reference"; where do we "retreat" to?
- h. In our "labors" - wearisome work; hard work - diligence
- i. In "sleeplessness" - Not getting sleep (enough) or unable to
- j. In "hunger" - abstaining from food (fasting or **sacrifice** for others)
- k. In our "purity" - our "blamelessness" - we have integrity
- l. In "knowledge" - understanding; our learning (we are thinkers)
- m. In "patience" - forbearance with others and problems
 - Our anger is literally "far off"
- n. In our "kindness" - "usefulness" or gentleness (approachable)
- o. In "the Holy Spirit" - we demonstrate His fruits and direction
- p. In "genuine love" - a **proven**, selfless love for others
- q. In "the word of truth" - a working, communicable handling of the Word
- r. In the "power of God" - our visible/known dependence on Him
- s. By the "weapons of righteousness" - doing what is right no matter what!
 - Doing the "right" is our offense (how we expect to get things done)

3. We will appear to be one thing to those looking on, but we are confident in what and who we really are! - vs. 8-10 - we do not seek to be impressed with the world or the world with us; simply being impressed with God and He pleased with His work in us!

This can even be key in how they see us treating one another - John 13:35