

Evangelism

"Divine Sovereignty"

I. THE ULTIMATE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD:

- Sovereignty is described as the supreme exercise of God's **power** over all of His creation.
- It is a term by which the supreme rulership of God is expressed.
- He is the **creator**, **sustainer** and **owner** of everything.

In the total expanse of human life there is not a single square inch of which the Christ, who alone is sovereign, does not declare, 'That is mine!'

Abraham Kuyper (Dutch Reformed Pastor 1860's)

- All things find their **origin** in him and **terminate** at his command.
- God's sovereignty implies that He is:

1. Unrivaled in **Majesty**.

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven.

Psalms 148:13

2. Unlimited in **Power**.

But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

Exodus 9:16

3. Unaffected by anything **outside** of Himself.

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

Acts 17:24-25

- No one can stay His hands, He is subject only to Himself.
- He needs no counsel and seeks no advice?

God does not deliberate or consult, but has once for all decreed before the creation of the world what he will do.

John Calvin

Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

Isaiah 40:13-14

- He alone is the King.

...He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

1 Timothy 6:15b

The Sovereignty of the God of Scripture is absolute, irresistible, infinite. When we say that God is Sovereign we affirm His right to govern the universe which He has made for His own glory, just as He pleases. We affirm that His right is the right of the Potter over the clay, i.e., that He may mold that clay into whatsoever form He chooses, fashioning out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor. We affirm that He is under no rule or law outside of His own will and nature, that God is a law unto Himself, and that He is under no obligation to give an account of His matters to any. Sovereignty characterizes the whole Being of God. He is Sovereign in all His attributes. He is Sovereign in the exercise of His power. His power is exercised as He wills, when He wills, where He wills.

A.W. Pink

- Charles Spurgeon in his sermon on Matthew 20:15 wrote:
“Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?”

There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God’s Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought more earnestly to contend than the doctrine of their Master over all creation—the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands—the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that Throne. On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldings, no truth of which they have made such a football, as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. *Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne.* They will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion worlds and make stars. They will allow Him to be in His almonry to dispense His alms and bestow His bounties. They will allow Him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends His throne, His creatures then gnash their teeth, and we proclaim an enthroned God, and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them in the matter; then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love. But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon His throne whom we trust.

- The Sovereignty of God can be considered from two different points of view.

1. His Sovereign **Will**.

- The Will of God encompasses all that God has predetermined should come to pass.
- His divine will is certain and inflexible.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him,
“What have you done?”

Daniel 4:35

- On the basis of Deut. 29:29 the will of God is often distinguished between that which is decreative or secret and the perceptive or revealed will of God.
- God **decretive** will is hidden and can be known only from its effects.
- On the other hand God’s **perceptive** will is revealed to us in His Word.

- It is important that we understand that God's will respecting His creatures is absolutely free.
- Even the sinful actions of man are also under the control of His sovereign will.

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Acts 2:23

2. His Sovereign **Power**.

- The power to execute His will is called his **omnipotence**.
- That fact that God is omnipotent does not negate that there are some things that God cannot do.

A. God cannot **lie**.

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Numbers 23:19

B. God cannot **die**. (Eternality)

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalms 90:2

C. God cannot **change**. (Immutability)

His nature and being are infinite, and so, subject to no mutations. There was never a time when he was not; there will never be a time when He shall cease to be. God has neither evolved, grown, nor improved. All that he is today, he has ever been, and ever will be. "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6) is His own affirmation. He cannot change for the better, for He is already perfect; and being perfect, He cannot change for the worse. Altogether unaffected by anything outside Himself, improvement or deterioration is impossible. He is perpetually the same. He alone can say, "I AM that I AM" (Ex. 3:14).

A.W. Pink

D. God cannot **deny** Himself.

If we are faithless, he remains faithful - for he cannot deny himself.

2 Timothy 2:13

E. God cannot give His **glory** to another.

I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

Isaiah 42:8

II. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN HIS WORD

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal;
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

Deuteronomy 32:39

I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

Job 42:2

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

Psalms 103:19

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Psalms 115:3

Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.

Psalms 135:6

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

Proverbs 21:1

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I
have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: To me every
knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.

Isaiah 45:22-23

Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like
me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel
shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my
counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.

Isaiah 46:9-11

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be
that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I
purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:10-11

Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you
would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all
these things came to be, declares the LORD."

Isaiah 66:1-2

For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

Romans 9:15-21

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Romans 11:33-36

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

Ephesians 1:11

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:15-17

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

Revelation 4:11

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Revelation 22:13

- From these and similar passages of Scriptures it is plain that:

1. *The sovereignty of God is **universal**.*

It extends over all his creatures from the highest to the lowest.

2. *The sovereignty of God is **absolute**.*

There is no limit to be placed on his authority.

3. *The sovereignty of God is **immutable**.*

It cannot be ignored or rejected.

III. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN HIS WORLD

- 2 Indicators that we believe the sovereignty of God:

1. You *thank* God for your salvation:

- You thank God for your salvation.
- Why? Because you know in your heart that God was entirely responsible for it.
- You don't attribute your repentance and belief to your own wisdom, prudence, sound judgment, or good sense.
- You have (hopefully) never told God that, while you are grateful for the means and opportunities of grace that He gave you, you realize that you have to thank, not Him, but yourself for the fact that you responded to His call.
- Your heart revolts at the very thought of talking to God in such terms.
- You see, your thanksgiving is itself an acknowledgement that your salvation was not your work, but entirely a work of God's sovereign and divine grace.

2. You *pray* for the salvation of others:

- Think about how you pray for the conversion of others...
- Do you pray, "God bring _____ to a point where he / she can save themselves."
- No... We pray things like: God would you open the eyes of their understanding, soften their hard hearts, renew their natures, move their will to receive the grace of Christ.
- When we pray for unconverted people, we do so on the assumption that it is God's power alone that can bring them to faith and repentance.
- And our confidence in asking God rests upon the certainty that he is able to do what it is that you ask of Him.

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

1 John 5:14-15

Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

Jeremiah 32:17

- In prayer, you recognize that God is the giver of all good things.
- The prayer of a Christian is not an attempt to force the hand of God, but a humble acknowledgement of your helplessness and dependence.
- When we are on our knees, we know that it is not we who are in control of the world.
- Every good thing that we desire for ourselves and others must be sought from God, and will come, if it comes at all, as a gift from His hands.
- Our prayer then is a loud confession of our own impotence and God's ultimate sovereignty.

Question for Next week: How do God's ultimate sovereignty and our human responsibility mesh?

Evangelism

"Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility"

I. ANTINOMY AND PARADOX:

- I want to be upfront with you and let you know that the topic of this morning's study is challenging.
- Last week we spent out entire hour together contemplating the sovereignty of God.
- We are going to consider the Christians evangelistic task in light of the presupposition that God is sovereign in salvation.
- The study of theology can sometimes be difficult.
- The reason behind that is because God's truth is never quite what man would have expected.
- Our topic this morning is particularly challenging because it forces us to wrestle with an antinomy of biblical revelation.
- What is an antinomy?
- An antinomy is the *appearance* of a contradiction.
- It is the word that we use when it *appears* as if two biblical truths cannot be harmonized.
- We know that there are no contradictions in God's word and neither are there any contradictions in God's mind.
- An antinomy exists when a pair of biblical truths stand side-by-side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable.
- The presence of antinomies means that we must learn to be okay with *tensions* in God's word.
- By tension I mean that there may be cogent reasons for believing two truths; each resting on clear and solid biblical evidence; but it is a mystery (to me and you) how those truths can be squared theologically.
- The two seemingly incompatible truths must be held together, and both must be treated as true.
- This tension scandalizes our frail and finite minds as we wonder, "How can this be..."
- We must remember that we are dealing with an infinite and inexhaustible God who said of himself:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

- Now, it must be clear that an antimony not the same as a *paradox*.
- A paradox is a figure of speech...
- It is the employment of an arresting trick on words (i.e. a play on words).
- It is a statement that is contrary to conventional wisdom and upon hearing sounds absurd.
- Many truths in the Christian life can be expressed as paradoxes.
- Examples:
 - In the world, but not of the world... *John 17:14-16*
 - What you sow does not come to life unless it dies... *1 Corinthians 15:36*
 - For His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen... *Romans 1:20*
 - For the one who has died has been set free from sin... *Romans 6:7*
 - Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing... Poor, yet making many rich... Having nothing yet possessing everything... *2 Corinthians 6:10*
 - When I am weak, then I am strong... *2 Corinthians 12:10*
 - He is the image of the invisible God... *Colossians 1:15*
- It is important to note that a paradox, unlike an antinomy, is always *dispensable* and *comprehensible*.

- A paradox is dispensable because the contradiction is only verbal and not real.
- This means that a paradox can always be eliminated and the same idea expressed in non-paradoxical form.
- A paradox is comprehensible because the person at the receiving end must be able, upon reflection, to see how to unravel the paradox, otherwise it will seem to be a real contradiction and lose its intended meaning.
- So...it is important that we are able to distinguish between an antinomy and a paradox.
- An antinomy is neither dispensable nor comprehensible.
- It is not a figure of speech, but an observed relation between two statements of fact!
- It is not deliberately manufactured for emphasis like a paradox.
- Rather, an antinomy is forced on us by the facts themselves.
- It is unavoidable and insoluble.
- And there is no way to get rid of it or around it without tampering with the very truths that led us to it.
- Now, how are we to deal with antinomies when we come across them in Scripture?
- How are we to deal with a pair of truths whose compatibility defies our finite understanding?
- *Answer:* We are to accept the truths for what they are and learn to let Scripture and truth sometimes lie in tension.
- The particular antinomy that concerns us this morning, in view of our current study on evangelism, is the apparent opposition between divine sovereignty and (evangelistic) human responsibility.
- God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are taught side-by-side in our Bibles, sometimes even in the same text. (Luke 22:22 | Acts 2:23)
- Both are guaranteed to us by the divine author, therefore, both are true.
- Man is a **responsible** moral agent, though he is also divinely **controlled**; man is divinely controlled, though he is also a responsible moral agent.
- In Scripture God is both the King and the judge.
- He is King in that he orders and controls all things; He is judge in that His righteousness demands that he hold all men responsible for their actions.
- This is a difficult teaching.
- Paul anticipated this teaching not fitting tidily in our theological boxes and so in Romans 9:19 he said:

You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who can resist His will?" Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of one of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and one for dishonorable use?

Romans 9:19-21

- What the objector has to realize here is that he, a creature and a sinner, has no right to find fault with the revealed ways of God.
- Creatures are not allowed to register complaints about their creator.
- We ought not be surprised when we find mysteries of this kind in God's word because the creator is incomprehensible to His creatures.
- Here is what we can be sure of... these truths, namely the divine sovereignty of God and human responsibility, find their reconciliation in the mind and counsel of God!
- We are to maintain both truths with equal emphasis, recognizing that this is a mystery which we cannot expect to solve in this world.
- And this is difficult for us.
- Our minds struggle with antinomies.
- We like to tie up everything into neat intellectual parcels with all appearance of mystery dispelled and no loose ends hanging out.

- We want to solve what appears to be a problem.
- We want to make right what seems to be an error.
- But we must learn to be at piece with the fact that the word, when it reveals two truths that seem to be in contradiction, communicates neither a problem nor an error.
- We must put away the semblance of contradiction to the deficiency of our own understanding.
- And think of these two truths, not as rival alternatives, but as complimentary to each other.
- Now, this brings us to the temptation that we face when we are confronted with two truths in which we find it difficult to reconcile.
- We suppress or jettison one truth in support of the other for the sake of a tidier theology.
- In other words, we either assert man's responsibility in a way that excludes God from being sovereign, or we affirm God's sovereignty so vigorously that we destroy the responsibility of man.
- With that in mind, lets look at the implications that an unbalanced view of sovereignty and responsibility produce as it pertains to our personal call to make the gospel known.

II. THE TEMPTATION OF DIFFICULT THEOLOGY:

A. The temptation to an **exclusive** concern with human responsibility.

- Human responsibility, as we have discussed, is a fact.
- Our responsibility to God as our Maker, can never be taken too seriously,
- God made us responsible moral agents and he will not treat us as anything less.
- His words address each of us individually and therefore we must answer to Him for how we respond to it.
- Without Christ man is a guilty sinner answerable to God for breaking His law.
- When he hears the gospel, he is responsible for the decision that he makes concerning its truth.
- And because the heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9), we must use every legitimate means in our power to bring to bear the seriousness of the choice that confronts the unbeliever and to urge him not to consider the gospels call in an irresponsible way.
- When we preach the gospel to an unconverted person, we must emphasize that they are responsible to God for the way that they react to the good news of His grace.
- Likewise, as believers, we have a responsibility before God for making the gospel known.
- Christ's command was to...*go and make disciples* (Matthew 28:18-20).
- Each one of us is under orders to devote ourselves, by every means possible, to the task of spreading the gospel.
- We are to use all of our ingenuity and enterprise to bring it (gospel) to the notice of the whole world.
- We must always be asking ourselves the question, "Am I doing all that I possible can for the sake of the elect?"
- This, brothers and sisters, is a responsibility that cannot be shrugged off.
- There is therefore a responsibility before both the hearer of the gospel and the preacher.
- But we must never let this understanding of responsibility drive the reality of divine sovereignty from our minds.
- It is God who brings men and women under the conviction of the gospel.
- Our evangelistic effort is the **instrument** that God uses for this purpose.
- But the power to save is not in the instrument, it is in the hand of the one who uses the instrument.
- If we forget that only God can grant faith and repentance, that only God can regenerate, that only God can remove a heart of stone and give a heart of flesh and give new birth, then we will in some manner, unfortunately, think that the making of converts, in the last analysis, depends not on God, but on how effectively we proclaim the gospel.
- It is right to recognize our responsibility to engage in aggressive evangelism.
- It is right to earnestly desire the conversion of unbelievers.
- It is right to want our presentation of the gospel to be as clear as possible.

- But it is not right to regard ourselves as being responsible for securing converts, and to look to our own enterprise and techniques to accomplish what only God can do.
- We need to let our knowledge of God's sovereignty control the way in which we plan, and pray, and work in His service.
- *Principle*: When we are not consciously relying on God, it is inevitable that we will be found relying on ourselves.
- But there is an opposite temptation that is equally damaging.

B. The temptation to an **exclusive** concern with divine sovereignty.

- Make no mistake about it, we want to have a high view of God!
- As Christians we should want to magnify God's sovereignty.
- But in our high view of God, we want to ensure that we have a correct view of God.
- The temptation here is that we understand that God is sovereign over all things.
- That God has determined his will and will see it through with unhindered perfection.
- They see that God is handling every situation perfectly before man ever comes on the scene, and that He will continue to handle and work everything out through either man's failure or his success....
- And the last analysis far from bearing the weight of human responsibility is... what does it matter....
- What does it matter if I pray... God is sovereign and will work all things out according to the counsel of His will.
- What does it matter if I share the gospel... God is sovereign and will work all things out according to the counsel of His will.
- It matters because God has commanded us to do so.
- And that in some manner, unknown completely to us, God uses our prayer and evangelism in the working out of His sovereign will.
- The temptation here is to be so zealous to glorify God by acknowledging His sovereignty in grace, that you cannot see your services as being indispensable to Him.
- This doesn't mean that God would be at a **loss** without you... but He does desire to **use** you!
- *Illustration*: Two centuries William Carey had a conversation with the chairmen of the ministers' fraternal. "Sit down young man," said the old warrior; "When God is pleased to convert the heathen, he will do it without your aid or mine."
- And he was right... partially. Cf. *Luke 19:38-40*
- This old minister had grasped that it is God who saves.
- He had grasped that we should never suppose that without our help God would be helpless.
- He had learned to take the sovereignty of God perfectly serious.
- His mistake was that he did not see the evangelistic responsibility of man with equal seriousness.
- Remember the parable of the talents... *Matthew 25:14-30*
- The faithful servants were those who furthered their master's interests by making the most enterprising, lawful use that they could of what was entrusted to them.
- We can apply this to our stewardship of the gospel.

III. CONCLUSION:

- What are we to do then to avoid both extremes?
- We must make it our business to believe and hold dear both of these doctrines with all of our might.
- What the Bible does is to assert both of these truths side by side in the strongest and most unambiguous terms as two ultimate facts.
- This is the position that we must take as well.
- C.H. Spurgeon was once asked if he could reconcile these two truths to each other.
- His response... "I wouldn't try. I never reconcile friends.

Evangelism

"The Responsibility of Every Christian"

I. WHAT IS EVANGELISM:

- Evangelism is the preaching of the gospel!
- It is the work of **communication** in which Christians make themselves mouthpieces for God's message of mercy for sinners.
- There are three major points of emphasis concerning your individual responsibility to share the gospel.
- They are: who you are as a minister of the gospel, what your primary task is and what your ultimate aim is.

1. You are a **commissioned** representative of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- We have been instructed, commanded, and dutifully enlisted to preach the gospel!
- And this is an incredible privilege.
- Evangelism is a task that has been specifically entrusted to us.

For Christ did not send me to baptize *but to preach the gospel*, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

1 Corinthians 1:17

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry *that I received from the Lord Jesus*, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:24

- How are we to regard ourselves in light of the commission that has been entrusted to us?

A. You are Christ's **steward**.

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and *stewards of the mysteries of God*.

1 Corinthians 4:1

But just as we have been approved by God to be *entrusted with the gospel*, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, *I am still entrusted with a stewardship*.

1 Corinthians 9:16-17

- We have been called to be faithful to Christ's trust.
- We must distribute and dispense the gospel according to our Masters instructions.
- The figure of stewardship highlights our **responsibility** to share the gospel.

*B. You are Christ's **herald**.*

- What is a herald?
- A herald is an announcer, proclaimer, or messenger!

I was appointed a preacher (*Keryx*) and apostle and teacher.
2 Timothy 1:11

- Paul was not a philosopher. He was not one of the world's wise men... he was simply a herald of Christ's message.
- Paul had received the gospel message from Christ.
- He was to deliver that message with exact and studious faithfulness, adding nothing, altering nothing, and omitting nothing.

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
1 Corinthians 2:1-2

- The figure of the herald highlights the **authenticity** of the gospel.

*C. You are Christ's **ambassador**.*

- What is an ambassador?
- It is the authorized representative of a sovereign.
- The ambassador speaks not in his own name, but on behalf of the ruler who sent him.

Pray for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, *for which I am an ambassador in chains*, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.
Ephesians 6:19-20

Therefore, *we are ambassadors for Christ*, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
2 Corinthians 5:20

- The figure of ambassadorship highlights the **authority** that you have a representative of Christ.

*2. Your primary task in evangelism is to teach the **truth** about the Lord Jesus Christ.*

For Christ... sent me to preach the gospel.
1 Corinthians 1:17

- We have been called to share the *evangelion*...literally the good news!
- The world needs to hear the good news of Christ!
- The truth about our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. *Titus 2:13*
- What is this truth? What is the good news?

It is the news about Jesus of Nazareth. It is the news of the incarnation, the atonement, and the kingdom – the cradle, the cross, and the crown of the Son of God. It is the news of how God glorified his servant Jesus by making Him Christ, the world's long-awaited Prince and Savior. It is the news of how God made His Son a man; and how, as man, God made Him a Priest, a Prophet, and a King; and how, as a Priest, God also made Him a sacrifice for sins; and how, as a Prophet, God also made Him a

lawgiver to His people; and how, as King, God made Him Judge of all the world, and has given Him prerogatives which in the Old Testament are exclusively Jehovah's – namely, to reign until every knee bows before Him, and to save all who call on his name. In short, the good news is that God has executed His eternal intention of glorifying His Son by exalting Him as a great Savior for great sinners.

- We are called to teach the good news.
- This means that we must by any means possible, engage attention, capture interest, set out the facts, explain their significance, solve difficulties, answer objections, and show how the gospel messages application to life.
- 5 times in the book of acts, Paul is said to have reasoned with his hearers... *Acts 17:2; 17; 18:4; 19; 24:25*

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to *bring to light* (Illuminate | Make men see) for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.

Ephesians 3:8-9

- Your method of evangelism must be a **teaching** method!

3. *Your ultimate aim in evangelism is the **conversion** of your hearers to faith in Christ.*

- It is interesting to note that there are several references in the NT where the subject of the one "converting" is not God, as we might have expected, but a preacher...

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

Luke 1:16

My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that *whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul* from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

James 5:19-20

I am sending you to the Gentiles...*to open their eyes*, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

Acts 26:17-18

- Now, here is what we have to understand from these passages... when the scriptures speak in this way of converting / saving as a task for God's people to perform, they are not, of course, calling into question the truth that, properly speaking, it is God who converts and saves.
- What these passages mean, is that the conversion and salvation of others should be the Christians main objective.
- Evangelism is not only a matter of teaching, instructing, and imparting information...
- It is all those things, but it is more!
- Evangelism must endeavor to elicit a response to the truth that is taught.
- Evangelism is communication with a view to conversion.
- It is not just a matter of informing, but also of inviting.
- It is an attempt to gain, win, and catch our fellow men to Christ.
- Remember what Jesus said to his first disciples in Matthew 4:19...

Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Matthew 4:19

Evangelism
"The Responsibility of Every Christian Part 2"

II. WHAT IS THE EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE:

- In simple terms, the evangelistic message is the gospel of Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:2); the message of man's sin and God's grace, of human guilt and divine forgiveness, of new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.
- It is a message that is made up of four essential components.

1. The gospel is a message about **God**.

- The gospel tells us who God is, what His character is, what His standards are, and what he requires of His creatures.
- It tells us that we owe our very existence to Him.
- That we were made by God and for God.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

Colossians 1:16

- God made all human beings to be worshippers.
- We were created to worship.
- That's why Psalm 150:6 says, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!"
- Our gospel message would always start with the character of God.
- Until the lost have been confronted with the foundation of the gospel, namely the character of God, the rest of the message will seem neither cogent nor relevant.
- What is it that those we are sharing the gospel with must know about God as a foundation for the rest of the gospel?
- There are 5 things:

A. God is my **creator**.

The gospel starts by teaching us that we, as creatures, are absolutely dependent on God, and that He, as creator, has an absolute claim on our lives. Only when this is understood can we see what sin is, and only when we see what sin is can we understand the good news of salvation from sin. We must first teach about God as our creator before we can teach about Him as our redeemer. We are too early advancing beyond what is of foundational importance by talking about sin and salvation where this preliminary lesson has not in some measure been learned.

J.I. Packer (Modified)

Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Psalms 100:3

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Psalms 139:13, 16

B. God is **personal**.

- God says about Himself that: He lives, He loves, He provides, He is involved, He redeems, He is near...
- He is not a distant, disconnected, disinterested deity.

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God *merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness*, keeping steadfast love for thousands, *forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin*, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

Exodus 34:6-7

C. God is **loving**.

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

Psalms 145:15-17

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:8-10

D. God is **holy** and **just**.

- We must be careful that we do not elevate the love of God in evangelism over His holiness and justice.
- God does have a loving disposition towards all that He has made (Psalm 145:9).
- But God also hates sin and we know from Exodus 34:6-7 that He will not let it go unpunished.
- Sin demands death and the shedding of blood (Romans 6:23 | Hebrews 9:22).
- Someone has to die...
- This is often times where the gospel message is watered down.

The Gospel of Christ has been replaced and its power has been removed from the modern gospel.

Where Jesus called his people to abandon this world, love God, and love one another, it is now declared that one must simply pray a prayer or join a church. Where Jesus' message demanded the entirety of one's life, today's gospel demands nothing. It has been reduced to a message about self-esteem, self-worth, and ultimately self-reliance. Unfortunately, where Jesus' Gospel had the power to save us from sin and death, today's gospel is only a candy-coated trip to Hell.

Unknown (Modified)

You who are of *purser* eyes than to see evil and *cannot look at wrong*.

Habakkuk 1:13

...But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "*You shall be holy, for I am holy.*"

1 Peter 1:15-16

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast *love, justice, and righteousness* in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

Jeremiah 9:23-24

- The holiness and justice of God demands that sins penalty be paid in full.

2. The Gospel is a message about **sin**.

- The gospel tells us how we have fallen short of God's righteous standard (Romans 3:23).
- It tells us that we are guilty of sin, and as a result stand under the wrath of God (Romans 1:18).
- It tells us that the reason we continually sin is because we are sinners by nature, and that nothing that we do, can bring us back into God's favor.
- It shows us ourselves as God sees us.
- *Important:* There is danger in our evangelism if we content ourselves to merely show a person his sin, to make him feel uncomfortable about his sin, depicting Christ as the one who saves him from his sin, without ever raising the question of his relationship with God.
- Sin is clearly communicated in the Bible as an offense against God.
- We must seek in our evangelism to impress upon sinners the basic truth about their spiritual condition, namely, that their sin has alienated them from God, and exposed them to His condemnation, and hostility, and wrath, so that their first need is for a restored relationship with Him.
- Unless we see our sin as the breaking of God's law and in the light of God's holiness, we do not see our shortcomings as *sin* at all.
- We will never really know what sin is until we have learned to think about it in terms of how God sees it, not by humans standards, but by the standard of God's holiness and His righteous demand on our lives.
- It doesn't take much conversation with an individual to discern that there is guilt and shame for their shortcomings in life.
- But we must be aware that it does not follow that a man is convicted of sin when he is distressed about his weaknesses and the wrong things he has done.
- It is not conviction of sin for a person to just feel miserable about themselves, their failures, and their inadequacy to measure up.
- What are the signs of true conviction of sin?

A. Conviction brings about an awareness of a **wrong** relationship with God.

- This isn't a problem primarily with human relationship.
- This isn't a problem primarily with the fact that the person has a heavy or burdened conscience.
- The problem is with the relationship with God Himself.
- Conviction of sin may center on the sense of one's guilt before God, or one's uncleanness in His sight, or one's rebellion against Him, or estrangement from Him; but it is always a sense of need to get right, not simply with oneself or with others, but with God.

B. Conviction of sin always includes conviction of **sins**.

- There must be a sense of guilt for particular wrongs done in the sight of God, from which an individual needs to turn, if he is ever going to right with God.

C. Conviction of sin always includes conviction of **sinfulness**.

- There has to be an understanding of complete corruption and perversity in God's sight.
- There has to be an acknowledgement that sin has affected every human faculty and that there is a subsequent need for what Ezekiel called a "new heart" (Ezekiel 36:26).
- David, in Psalm 51, was not only convicted about his adultery with Bathsheba and other specific sins, but he was also convicted about the depravity of his nature.
- Verses 1-4 deal with specific sins.
- Verses 5-6 deal with his sinful nature.
- Verses 7-10 deal with his desire for cleansing from the defilement of both.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalm 51:1-7

3. The gospel is a message about **Christ**.

A. Jesus is our **Creator**.

All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:3

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

Colossians 1:16

B. Jesus is **personal**

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Mark 10:13-16

C. Jesus is **loving**.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6-8

That you may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:18-19

And walk in love, *as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us*, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
Ephesians 5:2

D. Jesus is **holy** and **just**.

I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, *and my judgment is just*, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

John 5:30

E. Jesus died to **forgive** sins.

[Jesus] was delivered up *for our trespasses* and raised for our justification.

Romans 4:25

But he was pierced for our transgressions; *he was crushed for our iniquities*; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and *the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all*.

Isaiah 53:5-6

For our sake he made him *to be sin* who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

F. Jesus is the **only one** who can forgive sins.

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:12

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

John 14:6

G. Jesus’ **blood** is essential for forgiveness.

...Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 9:22

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been *offered (sacrificed)* once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 9:27-28

† We must not present the **person** of Christ apart from His saving work.

† We must not present the **saving work** of Christ apart from His person.

† **A-D** deal with the person of Christ and **E-G** deal with His saving word.

4. The gospel message is a summons to **repentance** and **faith**.

- What is repentance and what is faith:
- *Repentance* is a change of mind and heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior as King in self's place. Mere credence without trusting, and mere remorse without turning, do not save.
- *Faith* is essentially the casting and resting of oneself and one's confidence on the promises of mercy which Christ has given to sinners, and on the Christ who gave those promises.

A. Man must **turn** from his sinfulness and follow Christ as his Lord. (Repentance)

Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

Acts 14:15

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Luke 9:23

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

B. Man must trust Christ to be his **only hope** of salvation. (Faith)

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

Romans 4:4-5

Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

John 6:28-29

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Romans 10:9-10

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11:25-26

C. Repentance and Faith are **inseparable** in Salvation.

[Paul] testified both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:20-21

III. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE FOR EVANGELISM:

1. The primary and fundamental motive for evangelism is to **glorify** God.

- Remember the chief end of man... To glorify God and enjoy him forever!
- We glorify God in our evangelism, not only because evangelism is an act of obedience, but because in evangelism we tell the world what great things God has done for the salvation of sinners.
- God is glorified in the declaration of his mighty work of grace.

Sing to the LORD, *bless his name*; tell of his salvation from day to day.

Psalms 96:2

2. The second motive for evangelism is a **love** for our neighbor and a desire to see them **saved**.

- The wish to win the lost for Christ should be the natural, spontaneous outflow of love in the heart of everyone who has been born again.
- What greater need has any man than the need to know Christ?
- What greater good can we do to any man than to set before him the knowledge of Christ.
- We should communicate our love to others in evangelism by sharing with them our most valuable possession.

Whenever I am justified in choosing my subject of conversation with another, the theme of themes (Christ) shall have preeminence between us, so that I may learn of his need, and, if possible, meet it.

C.G. Trumbull (Taking Men Alive)

IV. BY WHAT MEANS AND METHODS SHOULD EVANGELISM BE PRACTICED:

- Be creative!
- Helpful, guiding questions for your evangelism:

1. Is the way that I am presenting the gospel conveying the whole **doctrine** of the gospel and not just a part of it?
2. Is the way that I am presenting the gospel conveying the whole **application** of the gospel and not just a part of it?

Evangelism

"Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God"

INTRODUCTION:

- Evangelism is a message that begins with information and ends with an invitation.
- The *information* concerns God's work of making His Son a perfect Savior for sinners.
- And the *invitation* is God's summons to mankind generally to come to the Savior and find life.
- Remember, God commands all people everywhere to repent. *Acts 17:30-31*
- This is not a suggestion... this is an imperative – a command.
- We, as believers, are sent into the world to try by every means possible to make the gospel message known to whoever will listen.
- If you remember back to our first week we said that God is sovereign in that he is both the king (Ruler) and the lawgiver (Judge) of all men.
- We also said that man is a morally responsible agent and is accountable for his actions namely his acceptance or rejecting the gospel message.
- The antimony is that even though God is sovereign over all creation (the actions of human beings), that at the same time / simultaneously true, man is responsible for his choices and has a duty to respond to the gospel in faith and repentance.
- We don't want to exalt the sovereignty of God in salvation over the responsibility of man and neither do we want to elevate the responsibility of man over the sovereignty of God.
- We must let these two truths, though somewhat a mystery to us as to how they are reconciled, lay side by side and see them as being in *harmony* and not in *opposition* to each other.
- There are two temptations that are easy to fall into:
 1. Those who are tempted to an exclusive concern with divine sovereignty...
 - Think that evangelism in some way undercuts the sovereignty of God.
 - God has already chosen the elects, he has the power to save them all by Himself...
 - For me to get involved is just to get in the way.
 - They may wonder, "What is the point of evangelism if God is going to call whom he wills?"
 2. Those who are tempted to an exclusive concern with human responsibility...
 - Think that they have to create new and ingenious ways of presenting the gospel message.
 - These people tend to be pragmatic in their approach to the gospel.
 - There is usually a softening of the gospel message in attempt to convert the lost.
- Satan would do anything to bring evangelism to a standstill and if he could divide Christians in the process it would be even better.
- This morning we will try to answer the question of how God's sovereignty in grace affects our individual responsibility as commissioned ministers of the gospel.

I. The Sovereignty of God in grace does not affect the nature and **duty** of evangelism.

- How do we know this...
- Remember we talked briefly a few weeks ago about God's decretive will and His perceptive will.
- His decretive will is that which is fixed in the mind of God and is not revealed to us.
- Things such as the *number* and *identity* of the elect and *when* and *how* God purposes to save them.
- This information is not revealed to us.
- And it is important to note that this information has no bearing on our responsibility to make the gospel known.
- God's command to make the gospel known is revealed in his law.
- So no matter what we believe about the sovereignty of God in election and calling, it does not change the fact that God's word is clear about our responsibility to be a herald of the gospel.

A. The belief that God is sovereign in grace does not affect the *necessity* of evangelism.

- No man can be saved apart from the gospel. *Romans 10:14:17*
- The lost must be told about Christ before they can trust Him, and they must trust Him before they can be saved by Him.
- Salvation depends on faith, and faith *in the Christ* of the gospel.
- God's method of saving sinners is to bring them to faith by bringing them into contact with the gospel.
- Evangelism is a necessity if anyone is to be saved.
- God sends us to act as a vital link in the chain of His purpose for the salvation of His elect.
- The fact that God has such a purpose, and that it is a sovereign purpose that cannot be thwarted, does not imply that evangelism is not necessary for its fulfillment, rather, it confirms the necessity of evangelism.
- *Illustration*: Invitation to the Wedding Feast.
- The way that the wedding was furnished was by the action of the king's servants...
- They went as they were called, into the roads, and invited *everyone* they saw.
- Hearing the invitation, the passersby came to the feast.
- In the same way, we are called to invite everyone that we come into contact with to come to the feast.
- And God in his sovereignty will use the gospel invitation to bring the elect into the salvation that the Redeemer has sovereignly won for them.

B. The belief that God is sovereign in grace does not affect the *urgency* of evangelism.

- Apart from the gospel men are heading to hell.

No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Luke 13:3,5

- This reality should create great urgency in sharing the gospel message.
- *Illustration*: A man sleeping in a burning building.
- You would think it extremely urgent to: Get to him, deliver the message of warning, and invite him to follow you to safety.
- We should not be held back in evangelism by the thought that if a person is not elect they will (1) not believe our message, and (2) our efforts to save them will be in vain.
- Whom God has chosen to elect is none of our business and it should make no difference to our action as a called and commissioned representative of the gospel.
- Let me give you a few principles here:

1. It is always *wrong* to abstain from doing what is good and right for fear that it might not be well received or appreciated.
2. The elect are *faceless* as far as we are concerned. We know that they exist, but we do not know who they are and it is futile and impious for us to try and guess.
3. Our calling as Christians is not to love God's elect, and then only, but to love our neighbor, *irrespective* of whether he is elect or not.

- To this end, Paul warned "everyone."

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Colossians 1:28

- The measure of urgency in our evangelistic task is the greatness of our neighbor's needs and the immediacy of his danger

C. The belief that God is sovereign in grace does not affect the **genuineness** of the gospel invitations, or the truth of the gospel promises.

- The offer of the promises contained in the gospel are genuine.
- God promises justification to whoever calls on the name of the Lord.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Romans 10:13

- Just as God calls all men everywhere to repent, so God invites all men everywhere to come to Christ and find mercy.
- The *invitation* is for sinners only, but sinners *universally*.
- It is true That God has from all eternity chosen whom He will save.
- It is true that Christ came specifically to save those whom the Father had given Him.
- But it is also true that that Christ offers Himself freely to all men as the savior, and guarantees to bring to glory everyone who trust in Him as such.

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:37-40

D. The belief that God is sovereign in grace does not affect the **responsibility** of the sinner for his reaction to the gospel.

- Unbelief is inexcusable.
- No unbeliever will ever be able to excuse himself on the grounds that he was not "elect."
- The unbeliever was really offered life in the gospel and could have had it if he would have trusted Christ.
- Therefore he is responsible for his rejection of its truths.
- The Bible never says that sinners miss heaven because they are not elect...
- It says that they are guilty because they have neglected such a great salvation.

How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard.

Hebrews 2:3

The last day judgment will prove that it is not the want God's election, so much as laziness, the love of sin, and unwillingness to come to Christ, which ruins the souls that are lost.

Old Paths – Puritan

II. The sovereignty of God in grace gives us our only **hope of success in evangelism.**

- The conviction of the sovereignty of God in salvation does not make evangelism futile.
- As a matter of fact, it is the sovereignty of God is the one thing that prevents evangelism from being futile.

- How is this? Sovereignty creates the possibility, indeed the certainty, that evangelism will be fruitful.
- Apart from the sovereignty of God in salvation, there is no hope of fruit.
- Why is this? Because of the spiritual depravity and inability of man.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:14

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

Romans 8:7

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

Ephesians 2:1

- There are two obstacles in the way of successful evangelism:
 1. Man's natural and irresistible impulse to oppose God.
 2. Satan's crafty shepherding man in the ways of unbelief and disobedience.

Questions:

- Can we, by our earnest talking break the power of Satan over a man's life? NO.
- Can we give life to a spiritually dead man? NO.
- Can we hope to convince sinners of the truth of the gospel by patient explanation? NO.
- Can you hope to move a man to obey the gospel by any words of entreaty that we may utter? NO.
- Unless there is some factor in the situation, over and above our own endeavors, all evangelistic action is doomed to failure.

Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

Psalms 127:1

- Faith is a gift of God.
- Repentance is a gift of God. *Ephesians 2:8-9*
- It is God's sovereignty in granting faith and repentance that give hope to any evangelism that we endeavor to accomplish.
- But we have a wonderful promise!

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:10-11

- What effects should the sovereignty of God in salvation give us as minister of the gospel:

1. It should make us **bold**.

- We should not be surprised when the wicked shrug off the gospels truth.
- We should not be discouraged...
- God's sovereignty tells us that NO heart is too hard for His grace to soften.

- You are not on a fool's errand.
- We will never write anyone off as hopeless and beyond the reach of God if we believe in the sovereignty of God in grace.

The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Proverbs 28:1

2. It should make us *patient*.

- We should not be daunted when we find that our efforts are not met with an immediate response.
- God saves on His own time, and we ought not suppose that He is in such a hurry as we are.
- Evangelism is a work in which quick results are not promised, and a work in which the non-appearance of quick results is not a sign of failure.

3. It should make us *prayerful*.

- Only God can grant faith and repentance.
- Only God can give a new heart. *Ezekiel 36:26*
- Preaching alone cannot save a man without a work of God's grace in his life.
- Prayer communicates our understanding and acceptance of God's sovereignty to save a lost persons soul – a work that we cannot perform.

Evangelism

"Evangelism as a Way of Life"

I. INTRODUCTION:

- My prayer this morning is that you would be encouraged to view evangelism through a new set of lenses.
- Here is what I mean: I want to encourage you to begin to see evangelism as an integral part of your life and not just something that you do every once in a while. (Compartment of your life)
- Have you ever thought about the truth that the reason that God left you here on earth after you came to Christ was so that you could be a part of God's plan to reach the unreached with the truth of the gospel.
- It is true: That is the reason that God didn't take you to heaven the moment you came to Christ.

And of this gospel I was appointed a *herald* and an apostle and a teacher.

2 Timothy 2:11

- Paul says that he was appointed as a herald. Herald is defined in two ways:
 1. A royal or official messenger
 2. A person that proclaims or announces
- Question: When you look at the lost world around you, how do you **envision** it being reached?
- How is the gospel going to be taken to the lost all around the world?
- Unfortunately a large number of people don't envision the world reached with the gospel.
- Others envision / hope that someone else will reach the world with the gospel.
- And an even smaller number of people, ask the question, what role can I play in reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Do you ever envision the world being reached by you... (Not prideful, but humbly used by God)
- I can't help but wondering sometimes - how differently our hearts might respond to the need to reach the world with the gospel if we really understood that life is short.
- Our lives are short - We don't have much time to **share** the gospel.
- The lives of the lost are short - They don't have much time to **hear** and **respond** to the gospel.
- Current World Population - 6.75 Billion People
- Approximately 150, 000 people die each day - 6240/HR - 104/MIN
- It is estimated that someone dies and slips into eternity apart from Christ every time your heart beats (Find your pulse...) Approximately every 1.7 seconds.

How these statistics are derived:

- There have been many comprehensive studies that break down the worlds population by religion.
- With these studies we can compare these belief systems with the Biblical Gospel.
- It is estimated from these studies that only about 7% of the worlds population actually believes in the Biblical plan of salvation.
- For the sake of argument, if that statistic were completely wrong and 75% of the worlds population were going to heaven...That still means that 40K people die / hell every day...
 - 1.7 Second **(Start Counter)**
 - 100 Minute
 - 5925 Hour
 - 142 Thousand Daily
 - 52 Million Yearly
 - 3.6 Billion in an average 70-year lifespan
- These are staggering numbers...

- It is clear that there is a need for believers to share the gospel with the lost and dying.
- "For a lack of knowledge, my people will perish." *Hosea 4:6*
- Jesus shared the need in Matthew chapter 9.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "*The harvest is plentiful but the workers / laborers are few*. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:36-38

- And so the question I want us to ask is, "How can God use us to take the gospel to these lost and dying people?"
- How can we be a part of God's plan to save His people?
- He wants to use you - Have you ever thought about that?
- God in no way needs us, but he chooses to use us!
- God could have chosen to reach the world for Christ anyway he wanted...
- And he chose you!
- He wants to show Himself glorious through you!

But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

Exodus 9:16

- He isn't just looking for pastors, missionaries, and evangelists to take the gospel to all peoples...He wants to use you!
- Shortly after Jesus' resurrection, he appeared to his disciples and said,

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

Matthew 28:18-20

Authority, Command, Promise!

- He wants us to know by what authority he calls us to make disciples by...
- "As you go..." this assumes that you will go! The Great Commission is a command not suggestion.
- He tells us to make disciples - To take the gospel to the lost.
- Then he sends us out with his promise "I am with you always"

II. COMMON FEARS:

1. *What if I don't know what to say? / What if I don't know enough?*

- Share what you do know...

"How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded. He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

John 9:10-11

One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

John 9:25

- Share your **testimony** - It is personal, relational, and irrefutable!
- It is one of the greatest tools in your evangelism tool belt!

2. What if I am **afraid**?

- Cheer up! Many of the men that God used mightily were afraid.
- They just didn't let their fear keep them from obeying and trusting God.
- You can either let your fear drive you to disobedience or drive you to trust / faith.

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (Paul)

The word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 1:4-8 (Jeremiah)

Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say." But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."

Exodus 4:10-13 (Moses)

3. What if I don't **know** where to **start**?

- Start with whoever is closest to you.
 - You don't even have to go anywhere...
 - It starts with the guy who has a cubical next to yours.
 - It starts with the stay at home mom next door.
 - It starts with the clerk at the checkout line.
 - It starts with the guy or the girl that lives on your dorm floor.
 - It starts with the guy or the girl that you work with.
 - It starts with the guy or the girl that sits next to you in class.
 - God has just called you to be **faithful** where you are.
- Example: A Plant – Grows where it is planted...
- There are lost people all around you...You sit by them, walk past them, live close to them, we rub shoulders with them every day.

The Woman at the Well:

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."

John 4:39

- Ask God, "How do you want to use me right here where you have put me?"

4. What if I *mess up*?

- There are only two ways that you can mess it up...
- Share something that is not in the *Bible*.
Encouragement: Have a daily quiet time / Begin memorizing scripture
- Share *nothing* at all.
- The saving work is up to God.
- God promises to use his Word when we share it!

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:10-11

III. WHY DON'T WE LIVE A LIFESTYLE OF EVANGELISM:

1. We lack *intimacy* in our walk with Christ.

- Evangelism is always an overflow of your walk with Christ.
- Not walking with Christ daily has some pretty catastrophic consequences:
 - A. We live *self-centered* lives.
 - B. We don't see the *need*.
- We get preoccupied with the temporary and lose sight of what is eternally significant.
- We get all wrapped up in giving our lives to things that in the grand scheme really don't matter.

*I've just seen the world and I'll set it to rhyme;
The way God sees it all of the time.
It's starving for food - number in millions,
While those needing life must be counted by billions.
There is a green pasture nearby, only a stones throw away;
But without a shepherd, in hunger, they'll stay.
Where are the shepherds? Where have they gone?
They're out pulling weeds in their own front lawn.
The shepherds have problems, they'll tell you themselves;
The manure from sheep, O how it smells.
The problems they debate are important, you see,
What color should the drapes in the shepherd's club be?
Nike's or Reebok's which should a shepherd wear?
Ask the dying and see if they care.
But I've seen the world and the way it can be,
And these things are no longer important to me.
Manure, I must agree, certainly does smell,
But what does it matter when sheep go to hell?
Once again come the tears, once again I must weep;
For no one is listening as the Lord calls, "Feed my sheep."*

Bob McNabb

2. We *compartmentalize* our walk with Christ.

- I have my quiet time here, hang out with the body here, weekly meeting here
- We begin to share our faith when is convenient and comfortable for us.
- We begin to view evangelism as if it were a light switch to be turned off / on.
- Ultimately we begin to pick and chose for Jesus who will hear the gospel...

3. We don't believe God's *promises*.

John 4:50 - The Officials Son...The man took Jesus at His Word!

Question: How many of God's promises pertaining to evangelism do you know?

Matthew 28 (Disciples) - I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Isaiah 55 - My Word will not return void...

Exodus 4 (Moses) - I will help you speak and will teach you what to say

4. We aren't *looking* for *opportunities*.

- Two things will keep your eyes off of the needy harvest...FEAR and PRIDE.
- Jesus was looking for the opportunity at the Well.
- John 4:27 says, "The disciples marveled that he was talking with a woman."
- Taking advantage of the teachable moment, Jesus uses a farming illustration to help the understand that if their eyes are open...The harvest is already ready.

Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

John 4:35

IV. PRINCIPLES FOR A LIFESTYLE OF EVANGELISM:

1. *Pray* and ask God to *break your heart* over the eternity of the lost.

- Matthew 9:36-38 (Compassion) It literally wrenched his bowels...

2. Root yourself in the *truths of the gospel*.

- This is how you grow.
- This is your message.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7

3. Be *available*.

- So often we miss out on opportunities to share Christ because we don't make our hearts available to God.
- Let your heart be surrendered to how God might chose to use you.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Jeremiah 6:8

4. Just *do* it.

- Commit to trust God and walk by faith – He want to use you!
- Claim his promises.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

- Remember the promise at end of the Great Commission – He said, “I will be with you always!”
- Next Week: Testimony Workshop!

How to Prepare a Personal Testimony

Many Christians have never sat down and thought through the specific events that took place in their conversion. When confronted with the question of what receiving Christ has meant in their life, they inevitably find themselves unable to be specific, thus hurting their credibility in evangelism. When a person has spent time preparing for the question he usually has more peace and confidence in giving his answer. Having a memorized, planned, evangelistic testimony enables you to have a ready tool for evangelism. Many situations throughout your day will lend themselves to effective evangelism. You will find many open doors for sharing your testimony while in the midst of conversations with others. Use your testimony as a way both to relate and communicate the gospel!

Do's and Don'ts of a 3 Minute Testimony

DO:

1. Pray and ask God for wisdom and guidance as you write and prepare.
2. Develop it around a three-point outline for a clear and logical impression.
 - A) Attitudes and actions before I became a Christian.
 - B) Circumstances surrounding my conversion.
 - C) Changes that took place in my actions and attitudes after receiving Christ.
3. Keep it relatively short (3-5 minutes).
4. Be as specific and clear as possible.
5. Use at least one, but not more than two scripture verses.
6. Edit and rewrite until it seems logical and communicates effectively.

DON'T

1. Be careful when you use Christian jargon. Words such as "saved", "convicted", "converted", and "born again" do not communicate truth to the average non-Christian. Though these words and their meanings are precious to us, they are not always understood by individuals outside of the church. In summary... just don't assume a vocabulary that your listener may not have.
2. Don't be too wordy and don't "beat around the bush".
3. Don't mention church denominations in a derogatory way.
4. Don't give the impression that the Christian life is a "bed of roses".

PERSONAL TESTIMONY WORKSHOP

1. **My life before I came to know Christ** (attitudes and actions): My family, friends, interests were... My security was sought in... My satisfaction was sought in... My attitude in regard to Christ was...

2. **How I realized my need for Christ / How I received Christ:** I was awakened to my need by... What I thought and/or noticed (about myself, God, and others) at this point was... I came to understand that Christ was... I saw my need was... Use a scripture or two here (Ex. 2 Cor. 5:21) and clearly / briefly communicate the gospel!

3. **My life since receiving Christ** (attitudes and actions): My relationship with... My attitude toward... My desires are now... I am learning that... I am excited about...

The Well Illustration

Where Do You Find Life?

- Begin the illustration by writing on the top of the paper, *"People follow, give themselves to, trust in whatever they believe will give them life."*
- Explain that by the word *life*, you mean whatever people believe are their deepest needs—security, satisfaction, respect, significance, love.
- Next, draw a number of boxes of different shapes and sizes. Take turns writing in the boxes what both of you see society, friends, or yourselves trusting in to meet the needs you've just described.
- To break the ice, and to be certain your friend understands what you are asking him to do, you will probably want to fill in the first box. It's important not to dominate the discussion or explain too much about the illustration at this time. For the individual to see truth, he has to discover it himself. This is a brainstorming session. Each box provides a discussion opportunity that can challenge and influence the person's thinking.
- As you take turns filling in the boxes, mention that Christ is the way you find "life." Once you have exhausted the possibilities, write out Jer. 2:13 below the boxes. This verse will summarize what both of you have discovered by filling in the boxes. Now is the time to explain that the boxes you have just filled in represent the cisterns (or wells) from the verse in Jeremiah.

Forsake

- Next, highlight key words from Jer. 2:13 and discuss what they mean.
- Start by underlining or drawing a box around the word forsaken and ask the person to define the term.
- Write down his definition and add to it if anything is missing. Be sure to include the idea that forsaking means choosing to abandon or leave something that is true.

Dug

- Underline the word dug next. Ask the question, “What is involved in digging a well (or cistern, as the verse in Jeremiah calls it)?” It takes a lot of hard work! As we dig our own cisterns, we naturally become arrogant and focused on our performance.
- At this point ask, “Do you think people believe that the quality and quantity of their digging will fulfill them?” Point out that there are many influences in society—our performance, our profession, our pleasures—that encourage us to find life apart from Christ.

Cistern

- Now underline the word cisterns. Ask your friend to define the word. If he needs help, describe the difference between a cistern and a spring. (A cistern is a well that is unable to produce its own water. It can only hold water that is put into it.)
- Explain that any cistern we dig has the capability of becoming an idol. Ask the person to define the word idol. Help him see that an idol is an object, person, or belief that we allow to control us, or anything that we submit ourselves to follow outside of our worship of God.
- This is a good opportunity to give an example from your own life of a time when you ran to a “well” that couldn’t satisfy you.
- You can also ask your friend to select a “well” from the boxes he has filled in and describe a person who is wrapped up in that idol.

Broken

- Underline the word *broken* and draw a crack through every well except the one with the word *Christ*.
- Discuss how people invest themselves in these wells, yet are never able to keep the wells full.
- Explain that leakage is inevitable. No matter how much or how carefully you pour your life into these cisterns, they can never satisfy you or remain full.
- We are deceived if we believe there are no cracks in these wells or that these wells can satisfy our basic needs.
- Again, you have the opportunity to share how you have bought into this deception at one time or another. Your vulnerability can set the tone for reciprocal sharing,

and the door will remain open for future dialogue.

- We often feel the need to hide our sinfulness, past or present, in order to appear “godly.” However, honesty about who we are, where we’ve been, and where we want to go is attractive when we focus on how Christ has met our needs and delivered us from the wells that couldn’t satisfy.
- Humility, centered on the works of Christ, stands in contrast with self-righteousness, which is centered on the works of the flesh.
- You should mention that many of the “wells” aren’t intrinsically wrong. They become wrong and damaging when we put them in the place of Jesus.

The Spring of Living Water

- Underline *the spring of living water*. This phrase speaks of Christ and His claims of being the only well that can satisfy man’s basic needs.
- Once again, you should talk about the difference between “the spring of living water” and a “cistern.” A spring is a continuous source of water that is ready for drinking without endless digging and filling.
- Ask the person, “What do you believe are man’s basic needs?” You may hear a variety of answers. Be sure to affirm only those answers that are biblical. (When a person gives an incorrect answer, I often simply nod and say “Hmmm,” or “That’s an interesting thought.”)
- Summarize your discussion by saying that you believe man’s basic needs are forgiveness and a right relationship with God (Col. 1:20-21). These needs can only be met through the death of Christ on the Cross. He died to take on Himself the punishment for our sins. Only He can satisfy our desire to be at peace with God. Until we have a personal relationship with Him, we are incomplete and unfulfilled.
- As you close the discussion, go back to the numerous wells on the paper. Point to the box (or well) that you filled in with the word Christ.
- Explain that when we believe we can meet our own needs, we are unwilling to let Christ give us life (Jn. 5:40). Talk about your response to the cisterns that didn’t satisfy—that you repented of looking to them for life and that you turned to Christ.
- Also tell your friend that as you follow Christ, this diagram is a good checklist to reveal areas you might continue to struggle with and periodically need to surrender to Christ again.

- Ask your friend to identify any cisterns in his life. Here are some questions you might ask:
 - Why do you try to meet your needs in these wells?
 - What have you learned about these wells?
 - Do you know what prevents you from going to the well of Christ?
- Keep in mind that The Well Illustration is more beneficial as a sowing tool than as a reaping tool. For many, this will be the first time they have verbalized their belief system and questioned its validity.
- Invariably, people will refer to the illustration weeks and even months after it has been shared with them. This interest gives you a platform for future discussions concerning the “wells” people dig and can even be a bridge into the gospel.
- It also gives you permission to find specific answers from Scripture the next time you meet with that person.
- After I share The Well Illustration with someone, I ask them if they’d like to get together the following week for lunch or a Coke to talk more about Christ as the only well that can provide them a continuous source of living water.
- As I have shared The Well Illustration, inevitably the person will have questions about Christ and often some misunderstandings about Him. Those questions take time to answer. There are no short-cuts. Sharing the gospel will generally mean establishing a relationship that develops over time into an open and honest interchange of ideas. The goal is to keep Christ the focus of their search for life.

The Bridge Diagram

WAGES

Open your Bible to Romans 6:23 and ask the person to read the verse aloud to you while you write it at the top of a piece of paper.

Draw a box around the word "WAGES," then write it midway down the left side of the page and box it there also.

"How would you define the term *wages*?" (Wages are the reward we receive for what we have done.)

"How would you feel if your boss refused to pay you the wages that were due to you? Deep down, we all know that it is only right that a person gets what he deserves. We earn wages from God for how we have lived our lives."

SIN

Draw a box around "SIN" in the verse and then write it below "WAGES." Draw a box around it there.

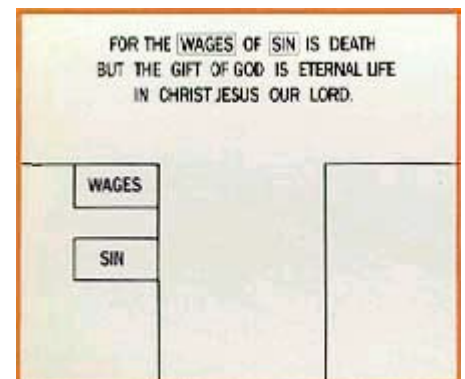
"What do you think of when you hear the word *sin*?"

"How would a person have to live in order to get into heaven? Have you always lived a life like you just described?" (This should help him to see that even by his own definition he falls short of living a good and perfect life.)

"Sin is more an attitude than an action—it can be a hostile or apathetic response to God. At any point in your life, has God seemed far away?"

When he answers "yes," draw in the lines of the cliff on both sides and explain that sin has separated everyone from God.

"Imagine that you agreed with your roommate on rules regarding how to use your stereo. What would happen if your roommate ignored the rules and broke your stereo? Would that create a separation or problem in your relationship? Our sin creates a distance between us and God."



DEATH

Draw a box around the word "DEATH," write it down on the illustration, and box it there.

"What thoughts come to mind when you think of death? Death often means separation—when we die our soul is separated from our body. If a person chooses to reject God while he is alive, that separation will extend into eternity: the separation will ultimately result in eternal torment in hell. Not only will he experience separation from God today, but also forever."

BUT

Draw a box around "BUT" in the verse and write U in a box between the bases of the cliffs.

"This is the most important word in the verse because it indicates that there is hope for all of us. What we have talked about so far is bad news, but God has good news. What we're going to talk about now is a contrast to what we just discussed."

GIFT

Draw a box around "GIFT" in the verse and write it on the right side of the cliff. Box it there.

"What is the difference between a gift and wages?"

(From now on, be sure to point back and forth to each side of the cliff to emphasize that the words contrast with each other.)

"A gift is not earned by the person who receives it, but someone else pays for it. How do you feel towards someone who gives you an expensive gift?"

"Some people try to earn God's favor by doing good deeds, living moral lives, or taking part in religious activities. But it is impossible to earn something that has already been bought."

"Say you wanted to buy a special gift for a close friend to show how much that person means to you. How would you feel if the friend refused to accept it without first paying you for it?"

OF GOD

Draw a verse around "OF GOD" and write it on the right side of the cliff, across from "SIN." Box it.

Point to "SIN" on the left side and then back to "GOD" on the right and explain that all of us have sinned but God is perfect and has not.

"God wants to give you a gift. I can't give it to you; a church can't give it to you; no one can give you this gift but God alone. Why do you think God would want to give you a gift? Why does anyone want to give someone a precious gift?"

ETERNAL LIFE

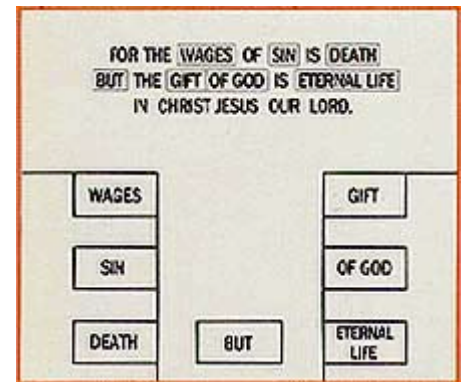
Draw a box around "ETERNAL LIFE" and write it on the right side of the cliff with a box around it.

"What do you think eternal life is?"

Point to "DEATH" on the left side and show that "ETERNAL LIFE" is the opposite.

"Eternal life means a relationship with God in blissful harmony forever. Just as separation from God starts in this life and extends into eternity, eternal life starts now and goes on forever. No sin can end it."

(Ask if there is any part that you have explained so far that he does not understand or if he has any questions. Be sure that each point is clear before you proceed any further. If necessary, go back and explain each point that is not clear.)



CHRIST JESUS

Draw a cross between the cliffs as a bridge. Box the words "CHRIST JESUS" in the verse. Write "CHRIST JESUS" inside the cross.

"Jesus is the means by which we can obtain the gift of eternal life. No one can offer a gift except the one who purchased it. He purchased it by paying for it with His life."

"Imagine that a police officer writes you a ticket for speeding and you go to court and the judge finds you guilty. But to your surprise, the policeman pays your fine out of his own pocket. In the same way, Jesus paid the fine for you—death."

Hold out a pen to the person, and ask him to imagine that someone had bought it for him as a present. As you hand it to him, ask him at what point the pen becomes his (when he accepts it). Tell him that he can accept God's gift to him by following two steps.

"A person is dying because his heart is diseased. Someone volunteers to donate his heart for a transplant, knowing that he will have to die in order to give it up. But first, in order to save his own life, the recipient must agree to accept the heart. It cannot be forced upon him. In order to accept God's gift, you must do two things."

LORD

Box "LORD" in the verse, and write it inside the cross on the illustration.

"The gift is offered to everyone who surrenders to the Lord Jesus Christ. This takes place by repentance and faith.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Write "REPENTANCE" across the top of the cross on the left side and number it with a "1."

"Repentance means to agree with God that we are sinful and to turn from that sin to Christ – seeking forgiveness."

Write "FAITH" across the top of the cross on the right side and number it "2."

"To have faith in Christ means that you are no longer looking to yourself, anyone else or any other thing to save you. This is an acknowledgement that only Christ can save you from your sin Ephesians 2:8-9."

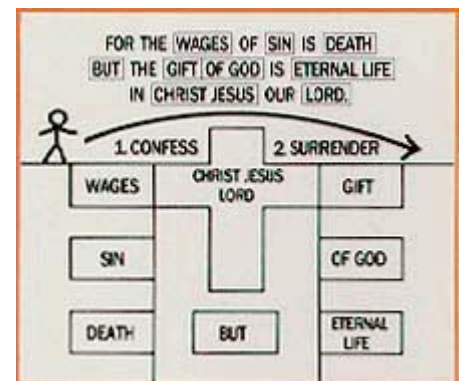
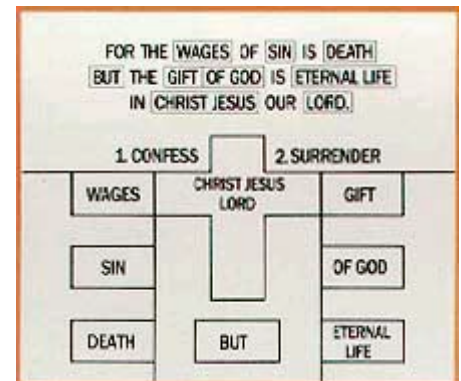
Draw a man on the left side of the bridge.

"As a person confesses and surrenders, he passes across the bridge. He begins a relationship with God and starts to experience a new and eternal life."

Draw an arrow across the bridge.

"On the basis of what I have just explained, what must a person do to have a relationship with God and eternal life?" (If he does not say "confess and surrender" and understand what that means, go back and explain it until it is clear.)

"If you were to place yourself on the bridge, where would you be? Are you far off to the left—far away from God—or close to the bridge and eager to learn more about God?"



Naturally, you will want to put the questions and explanations in this presentation into your own words. You might want to practice sharing it with a Christian friend before you share it with an unbeliever.

After you have become familiar with this illustration, be sure to personalize it—use your own stories or analogies so that the presentation becomes a natural part of you. It is also a good idea to know at least one verse that backs up each step in the illustration in case the hearer needs further explanation.

Be sure to listen carefully as the person you are talking with answers the questions. Try to understand where he stands in relation to the gospel and adjust your presentation to suit his personality and needs. Be alert to signs of confusion as you explain.

Most important, remember that the power to change lives is not in having an effective, smooth-flowing illustration. It is the Spirit of God who opens people's hearts to hear the message of salvation (John 6:63–65). But what a privilege we have in being able to co-labor with God Himself in reaching out to others! Let us sharpen our tools and be ready always to give the answer that every person needs to hear with clarity and simplicity.

Evangelism

"Evangelism for the Purpose of Godliness"

INTRODUCTION:

I know many believers who feel confident that they are obeying the lord when it comes to their intake of Scripture or to their giving or serving, But I'm sure I don't know a single Christian who would boldly say, "I'm as evangelistic as I should be."

- Godliness requires that we *discipline* ourselves in the practice of evangelism.

1. Evangelism is Expected.

- Five evangelism imperatives:

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

Matthew 28:18-20

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Mark 16:15

...And that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Luke 24:47-48

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

John 20:21

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

Acts 1:8

- Some Christians believe that evangelism is a gift and therefore the responsibility only of those who possess that gift...
- They would appeal to texts like Ephesians 4:11... And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers.

- Just as every Christian, regardless of spiritual gift or ministry, is to love others, so each believer is to evangelize whether or not his or her gift is that of an evangelist.
- Many of us know at least the first part of 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession..."
- But the verse goes on to say, [So] that you [Christian] may proclaim / declare the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
- We normally think of this verse as establishing the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, but it is equally appropriate to say that it also exhorts us to a kind of prophethood (little p) of believers.
- God expects each of us to "declare the praises" of Jesus Christ!

2. Evangelism is Empowered.

- If we are waiting to evangelize the lost until we feel confident:
 1. We are really thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought... *Romans 12:3*
 2. We are waiting for a day that will never come...

One dominant reason underlying the increasing reluctance of Christians to share their faith with non-Christians pertains to the faith sharing experience itself. In asking Christians about their evangelistic activities, we have found that nine out of ten individuals who attempt to explain their beliefs and theology to others come away from those experiences feeling as if they had failed... The reality of human behavior is that most people avoid those activities in which they perceive themselves to be failures. As creatures seeking pleasure and comfort, we emphasize those activities in which we are most capable and secure. Thus, despite the divine command to spread the Word, many Christians redirect their energies into areas of spiritual activity that are most satisfying and in which they are most likely to achieve [at least perceived] success.

George Barna

- Our confidence in evangelism should not rest in our abilities, but in the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the gospel message.
- *Question:* What is success in evangelism?
- Is it when conversion takes place?
- If that is the case then Jesus failed, because there were many evangelistic encounters in which the person that Jesus was preaching the gospel, walked away in their sin.
- Sharing the gospel is successful evangelism.
- We are like the postal service in this regard. Success is measured by the careful and accurate delivery of the message, not by the response of the recipient. Whenever we share the gospel (accompanied with a summons to *repent* and *believe*) we have been successful!
- You have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to minister the gospel.
- At your conversion were sealed by and indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

- It is that indwelling Holy Spirit combined with the gospel message that empowers you to be an effective witness for Christ.
- Evangelism is expected of every Christian because every Christian has been equipped and empowered to evangelize!
- The evidence that you have been given the power to be an effective witness for Christ is your changed life.
- The same Holy Spirit that changed your life, empowers you to be an effective witness for Christ when you share the gospel.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:16

- The moment that you became a Christian you were given a new aroma...

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

2 Corinthians 2:14-17

- To some you will be the fragrance of death.
- But to others, you will be the fragrance of life!
- *Question:* What does your life smell like?
- The most powerful ongoing Christian witness has always been the speaking of God's Word by one who is living God's Word.
- What you say and what you do must agree!
- If we are pursuing a godly life and are faithfully sharing the gospel, we can be assured that some will respond!

3. Evangelism is a Discipline.

- Evangelism is a natural overflow of the Christian life.
- We should all be able to talk about what Christ has done in our lives.
- But we cannot just wait for evangelism opportunities to happen...
- There must be a disciplined, intentionality to our evangelism.
- Remember the old saying... If you aim at nothing you will hit it every time.
- If you are always waiting for the perfect opportunity, you will always be waiting...

- Remember, you don't need a doctorate in systematic theology to communicate the gospel.
- You need to be walking with Christ and a desire to discipline yourself in the area of evangelism.
- If we have understood the gospel enough to be converted, we should know it well enough to tell someone else how to be converted.
- One objection that I hear often is that, "I'm too busy."
- We all have busy lives, but are we ready to say that we are too busy to fulfill the Great Commission?
- Do we expect that at the last judgment Jesus will excuse us from one of the most important responsibilities that He gave us because we say, "I didn't have time?"
- The reason that we don't evangelize the lost is because we do not discipline ourselves to do it!
- Unless we discipline ourselves to share the gospel, it is very easy to excuse ourselves from ever sharing the gospel with anyone.
- We must make the most of every opportunity!

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, *making the best use of the time*. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Colossians 4:5-6

- *Practical*: Lunches with co-workers, inviting neighbors to your home for a meal, etc...
- We must SPEAK! The gospel necessitates words!
- I'm reminded of the story of a man who came to Christ and then told his employer.
- *Employer*: That's great! I'm a Christian and have been praying for you for years.
- *Employee*: Why didn't you ever tell me? You were the reason I have not been interested in the gospel all of these years.
- *Employer*: How can that be? I have done my very best to live the Christian life around you.
- *Employee*: That's the point. You lived such a model life without ever telling me that it was Christ who made the difference. I had convinced myself that if you could live such a good and happy life without Christ, then I could too...

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

1 Corinthians 1:21

Application:

1. Since evangelism is expected, will you obey the Lord and share Christ?
2. Since evangelism is empowered, will you believe God can use your words in the salvation of others?
3. Since evangelism is a discipline, will you plan for it?