

Andrew Maples  
**SESSION 3 | Developing a Heart for  
Evangelism**

**Main Point:** Evangelism should flow from our heart. We do not want it to be a disinterested task, but rather we want it to naturally flow from a Christian perspective founded on a love for Christ and others.

**Application:** We want to begin to see others as Jesus sees them (i.e. through a Gospel lens) and learn to identify opportunities for evangelism in everyday life.

**Text:** Matthew 9:35-38

## **I. A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE: SEEING THE LOST CORRECTLY**

### **A. Like Jesus, We Must Keep the Big Picture in Mind**

#### **1. History's End: The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand**

Jesus proclaims the gospel of the kingdom (v.35). Similar terms are used throughout Matthew such as “kingdom of heaven” or “kingdom of God.” This kingdom can be defined as follows:

“[It is] the idea of the rule of God over creation, over all creatures, over the kingdoms of the world and, in a unique and special way, over his chosen and redeemed people, is the very heart of the message of the Hebrew scriptures”  
- Goldsworthy, “Kingdom of God,” in *The Dictionary of Biblical Theology*

Therefore, Jesus has come proclaiming the ultimate restoration of God's kingdom, a time in the future when all things will be made new and salvation or condemnation for all people will come through the just judgement of God the King.

To develop a heart for evangelism, we must keep this coming reality in mind.  
*What we believe about the future necessarily informs how we act today.*

“The longer I live, the more I am enabled to realize that I have but one life to live on earth, and that this one life is a brief life, for sowing, in comparison with eternity, for reaping.” – George Muller

## **2. The urgency of our message**

Note Jesus' example: the Master is urgent, but the laborers are idle. If we know the kingdom is coming, our hearts should be filled with urgency and a desire to evangelize.

## **B. Like Jesus, We Must Have a Proper Perspective of People**

### **1. People are created in the image of God**

Consider this: your neighbor is the pinnacle of creation, an eternal soul, and an object of love so valuable that God gave his Son as a ransom that he or she might know Him. Within this perspective, suddenly we find that the intolerable become tolerable. Our interaction with others should be marked by patience and love.

### **2. People are harassed and helpless**

Although made in the image of God, people are sinful. People are harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

The shepherd language functions to remind the reader of Old Testament passage where God is portrayed as the perfect shepherd of his people (Ez 34 et al.). On one level, Matthew is using this language to affirm that Jesus is God incarnate. On another level, Matthew is showing us the unique nature of Jesus' ministry. Just as God acted as the Israelite's shepherd when his people were in need of direction and rescuing, so Jesus acts as everyone's shepherd as all people are subject to illness, affliction, pursue sin, and are in need of rescue. This means that Jesus was doing divine work, the very work of God himself.

How does this relate to us? Think about the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20). *When Jesus commissions believers to follow his example and evangelize, he is inviting us to do the very work of God.* There is no greater calling!

## **II. A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE: HAVING COMPASSION AND LOVE FOR THE LOST**

### **A. Jesus' Response: Compassion**

The people are lost in sin but Jesus' response isn't anger, resignation, or impatience. Rather, Jesus responds with compassion, love, and action. Jesus is the incarnate display of God's compassion.

"The emotion which we should naturally expect to find most frequently attributed to Jesus whose whole life was a mission of mercy, and whose ministry was so marked by deeds of beneficence that it was summed up in the memory of his followers as a going through the land 'doing good' (Acts 10:38), [that emotion] is no doubt "compassion." -B.B Warfield, *Person and Work of Christ*

## **B. How do we develop compassion?**

### **1. Beholding Christ**

You become what you behold. This is why Scripture constantly exhorts us to fix our eyes on Christ (Heb 12:2; cf. 2 Cor 3:18; Phil 3:17), and Paul tells us to fill our mind with heavenly things (Phil 4:8). The things we think about and meditate on will necessarily effect our attitude and actions.

"In order for Christlike love to be cultivated in our hearts, we must [meditate on] his love for us, especially his love demonstrated on the Cross. We must preach to ourselves that we can love because God first loved us." Borgman, *Feelings and Faith*.

Here's another way of saying this: preach the Gospel to yourself every day! Consider the compassion that has been shown to you and how you should show that compassion to others.

### **2. Consider Your Christian Calling**

#### **a. Our New Identity**

"...seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Col 3:1-4 cf. Eph 4

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light... Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as

evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” 1 Peter 2:9-12

#### **b. Our Christian Mission**

“Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be *ministers of a new covenant*, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” 2 Cor 3:5-6

“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and *gave us the ministry of reconciliation*; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” 2 Cor 5:18-20

*There is no mundane life for the Christian! God’s sovereignly placed you where you are to engage those around you with the Gospel.*

### **III. THE CHRISTIAN MISSION: LIVING AN EVANGELISTIC LIFE**

#### **A. Jesus was Constantly Proclaiming the Gospel and Engaging the World in Practical Ways**

Teaching, proclaiming, and healing characterized Jesus’ life. This is an example for us (Jn 13:15; 2 Tim 1:13; 1 Jn 2:6). We might not make a lame person walk, but we can comfort the afflicted, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and proclaim the Gospel.

A brief reminder: when you act, proclaim the Gospel *explicitly*. Let them know the reason for your hope and why you act as you do!

#### **B. Jesus Commands Us to Pray**

Prayer is Jesus’ first response in light of a tragic situation. In evangelism, we may labor and toil, but the results are up to God (1 Cor 3:7). All our evangelistic efforts are in vain apart from a dependence on and work of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer acknowledges this dependence and need for power (Matt 7:7, 21:22; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6-7; James 5:14-16).

### **IV. POINTS OF APPLICATION**

Although not exhaustive, here are several points of thought and application for this week:

1. Consider eternity and the urgency of the Gospel message. How should this change how you act, specifically toward others?
2. Preach the Gospel to yourself daily. How should the Gospel shape your perspective on evangelism?
3. How can you care for and evangelize those around, especially during the pandemic?
4. When the time comes, how would you succinctly and clearly explain the Gospel to someone?
5. What is the place of prayer in your Christian life? Are you actively praying for more workers?