

SENT: SHARING THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL

Session 3 | Steve Whitacre

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I. Introduction

A. Our Recommended Text

Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus, by J. Mack Stiles.

B. Our Study of Evangelism

Week One: The Mission of the Church

Week Two: The Heart of Every Ambassador

Week Three: The Message of Every Ambassador

Week Four: The Corporate Witness of the Church

Revisiting our Mission as a Church

“The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples in churches, that they might worship and obey Jesus Christ now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father.”¹

“Evangelism is teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade.”²

“Here is how the Amplified Bible might have expanded my definition: Evangelism is teaching (heralding, proclaiming, preaching) the gospel (the message from God that leads us to salvation) with the aim (hope, desire, goal) to persuade (convince, convert).”³

C. Reviewing Our Goals

1. *Gain a greater understanding of key scriptures on evangelism.*
Today we will explore Matthew 9.35-38, which addresses the heart of every ambassador.
2. *Recognize and repent of our excuses regarding evangelism.*

¹ DeYoung, Kevin and Gilbert, Greg. *What is the Mission of the Church?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2011), 241.

² Stiles, J. Mack. *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2014), 26.

³ *Ibid*, 27.

3. *Form convictions about evangelism.*
4. *Develop a practical strategy of prayer and evangelism.* Do you have that 1 person who does not know the Lord, who you are praying for daily? When you pray, let the passages we are studying inform your prayers. Let the passages we are studying soften your heart to the need of your lost friend.
5. *Cultivate a culture of evangelism in SGCL.*

“I also pray that as you come to evangelize more, you will help your church to develop a culture of evangelism. What do I mean by a culture of evangelism? I mean an expectation that Christians will share the gospel with others, talk about doing that, pray about it, and regularly plan and work together to help each other evangelize. We want evangelism—in our own lives and in our churches.”⁴

Mack Stiles, in his book, *Evangelism* adds...

“I appreciate personal evangelism, and we need to be equipped for it. But since I believe in the church as the engine of evangelism, we need to develop cultures of evangelism in our local churches, too. We want whole churches that speak of Jesus.”⁵

II. The Message of An Ambassador

A. Every Christian is an ambassador

“Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. ... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 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. 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 5:11, 17–21)

⁴ Dever, Mark. *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2011), 17.

⁵ Stiles, 42.

1. Ambassadors are sent
2. Ambassadors represent
3. Ambassadors go under authority
4. Ambassadors go with a message

“The ambassador is a chosen and commissioned representative of the King of kings. The ambassador is given a message and sent. Ambassadors act in ways to give credit and weight to the message they carry. They avoid disqualifications; they practice the art of diplomacy. That’s the Christian ambassador.”⁶

“The striking thing about Paul’s ambassadorship is its relation to God’s activity as the reconciler. The God who reconciled the world to himself through the death of his Son, now actually appeals to the world, through his ambassadors, to be reconciled to him.”⁷

Let’s evaluate:

- a. How often are you aware that, as you navigate your office, your school, your neighborhood, or even your family room, you are an ambassador in a foreign land?
- b. Describe the difference it would make to carry this mindset into your average day:
- c. What steps can you take to remind yourself daily that you are an ambassador with the King’s message in a foreign land?

B. Every ambassador has a message

“...be reconciled to God...”

“Paul is sent as God’s prophetic minister of the new covenant to announce God’s “peace treaty” with those who will trust in Christ to free them from the penalty and power of sin. “Be reconciled to God” is

⁶ Stiles, Mack. *Speaking of Jesus* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 169.

⁷ Colin Kruse, *2 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 128.

a summary of the gospel message Paul proclaims to unbelievers; it is a call to receive the reconciliation that God has wrought.”⁸

1. How Scripture defines the gospel

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,” (1 Corinthians 15:1–3).

“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).

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:23–26).

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Romans 5:1–2).

“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).

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.” (1 Timothy 2:5–6).

⁸ *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008) note on 2 Cor. 5:18-20.

“and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”” (Mark 1:15).

“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood...” (Revelation 1:5).

2. Other definitions of the gospel

“The gospel is the good news of salvation for hell-deserving sinners through the person and work of Jesus Christ.”⁹

“The gospel is the joyful message from God that leads us to salvation.”¹⁰

“The death of Christ is the wisdom of God by which the love of God saves sinners from the wrath of God, and all the while upholds and demonstrates the righteousness of God in Christ.”¹¹

“First the bad news: God is your Judge, and you have sinned against him. And then the gospel: but Jesus has died so that sinners may be forgiven of their sins if they will repent and believe in him.”¹²

“The good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him. In his great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in him. He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ’s sacrifice and that God’s wrath against us had been exhausted. He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again in to a new life, an eternal life with God. Now that’s good news.”¹³

⁹ Vincent, Milton. *The Gospel Primer* (Focus Publishing, 2008) front matter.

¹⁰ Stiles, *Evangelism*, 33.

¹¹ Piper, John. *Desiring God* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1996) 60.

¹² Gilbert, Greg. *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2011), 36.

¹³ Dever, 43.

C. A basic outline of the gospel

1. God
2. Man
3. Christ
4. Response: repentance and faith

Four crucial questions:¹⁴

1. Who made us, and to whom are we accountable?
2. What is our problem? In other words, are we in trouble and why?
3. What is God's solution to that problem?
4. How do I—myself, right here, right now—how do *I* come to be included in that salvation? What makes this good news for me and not just for someone else?

III. How Do Ambassadors Communicate the Message of the Gospel?

“We aim to persuade...”

¹⁴ Gilbert, 31.