

# The Gift of Evangelism --- Romans 12:6-8

September 13, 2020

Ephesians 4:7-8,11 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."* 9(Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 11And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, . . . .

## Introduction

You have heard the words "post-modernism" and "pluralism." These two words are used to describe the thinking in our culture today. We live in a culture in which there are a plurality of religions, many ways of thinking, a variety of values, and people want to hold on to the idea that there is no ultimate standard by which to decide whether something is right or wrong. It is all relative.

The thinking goes this way, "So what if I want to define marriage in another way other than between a man and a woman? Who are you to tell me that I am wrong? If a woman wants to abort her baby, you are in no position to tell her what to do with her body. It is none of your business if a man wants to *identify* as a woman, or vice versa? You have no basis to say otherwise. That's post-modernism, pluralism. You should respect my values, and I will respect yours. Let's Coexist."

Into this chaotic mix, the Church today seems to want to adjust the method and message of the Gospel in an attempt not to sound too exclusive. The Church makes appeals that sound like Jesus will fix all your problems if you will just come to church.

The thinking within the Church, at large, today goes this way, "Hey, look at Mr. Jones over there, he is wealthy and he is a Christian. If you accept, Jesus you will succeed too. Look at that successful athlete. He is a professional quarterback. He is a Christian. See what Jesus can do with your life." There is the mentality of *try Jesus because things will go better for you with Him*. People get the impression that they can take up Jesus like they do jogging. It's a "what's in it for me" message.

One of the foundational reasons for the existence of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, but the Church has so muddied the message that she has become ineffective.

Paul said in Romans 1:16, *“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.”*

The desire of God is for the Church to be built up in the Truth and in the exercise of spiritual gifts so that it can be effective in calling a rebellious world to repentance and trust in Jesus as Savior who has provided salvation through His death and resurrection and will save from an eternal hell and give an inheritance in heaven. This morning we consider the last spiritual gift in our series, namely the gift of an evangelist.

## Review

Last week we considered the gift of leadership. We saw that a leader is one who exercises authority, who manages; who cares for, and gives help. The word is derived from the idea of piloting a ship, so it has the sense of giving direction. The one with this gift gives administrative direction to steer the flock of God. A gifted leader comes to know those who he leads and is able to delegate and coordinate efforts. Leading is the ability to see an objective, mobilize a group of people, and then work with them to reach the objective.

We saw that this leadership ability is accompanied by diligent labor, teaching and giving instruction. Leading does not just oversee but interacts and motivates. The word used here also carries the sense of caring for and giving help. The one with this gift manages people in the sense of being able to interact with people for the sake of example, to exercise authority, and to nurture.

We also considered Peter addressing leaders in 1 Peter 5:2-3. Here Peter exhorts them to, *“exercise oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”*

One pastor writes, “The gift of leading is not a type of tyrannical dictatorship in which one person dominates. It is the combined wisdom of a team where a group of people who are so gifted pool their skills and reach a decision about how to steer the body. No single person has all the right answers.”

J. Oswald Sanders in his book Spiritual Leadership says, “The man who is impatient with weakness will be defective in his leadership. The evidence of our strength lies not in streaking ahead but in a willingness to adapt our stride to the slower pace of our weaker brethren, while not forfeiting our lead. If we run too far ahead, we lose our power to influence.”

The one who leads in the Church is responsible for the spiritual environment of the church. Hebrews 13:17 commands us to *“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”*

We considered the gift of mercy as well. The gift of mercy is the act of helping someone. This gift enables us to sympathize with a suffering person—to come along side and minister. We saw that “showing mercy” as a spiritual gift does not pertain to the area of forgiveness or sparing judgment. It has to do with ministering to the needy. This is to be done in a cheerful, spontaneous manner that will convey blessing rather than stimulate self-pity.

We saw that the gift of mercy emphasizes the compassion of the heart. The idea is conveyed by 1 Corinthians 12:26, *“And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it . . . .”*

Some of you are gifted in the area of mercy. The Spirit has given you areas of ministry to help those who are suffering physically and/or emotionally, and you do it with cheerfulness. Again, we are all called to show mercy. The ones with this gift show us how to do it effectively.

Before we consider the gift of evangelism, I want to touch on the gift of apostleship mentioned in our Ephesian text this morning. We have already considered what an apostle is at the beginning of our study of Romans, but that has been a few years, so I just want to hit on it briefly. There is much error in modern Christianity concerning the topic of apostles.

For example, Roman Catholicism has always taught that any Pope at any given time has his lineage back to the apostle Peter. Catholicism holds to apostolic succession. Furthermore, some in the charismatic movement hold that the role of the apostle is still for the Church today. This new teaching taken to its extremes is having weird ramifications so that some men are claiming to be modern apostles with great authority. In fact, I saw numerous individuals on the internet who claimed that they are apostles with full apostolic authority.

Biblically, an apostle is one who was specifically chosen by Jesus, whom Jesus commissioned and gave authority to represent Him and to establish the church and preach the message of the kingdom.

The Greek word *apostello* means “to send.” The word carries the meaning to send someone with a specific purpose in mind. The emphasis is not just the act of sending, like a package or a person, but on the purpose of the messenger.

John 3:17 *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.* [the Father sent the Son for a certain purpose]

The word *apostello* unites the sender with the one sent. Similar to an ambassador. The main stress is on the one who sends, not on the one who is sent. There is implied a commissioning, an appointment to achieve a certain duty. This meaning of commissioning and representation is found in multiple passages—

Jesus said to the apostles in Luke 10:16, *"The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who (apostellw) sent Me."*

In John 17:18 Jesus said to the Father, *"As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."*

John 20:21 *Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*

So the meaning and the use of the verb form make clear that the sense of the term is to commission someone with a specific purpose with full representation of the one sent. We get the word “apostle” from the Greek noun form *apostolos*. It refers to a “messenger” or an apostle. There are a number of passages that refer to the origin of the twelve apostles—

Matthew 10:1-4 *And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.* [This passage shows the nature of what an apostle is. It is one who is given authority to exercise on

behalf of another.]

Mark 3:14 And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach . . . .

Luke 6:13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.

Mark 6:7 *And He \*summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs; and He was giving them authority over the unclean spirits; . . . .* [The gift of apostleship included the ability to do “the signs of an apostle.” There were certain signs that only an apostle or those representing them could perform to confirm that he was an apostle.]

2 Corinthians 12:12 *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.*

Hebrews 2:3-4 *After the gospel was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard (the apostles), God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

As Christ's representatives, the apostles performed the same miraculous powers that Jesus did because they carried the same authority. The gift of apostleship was foundational to establishing the church. Apostles could speak and write inspired words from God. Many of their written words became the New Testament Scriptures. It is primarily the apostles who are given the ability from the Holy Spirit to recall accurately the words and deeds of Jesus and to interpret them rightly for subsequent generations.

Are there apostles today? The answer to that is a categorical no. We know by the definition of an apostle given in the Scripture that no one since Paul has seen the risen Christ or been commissioned by Him. Furthermore, none have the capability to do the signs of an apostle.

Because the apostles laid the foundation of the Church for all ages, the gift of apostleship was specific to the early establishment of the church. There is no need for apostles today because their function or need has been fulfilled. You cannot relay the foundation of the Church.

The Gift of Evangelism

That brings us to the last spiritual gift in our study the gift of an evangelist. Evangelism is one of the primary purposes of the church. One of the chief reasons why the Church is left on earth is for the purpose of evangelism. Everything else the Church does could be accomplished better in heaven.

The Church could exalt God better in heaven apart from the sinful influence of this world in glorified bodies. There is no need for edification in heaven because we would be in the presence of the very Word of God, Jesus Christ. The Church remains on this earth for the great purpose to be the representation of Christ here on earth. We are a beam of light in a dark, rebellious world.

Matthew 28:18-20 has rightly been called "The Great Commission." Jesus gives His last great charge to those whom He has left behind concerning what they are to be doing. Matthew 28:18-20 says, "*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. "*

Imperatives in the passage are: Go—Make Disciples—Baptize—Teach. There is no mistaking the clear purpose of the Church in regards to evangelism. This morning in our study of the gift of evangelism, I would like to consider some simple ingredients of evangelism that are involved in the gift of an evangelist; the ingredients being: evangelism's meaning, message, and some models of evangelism.

We as the Church are called to evangelize and make disciples. There are those who are given the gift of evangelism who are examples to us concerning how to evangelize.

## The Meaning of Evangelism

In the secular use, the term, εὐαγγελίζω, was used for the proclamation of news of victory. The good news would come from the field of battle by ship, by horse, or from a swift runner and proclamation would be made to the anxiously awaiting city concerning the victory of the army, and the death or capture of the enemy.

It referred to news that brought great joy. Not just, "Hey, I have some good news for you." This is the news of your son who is in the heat of battle and you don't know if he is dead or alive, and you hear that he is alive.

The Church's good news is the salvation of a person's never dying soul. It is the news of Christ and that through His death and resurrection, you can be saved from eternal judgment and have eternal life with Him. That is a victorious message; that is the salvation message.

In Romans 10:13-15 Paul said, *"WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED. 14How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"*

Verse 15 quotes Isaiah 52:7-10 which is a message of victory. *"How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!' 8Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, They shout joyfully together; For they will see with their own eyes When the LORD restores Zion. 9Break forth, shout joyfully together, You waste places of Jerusalem; For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. 10The LORD has bared His holy arm In the sight of all the nations, That all the ends of the earth may see The salvation of our God."*

So εὐαγγελίζω was used in reference to victory in battle. Either of victory over an enemy or release from being captive. Our good news is that Jesus, the eternal God, the Messiah has overcome death and hell. He will save you from the tragic end to which you are running. He will adopt you and give you eternal life with Him.

The Gospel was not a new message with the coming of Jesus. The Gospel has its roots in Genesis 1 and is expounded upon each step of the way. The good news of Jesus Christ is deeply rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament. The promised coming Messiah is a main theme in the Old Testament. The good news of the coming of the King with His kingdom would have been received by the Jews with great joy, because the Jews were dominated by the Romans and they were looking for a deliverer. This was the news that their ancestors had longed for.

But Jesus was not the kind of Messiah that the Jews wanted. Jesus was speaking about salvation from and victory over their sins. But they wanted salvation from the Romans. This explains why the Jews rejected Jesus.

The word εὐαγγελίζω, evangelize, was used concerning the one who brought

good news, the good news itself and the process of bringing good news. It was good news of victory in battle and liberation. That brings us to the message of evangelism. In the context of the Church, it is important to know what the good news is. So what is the good news that is spread by the Church and the one with the gift of evangelism?

## The Message of Evangelism

The Church has the best news in the world. We can tell people how they got here, why they are here, what their current condition is, and how they can miss the coming judgment; how they can be reconciled to their Creator, and receive eternal heaven which is beyond what they can ever imagine. The Church has the Truth concerning Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, *“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup>by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, . . . .”*

Paul refers to the death, burial, resurrection of the Messiah. It was foretold in the Old Testament and is now fulfilled. Jesus had to die to save the ungodly from the wrath of God because of sin. In Romans 2:16, Paul refers to the judgement for sin, *“... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”*

The Gospel, the good news concerning Christ has to do with sin, judgment, Jesus the Son of God, the Son of David, His death, burial and resurrection. All was foretold and fulfilled by Christ. One who has the gift of evangelism is clear on the contents of the good news. He or she has a grasp of the overall message of God contained in the both the Old and New Testaments.

The gift of evangelism is not defined just in terms of desire to see lost people come to Christ. The gift of evangelism involves the fact that the evangelist is clear on the message. This is why the gift of an evangelist is included in the list of teaching gifts in the Church in Ephesians 4. It is used in building up the church in understanding what the gospel is and how to proclaim it to be effective in making disciples.

We have seen in our study of Romans that in order to be saved, a person must



repent and trust in the Gospel. Repent means to turn from sin and self and trust in what Christ has done for you on the Cross. So we have considered the meaning and message of evangelism. I want to give you some examples of evangelism.

## Models of the Gift of Evangelism

What does a person who has the gift of evangelism do? His primary function is to proclaim the Gospel. The ability of an evangelist is one who is gifted in leading people to Christ and can teach them the fundamentals.

The Apostles—All the apostles exercised the gift of evangelism. But, not all evangelists were apostles.

*Luke 9:1, 2, 6 And Jesus called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases. 2And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to perform healing. 6And departing, they began going about among the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.*

Philip—Philip is called an evangelist. We see his ability in the book of Acts. Philip was one of the original seven who helped the apostles and freed them to minister the Word.

*Acts 21:8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.*

*Acts 8:5-8, 12 tells us a little about Philip. "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. 6The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. 7For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. 8So there was much rejoicing in that city. . . . [Philip went to the Samaritans and God used him mightily to bring people to the Lord. His message was the kingdom of God and the person of Christ, namely Jesus as the Messiah, Savior from sin.] 12But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.*

Acts 8:26-38 continues to give us an example of how the Holy Spirit used Philip as an evangelist. *But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and*

go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert road.) <sup>27</sup>So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup>and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

<sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.” <sup>30</sup>Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup>And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. [An evangelist is one who can guide another into the truth of the good news concerning Jesus. Notice that Philip begins in Isaiah. He knew that the good news was rooted in the inspired words of the Old Testament] <sup>32</sup>Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

“HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. <sup>33</sup>“IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH.”

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?” <sup>35</sup>Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. <sup>36</sup>As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch \*said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” <sup>37</sup>And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” [Notice that Philip included in his message not only that Jesus had to die for sin, but also that Jesus is the Son of God.] <sup>38</sup>And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.

So we see in these examples of Philip evangelizing crowds in Samaria on one hand, and on the other hand evangelizing one Ethiopian, that at times the bearer of the good news proclaims it to one person and sometimes many. That is what the gift of evangelism does. An evangelist is able to operate in both situations.

Furthermore, one who has the gift of evangelism may travel to where the need is most great and/or he may settle down in one location and work through the local church. Evangelistic work can be carried out in places where Christ is not named, or it can be carried on in places where there is an established group of believers trying to lead locals to Christ.

Similar to many of the other gifts—like the gifts of service, giving, exhortation—

the whole Church is called to evangelize because that is what the Church is called to do in the great commission. When the Church was scattered because of the persecution in Jerusalem and the martyrdom of Stephen, we are told that they went out and preached the Gospel. Acts 8:4, "Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word."

The spiritual gift of an evangelist is used by the Spirit to teach evangelism. There are those within the Church who have a heightened ability to effectively proclaim the Gospel, and they serve as examples to the Church of how to evangelize.

## Conclusion

Romans 10:13 *"WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."*

God calls men to salvation through the Gospel. Since the Gospel is God's message to men it demands decision and imposes obedience. εὐαγγελίζω refers to offering salvation. It is the powerful proclamation of the good news. Verse 13 makes clear that it does not make any difference who you are or what you may or may not have done.

You may be rich or poor, educated or uneducated, advantaged or disadvantaged. You may be passive or highly motivated. You may be religious or not religious at all. You may be outwardly moral or you may be outwardly immoral. You may have lived in sin a long time. You may have committed adultery or stolen money. You may even have murdered someone. It does not matter. The text says, *"Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

There is a universal call of the Gospel to all men. Paul writes further of this call to man in Romans 10:14-15, *"How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, 'HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!' "*

We exist as the Church, namely to speak the Truth of the Gospel to the world. God is a sending God who sent His Son to save ungodly men. He sends you and me as His ambassadors every week to speak this truth of the Gospel of Christ to those around us.

It is our task to speak the Truth of the Gospel to all in our circles. If you want a

refresher in how to share your faith, I would encourage you to go to our website. We spent a whole summer considering what is the Gospel and how to share your faith.

We are here to make disciples. Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. We are all called to make disciples and to teach. I pray that we will grow in our effectiveness to do so.