

The Fields Are White

**A Study of New Testament
Teaching on Evangelism**

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Lesson One

The Great Commission

Memory Verse: “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’”
(Mark 16:15)

I have had the privilege of preaching in five African nations. Often I have been virtually moved to tears at the deprivation people endure. Anyone with even slight concern for others would wish to be able to do something to alleviate the grinding poverty and endemic disease. But for one who appreciates the value of the human soul a more pressing need is apparent both in third world countries and developed nations - the need for the saving power of the gospel.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:44-49). This commission contains in summary form the mission of the New Testament church. What then is the mission of the church of Christ?

Authority Which Dictates

Before Jesus sent the apostles, He claimed, “all authority ... in heaven and on earth” had been “given to” Him (Matthew 28:18). Because Jesus spoke the words His Father sent Him to speak, His words shall judge us in the last day (John 12:48-49).

Certainly the Great Commission was primarily delivered to the Lord’s apostles (Matthew 28:16-18; Mark 16:14-15). But Christ commanded His ambassadors to teach those whom they baptized “to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). Thus, the commission secondarily applies to all Christians.

The Son of God, our King now and Judge in the last great day, issued the Great Commission as a divine command in summary of His purpose for His people. Who would dare disobey!

Need Which Compels



The purpose of the Great Commission is to lead people to be saved (Mark 16:16). But one cannot be saved unless he is first lost. I could not save a man on the river bank from drowning; he would be safe. But if he fell into water over his head and could not swim, he would be lost and would need salvation.

Thus, the purpose of the Great Commission implies that the world is lost and needs salvation. Indeed, all responsible people have sinned (Romans 3:23) and are thus spiritually dead (Romans 6:23). The world now, as in Jesus’ day, tragically needs spiritual guidance (Matthew 9:36-38).

The greatest need of all people throughout the entire world is not bread for the belly but bread for the soul (Matthew 16:26-27; John 6:27; Romans 14:17). The gospel alone has the power to meet this need (Romans 1:16).

Love That Directs

Early in His earthly ministry the Lord gave His apostles the Limited Commission. He sent His chosen ambassadors to the Jews alone to prepare them for the establishment of the kingdom (Matthew 10:5-7). But the Master had taught that our love is to be for all mankind (Matthew 5:43-48). God “desires all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:3-4). Indeed, salvation in Christ is for people “in every nation” (Acts 10:34-35). Thus, the Lord through the Great Commission directs us to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19), i.e., to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). We must seek to win all the lost to Christ, paying no heed to differences in nationality, race, tongue, skin color, social position, economic status, parentage, or sex.

Message Proclaimed

The Prince of Peace did not send His ambassadors without a message. The gospel they were to announce is the same we must proclaim.

The gospel contains facts to believe: in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and He arose from the dead the third day (Luke 24:44-46). These facts prove Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 1:1-4), and one must believe them to be saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The gospel of the Great Commission also includes commands all must obey. The sinner must repent (Luke 24:47), and, upon confession of his faith in Christ (Romans 10:10), be baptized (Matthew 28:19) in order to be saved (Mark 16:16). As a disciple of Christ he must then be taught “to observe all things” the Lord has commanded (Matthew 28:20).

To those who believe the facts and obey the commands, the Lord extends the promise of salvation (Mark 16:16), i.e., “the remission of sins” (Luke 24:47).

Promise That Sustains

The Great Commission

- ☆ Authority - Dictates
- ☆ Need - Compels
- ☆ Love - Directs
- ☆ Message - Is Proclaimed
 - ☛ facts to believe
 - ☛ commands to obey
 - ☛ promise to receive
- ☆ Promise - Sustains

The Lord promised His apostles when He sent them out, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). He was with them by confirming their word through the miracles He worked by them (Mark 16:17-18). He kept His promise, and the apostolic preaching was established as true by the divine signs (Mark 16:19-20).

We have that confirmed word, and through it the Lord is yet with us (Philippians 2:13), accomplishing more than we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Conclusion

Our generation is now presented with opportunities and resultant responsibilities perhaps never seen since that generation. With the technology, transportation and freedom now afforded us, we can be the instruments of

Christ in the greatest assault on the citadels of Satan since the apostolic age or the most miserable failures in history.

The world is before us lost in sin. We have the power to save them. What shall we do?

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

Matthew 28:16-20

Mark 16:14-20

Luke 24:44-49

John 12:48-49

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Matthew 9:36-38

Matthew 16:26-27

John 6:27

Romans 14:17

Romans 1:16

Matthew 10:5-7

Matthew 5:43-48

1 Timothy 2:3-4

Acts 10:34-35

Romans 1:3-4

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Romans 10:9-10

Philippians 2:13

Ephesians 3:20-21

II. Fact Questions

1. In what passages is the Great Commission recorded?
2. What is the Great Commission?
3. What question does this lesson answer?
4. By what authority did Jesus give the Great Commission?
5. What will be the standard of judgment in the last day for those who disregard His words?
6. What is the purpose of the Great Commission?
7. To whom were the apostles sent under the Limited Commission?
8. Whom are we to love?
9. Whom does God want to be saved?
10. For whom is salvation in Christ intended?
11. Where are we to take the gospel?

12. To whom are we to preach it?
13. What are the facts of the gospel?
14. What should we do with these facts?
15. What are its commands?
16. What must we do with the commandments?
17. What promise does the gospel contain?
18. What promise did Jesus give to the apostles to encourage them to fulfill the Great Commission?
19. Did Jesus keep His promise to them?
20. How does this promise apply to us?

III. Thought Questions

1. Was the Great Commission only for the apostles, or does it apply to us as well?
2. What does the purpose of the Great Commission imply about people who have not received the gospel?
3. What is the greatest need of all people in the world?
4. What will meet this need?
5. Can we truthfully say that lost people in other countries are not our responsibility or concern?
6. Once we have baptized a person into Christ, should we be concerned about teaching him more?
7. Is it possible for us to fulfill the Great Commission?

Lesson Two

The Power of God to Salvation



Memory Verse: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek (Romans 1:16).*

On September 23-26, 1991, I debated Brother Mac Deaver on the subject of church benevolence. The first two nights of the debate Brother Deaver affirmed: “The Scriptures teach that a local church may grant benevolent aid to alien sinners.” In Brother Deaver's third affirmative he introduced this argument: “... the Bible teaches that benevolence when rendered to non-saints is an evangelistic vehicle.”

For generations the Salvation Army, Methodist Church, and other liberal denominations have sought to win converts by first caring for their material needs. This leads to an important question. By what means shall we lead the lost to Christ?

Men's Answers

Brother Deaver accepted as scriptural “Church of Christ” hospitals and church “soup kitchens.” In fact, every form of benevolent work and every recipient of benevolent aid is inherent in this argument.

Similarly, in the Nashville Meeting in December, 1987, in which institutional and noninstitutional preachers from churches of Christ met to discuss their differences, Brother Lewis G. Hale argued that anything which helped get the lost to hear the gospel was scriptural as an aid to evangelism. Of course, this argument includes such popular recreational activities as church camps and “family life centers” (gymnasiums) as authorized activities. Thus, in the two arguments, every form of social gospel activity that denominations engage in is justified as an aid to evangelism.

Authorized Aids or Unauthorized Additions?	
Authorized Action: Sing - Ephesians 5:18-19	Unauthorized Addition: Play
Authorized Aids: Parts, Song Books, Song Leader, Pitch Pipe	

Authorized Aids or Unauthorized Additions?		
Authorized Activity: Evangelism - 1 Thess. 1:6-8; Phil. 4:15-16	Unauthorized Addition: Church Benevolence to Sinners	Unauthorized Addition: Church Sponsored Recreation
Authorized Means: News Paper, Bulletin, Radio, TV, Pulpit, Home Bible Studies		

Nature of Authority

Are benevolence and recreation means of evangelism? In the first place, the argument itself demonstrates ignorance of the nature of authority. Benevolence and recreation are two kinds of works, and evangelism is another work, just as singing is one kind of music and playing is another. One work (benevolence or recreation) is no more authorized as a means to another work

(evangelism) than one kind of music (playing) is authorized as a means to another (singing). Papers, radio programs, pulpit preaching, and home Bible studies are means (methods) of evangelism (taking the good news of salvation in Christ to the lost); but benevolence (material assistance to the needy) and recreation are other works.

Contradicts Scriptural Teaching

Furthermore, Jesus, our perfect example, refused to use benevolence as an enticement to the lost. He miraculously fed five thousand men besides women and children as proof of His claims (John 6:1-14). But when they sought Him for bread the next day, He refused to feed them and exhorted them to seek everlasting life rather than perishable bread (John 6:26-27).

The apostle Paul observed, “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Kingdom blessings are spiritual, not material. The Lord’s church is not a glorified Red Cross. We must not lead people to believe otherwise by enticing them with benevolent aid.

The New Testament limits the benevolent work of the local church to the relief of needy saints (Christians) (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-4; 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4; 9:1, 12-13; 1 Timothy 5:3, 9-10, 16). We dare not violate this divine pattern (Colossians 3:17; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 John 9).

Recreational activities as enticements to hear the gospel are an even grosser corruption of God’s plan. The Lord appeals to our higher natures, our spirits, through reason and expressions of love, whereas Satan appeals to our flesh (Romans 8:5-8). When we use fun and frolic as lures to the lost so we can preach to them, we are making carnal appeals. We are helping Satan. The church of Christ is not a sanctified YMCA.

Are We Different?

If we rely on fun, food and frolic to attract sinners to hear some gospel, what do we offer that is any different from denominations? How do we make the Lord’s church distinctive from churches of men? How can we expect to compete in giving material help and recreation to sinners? If we offer hamburgers, the wealthy denominations will give steaks. If we offer a retreat (camp out), the denominations will send them on a ski trip to Vale. We have only one thing to offer that no denomination does - the truth that leads to salvation (John 8:31-32).

God’s Answer

The inspired apostle announced the theme of the Roman epistle, perhaps the greatest treatise ever written on the plan of salvation, when he declared:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek (Romans 1:16).

Men have many so-called means with which to try to reach the lost, but God has but one power to save - the gospel.

And how are we to take this message of salvation in Christ to the lost?

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:21).

If we are to reach the lost, we must proclaim Christ “publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). There are many methods of evangelism - pulpit preaching, home studies, classes, radio and television preaching, papers,

newspaper articles, correspondence courses, circulars, debates, lectureships, etc., and these and others are all authorized generically by the directive to take the gospel to the lost (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19).

But the divine means of reaching the lost remains ever the same - the preaching of the gospel.

Example of First Century Church

The first century church evangelized the entire world in one generation (Mark 16:15; Colossians 1:5-6,23). How did they accomplish so daunting a task? They “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4) If we will do the same, we can have the same results.

Conclusion

How shall we reach the lost for Christ in our generation? Men have many answers. But God’s answer alone will work (Isaiah 55:8-11; Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 11:33-36). What is the divine answer?

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

Romans 1:16	1 Timothy 5:3,9-10,16
Ephesians 5:18-19	Colossians 3:17
1 Thessalonians 1:6-8	2 Timothy 1:13
Philippians 4:15-16	2 John 9
John 6:1-14	Romans 8:5-8
John 6:26-27	John 8:31-32
Romans 14:17	1 Corinthians 1:21
Acts 2:44-45	Acts 20:20
Acts 4:32-35	Mark 16:15
Acts 6:1-4	Matthew 28:19
Acts 11:27-30	Colossians 1:5-6,23
Romans 15:25-26	Acts 8:4
1 Corinthians 16:1-4	Isaiah 55:8-11
2 Corinthians 8:4	Jeremiah 10:23
2 Corinthians 9:1,12-13	Romans 11:33-36

III. Thought Questions

1. If the arguments made by brethren Deaver and Hale are correct, what kinds of activities is the local church authorized to engage in?
2. What is the “social gospel”?
3. What is wrong with the social gospel?
4. Is instrumental music in worship an authorized aid or an unauthorized addition?

5. What about song books? four part harmony? a song leader? a pitch pipe?
6. Is church benevolent aid to sinners a means of evangelism or an unauthorized work?
7. What about church-sponsored recreation?
8. What about a Bible teaching paper published by the local church? a Bible teaching radio or TV program? preaching the gospel from the pulpit? teaching home Bible studies?
9. Why did Jesus feed the multitudes?
10. Would He use food as a means to attract people?
11. Should we?
12. What kind of blessings do we receive in the kingdom of God?
13. Should we lead people to expect material benefits from the kingdom of God?
14. Whom may the local church scripturally give benevolent aid?
15. Should we violate this pattern?
16. What do we have to attract sinners that no denomination has?
17. By what means should we try to reach the lost for Christ?
18. Which way of reaching the lost works best, God's or man's?



Lesson Three

Prayer and Evangelism

Memory Verse: “Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” (Matthew 9:37-38)

One of my most treasured childhood memories is of Daddy Sprott, my maternal grandfather, as we gathered in the evening around the pot belly stove in the living room of his little four room farmhouse on forty acres of rocky hill top in the Arkansas Ozarks. After Mama Sprott had read a chapter from the Bible, Daddy Sprott, in work shirt and overalls, would get out of his rocking chair, kneel on the floor, and pray. It seemed to me as a child that he prayed a very long time. His words were not eloquent; he had been a Southwest Texas cowboy, goatherder, bee keeper, and truck driver. But his heart was in his words. Over half a century later, this vision still can bring a tear to my eye.

The ability to save the lost does not reside in us. Paul was an apostle of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:1). Apollos was “an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures” (Acts 18:24). But Paul informed the brethren at Corinth:

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).



God wills that all people everywhere be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4). As we do His will, the Lord works in us “both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). And He “is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Ephesians 3:20). If we want to be successful in our efforts to bring the lost to Christ, we must rely upon the Lord.

We rely upon the Lord by simply preaching and teaching the gospel to the lost rather than employing benevolence and entertainment as attractions to the lost. God does not use such carnal enticements (John 6:26-27; Romans 8:5-8). Rather, “the gospel of Christ ... is the power of God to salvation” (Romans 1:16-17). To attract the world to Christ, we must lift Him up before them (John 12:32).

But, to reach a lost and dying world with the saving message of the gospel, we must depend upon the providence of God. By “providence of God” I mean the forethought, rule, and care God exercises in all things. The Lord God exercises sovereign rule over the universe (Acts 17:24-31). The ultimate purpose of His rule is “that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth” (Ephesians 1:10) in order “that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:12).

Both in ancient times and today God rules the nations to bring to pass His will (Daniel 4:17,23-26,31-32,34-35,37; Revelation 19:11-16). When Daniel saw that the time had come for Israel to be restored, he prayed fervently that God would fulfill His promise (Daniel 9:1-19), and the Lord God did so (Ezra 2:1,70). In the good providence of God, the nations were so ordered in the first century that the gospel could be spread to the world in that one generation (Galatians 4:4; Colossians 1:5-6,23).

When we responded in obedient faith to the Savior's invitation, it was to enter fellowship with God (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:3). There is no deeper recognition of that fellowship than prayer, as we "draw near" to God "with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22). In fact, the entire life of the Christian is a pilgrimage by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). Prayer is the fullest expression of that dependent trust. When the Master taught His disciples the importance of prayer, He used the term "faith" to denote persistent prayer (Luke 18:1-8). We must "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Thus, it is imperative that we pray for the success of the gospel.

Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Since God wills that all people everywhere be saved, this request is, above all else, a plea for the salvation of all mankind.

As he observed the weary, scattered multitudes in Palestine, the Master declared to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:36-38). Both at home and abroad, the world is filled with spiritually scattered throngs weary of the fruit of sin. The harvest is overwhelmingly immense. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send His laborers throughout the world, into every corner of the field. The Master obeyed His Father and helped answer His own prayer by sending the seventy around Palestine (Luke 10:1-2). We also must help send out laborers.

When the Jewish council forbade Peter and John to preach in the name of Jesus and severely threatened them if they did so, having defied the council, they returned to the disciples and reported these events. They all with "one accord" prayed, "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word" (Acts 4:29). The Lord emphatically granted their request (verse 31). We also should pray that evangelists will boldly speak all the truth rather than timidly withholding what is unpopular (Ephesians 6:19-20).

The brethren in Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul out with prayer to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-3). We, likewise, should send out preachers with prayer that God would be with them in their endeavors.

We should pray for the salvation of the lost (Romans 10:1).

The apostle Paul exhorted the Christians in Colosse:

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak (Colossians 4:2-4).

An open door stands for opportunities to preach to the lost (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9; Acts 19:10, 20). We should pray that the Lord would open doors to reach the lost and that preachers and teachers of His word would speak the truth so plainly that the lost will comprehend the will of God.

The apostle requested of the Thessalonians:

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

We should pray for the rapid spread of the gospel by ministers of the word, that the word of God might be glorified. We should pray that men of God be delivered from the persecutions and opposition of unreasonable men who refuse to believe (cf. also Romans 15:30-32). The prayers of saints are a mighty help in delivering preachers of the gospel from tribulation (2 Corinthians 1:8-11).

A primary reason for praying for civil rulers is that we may “lead a quiet and peaceful life” (1 Timothy 2:1-2). These conditions are ideal for the spread of the gospel.

Preachers should daily thank God for those who support them in their work (Philippians 1:3-5; 4:15-16) and pray God’s blessings upon them (Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4).

We must ever remember that our success in reaching the lost for Christ is in the hands of God, and we are but His instruments. Thus we will rely on the power of the gospel rather than carnal inducements to attract sinners, and we will pray the Lord of the harvest for success as we labor in His vineyard. Pray for the men and their families who labor in the gospel. Pray for success in our efforts to lead the lost to Christ. Pray that all in the world will have the opportunity to hear the gospel in our time.

We Should Pray

- † God’s Will Be Done**
- † The Lord to Send Laborers**
- † Evangelists Will Speak Boldly**
- † For Preachers We Send Out**
- † For Salvation of the Lost**
- † For an Open Door for the Word**
- † For Preachers to Speak Plainly**
- † For the Spread of the Word**
- † For Deliverance from Persecution**
- † For Civil Rulers**

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

1 Corinthians 1:1	2 Corinthians 5:7
Acts 18:24	Luke 18:1-8
1 Corinthians 3:5-7	1 Thessalonians 5:17
1 Timothy 2:3-4	Matthew 6:10
Philippians 2:13	Matthew 9:36-38
Ephesians 3:20	Luke 10:1-2
John 6:26-27	Acts 4:29,31
Romans 8:5-8	Ephesians 6:19-20
Romans 1:16-17	Acts 13:1-3
John 12:32	Romans 10:1
Acts 17:24-31	Colossians 4:2-4
Ephesians 1:10,12	1 Corinthians 16:8-9
Daniel 4:17,23-26,31-32,34-35,37	2 Thessalonians 3:1-2
Revelation 19:11-16	Romans 15:30-32)
Daniel 9:1-19	2 Corinthians 1:8-11
Ezra 2:1,70	1 Timothy 2:1-2
Galatians 4:4	Philippians 1:3-5
Colossians 1:5-6,23	Philippians 4:15-16
1 Corinthians 1:9	Colossians 1:9-12
1 John 1:3	1 Thessalonians 1:2-4
Hebrews 10:22	

II. Fact Questions

1. Does the power to save the lost reside in us?
2. Who has the power to save the lost?
3. What is the will of God concerning those who are lost?
4. How can we attract the world to Christ?
5. What is divine providence?
6. What is the ultimate purpose of God's rule?
7. Who rules over the nations?
8. Should we pray for the success of the gospel?
9. Make a list of things for which we should pray concerning the spread of the gospel. Cite a passage which proves each point.

III. Thought Questions

1. What are the two ways in which we rely on the power of God rather than our own ability to save the lost?
2. What are some ways in which people depend on their own ability rather than the power of God to lead the lost to Christ?
3. Should we use these attractions?
4. Can the Lord bring about conditions that help lead the lost to Him without performing miracles?
5. If we pray that the lost might be saved, does that necessarily mean we are asking God to over rule their free will?
6. Can you think of Bible examples in which God brought the sinner in contact with the gospel message without violating the sinner's freedom to choose between salvation and condemnation?
7. How important is prayer in the life of a Christian?
8. Can you think of things for which we should pray relative to evangelism in addition to those listed in the lesson?

Lesson Four

Local Evangelism

Memory Verse: *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus [as] the Christ (Acts 5:42).*

In the late summer of 1945, my father, twenty-nine years old and fresh out of Freed-Hardeman College, preached a ten night gospel meeting in the tiny Southwest Arkansas village of Kings Rider. One hundred ten souls were saved. Dad said later, “I thought Pentecost was happening all over again.”

About thirty years thereafter I, twenty-nine years of age, preached a seven day gospel meeting in the tiny Southwest Arkansas hamlet of Burg. It was the most successful meeting I ever preached in terms of baptisms. Six people became Christians. What a difference a generation makes!

From 1945 to 1965 the church of Christ was the fastest growing religious body in the United States. But from 1965 to 1980 the Lord’s church in this country actually lost membership. Since 1980 there has been a barely perceptible increase (Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr. **Why Churches Grow**. iv,v,1). How can local churches recapture the astounding evangelistic successes of bygone years?

Jerusalem the Model

The Church in Jerusalem

- ♥ Truly Converted and Faithful
- ♥ Attractive
- ♥ Used Every Scriptural Means
- ♥ Let Preachers Preach
- ♥ Met False Teachers
- ♥ Overcame Obstacles
- ♥ Employed the Local Church

The Model for Local Evangelism

The church in Jerusalem is the preeminent model for local church evangelism. Three thousand were baptized the first time the gospel was preached there (Acts 2:41). More were added daily (Acts 2:47). Then many, including five thousand men, believed (Acts 4:4). Next, “multitudes of both men and women” were “added to the Lord” (Acts 5:14).

Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests

were obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7).

Incredible! How did they do it? However they did, if we are to be successful in reaching the lost in our locality, we must follow their example. We may not reach thousands as they did, or even hundreds as fifty years ago, but we can reach the honest people desiring to be saved in our locality.

The Secrets of Their Success

First and foremost, the church in Jerusalem was composed of saints who were truly converted and faithful to Christ (Acts 2:42). We will never reach the lost until we too are steadfast to Christ and His church. Lukewarm, disinterested, slothful brethren will never take their community for Christ.

They were an attractive church. This does not mean they owned a beautiful building. In fact, they didn't even own a meeting place. It means their lives attracted others as an adornment to the gospel (Acts 2:47). They had a deep love for one another manifested by sacrificial giving to help the needy in their midst (Acts 2:44-45). They were united in faith and love, as evidenced by unity in worship and hospitality for each other (Acts 2:46). Their lives were godly, and sin was not allowed to continue in their midst (Acts 5:1-11).

They employed every scriptural means available to proclaim the gospel to the lost (Acts 5:42). Methods are matters of judgment. Try as many as possible. Don't discard a method just because there are no immediate results. Don't be afraid to try new methods. Actively getting the word before the lost is more important than the method used.



They let preachers preach and teach the word rather than be tied down with mundane matters. The apostles refused to "leave the word of God" to "serve tables" even though there was a legitimate benevolent need involved (Acts 6:1-2; cf. 2 Timothy 1:11). Many today are more interested in a preacher who "visits" for and with the members than one who will effectively preach and teach "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). They simply want a denominational pastor and are crippling the preacher's work of reaching the lost.

They met and vanquished false teachers in public controversy (Acts 6:9-10). Because the disciples led many to salvation, false teachers, stung by envy and loss of followers, attacked them. Steven was ready to defend the truth. Those in error resorted to dishonest, even vicious, tactics (verses 10-14). But they could not resist the wisdom and the pure spirit of Steven. When we begin to make an impact on denominational bodies, leading their members from the darkness of human creeds to the pure light of the gospel, we too will be attacked, sometimes viciously and dishonestly. We too must be ready to defend the truth with wisdom and a pure, gentle spirit.

They let no obstacles hinder them from preaching the word (Acts 8:1-4). We will face discouragement and persecution, probably not as violent as the brethren at Jerusalem met. Regardless, we as they must go "everywhere preaching the word."

The only organization they employed in preaching the gospel to the lost was the local congregation, the divine organization designed for this purpose (Acts 11:22). They relied upon divine wisdom rather than human and did not try to supplant or supplement the local church with evangelistic organizations designed by men.

Conclusion

When Dad was quite young, he worked for his grandfather, a carpenter. Grandpa Brewer had Dad saw the rafters for a small storage building. He sawed a two by four for Dad to use as a pattern and told him to saw eleven more the same length. Dad used the pattern to measure the next rafter, sawed his rafter, threw away the pattern and used the rafter he had sawed to measure the next. As he sawed each rafter he used the last one he had sawed as the pattern for the next. The last few rafters would not fit. He had gotten gradually,

imperceptibly farther away from the correct length as he got farther away from the original pattern.

The church in Jerusalem is the divine pattern for local evangelism. No other congregation in history has enjoyed the success in reaching the lost in their locality that Jerusalem did. The farther away from this pattern we get, the less successful we will be and the less pleasing to God we will be. Will we carefully follow this pattern or be content to drift along while our friends and neighbors are lost?

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

Acts 2:41	Acts 5:1-11
Acts 2:47	Acts 5:42
Acts 4:4	Acts 6:1-2
Acts 5:14	2 Timothy 1:11
Acts 6:7	Acts 20:20
Acts 2:42	Acts 6:9-14
Acts 2:44-45	Acts 8:1-4
Acts 2:46	Acts 11:22

II. Fact Questions

1. What is the growth rate for the Lord's church in the United States?
2. What is the model for local evangelism?
3. Trace the numerical growth of the church in Jerusalem before they were scattered by persecution.

Acts 2:41 _____

Acts 2:47 _____

Acts 4:4 _____

Acts 5:14 _____

Acts 6:7 _____

4. List and biblically prove the characteristics of the Jerusalem church which helped them be so successful in local evangelism.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Lesson Five

Salt and Light

Memory Verse: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

In February, 1992, while I was in Nigeria, the late Brother Joseph Onyemaechi took me far out into the bush near Aba to preach on Sunday evening to a new congregation he had started. We were honored with the presence of several village dignitaries. When I was through preaching, the chief spoke for the villagers. He welcomed me and the new, little church. He acknowledged I had spoken the truth. Then he observed, “We will watch the people you convert. If they live good lives, you will convert many from our village. If not, you will not.” The chief was both wise and a fine judge of human nature.

In Matthew 5:13-16, the Master teaches us our responsibility to the world. We are salt and light. By successfully so acting, we lead the world to glorify God. How can we effectively be salt and light for Christ?

Salt

Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

“Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The function of salt is to preserve meat and to make otherwise unpalatable food tasty (cf. Job 6:6). God rules the world in righteousness (Psalm 9:8; 97:2; Revelation 19:15). Where there are no righteous people, a nation will perish (cf. Genesis 18:16-33). The righteous lives and influence on others of Christians preserve the nation and make society palatable to God.

But to cure or flavor food, salt must be in contact with the food. Christians are to be in the world but not of the world (John 17:14-18). If we are to influence people in the community for good, we must be among them. We need to become friends with them, have them into our homes, and go to innocent functions of mutual interest. Jesus mingled socially with sinners in order to save them (Matthew 9:9-13), and we must do the same.

In ancient Palestine, salt was dug from the ground or recovered from salt marshes. If moisture dissolved the sodium chloride (salt) from the compound, a residue would be left.

This residue was useless to preserve or flavor but had enough

saltiness left to sterilize land on which it was thrown. It was worse than useless; it was a nuisance. It was carefully swept up and thrown on footpaths, where at least it would do no harm (cf. Luke 14:34-35).

Christians who cease to live righteous lives are worse than useless; they hinder the cause of Christ (cf. Romans 2:21-24). They are a discouragement to their brethren and a stumbling block to the lost.

Light

The Master called us “the light of the world.”

The physical light of the sun is the basis of and absolutely essential to earthly life. It provides energy, warmth, and visibility. It guides, heals, protects from evil, and exposes things hidden in darkness.

Jesus boldly announced, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). He is the source of spiritual life (John 1:4). The Son is the sun that lightens the world. He shows us God (John 14:7), guides us to Him (John 14:6), protects us from evil (John 10:27-30), and exposes the evil lurking in the darkness of ignorance and sin (John 3:20).



Christians are to reflect to the world in our lives the life Jesus lived upon earth (1 Peter 2:21-22). We are the moon that reflects the light of the sun (2 Corinthians 3:18). Our lights thus shine as we live “in all goodness, righteousness, and truth” (Ephesians 5:8-11). As Jesus “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38), so should we (Acts 20:35). Our friends, neighbors and acquaintances will see Jesus in us as we befriend the poor and lowly; live honest, morally upright lives; love each other; do good in return for evil; show mercy to our friends in their troubles and heartaches; try to gently lead them from their sins; speak of things that are pure; and put God first in our lives.

Poor, Jewish homes had the light of a single oil lamp. It would be foolish to light such a lamp and then cover it with a basket. When sin, selfishness, lack of concern for others, and apathy for the Lord characterize our lives, our light is smothered.

A city built on a hill cannot be concealed from the enemy. Because of the peculiar claims of God’s people, we are conspicuous to the world (Hebrews 12:22-23). We must be especially careful to have our “conduct honorable” before a hypercritical world (1 Peter 2:9-12).

Result

The result of such lives is that people of the world “may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” People glorify God by believing and obeying His will (1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

How shall we lead our lost friends, neighbors, loved ones, and acquaintances to Christ? We must be the light of the world. If our lives reflect Christ, our words will be effective. If not, no amount of preaching and teaching will hide our misdeeds from the people we are seeking to reach. “Let your light so shine....”

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

Matthew 5:13-16

Job 6:6

Psalm 9:8

Psalm 97:2

Revelation 19:15

Genesis 18:16-33

John 17:14-18

Matthew 9:9-13

Luke 14:34-35

Romans 2:21-24

John 8:12

John 1:4

John 14:6-7

John 10:27-30

John 3:20

2 Corinthians 3:18

1 Peter 2:21-22

2 Corinthians 3:2-3

Ephesians 5:8-11

Acts 10:38

Acts 20:35

Hebrews 12:22-23

1 Peter 2:9-12

Ephesians 1:12

II. Fact Questions

1. In Matthew 5:13-16, what two relationships does the Master teach that we have to the world?
2. What are the functions of salt?
3. Can we influence the lost for good if we refuse to associate with them?
4. How could salt become a nuisance?
5. How can our lives influence the lost to come to Christ?
6. What good does light accomplish?
7. Who is the light of the world?
8. How do people glorify God?

III. Thought Questions

1. How are the lives of Christians like salt?
2. If we are aggressive in trying to take the gospel to the lost but lead immoral, ungodly lives, will we be successful in reaching the lost?
3. Are there any scriptural limits to our associating with sinners? If so, what are they?
4. How is Jesus the light of the world?

5. How are we light?

6. How can we let our lights shine?

7. How can we fail to let our lights shine?

8. How are Christians like a city on a hill?

IV. Practical Application

Make a list for your own use of ways you need to improve your own life in order to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. No one needs to see this list but you.

Lesson Six

Let's Go Fishing for Men

Memory Verse: "Then Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men'" (Mark 1:17).

Introduction

Perhaps the most effective soul winner for Jesus I have ever worked with was Joe Pollack of Springdale, Arkansas. When I knew Joe he was a widower in his seventies. He had very little formal education, was quite poor, and never taught a class that I knew about. But he knew how to reach the lost.

Mark 1:16-18 records Jesus' call of Simon Peter and Andrew to be His disciples. It is important to note that this was not the call to apostleship but to discipleship. He later named these same men apostles. Thus, the call of this passage applies in principle to all who would follow the Master. "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Why should we be fishers of men, soul winners for Jesus?

Reasons to Be Fishers of Men

In John 15:1-8 Jesus compared His relationship to His disciples as that of a vine to branches. The Master warned, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away" (verse 2). What happens to the branch that is taken away? They "gather them and throw [them] into the fire, and they are burned" (verse 6). It doesn't take a very deep Bible scholar to understand that figure. Fruit bearing is certainly not limited to leading the lost to Christ, but winning the lost to Christ is one way we bear fruit (Romans 1:13). Thus, we need to be fishers of men for self-preservation - to save our own souls.



Don't misunderstand. We are not responsible for the numbers we help save. The increase is in the hands of God (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). We will be held accountable for the effort we put forth.

A second reason to be a soul winner is to accomplish God's will. His will is that everyone in the world be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4).



But, you might wonder, what can one person with limited ability do to accomplish such an overwhelming task? God only holds you and me responsible for what we each can do (Matthew 25:14-30). But what can you do? Do you think in one year you could ask at least ten people for a home Bible study? Do you think one of those ten might become a Christian? If so, next year there will be two Christians, whereas now there is one. Can the two of you do the same thing a second year? Can you keep this up for ten years, one decade - each Christian, including each new convert, helping lead one lost soul to Christ each year? If so, whereas now there is just you, ten years from now there will be 1024 saved souls! That's what just one Christian with limited ability can help do.

Another reason to be a fisher of men is the value of one human soul. If you had two job offers, equal in all respects except that one paid twice as much as the other, which would you accept? If you help win a lost sinner you have gained something more valuable than the entire material world, a soul (Matthew 16:26-27). And what will happen to that lost sinner if no one takes the gospel to him? He will spend eternity in hell (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). The photographers who were chasing the car in which Princess Diana died are accused, among other things, of failing to render assistance to an injured person. Do you, as most, feel such men are contemptible? How contemptible are we if we will not try to save our lost friends, neighbors and loved ones? What is worse, dying in a car wreck or going to hell? Will we just let them die, or will we have compassion on them? (Matthew 9:36-38)

We should be soul winners in order to be like Jesus. Our highest aim in life must be to become like Jesus (Luke 6:40). And what was He like while on this earth? He declared, “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

We should seek to save the lost in order to meet our responsibility under the Great Commission. Jesus directed His apostles to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them and then to teach those disciples “to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20). Thus, we must teach people, baptize them, and then teach them to teach. In this way the kingdom of Christ is perpetuated on earth and spread throughout the earth from generation to generation.

Each of us should be fishers of men in order to experience the great joy of leading a soul to Christ. One of the great joys I experienced in Nigeria was baptizing a young man in a filthy drainage ditch next to a railroad track in the pitch blackness of a moonless night. He was in his third year of seminary training to be a Catholic priest and gave up his hope of an education and a comfortable living in an impoverished society in order to become a Christian. The apostle Paul called the Philippians, many of whom he had led to Christ, “my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown” (Philippians 4:1). The apostle John observed, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 4). You’ve never known real joy until you’ve seen someone you helped lead to Christ become a Christian.

Fishers of Men
Self Preservation
Accomplish God’s
Will
Value of the Soul
Emulate Christ
Meet Responsibility
Enjoyment
Not Impossible

Yes, you might say, I know I should help win lost souls, but I just don’t think I can. That leads to the last reason to be a fisher of men - it’s not impossible. You see, God is working through us, by His word and providence (Philippians 2:13). And with God on our side, we can do more than we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Conclusion

Oh, about Joe Pollack. How was he such a great soul winner, if he couldn’t teach? He asked everyone he met if they would have a Bible study. When someone agreed he called me and informed me he had a Bible study for me to teach. Several lost souls were saved as the result. He was one of the best “bird dogs” I ever had. If you are just not a hunter (teacher), why not be a bird dog? Every hunter needs one or two good bird dogs.

The Lord impressed upon his apostles the urgency of the task. He observed:

'Do you not say, "There are still four months and [then] comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together' (John 4:35-36)

Brothers and sisters, look all around at your friends, loved ones, coworkers and neighbors who are lost and dying in sin. Indeed, the fields are white for harvest. Let's go fishing for men!

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

Mark 1:16-18

Luke 6:40

John 15:1-8

Luke 19:10

Romans 1:13

Matthew 28:18-20

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

Philippians 4:1

1 Timothy 2:3-4

3 John 4

Matthew 25:14-30

Philippians 2:13

Matthew 16:26-27

Ephesians 3:20-21

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

John 4:35-36

Matthew 9:36-38

II. Fact Questions

1. In John 15:1-8, tell what each of these represents:

a. the vine -

b. the branches -

c. the vinedresser -

2. What happens to branches that fail to bear fruit?

3. Is leading the lost to Christ the only way we bear fruit?

4. Are we accountable for the number of people we help save or for the effort we put forth to reach the lost?

5. How many people does God will to be saved?

6. Does God hold us responsible for more than we are able to do?

7. Should we use small ability as an excuse to do nothing?

8. How much is the soul of one person worth?

9. What will happen to people who never hear the gospel?

10. Should we show mercy toward those who are dying spiritually?

11. Should we be like Jesus?

12. Did Jesus seek to lead the lost to salvation?

13. Does it bring joy to help lead a lost soul to Christ?

14. Is it possible for you to help win lost sinners to the Lord?

III. Thought Questions

1. When Jesus called Simon Peter and Andrew to become “fishers of men,” was He calling them to apostleship or to discipleship?

2. How does this apply to us?

3. Will we be saved if we fail to try to save others?

4. How does taking the gospel to sinners help fulfill God’s will?

5. How much can just one person accomplish in taking the gospel to the world?

6. Which is worse, to refuse to help save a person’s life from a fiendish attacker or to refuse to help save a person’s soul from hell?

7. How urgent is the task of bringing sinners to Christ?

8. What can you do to help lead lost sinners to Christ in the area where you live?

Lesson Seven

The Work of an Evangelist

Part 1



Memory Verse: “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2).

I have heard of people who quit attending a local congregation on the complaint that the preacher did not visit them. This excuse not only betrays weakness of faith, it also reveals a denominational attitude toward preachers. We need to ask ourselves if we want the preacher to do the work God has assigned him or to do the work sectarians assign their pastors. Thus we inquire, What is the scriptural work of an evangelist?

What Is an Evangelist?

Hopefully you have noticed that I have used the terms “preacher” and “evangelist” interchangeably to describe the same man. Paul solemnly charged Timothy both to “Preach the word” and to “do the work of an evangelist.” (2 Timothy 4:2,5) A “preacher” is a “crier” or “herald,” and an “evangelist” is “one who announces glad tidings.” These are two descriptive titles for the same work. Paul also encouraged Timothy to “be a good minister of Jesus Christ.”

(1 Timothy 4:6) Since the term “minister” means “servant,” all Christians are ministers (Matthew 20:25-28), but preachers have “the ministry” (service) “of the word.” (Acts 6:4; cf. 2 Timothy 4:5)

Three Names - One Work

- ☛ Evangelist
- ☛ Preacher
- ☛ Minister of Jesus Christ

Denominational people think that a traveling preacher is an evangelist, whereas a preacher who works with a local church is a pastor. But “Philip the evangelist” apparently preached in the same place for at least twenty years (Acts 8:40; 21:8).

The Work Is Not

Many Christians expect preachers to take the lead in calling on the sick. The apostles, who were also preachers (2 Timothy 1:11), refused to “leave the word of God and serve tables,” even though there was a legitimate benevolent need in Jerusalem that threatened the unity of the church (Acts 6:1-2). Other than the fact that ministers of the gospel should be an example in all good works (1 Timothy 4:12-16), preachers have the same benevolent obligations as all other Christians (e.g., James 1:27).

Preachers should certainly teach the word “from house to house” (Acts 20:20) as a very effective means of reaching the lost. And preachers have the same obligations to practice hospitality that all other Christians have (1 Peter 4:9). But the idea that a preacher and his wife should regularly entertain the members and go around to visit them is a false concept rooted in the sectarian pastor system.

What the Scriptures Say

Work	Place	Message
Proclaimed Taught	Publicly House to House	the whole counsel of God
Acts 20:20	Acts 20:20	Acts 20:27

The New Testament pattern for the work of an evangelist is exceedingly simple. Two passages, each involving the apostle Paul, summarize the work of a preacher.

Acts 20:18-35 records the beloved apostle's farewell address to the elders of the church at Ephesus. In it he reminds them of the work he did among them and thus sums up, by his own example, the work of a preacher. He reminded them how he "kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house." (Acts 20:20) He attested his own work thus:

'Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

'For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.' (Acts 20:26-27)

The work of a preacher is the preaching and teaching of God's word, both publicly and from house to house. He must not hold back any truth spiritually profitable to his hearers but boldly declare the whole counsel of God. Only thus can he be free of blame before God if any of his hearers are lost.

Paul's charge to Timothy, which in principle applies to every gospel preacher in every generation, must be the core and sum of our every conscious endeavor as men of God. It constitutes our commission as soldiers of Christ.

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

But you be watchful in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

To underscore the importance of his charge, the inspired apostle brings as witness God, the Creator of all, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our King and the One before Whom we shall stand to be judged on that last great day. But, as this command was to Timothy in his role as a preacher, it with equal force applies to all ministers of the gospel in each subsequent age.

Timothy's work, and that of every other gospel preacher, is amazingly simple - "Preach the word!" It is not to teach human philosophy, spout personal opinions, delve into politics, entertain with jokes and funny stories, or salve consciences with positive "pop-psychology" that promote "self esteem." It is to preach the word. If our sermons are anything other than explanations and applications of Scripture, we fail to fulfill our



The Work of an Evangelist

2 Timothy 4:1-5

★ The Witnesses ★

verse 1

“God and the Lord Jesus Christ

★ The Work ★

verse 2

“preach the word”

“Be ready, in season and out”

“Convince, rebuke, exhort”

★ The Opposition ★

verses 3-4

“will not endure sound doctrine”

“will turn away their ears from the truth”

“be turned aside to fables”

★ The Preacher’s Response ★

verse 5

“Be watchful in all things”

“endure afflictions”

“do the work of an evangelist”

“fulfill your ministry”

The Charge of Paul to

responsibility as evangelists. We must fill our minds with the love and knowledge of God’s word and proclaim that word to all who will hear.

Our work is to “Convince, rebuke, and exhort.” We must convince sinners of the guilt of sin (cf. John 16:8), chide them for these sins, and seek to lead them to repent, obey, and live faithfully to the Lord. In the immediate context Paul had reminded Timothy that the Scriptures fully equip us for this work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

We must suffer long with the sloth of men in responding to the truth we proclaim, and teach them gently and patiently that they might obey.

Many, including some brethren, are unwilling to receive all the truth. They cannot “endure sound doctrine” because they love their sins. They want to hear things that please their ears. Thus, they find teachers who will not preach unpleasant truths. Once people refuse the truth, false teachers will fill the void with the doctrines of men.

What should we do in the face of such unwillingness to hear all the word? We must watch for false teachers and false doctrine, warning brethren of their errors. Persecution will come from those who do not love the truth, but we must willingly endure it. Despite all temptations, persecutions, and oppositions, we must continue to do our work as evangelists. Only thus shall we be faithful in our service to God as preachers of the gospel.

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

1 Timothy 4:6

Matthew 20:25-28

Acts 6:1-6

Acts 8:40

Acts 21:8

2 Timothy 1:11

1 Timothy 4:12-16

James 1:27

1 Peter 4:9

Acts 20:17-35

2 Timothy 3:16-17

II. Fact Questions

1. What three names does the New Testament use for a man who preaches the gospel?

2. Define these terms.
 - a. evangelist

 - b. preacher

 - c. minister

3. According to the example of the apostle Paul:
 - a. What kind of work is an evangelist to do?

 - b. Where should he do this work?

 - c. What message should he proclaim?

4. According to Paul in his charge to Timothy:
 - a. What is the work of a preacher?

 - b. How is he to do this work?

 - c. Should he expect opposition?

 - d. Should he expect opposition from brethren?

 - e. How should he respond to opposition?

III. Thought Questions

1. Is the preacher the only minister in the local congregation?

2. What is the difference between an evangelist and a pastor?

3. How serious are the consequences if a preacher holds back some of the truth of God's Word because people don't want to hear it?

4. How solemn was Paul's charge to Timothy?

5. Does this charge apply to ministers of the word today?

Lesson Eight

The Work of an Evangelist

Part 2

Memory Verse: “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5).

God ordained the work of an evangelist (Ephesians 4:11). All aspects of the Lord's will for the church are to accomplish His purpose (Ephesians 3:8-12). Thus, there is aim or purpose in the work of a preacher. An evangelist has six goals he should seek to accomplish in his work.

The Purposes of Preaching

- **Toward God: Please**
- **Toward Sinners: Reconcile**
- **Toward Brethren: Edify**
- **Toward the Faith: Guard**
- **Toward the Faithful: Teach to Teach**
- **Toward the Congregation: Set in Order**

Toward God: Please

As of any other servant of God, the first obligation of a minister of the gospel is toward God.

For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10).

A servant seeks to please his master. As Christ is our Master, we must seek to please Him. Of course, we would wish that our work is pleasing to those who hear us, and we should not be unnecessarily offensive, but we must always remember that ultimately we serve God rather than men.

Toward Sinners: Reconcile

It is God's purpose in Christ to reconcile the sinful world to Himself by the preaching of the gospel (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Though the apostles are the ambassadors of this passage, preachers are to proclaim this same apostolic doctrine (Galatians 1:8-9). The purpose of preaching to the world is to lead them to the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5; 16:26) that they might be forgiven (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 3:19) and thus be reconciled to God.

Toward Brethren: Edify

The word of God is able to build Christians up, that they might receive the inheritance of eternal life (Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Thus, preachers should teach brethren with the aim of developing in them "the divine nature," so they might attain unto the heavenly kingdom (2 Peter 1:2-11).

Toward Faith: Guard

In every generation false teachers arise bringing heresies that test who will be faithful to the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:19; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18-19). They will overthrow the faith of some (2 Timothy

2:16-18). The soldier of Christ must guard the faith against all error, whether from within or without (Jude 3; 2 Timothy 4:3-5).

Toward the Faithful: Teach to Teach

I believe the greatest measure of a preacher's work is the ability of a congregation to prosper spiritually while he is away and after he is gone. A church which cannot effectively function without the evangelist there has not sufficiently matured. They should develop men and women to teach Bible classes, including home Bible studies, men to lead the worship assemblies, and men to preach. Thus, the wise preacher will diligently heed the apostle's admonition:

And the things which you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

The word "men" of this passage is from the Greek term "*anthropos*," which means "without distinction of sex, a human being, whether male or female" (Thayer. 46). Thus, the evangelist should carefully cultivate the knowledge of God's word and the ability to teach that word in faithful men and women, that they might in turn teach others.

Toward the Congregation: Set in Order

But even though an evangelist might equip faithful Christians to teach, lead in worship, and preach, he still has not completed his obligation to the local church. The church is not complete until it has elders to shepherd the flock and oversee the work of the church and deacons to serve the congregation (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:17,28-31; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 6:1-6). Therefore, the faithful minister of the gospel will make it a long term goal to obey Paul's admonition to Titus:

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you (Titus 1:5).

No local church is fully set in order until it has qualified elders and deacons appointed and serving in their divinely appointed roles.

Conclusion

As to his personal distinction, a preacher is no more important and to receive no more honor than any other Christian (1 Corinthians 3:5-7; Matthew 20:25-28; 23:5-12). But there is no more vital work than the proclamation of the gospel. It is God's means to save the lost and to build up His church (1 Corinthians 1:21; Acts 20:32). Those who love God's word love the men who proclaim it (Romans 10:15), and those who hate truth hate those who preach it (John 17:14-18). Even as the prophets of old were men of God (1 Kings 13:1), i.e., men whose life's work was the service of God, so evangelists are men of God (1 Timothy 6:11). God has only one Son, and He was a preacher (Luke 4:18).



The Lord's church needs good men who will devote their lives to proclaiming the gospel (Matthew 9:36-38) and good brethren who will hold up their hands in the thickest fight (Philippians 4:10-17). Thus, we will save both the lost and ourselves and glorify God.

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.

Ephesians 4:11	1 Timothy 3:1-13
Ephesians 3:8-12	Titus 1:5-9
Galatians 1:8-10	Hebrews 13:17
2 Corinthians 5:18-20	1 Peter 5:1-4
Romans 1:5	1 Corinthians 3:5-7
Romans 16:26	Matthew 23:5-12
Luke 24:46-47	1 Corinthians 1:21
Acts 3:19	Romans 10:15
2 Peter 1:2-11	John 17:14-18
1 Corinthians 11:19	1 Kings 13:1
2 Peter 2:1-3	1 Timothy 6:1
1 John 2:18-19	Luke 4:18
2 Timothy 2:16-18	Matthew 9:36-38
Jude 3	Philippians 4:10-17
2 Timothy 2:2	

II. Fact Questions

What is the purpose of preaching in relationship to:

1. God
2. sinners
3. brethren
4. the faith
5. the faithful
6. the congregation

III. Thought Questions

1. If a congregation just can't get along without its preacher, is he doing a good job?
2. How does a preacher set a church in order?
3. Should we honor preachers above other Christians?
4. Is the work of preaching important?

Lesson Nine

Declaring the Whole Counsel of God

Memory Verse: “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27).

Reportedly, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the Christian Church and the church of Christ were in the process of becoming separate bodies, a church sent a prospective local preacher a list of questions to ascertain his views on the divisive issues of the day. One query asked his position on the use of instrumental music in worship. Supposedly, he brazenly replied, “Tell me how you stand, and I will preach it that way. I can preach it equally well either way.”



I do not know if such an exchange actually occurred, but, in the face of every divisive issue that besets the Lord’s people, there are those preachers who betray their cowardice by either refusing to preach on the subject, waiting to “see which way the wind is blowing,” or simply capitulating to the popular view without true conviction.

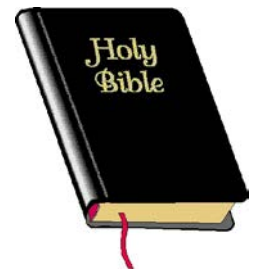
Paul’s determined course was far different. In his emotion laden farewell to the elders of the church in Ephesus, he summarized his work thus: “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27).

What It Means

What does it mean to declare the whole counsel of God?

As Paul’s valedictory to the Ephesian bishops summarizes the work of an evangelist by example, his farewell charge to his son in the faith Timothy capsulizes the preacher’s work in a command:

*I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:
Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. (2 Timothy 4:1-2)*



The work of an evangelist is to “Preach the word”! When articles are long on vignettes and virtually or utterly void of “book, chapter, and verse,” writers are not declaring the whole counsel of God. When sermons are full of syrupy stories acceptable to any sectarian gathering, but sinners are not convinced and rebuked of sin and exhorted to repent, the man in the pulpit has failed to declare the whole counsel of God.

The weight of the witnesses to whom the apostle appeals demonstrates the seriousness of his charge. He delivered his command “before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead.” How solemn the truth that we who preach must give account to the great Judge whether or not we have declared the whole counsel of God. Will we be “innocent of the blood of all men”?

Evangelists must preach the word “in season and out of season.” We must declare the whole counsel of God when men love us and when men hate us, when we are popular and when we are unpopular, when we are hired and when we are fired, when men acclaim us as great and when they defame us as snakes, when

they pat us on the back and when they stab us in the back, when churches invite us to hold meetings and when they cancel our meetings. It is fine to teach young men who desire to preach the proper techniques of public speaking. We must give our best in the Master's service. But when sermons are long on style and short on substance, sinners are merely made comfortable in sin, and brethren are simply entertained.

T.B. Larrimore was widely considered to be the most eloquent gospel preacher in our country around the beginning of the twentieth century. Hundreds were moved to obedience by his persuasive speech. In his latter years, he intentionally curbed his powerful rhetoric, afraid that people were being moved by beautiful speech rather than by the beauty of the story of Christ.

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:1- 5).

In past years, when young men went to older preachers for advice on how to preach, they were usually advised, "Fill yourself so full of the Scriptures it just runs over!" In essence, this is what aged Paul advised Timothy (1 Timothy 4:15-16).

What does it mean to "declare ... the whole counsel of God"? It means to "preach the word." We don't need more suave, glib orators. We need dedicated, righteous, courageous men of the book who will declare the whole counsel of God regardless of the cost.

It further means to preach **only** the word (1 Peter 4:11). There is no place in the pulpit for human opinion or dogmas of men.

It also means to preach **all** the word (Acts 20:20, 26-27). It takes courage to preach truths that those who write your pay check are loathe to hear, but the man of God must do so. It takes love to point out sins that the sinner does not want to confess.

**Declaring the Whole
Counsel of God**

**The Word
Only the Word
All the Word**

Why Do Some Not?

If declaring the counsel of God is so important, why don't all gospel preachers do so? There are many weak brethren who don't want to hear all the truth, especially the truth that exposes their sins, and they hinder the declaration of the word (2 Timothy 4:3-4). But evangelists must endure hardships and preach it anyway (2 Timothy 4:5). Why do many not do this? Because they are the opposite of Paul. Paul unselfishly sacrificed himself for the Lord (Acts 20:22-24). Many selfishly sacrifice truth for popularity, pomp, pride, and prosperity.

Conclusion

The book of Second Timothy contains the last recorded words of one of the greatest soldiers of the cross who ever lived, the apostle Paul. A martyr's death was eminent even as he wrote (2 Timothy 4:6). But he was ready, because he had not "shunned to declare ... the whole counsel of God." It must be the solemn determination, by the grace of God, of every preacher of the cross, when he comes to the end of the way, to be able to repeat with the fervor of a clear conscience the immortal words of the beloved apostle:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

Acts 20:26-27

1 Timothy 4:15-16

2 Timothy 4:1-8

1 Peter 4:11

1 Timothy 4:15-16

Acts 20:20

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

II. Fact Questions

1. What question does this lesson answer?
2. Should preachers declare the whole counsel of God?
3. What will be the substance of a preacher's sermons if he declares the whole counsel of God?
4. Should he tell people to believe or practice anything he cannot prove from the Scriptures?
5. Should he hold back any of God's word?
6. Why do some preachers not declare the whole counsel of God?
7. What should the determination of each minister of the word be?

III. Thought Questions

1. What kind of preaching should we desire: that which entertains us, which makes us feel good about ourselves, or which faithfully teaches us God's word?
2. How serious is the obligation of an evangelist to "declare the whole counsel of God"?
3. Which man is doing a better job of preaching: one who eloquently entertains us with funny jokes and heart warming stories or one who with plain speech shows us what the Scriptures teach us to

believe and practice?

4. Can you give some examples of preaching in which the speaker taught his audience to believe or practice something he couldn't prove from the Bible?
5. What are some truths that preachers are tempted not to preach?
6. Why do some brethren not want to hear unpopular truths?
7. Are the evangelists who are the most popular with men likely to be the most pleasing to God?

Lesson Ten

Contending for the Faith

Memory Verse: *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).*

We live in an “I’m ok, you’re ok” age. The only thing that is intolerable is intolerance. Of course we should be tolerant of racial, ethnic and political differences. We must never be so arrogant as to demand that our opinions alone are right. We should never try to enforce our views on others by physical might or political power. But does this mean we should accept all religions as equally valid?

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude verse 3).

What is our responsibility to the faith?

Definition

To answer this, we must first determine what “the faith” is. The faith is what Paul preached (Galatians 1:23). But Paul preached the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:11). Thus, the faith is the gospel. It is the word of God which produces faith in our hearts and is the object of our faith (Romans 10:8,17). This gospel is the “sound doctrine” which the apostles preached (1 Timothy 1:8-11). It is the doctrine of Christ (2 John verse 9), that which the Lord Jesus Christ teaches (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

Characteristics

The faith has four characteristics stated in Jude verse three which are the bases of our responsibilities to it.

It is “**the** faith,” not **a** faith. Thus, it is unique. There is only one faith (Ephesians 4:5). It is not correct to say, You have your faith, and I have mine. We may each have our own opinion, but there is but one faith.

This view is narrow, but this is precisely the nature of truth and salvation in Christ. He is the only way to God (John 14:6). Salvation is through Him alone. Early Christians could have escaped persecution by acknowledging Caesar as god and viewing Christ as a lord among others. But there is one Lord (Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 8:5-6), and it was precisely the narrowness of this stand that led unbelievers to persecute Christians.

It is “the faith **once for all** delivered” to the saints. The Greek word translated by the phrase “once for all” is also used to describe the uniqueness of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins (Hebrews 9:27-28). He was offered once and only once. The faith was delivered once and only once. It is not continuously revealed through the ages, but was given once for all time through the apostles and prophets of the first

The Faith

- ★ unique
- ★ final and complete
- ★ divine in origin
- ★ for all Christians

century. Those who either bring or accept another supposed gospel or any additions to the faith are accursed of God (Galatians 1:6-9). The faith contains all God's will for man (John 16:13) and is completely sufficient to meet all our spiritual needs (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

It is "the faith which was once for all **delivered.**" The faith is of divine rather than human origin (Galatians 1:11-12). It is the word of God not man (1 Thessalonians 2:13). It stands in stark contrast to the false revelations of such religions as Islam, Hinduism and Mormonism and to all the creeds of the denominations. They are all from man; only the faith is from God.

It is "the faith which was once for all delivered **to the saints.**" All disciples of Christ are saints (cf. Acts 9:1,13), i.e., people who have been set apart to God. Thus, the faith was not delivered to a clergy which has a supposedly unique ability and authority to understand and explain it. Rather, it was delivered to all Christians. We all have the ability to comprehend its truth (Ephesians 5:17) and therefore have the responsibility to study and learn it for ourselves (1 Peter 2:1-3).

Our Responsibility

It is precisely because the faith possesses these unique qualities that we have a solemn obligation to it. We must "**contend earnestly** for the faith." These two words "contend earnestly" are from one Greek term which literally means to intensely agonize. It was the term the Greeks used for Olympic wrestling.

The Lord Himself engaged in public dispute with the Jewish leaders over truth (Matthew 22:15-46). He was so successful they were afraid to ask Him any more questions. Stephen, the first disciple to give his life for his faith, was eminently successful in public debate (Acts 6:9-11). The apostle Paul disputed with false teachers both within the church (Acts 15:1-2) and without (Acts 17:16-17). With such examples before us, how can we shrink from defense of the faith?

The apostle Paul summarized our obligations to the faith in the conclusion of his first letter to the Corinthians:

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

Let all that you do be done with love" (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).

As the sentry on duty, we must watch for false teaching. When it appears, we must "stand fast in the faith." When the spiritual battle of truth against error is fought, we must be brave. When comrades around flee or fall to Satan, we must remain strong. But our battle must be fought with love - love of the truth, love of the souls we seek to save, and, yes, even love for the false teachers we fight.

In past times great debates caused many people to see the truth. The five debates of Alexander Campbell in the earlier part of the nineteenth century even made a national impact. The church grew from nonexistence in our country to become at one time the fourth largest religious body in America. Our preaching must be loving, but it must also be militant. We should answer error with a loving and gentle spirit, but we must answer error. And Christians who do not preach must love their friends and neighbors enough to show them their errors.

Conclusion

In 480 BC King Xerxes of Persia crossed the Hellespont and invaded Greece with an army estimated by modern historians to be about 360,000 soldiers. As the Greeks were forced to fall back to the south, they sent King Leonidas of Sparta with a token force of 5200 to defend the narrow pass of Thermopylae. After three days of heavy fighting the Greeks remained unconquered. During the night scouts for the Persians discovered a narrow mountain trail by which they could attack the Greeks from the rear and surround them. As the fatal attack began, most of the Greeks either surrendered or fled. But Leonidas, his band of 300 Spartans and a contingent of Thespians stood their ground. After their spears were broken, they fought with swords and then hands. They died to the man. But 20,000 Persians fell, and the time Leonidas purchased with his life enabled the Greeks to rally the forces to repel the Persian host. The stubborn, unyielding courage of Leonidas must be ours against all enemies of the faith.



The gospel is by its nature controversial. Paul and his company were accused of having “turned the world upside down.” (Acts 17:6). The world hated the Master and will hate His disciples (John 15:18-20). But it was the courage to stand for truth while loving those who hated them that enabled the first century disciples to turn the world upside down. We dare not do less.

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

Jude 3	2 Timothy 3:16-17
Galatians 1:23	Acts 9:1,13
Galatians 1:6-9	Ephesians 5:17
Romans 10:8,17	1 Peter 2:1-3
1 Timothy 1:8-11	Matthew 22:15-46
2 John 9	Acts 6:9-11
1 Timothy 6:3-5	Acts 15:1-2
Ephesians 4:5	Acts 17:16-17
John 14:6	1 Corinthians 16:13-14
1 Corinthians 8:5-6	Acts 17:6
Hebrews 9:27-28	John 15:18-20
John 16:13	

II. Terms to Define

1. once for all
2. saints
3. contend earnestly

III. Fact Questions

1. What question does this lesson answer?
2. What is “the faith”?
3. How many faiths are there?
3. What are the four characteristics of the faith which set it apart from all human messages?
4. What responsibility toward the faith does Jude teach that we have?
5. Is the gospel a controversial message?
6. Should we expect people of the world to hate us?

IV. Thought Questions

1. Should we tolerate the religious views of those with whom we disagree?
2. Is the religion of Christ narrow?
3. If we differ religiously, is it because each of us has his own faith?
4. Has the faith gradually developed through the centuries?
5. How many books do we need to understand to be fully mature Christians?
6. Should we be able to understand the Bible without having a clergyman, priest or preacher explain it to us?
7. Should I trust a preacher to tell me what to believe, or should I study the Bible for myself?
8. Should Christians discuss their religious differences with others?
9. Is it right to have public discussions of religious differences?
10. How should these public discussions be conducted?
11. What are the purposes of these discussions?
12. If properly conducted, do they do any good?

Lesson Eleven

Congregational Cooperation for Evangelism

Memory Verse: *Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch (Acts 11:22).*

Once I spoke by phone to an institutional preacher who works with a large congregation in South Texas. As we conversed he asked if I was “anti-cooperation.” I told him I knew what he was talking about, but that I advocated scriptural cooperation between churches of Christ. He changed the subject.

The issue of how local congregations may scripturally cooperate with one another has been from early days and continues to be today a divisive issue among brethren. So, we inquire, how may local churches of Christ scripturally cooperate with one another to do the work of evangelism?

Autonomy

No principle is more basic to the New Testament pattern for the organization of the church than that of the independence or autonomy of the local church. The term “autonomy” means, “The quality or state of being independent, free, and self-directing; individual or group freedom” (**Webster’s Third New International Dictionary**, unabridged. 1:148).

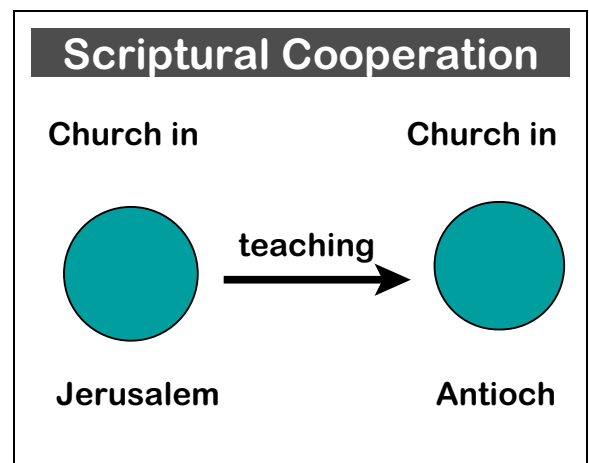
How Applied to Local Church

By “congregational autonomy” I mean that the direction of the execution of the will of Christ belongs completely within the local church and is not to be surrendered, partially or completely, to any outside control. Elders are to be appointed within each local church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). These elders (also called bishops, i.e., overseers, or pastors, i.e., shepherds - Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-2) have the oversight of the congregation of which they are members (1 Peter 5:1-2). There they rule under the authority of Christ, the Chief Shepherd (1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4). No passage of Scripture broadens their authority. The elders of the local church have no right to oversee anything other than the work of the local church where they are members. There is no authority for a congregation to allow any man, group of men, or organization outside the local church to oversee all or any part of its function.

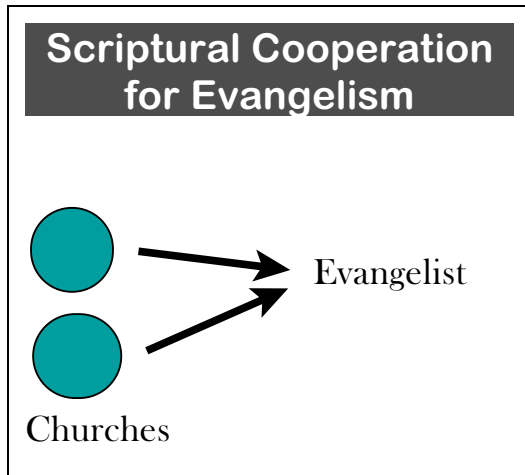
Scriptural Cooperation

How, then, may congregations scripturally cooperate in evangelism while at the same time maintaining autonomy?

It is perfectly scriptural for churches to send teaching to each other. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to the young church in Antioch to encourage them “that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord” (Acts 11:22-23; cf. 13:1-3; 14:21-23, 26-28; 15:22-31,40; 18:22; Colossians 4:16). A local church may send scriptural teaching to any person or group of people anywhere (1 Thessalonians 1:8). When a local church sends a



teaching paper to other churches, or when a congregation pays the way of an evangelist to preach a gospel meeting for a small congregation or to preach overseas, this is scriptural congregational cooperation.



A congregation may act alone in supporting a preacher in another place (Philippians 1:3-5; 2:25, 30; 4:14-18). Or, several churches may independently and directly support a preacher working in another place (2 Corinthians 11:8-9). Thus, when several churches send directly to a preacher to work with a small church or to send that preacher to another nation, they are scripturally cooperating in evangelism.

The Pattern Applied

This reveals three facts. No church is to act as an agent for another church or churches since, when several churches pool their resources to do a work common to all of them, all the other churches become subordinate to the congregation which

decides how the funds will be used. No church may assume the oversight of any part of the evangelistic work (or any other work) of any other church or churches. Also, the equality of each local congregation relative to oversight must be maintained.

The Pattern Summarized

The principle is congregational autonomy. The oversight of all the work of each local church is completely within that congregation (1 Peter 5:1-4). The expression of that autonomy in congregational cooperation for evangelism is concurrent cooperation. Local congregations may and should work concurrently to achieve a common objective, but they must not pool their resources under the oversight of one church.

Superiority of Divine Wisdom

This plan dramatically demonstrates the superiority of God's wisdom to man's wisdom (Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-36; Ephesians 3:8-11). By this amazingly simple plan, in stark contrast with the elaborate organizational schemes of men, the first century church took the gospel to the whole world in one generation (Mark 16:15; Colossians 1:5-6, 23). How could we possibly improve on such a plan?

The Sponsoring Church

For two generations years the issue of "the sponsoring church" has divided churches of Christ. Such programs as "Herald of Truth," "World Radio," "Search," "One Nation Under God," "Amazing Grace," and "Campaign America" are examples. In his book **How Churches Can Cooperate**, Lewis G. Hale, a notable defender of the sponsoring church, thus described the part of contributing churches:

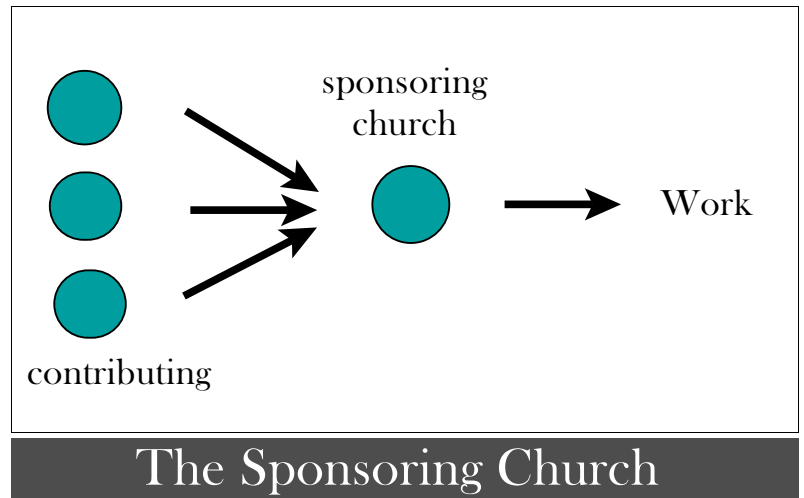
There are hundreds of churches which send financial aid to help keep the program on the air. They have no part in the management of the program. They have no part in the selection of the preacher, singers, nor sermon topics. Their part is solely that of financial assistance (page 2).

This is the work of all involved churches.

The principle of representative work is involved when a church sends a gift to another

church to assist in a work which it is doing. If the gift is to help pay the expenses of the evangelistic effort, the contributing church is preaching the gospel just as surely as if it had used those finances to have the preacher come to its own locality to do the preaching. In either case, the church is preaching by means of a representative, the preacher (Ibid. 57).

Thus, the elders of the sponsoring church (or “overseeing eldership”) oversee the work of a number of churches.



This violates all scriptural principles governing congregational cooperation for evangelism. One church acts as the agent of other churches, one church assumes the oversight of an evangelistic work belonging to several churches, and the equality of each congregation relative to oversight is destroyed. The sponsoring church violates the New Testament pattern for congregational cooperation and destroys the autonomy of local churches.

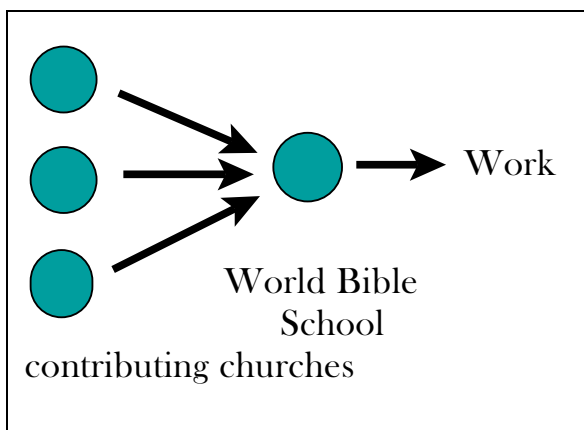
Human Organizations for Spread of Gospel

World Bible School is a notable example of an organization begun by men to preach the gospel. Its founder and long time head, the late Jimmy Lovell, wrote:

Legally, and again I have never been questioned, we are incorporated under the laws of California as West Coast Publishing Co. - a non-profit, tax deductible religious organization. We have another corporation in Texas known as World Bible School, with directors who are on the WCC board. (Action, Sept., 1983. 2)

It is funded by churches of Christ. Again, Jimmy Lovell wrote:

We would like to see more churches financially supporting WBS. Small churches that do no mission work because they are small would find themselves responsible for more baptisms than more large churches if they simply sent a monthly check to WBS to help with this good work. Mention it to the leaders and elders where you worship and ask that they consider doing it. (Action, March, 1986. 2).



World Bible School

When churches support a human organization to do the work of the church, they establish ties of fellowship with the human institution, since a contribution by a local church is an expression of fellowship (2 Corinthians 8:4; Philippians 4:15-16). The only tie in Christ is that of

fellowship (1 John 1:3). Thus, by donating to the Missionary Society, World Bible School, or any other human organization, that man-made institution is attached to the churches in ties of fellowship. It becomes in reality a church organization. It thus is a violation of the New Testament pattern for the organization of the church (2 John 9).

Church support of human institutions violates the independence of the local church. In the Missionary Society of the Christian Church begun in 1849, the board of the Society supervised the work of evangelism in which all the contributing churches participated. The elders of those local churches surrendered their oversight of that work to the board of directors of a human institution. The same thing is true of church support of World Bible School. Churches send the money; World Bible school provides the oversight.

“All of this is handled through our follow up work in Visalia, California with funds provided by churches and individuals who want someone to follow-up on their students” (“Action,” January, 1986. 4).

This clearly violates local church independence (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Conclusion

When we consider the literally billions of lost souls alive today who have never heard the gospel, surely we can realize the urgency of taking to them the precious message of salvation. Let us zealously do so.

But we must temper our zeal with knowledge by following the divine plan for congregational cooperation for evangelism. We must maintain the independence of each local church by engaging in concurrent cooperation for evangelism. This is both the most effective plan and the way that will glorify and please God.

The sponsoring church system and church supported human organizations corrupt the organization of the church, alter the divine pattern for congregational cooperation, destroy local church autonomy, and lay the groundwork for the centralized organization of denominationalism. Furthermore, these human schemes just don't work. In the apostolic age, as local churches zealously followed the divine plan, God's people took the gospel to the whole world in one generation. The last generation has seen a dramatic increase of sponsoring churches and church supported human organizations for evangelism among churches of Christ. As the result the church of Christ has actually lost membership in the last generation. God's way is both right and best.

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

Acts 14:23	Philippians 1:3-5
Titus 1:5-9	Philippians 2:25,30
Acts 20:17,28	Philippians 4:14-18
1 Peter 5:1-4	2 Corinthians 11:8-9
1 Timothy 5:17	Isaiah 55:8-9
Acts 11:19-30	Romans 11:33-36
Acts 15:1-31,40	Ephesians 3:8-11
Acts 13:1-3	Mark 16:15
Acts 14:21-23,26-28	Colossians 1:5-6,23
Acts 18:22	2 Corinthians 8:4
Colossians 4:16	1 John 1:3
1 Thessalonians 1:8	2 John 9
2 Corinthians 12:13	

II. Fact Questions

1. Define the following terms:

a. autonomy

b. congregational autonomy

c. sponsoring church

2. How is a local church to be ruled?

3. How broad is the authority of elders?

4. Is there a New Testament pattern for congregational cooperation in the work of evangelism?

5. How did local churches cooperate to do the work of evangelism in the first century?

6. What is the principle behind scriptural cooperation between congregations?

7. What type of cooperation correctly applies this principle?

8. Can we come up with a better plan for congregational cooperation than the New Testament plan?

9. Describe the sponsoring church system.

III. Thought Questions

1. Does the New Testament teach congregational autonomy?

2. Is this principle important? Why or why not?
3. What are some ways local churches may properly cooperate in evangelism today?
4. Is it right for one local church to send funds to another congregation to do the work of evangelism? Why or why not?
5. Is it right for the elders of one congregation to oversee part of the evangelistic work of another local church?
6. Give some examples of scriptural cooperation between congregations for evangelism you have known about during your life.
7. Is the sponsoring church system scriptural? Prove your answer.
8. What about an organization devised by men and supported by churches of Christ to take the gospel to the lost?

Lesson Twelve

Into All the World

Memory Verse: “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’” (Mark 16:15).



Stunning change sweeps the globe in our time. Communism has collapsed in the Russian Empire and is being replaced by democracy and the free enterprise system.

Arab states previously bitterly hostile to the U.S. were our allies in a spectacular victory over a brutal Arab dictator. African nations formerly repressed by Soviet backed dictators move painfully closer to freedom.

While those who love freedom view these times as both exciting and dangerous, those who love Christ see the far greater need for the freedom He alone can give (John 8:30-36). However, far too many Christians see neither responsibility nor opportunity in these momentous events. What is our obligation toward evangelism in other places?

The Great Commission

While the Great Commission was primarily given to the apostles of Christ, secondarily its commands are to all Christians (Matthew 28:19-20). We today are also obligated, as we have opportunity and ability, to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). How are we to accomplish this daunting goal?

The Great Commission

Mark 16:15
ca. AD 30

First Century Church Our Model

The Jerusalem church is a model for us in this as well as in other matters. This congregation is the preeminent example of success in local evangelism (Acts 2:41,47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7). But the brethren in Jerusalem were guilty of spiritual nearsightedness. The apostles had been directed to preach, not only "in Jerusalem," but also “in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). But it took a great persecution to cause them to be scattered beyond Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). When this happened, the disciples went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4). They traveled “as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word” (Acts 11:19). As the result “the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:21). The Jerusalem brethren also sent out the evangelist Barnabas "to go as far as Antioch." His preaching greatly encouraged the new converts to faithfulness. Thus, a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:22-24). Only when the brethren in Jerusalem zealously took the gospel into other places were they truly successful at evangelism.

The congregation at Antioch followed the example of the church in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas were eminently productive in their preaching efforts in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). But the Christians at Antioch were taught by the Holy Spirit not to be selfish in the use of the enormous abilities of these inspired evangelists. Rather, the Spirit directed them to send these men out to take the gospel afar (Acts 13:1-3). Upon the return of the preachers from foreign lands, the brethren at Antioch were anxious to hear of their work and assembled for this purpose (Acts

14:26-28). How many churches today are too selfish to share their evangelist with others and too unconcerned to hear reports about preaching in far places? Later, Paul and Barnabas left Antioch again, this time separately, to preach abroad, each taking with him another evangelist from Antioch (Acts 15:30-41).

What was the result of these zealous efforts?

Around A.D. 30 the Lord commanded, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

About A.D. 60, one generation later, when Paul

wrote to the Colossians from prison in Rome, the gospel had gone into "all the world" (Colossians 1:5-6) and had been "preached to every creature" (Colossians 1:23). In one generation the first century church fulfilled the Great Commission.

The Great Commission Fulfilled

Colossians 1:5-6,23

ca. AD 60

- ☛ Where had they gone?
 - ☛ To whom had they preached?
 - ☛ all the world
 - ☛ every creature
-

Four Keys

How was the New Testament church, beginning with a little band of twelve "uneducated and untrained men" able to accomplish this incredible task? There were four keys to their success. The holy, loving, faithful lives of the disciples were a living demonstration of the effects of the gospel (Acts 2:42-47). They were so zealous to reach the lost, they preached everywhere even in the face of bitter persecution (Acts 8:1-4). The only tool of evangelism they employed was the gospel (Acts 11:19-21). And the only organization they formed for evangelism was the independent local congregation (Acts 11:22).

Our Opportunity

If first century Christians could take the gospel to the known world in one generation without the use of automobiles, airplanes, radio, television, or the printing press, what should we be able to do with the aid of all these means of swift, easy, safe transportation and mass communication? If the *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace) enabled evangelists to travel throughout the Roman Empire with the gospel in the first century, what should the collapse of the barriers of tyranny do for us? If the *Koine* Greek language as the *lingua franca* (international language of commerce and trade) provided first century disciples a medium through which to preach to the world, what should the English language occupying the same position provide for us today? It is yet "God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). He is even now "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20). The gospel has the same power to save today it had almost two millennia ago (1 Peter 1:22-25). If we will use the same four keys first century disciples employed, they will open the door to the salvation of a lost world now, as they did then.

Four Keys

- ① Holy Lives
- ② Zeal
- ③ The Gospel
- ④ Independent Local Church

Conclusion

The Master urged the twelve, "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest" (John 4:35-36). Brothers and sisters, look at all the poor, lost souls where you live, in your country and throughout the world. Let us take them freedom from sin in our time.

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

John 8:30-36	Acts 11:19-26
Matthew 28:19-20	Acts 13:1-3
Mark 16:15	Acts 14:26-28
Acts 2:41-47	Acts 15:30-41
Acts 4:4	Colossians 1:5-6,23
Acts 5:14	Ephesians 3:20
Acts 6:7	1 Peter 1:22-25
Acts 1:8	John 4:35-36
Acts 8:1-4	

II. Fact Questions

1. According to the Great Commission:
 - a. Where should we take the gospel?
 - b. To whom should we preach it?
2. How successful was the church in Jerusalem in taking the gospel to people in their locality?
3. Did the congregation there also spread the gospel to other places?
4. Did brethren in the first century fulfill the Great Commission?
5. Is it possible for us to have the same kind of success they had?

III. Thought Questions

1. What changes have occurred in the world in the last decade that make taking the gospel into all the world a more manageable goal?
2. Does the Great Commission apply to us?
3. While the church in Jerusalem was taking the gospel to people in Jerusalem but had not preached the word anywhere else, were they fulfilling the Great Commission?
4. How is the congregation in Antioch an example of this same principle?
5. How did the first century church manage to take the gospel to the whole world?
6. How can God's people today be as successful as those in the first century at taking the gospel to a lost world?

IV. Application

1. How can a church be selfish toward lost people in other locales.
2. What can the congregation here do about taking the gospel to the world?

Lesson Thirteen

Why the Church Is Not Growing Today

J. Scott Futrell

On the day of Pentecost there were 3000 souls that gladly received the word, (Acts 2:41). During the days that followed the church grew considerably in number (Acts 4:4; 5:14). Even in the face of persecution, the church continued to grow because, “they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). This phenomenal growth is their testimony of conviction, trust, faith in God, and the power of the word. The first century saints, along with the apostles, sounded forth the word of God (Acts 20:27; 1 Thessalonians 1:8).

Shifting our thoughts closer to our time period; growth characterized the church during the 1860’s through the 1960’s in America. Old biographies of famed preachers consist of “stump meetings,” “old time revivals,” and “tent meetings” where 50, 75, 100, or more were baptized into Christ. Throngs of people came from far and wide to hear the message of the visiting preacher. Following the message, rivers, lakes, creeks, and home-made baptisteries were sought out for individuals to have their sins washed away in immersion (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16). Often, saints stood along the banks singing songs of praise and poised to encourage and edify the newly converted. Times were good, the society stable, and “religion” and “morality” were a part of everyday concern.

Times have changed! What happened to America? What has changed that has set us on a course of apathy and destruction toward the down hill spiral to a Devil’s Hell? I would like to propose two main transformations that have occurred over the last few decades that have led to this epidemic of apathy. First, the world, society and culture, has experienced drastic change over the last 100 years. Second, the church, its internal attitude and action, has significantly altered over the past 40 years. I believe the two propositions above will sustain as to... Why the church is not growing today in America!

The World Has Changed...

The world today is engrossed in **materialism** and the pursuit of happiness through the acquisition of wealth and material goods. See Luke 12:16-21, for a brief synopsis of the current trend and attitude of many today. Materialism is the bane of Satan. Frankly, for the worldly, interest in the soul and spiritual matters are at low ebb. Therefore, salvation and spiritual matters are not even on the list of priorities for the modern family of the world. Often, it is hard to set up a Bible study with individuals because there is a conflict of time with their material pursuits. Reminiscent of Paul before Felix, most want to wait for a convenient time (Acts 24:25). That time never comes! Additional work, second jobs, and pyramid schemes to acquire wealth have encumbered the time, energy, and talents of the man of the world. The world is seeking its treasure in the here and now instead of laying up for themselves treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21).



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The world is **entertainment** driven. For the Bible bearing saint, there is too much to compete with in this present age. In short, this is why our modern Gospel Meetings are not well attended and few, if any,

baptisms occur during the event. Notice the following venues that compete for the time, social interests, and carnal desires of the world - malls, movies, bowling leagues, sports events, school events, video rentals, the internet, television programs, fishing, hunting, camping, food, fun, and frolic have taken a front seat in the hearts of the masses. (Much of the aforementioned listed above did not rival the attention of the pioneers of yesteryear...such things did not exist. Also, money was hard to come by and modern transportation and amenities had not come on the scene.) As for today, attempt to find a conducive time to study with someone...it may be hard for them to find a spot on their calendar. Isaiah 55:6 states, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Today, many are following the example of the Israelites of which, "as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (1 Corinthians 10:7). Consequently, denominational churches see this trend and have altered their worship services toward contemporary styles and include in their work a myriad of entertainment to bring in and appease the worldly. As for the church of our Lord...we will continue to worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

The world has adopted an **ecumenical philosophy** regarding "religion." It no longer matters what one actually believes or teaches ...because according to them, all are going to be saved. Pick and choose! Join the church of your choice is the outcry of the pseudo prophets. We live in a "Burger King" religious world ... Have it your way! God will accept your service. You are in charge of your destiny! This ecumenical philosophy is the standard that many today have subscribed and adopted as truth. The idea of one body (church), one faith (truth), one baptism (entrance), seems too narrow and closed minded for many to accept (Ephesians 4: 4-6). For the world, a cafeteria style of religion is best... it enables them to choose!

America Today

- ☛ Materialistic
- ☛ Entertainment Driven
- ☛ Ecumenical
- ☛ Denies Hell
- ☛ Immoral

The world has subscribed to the **belief that Hell is not real**. A loving God will not punish his creation. How many times have you heard, "The God I know will not send me to Hell"? Speaking candidly, I am not sure what God they know. The God of the Bible has prepared a place of punishment for the unrighteous (Matthew 25:41). However, it is interesting to note that in a recent survey 83% polled believed in Heaven...while only 37% believed in Hell. Who do you know that will admit that they are lost and going to hell? Take the personal challenge and try to find one. Go to the mall and conduct a survey for yourself. Most people are going to heaven... if you do not believe it...ask them! People do not fear God or Hell anymore (Matthew 13:50).

Many have been liberated from such a belief. Friend, Hell is real!

The world has changed its view as to **what constitutes sinful conduct**. There was a time when immorality was recognized and shunned by the world in general. Now, homosexuality, fornication, adultery, drugs, drunkenness, living together, abortion, etc. is accepted as the norm and part of our society (Romans 1:21-32). Woe to you if you mention that these social ills are actually sinful and against the will of God. Truly, America has lost its moral edge. Our grandparents and forefathers would be ashamed at the morality of our country today. May God be merciful to us is my prayer.

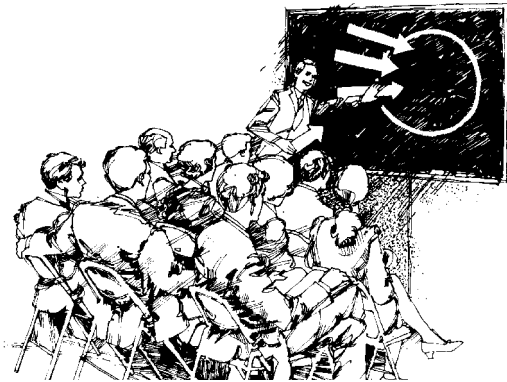
The Church has changed...

Like the world, the church has gone through significant change over the past few decades. The changes are basically the same as the ones mentioned above. We, as members of the body, have been affected by the contagious epidemic of the world. Often, saints are so intent on material wealth that time for worship, family, Bible study and spiritual pursuits are put on the bottom of the list, (1 John 2:15-16). Also, we have become enamored with

The Church in America

- ☛ Materialistic
- ☛ Entertainment Driven
- ☛ Unconcern for Lost
- ☛ Acts as If Hell Not Real
- ☛ Confused on Moral Issues

television, sports, and a cornucopia of entertainment driven practices that have squelched the fires and flame of evangelism. Consequently, there is not enough time in the day to give to God, our families, or this lost world in devotion and study. Are we in the world or of the world is an apropos question. We do not advance in public teaching an ecumenical philosophy but often espouse it in action through unconcern for those in denominations (2 Timothy 2:2). We teach a strong belief in Hell, but act as if few will be affected by such a place (Matthew 7:13-14). Further, we often argue over what constitutes sin regarding certain movies, music, modesty, and a plethora of other moral issues we face in this country (Isaiah 5:20). As a result, we are losing our children to the world. Also, the world remains lost in sin do to a lack of commitment to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude verse 3).



Of a truth, the church is not growing today as it did in the past. We can change that by first changing ourselves and then by changing the world one soul at a time. As children of the Most High, it is my plea that we will ignite the flames of evangelism in our hearts and set ourselves on a course for change. “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest”, (John 4:35). Children of God... Let's go to work!

Questions

I. List of Passages Used in This Lesson (Read each passage and be able to discuss its meaning and its application to the lesson.)

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Acts 2:41 | 1 Corinthians 10:7 |
| Acts 4:4 | John 4:24 |
| Acts 5:14 | Ephesians 4: 4-6 |
| Acts 8:4 | Matthew 25:41 |
| Acts 20:27 | Matthew 13:50 |
| 1 Thessalonians 1:8 | Romans 1:21-32 |
| Mark 16:16 | 1 John 2:15-16 |
| Acts 22:16 | 2 Timothy 2:2 |
| Luke 12:16-21 | Matthew 7:13-14 |
| Acts 24:25 | Isaiah 5:20 |
| Matthew 6:19-21 | Jude verse 3 |
| Isaiah 55:6 | John 4:35 |

II. Terms to Define

materialism

ecumenism

III. Fact Questions

1. Did the first century church experience great numerical growth?
2. Why?
3. What about earlier generations in America?

4. What has changed in America that has caused us to experience far less success in bringing the lost to Christ?
5. How does materialism in America make it difficult to teach sinners?
6. What about entertainment?
7. How does the ecumenical philosophy get in the way?
8. What do most American believe about hell?
9. How does this affect efforts to reach the lost?
10. What about American attitudes toward sin?
11. Has the Lord's church in America changed also?
12. In what ways?
13. How has this affected our evangelism?

IV. Thought Questions

1. Do you agree with Scott's assessment of American society?
2. Are there other hindrances to our evangelistic efforts in American society?
3. What about changes in the church of Christ in America?
4. Are there ways we can adapt to society in our efforts to evangelize the lost?
5. Are there ways it would be wrong to adapt?
6. What suggestions do you have for the congregation where you are a member to be more effective in evangelism?
7. What can you do to help?
8. Will you make a commitment to do this?

Conducting a Home Bible Study

- I. All the members should be involved. - Mark 1:16-18
- II. Those with biblical knowledge, teaching ability, and pure lives should do the actual teaching. - James 3:1
- III. Some means to make contacts must be used.
- IV. Means depends on condition of congregation. - e.g., soldiers coming to visit our house
 - A. New congregation might have to do door to door.
 - B. Established congregations should use contacts generated by members.
 - C. Advertise a **FREE** Bible correspondence course, but offer a personal Bible study to those who respond.
 - D. This could be supplemented by list of newcomers to town, etc.
 - E. Most importantly, all members should be thinking constantly of leading lost friends, neighbors, loved ones to Christ. - Matthew 9:36-38
- V. Conducting the Home Bible Study
 - A. First meeting should be to get acquainted and find out where the prospect is spiritually.
 - B. At the end of the first meeting, suggest a series of about six topics to study (Alternate for students with no biblical knowledge; read through Luke/Acts together).
 - C. Start the series of studies by asking the student to answer for himself on a slip of paper two questions.
 1. Are you saved?
 2. If so, how were you saved?
 - D. Ask him to keep this in his Bible and assure him you will never ask him how he answered those questions.
 - E. In this way, when you get to the purpose of baptism, if he projects onto his past what he now knows, you can ask him to read his own answers (silently, to himself).
 - F. Always begin by answering the student's questions.
 1. These may reveal spiritual needs which are important to the student.
 2. It shows the student:
 - a. You do not have a memorized track, and
 - b. You care about him.
 3. If you don't know the answer to a question, tell him so, but promise to find out the answer.
 - G. You should have only a Bible, stenographers note pad with hand written lists of passages and questions, and a small notepad to take notes.
 - H. If the prospect has and can use his own Bible, have him read all references from it.
 - I. Otherwise, have a few pew Bibles you bring, all the same printing of the same translation.
 - J. Have a partner to help locate all verses referenced and to write, as you reference them, a list of verses studied to leave with the student for his continued study.
 - K. By having the same printing of the same translation, the partner can simply call a page number where the passage is found.
 - L. Use a modern, essentially literal translation, but try not to make the translation an issue.
 - M. Have the student read a verse aloud, then ask him a simple question or questions designed to cause him to see the point of the passage.
 - N. Remember your goal - to lead a lost sinner to Christ. Don't get sidetracked.

Personal Evangelism Notebook

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Lesson One LOST

What is the most valuable thing you could lose?

Matthew 6:19-20

Is it money and material things?

Psalm 27:10

Is it your family?

1 Timothy 4:8

Is it your health?

Ecclesiastes 2:1-2

Is it pleasure?

John 6:27

Is it your job?

Ecclesiastes 11:10

Is it your youthful looks?

Job 19:19

Is it friends?

Matthew 16:26-27

Is it your soul?

Philippians 3:8

Is anything more important than being right with Christ?

Are you lost?

Romans 3:23

Have you sinned?

Romans 6:23

What is the result of your sin?

James 2:26

What is death?

Isaiah 59:1-2

What kind of death do our own sins bring upon us?

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

What will happen to those who remain lost?

Can you be saved?

Jeremiah 10:23

Can you save yourself by your own devices or plans?

Ephesians 2:8-9

Can we earn our salvation by doing good works?

Romans 7:24

Do we need a savior?

Acts 13:24

Who is the Savior?

Romans 5:8

What did He do for us?

2 Timothy 2:10

Do you need to be in Christ to be saved?

If you died tonight, where would you spend eternity?

Now ask yourself two questions.

1. Am I lost?
2. Do I need Jesus?

If you think you are saved, write down on a piece of paper how you were saved and keep it in your Bible.
No one needs to see it but you.

Lesson Two The Cost of Discipleship

Luke 14:25-35

Should we count the cost of following Jesus?

Matthew 16:24

What does it take to be a disciple of Christ?

Deny Himself

Luke 14:33

How much must we be willing to give up for Jesus?

Galatians 2:20

If I sacrifice all for Christ, what will direct my life?

Luke 14:26

Can I put my family ahead of Christ if I want to be His disciple?

Matthew 6:24

1. If a servant served one master rather than another, what had he done to the master whom he did not serve?

2. What does it mean to “hate” one’s family?

Matthew 10:34-37

If my family opposes me for being a Christian, what should I do?

Mark 10:17-27

If I want to follow Jesus, can I put money and material things ahead of Him?

Galatians 5:24

Can I continue to indulge in sinful pleasures if I become a Christian?

Matthew 16:25-27

Can I even put my life ahead of Jesus?

Take up his cross

Luke 9:21-24

What did the cross mean for Jesus?

Matthew 5:10-12

Must I be willing to suffer for Him?

Luke 9:26

Must I be willing to be rejected by others for Him without being ashamed?

Follow me

John 8:31-32

If I follow Jesus, what will I do with His word?

Luke 6:40

If I follow Him, what will my life be like?

Luke 14:33

Can I refuse to do any of these things and be a disciple of Jesus?

Mark 10:28-30

1. How do the disciples of Jesus have all these things?
2. Is the reward worth the sacrifice that it takes to be His disciple?

Lesson Three

The Roman Road to Salvation

Romans 1:16

What is the power of God to salvation?

Romans 3:23

Have we sinned?

Romans 6:23

Do we need to be saved?

Romans 5:6

Do we have the ability to save ourselves?

Romans 5:8

What did Jesus do to save us?

Romans 3:21-26

Why was the death of Jesus necessary for our salvation?

Romans 1:16

Romans 10:17

Do we need to hear the gospel?

Romans 3:28

Do we need to believe in Jesus to be saved?

Romans 5:1-2

Why is faith essential?

Romans 1:1-4

Romans 10:8-10

What do we need to believe about Jesus?

Romans 2:4-6

Do we need to repent of our sins?

Romans 10:8-10

Do we need to confess our faith in Christ?

Romans 6:3-4

Do we need to be baptized?

Romans 12:1-2

After we are baptized, what kind of lives should we live?

Lesson Three (alternative)
Steps to Christ

2 Timothy 2:10

Where must we be to be saved?

John 14:6

1. Is there any other way to receive salvation?

2. Can we be saved outside Christ?

John 6:44-45

1. How do we come to Christ?

2. How does God draw us?

Romans 1:16

What do we have to learn to be saved?

John 20:30-31

What does the gospel teach about Jesus?

John 8:24

Do we have to believe in Jesus to be saved?

James 2:24

Are we saved by faith alone?

Acts 3:19

Do we have to repent of our sins to be saved?

Romans 10:8-10

Do we have to make a confession to be saved?

1 John 4:15

What should we confess?

Galatians 3:26-27

What act of faith puts us into Christ?

Now, what steps do you need to take to come to Christ and be saved?

Lesson Four The One Baptism

Ephesians 4:5

How many proper kinds of baptism are there?

Acts 19:1-5

If one has been improperly baptized, should he be baptized properly?

Matthew 28:18

How much authority does Jesus have?

Luke 20:1-6

Should we receive a baptism that has only human authority behind it?

Acts 19:5

What is the proper authority for baptism?

Acts 8:36-39

What are we to be baptized in?

Romans 6:3-4

1. What is the action of baptism?

2. Are sprinkling or pouring baptism?

Mark 16:16

Must we believe before we can be baptized?

Acts 2:38

1. Must we repent before we can be baptized?

2. Who should be baptized?

3. Should babies or little children be baptized?

Mark 16:16

1. Does baptism come before salvation or after it?

2. Is baptism necessary to salvation?

Acts 2:38

1. Does baptism come before the remission of sins or after it?

2. Is baptism necessary for the remission of our sins?



3. What is the purpose of baptism?

Acts 22:16

1. Does baptism come before or after the washing away of sins?
2. Do you need to be baptized to have your sins washed away?
3. What are the characteristics of the one baptism that God approves?
4. Do you need to be baptized?
5. Do you want to be baptized?

One Baptism

- One Authority: Jesus Christ
- One Element: Water
- One Action: A Burial
- One Subject: A Penitent Believer
- One Purpose: Remission of Sins

Lesson Five

What Is the Church of Christ?

Ephesians 1:22-23

1. What is the church?

2. Who is its head?

Ephesians 4:4

How many churches does Christ have?

Ephesians 5:23

1. Who is the Savior?

2. Whom does He save?

Acts 2:47

How does one become a member of the church?

Acts 8:3

Whom did Saul persecute?

Acts 9:1

1. When Saul was persecuting the church, whom was he persecuting?

2. What are members of the church?

Acts 9:13

1. What else were the people Saul persecuted called?

2. What else are members of the church?

Acts 11:26

1. What name did God give the disciples?

2. What does this name mean?

3. If you are saved, what do you become?

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

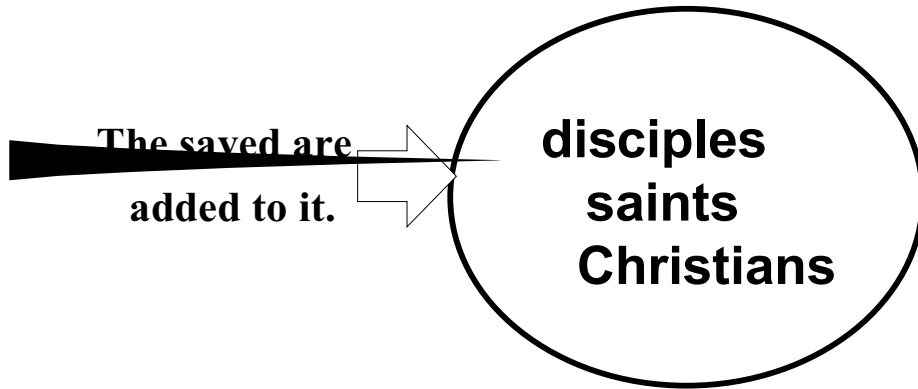
1. Should Christians be divided?

2. Should we believe and teach differing doctrines?

3. Should we wear sectarian names?

4. Should we join a denomination?

The Church of Christ



The Body of Christ

Lesson Six Should I Be a Christian?

Ephesians 1:3

What do we receive in Christ?

Romans 5:1

Name two blessings in Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:11

Name two more blessings in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:18

Name another blessing in Christ.

Galatians 3:26

What is another?

Ephesians 1:7

Name two more blessings in Christ.

2 Timothy 2:10

What is another blessing in Christ?

1 Peter 1:3-5

Name another blessing in Christ.

1 Peter 3:12

What is another?

1 John 5:11-12

What is another blessing?

Luke 14:25-33

1. If you decide to become a Christian, will you have to make any sacrifices?

2. How much must you be willing to sacrifice for Christ?

Mark 10:28-30

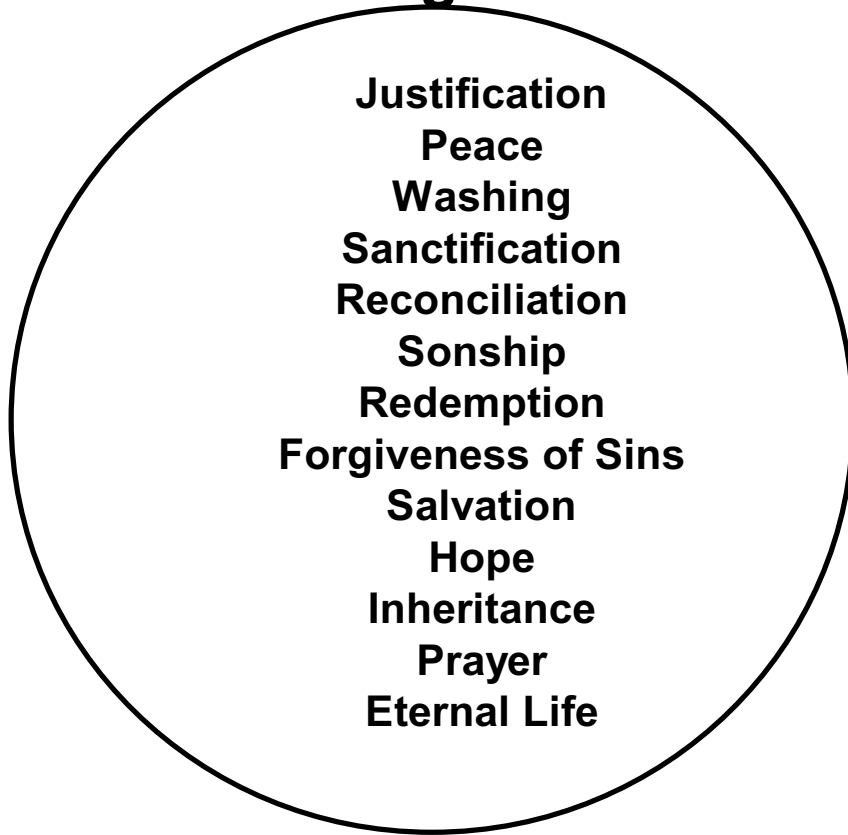
Is the reward worth the sacrifice?

Hebrews 11:24-26

1. Is it better to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin or to suffer for Christ?

2. Should you become a Christian?

Blessings in Christ



All Spiritual Blessings

Lesson Seven
The Scriptures and the Church
for study with Catholics
(Use New American Bible)

2 Timothy 3:16-17

1. What is the source of the Scriptures?
2. What are the uses of the Scriptures?
3. What will the Scriptures do for us?
4. Do we need any guide other than the Scriptures?

John 17:17

Are the Scriptures ever wrong?

Psalms 119:73,99-100,104-105,125,130

Are we capable of understanding the Scriptures?

Matthew 13:3-23

What keeps many people from understanding the Scriptures?

Acts 28:23-27

Why are people divided over what they think the Scriptures teach?

Ephesians 1:22-23

What is the church?

1 Corinthians 12:27

What is the church composed of?

Genesis 16; 21:1-13; Galatians 4:21-31

1. In the allegory:
 - a. What does Hagar represent?
 - b. What does Ishmael represent?
 - c. What does Sarah represent?
 - d. What does Isaac represent?
2. What is our spiritual mother?
3. Did the church give us the Scriptures, or do the Scriptures produce the church?

1 Peter 2:4-10

Who are God's priests?

Matthew 23:1-12

1. Should men wear religious titles?

2. Should men claim to be our official teachers?

1 Timothy 4:1-3

Can the church be wrong?

Acts 20:17, 28-31

Can leaders of the church be wrong?

James 1:21

What standard of authority should we follow to be saved?

Lesson Eight The Pope (Use New American Bible)

Did Jesus confer on Peter primacy among the apostles?

(“... our Lord conferred on St. Peter the first place of honor and jurisdiction in the government of His whole Church...” [James Cardinal Gibbons, **The Faith of Our Fathers**. 78].)

Read Matthew 16:13-18.

1. Now read 1 Corinthians 3:11; Isaiah 28:16; and 1 Peter 2:3-6.
Is Peter the “rock” upon which the church is built?

2. Now read Matthew 16:21-23; 26:69-75; and Galatians 2:11-14.
Was Peter an unshakable foundation?

3. Now read Matthew 16:19 and John 20:21-23.
Did Peter have greater authority and power than the other apostles?

4. Now read Matthew 23:8-10.
Was Peter the “doctor” (teacher) of the church?

5. Now read 1 Peter 5:1-4.
Was Peter the chief shepherd of the church?

6. Now read Acts 10:25-26.
Would Peter accept the veneration that popes accept?

7. Now read Luke 4:38 and 1 Corinthians 9:5.
Was Peter celibate?

8. Now reread Matthew 16:13-18.
In the metaphor Jesus used the church is compared to a house, Jesus is its builder, and Peter is the doorkeeper. What does the bedrock foundation, a foundation so secure that even the “jaws of death” could not prevail against it, represent?



Did Jesus set up the papacy as the supreme office in the church?

(... *the same spiritual supremacy has always resided in the Popes, or Bishops of Rome, as being the successors of St. Peter.... whatever official prerogatives were conferred on St. Peter were not to cease at his death, but were to be handed down to his successors from generation to generation* [Ibid. 78,89].)

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; and Philippians 1:1.
Is the office of the pope ever mentioned in the Bible?

2. Read Acts 1:15-26.
What are the qualifications to be a successor to an apostle?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:8.

a. Who was the last witness of Christ?

b. Can anyone on earth today be a successor to an apostle?

Is the pope infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*?

(What, then, is the real doctrine of infallibility? It simply means that the Pope, as successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, by virtue of the promises of Jesus Christ, is preserved from error of judgment when he promulgates to the Church a decision on faith and morals [Ibid. 101].)

Read John 14:26 and 16:13.

1. What power did Peter and the other apostles have that made them infallible in their teaching?

2. Do the popes even claim to have this power?

(Peter, it is true, besides the prerogative inherent in his office, possessed also the gift of inspiration and the power of working miracles. These two latter gifts are not claimed by the Pope.... No Catholic, on the contrary, claims that the Pope is inspired or endowed with divine revelation properly so called [Ibid. 89,99].)

Lesson Nine

Do All in the Name of the Lord Jesus

Colossians 3:17

What principle governs everything we say and do?

Acts 4:18

1. What did the council forbid Peter and John to do?

2. What is the meaning of the phrase “in the name of Jesus”?

*(I) in general of the name by which a person or thing is called.... (II) for all that a name implies, of authority, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the name covers... (4) in recognition of the authority of... (W.E. Vine, **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**. 3:99-100).*

3. Must we have authority from the Lord for all that we do and say?

2 Timothy 1:13

1. Is the New Testament an authoritative pattern?

2. What is our obligation to it?

2 John 9-11

1. Is it all right to teach and practice things not authorized in the teaching of Christ?

2. Does the New Testament have to specifically forbid a practice for it to be wrong?

3. What is the result of teaching or practicing things not authorized in the New Testament?

Matthew 19:4-5

1. How many wives does Jesus authorize a man to have?

2. Does the Lord forbid a man to have more than one wife?

3. Is it right for a man to have more than one wife?

4. Must we have authority from Christ for what we do?

Mark 16:15

1. What are we to do with the gospel?

2. Did Jesus tell us how to go?

Acts 8:26-31

1. What did the angel and the Spirit tell Philip to do? (verses 26 and 29)

2. Did Philip obey?

3. How did Philip go? (verses 30-31)
4. Did the Spirit authorize Philip to run or to ride in a chariot?
5. When the Lord authorizes us to do something, does this include incidental means, whether essential or a matter of liberty, to accomplish the authorized act?

Genesis 6:14-16,22

1. Did the Lord give Noah a pattern for the ark?
2. Did Noah obey the Lord?
3. Could he have used any wood other than gopher wood and still have obeyed the Lord?
4. Did the Lord tell Noah what tools to use?
5. If Noah used tools to build the ark, did he go beyond what the Lord authorized?

Mark 16:16

1. Did the Lord declare by statement of fact that baptism is necessary for salvation?
2. Are we authorized to teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?
3. Does this mean New Testament statements of fact authorize us to act?

Acts 2:38

1. Did the apostle Peter declare by command that alien sinners must be baptized for the remission of sins?
2. Are we authorized to teach that baptism is for the remission of sins?
3. Does this mean New Testament commands authorize us to act?

Acts 16:25-34

1. Does the Bible teach that the Philippian jailer and his family were baptized to be saved?
2. Does this mean we can teach people that they should be baptized to be saved?
3. Do New Testament approved examples authorize us to act?

Romans 6:3-4

How do we get into Christ?

John 14:6

1. Can we be saved outside Christ?
2. Does the Bible necessarily imply that baptism is necessary for salvation?

3. Does this mean we can teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?

4. Do New Testament necessary implications authorize us to act?

5. In what ways does the New Testament authorize us to do things?

1 Timothy 4:1-5

Are we authorized to eat all kinds of food?

1 Corinthians 8:8-9

1. Does it make any difference to our salvation what kind of food we eat?

2. What are practices that are authorized but make no difference to our salvation called? (v. 9)

3. If a practice is not authorized (unlawful), do we have the liberty to do it?

1 Corinthians 6:12

1. If something is not lawful (unauthorized), can we claim it is helpful (expedient)?

2. Must we have authority from the New Testament for everything we teach and practice?

Lesson Ten

The Local Church

Acts 9:26-28

Should a Christian join a local group of disciples?

1 Corinthians 1:2

What is a local group of disciples called?

Romans 16:16

What is another name for local groups of disciples?

Acts 2:38-47

1. Should disciples meet together regularly?
2. Should they study the word of God together?
3. Should they break bread (eat) together?
4. Should they pray together?
5. Should they have a common treasury?



1 Corinthians 11:17-34

1. What meal should we eat when we come together as disciples?
2. Why do we eat this meal?



Acts 20:7

When should we eat the Lord's Supper?

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

1. How should the church raise its money?
2. When should we have the collection?



Ephesians 5:18-19

Should we sing together to praise God and teach each other?



Acts 2:46

1. May the church come together on days other than the first day of the week?
2. What two things may be done ONLY on the first day of the week?
3. What three things may we come together to do on any day of the week?

Hebrews 10:24-25

When the church comes together, do you need to be there?

Lesson Eleven Music in Worship

Genesis 4:3-5

Why did the Lord accept Abel's sacrifice and reject Cain's?

Hebrews 11:4

Why did the Lord accept Abel's sacrifice?

Romans 10:17

How do we worship by faith?

2 Corinthians 5:7

1. Should we act by faith?

2. Did it make any difference what kind of sacrifice Cain and Abel offered to God?

Leviticus 10:1-3

1. Why did God kill Nadab and Abihu?

2. Had God forbidden them to get the fire for the sacrifice where they did?

3. Did it make any difference where the priests got the fire for the incense?

2 Chronicles 26:1-5, 16-21

Why did the Lord strike Uzzah with leprosy?

Hebrews 7:14

1. Where does the law of Moses say no one from the tribe of Judah may offer incense?

2. Why was it wrong for Uzzah to offer the incense?

3. Did it make any difference who offered the incense to the Lord?

John 4:19-24

1. Does it matter where we worship God?

2. Does it make any difference how we worship Him?

3. What kind of worship will God accept?

4. What are the elements of true worship?

Romans 12:10-11

What does it mean to worship "in spirit"?

John 17:17

What does it mean to worship "in truth"?

Acts 16:25

What kind of music did Paul and Silas use in worship to God?

Romans 15:8-9

What kind of music did Paul say should be used in worship?

1 Corinthians 14:15

What kind of music did Paul tell the brethren in Corinth to use in worship?

Ephesians 5:18-19

1. Did the apostle Paul tell the Ephesians what kind of music to use in worship?

2. What kind of music did he command them to use?

Colossians 3:16

What kind of music did he direct the Colossians to use in worship?

Hebrews 2:11-12

What kind of music does the Hebrew writer say should be used in worship?

James 5:13

1. What kind of music did James direct us to use in worship?

2. How many kinds of music are there?

3. Does it make any difference which one we use in worship to God?

Psalms 150

Were the Jews under the law of Moses allowed to use mechanical instruments of music in worship?

Galatians 5:4

Can we use the law to justify what we do today?

Galatians 3:16-17

What law does Paul refer to?

1 Samuel 18:27; 2 Samuel 3:2-5; 5:13; 12:24; 15:16

How many wives did David have?

Matthew 19:3-6

Does this mean polygamy is approved under the law of Christ?

Revelation 14:1-4

Is this language literal? (Note verses 1,3,4)

1 Corinthians 15:25-28

1. When will the reign of Christ end?

2. Does the kind of worship in heaven after the resurrection determine how we should worship now?

3. May we use instrumental music in worship with God's approval?

Lesson Twelve The Organization of the Church

Ephesians 1:22-23

1. Who is the head of the church?
2. Does the church have any earthly head or headquarters?

1 Corinthians 12:27

What are the units that make up the church?

1 John 1:7

1. How are the members of the body tied together?
2. Does the Lord authorize any world-wide, earthly organization to tie Christians together all over the world?

Acts 9:26-28

Should Christians in a given locality join themselves together?

1 Corinthians 1:2

What is a group of these Christians in a given locality called?

Romans 16:16

What is another name for these local groups of disciples?

Philippians 1:1

Should each of these local churches have officers to lead them?

1 Timothy 1:1-2,11

Was Paul a preacher?

Philippians 1:1; 4:15-16

Should a local church have fellowship with a preacher or preachers in their work?

Acts 2:44-45

Should each local church have a treasury through which they work as a group?

1 Timothy 5:16

1. Does each local church have work to do as a group that is distinct from the individual work of its members?
2. Is then the local church an organization?
3. Does the Lord authorize any other way for God's people as God's people to be organized?
4. What about having a denominational headquarters or a diocese?

Acts 20:17, 28

Is there any difference between elders of the local church and bishops (overseers)?

1 Peter 5:1-4

1. What is the work of the elders of the local church?
2. What do they have the oversight of?
3. Is, then, each local church independent of outside, human control?
4. Are the elders of one local church authorized to oversee any part of the work of another local church?

5. Are the elders (overseers, bishops) authorized to oversee a combination of churches?
6. Are they authorized to oversee an organization designed by uninspired men, such as an orphanage or a camp?

2 Corinthians 8:1-4

1. When a local church makes a contribution, does it establish ties of fellowship with the recipient of the contribution?
2. If a local church makes a contribution to an organization designed by uninspired men, such as an orphanage, a college, a hospital, or an evangelistic organization, does it establish ties of fellowship with that organization?
3. What other tie is there in Christ besides that of fellowship?
4. If local churches contribute to organizations designed by men have they changed the Lord's pattern for the organization of His people the church?

2 Timothy 1:13

1. Does the Lord want us to change His pattern?
2. Should local churches send contributions to organizations designed by uninspired men?

Lesson Thirteen

The Individual Christian and the Local Church

Colossians 3:17

Must we have authority from Christ for all we do?

Colossians 3:18-21

Does this principle apply to family relationships?

Colossians 3:22 - 4:1

What about business?

Colossians 4:5

Does it apply to social contacts?

Romans 13:1-7

What about our relationship to civil government?

1 Corinthians 1:2

What local group of people are we to be a part of in the spiritual realm?

Ephesians 1:22-23

Must we have authority from Christ for all we do in this relationship?

Matthew 18:15-17

1. Are my individual activities the same as congregational activities?

2. Are the activities of a few members of the local church the same as the work of the church?

1 Timothy 5:16

Is the work of the individual Christian the same as the work of the local church?

1 Timothy 5:14

1. May an individual Christian marry and have children?

2. Does this mean the local church has married and had children?

Acts 18:1-3

May a Christian start a business to earn money?

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

May the congregation start a business to earn money?

1 Timothy 4:8

May a Christian join a softball team?

1 Timothy 3:14-15

Does Christ give permission to the local church to sponsor a softball team?

Romans 16:23

May a Christian hold an office in civil government?

John 18:36

Should the local church support a candidate for office in civil government?

1 Timothy 5:16

1. Is there a difference between what we do as individual Christians and what the church does collectively?

2. May the local church do everything individual Christians do in fleshly relationships?

Lesson Fourteen

The Work of the Church

1 Thessalonians 1:2-4

Should the local church be diligently at work?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Should it be doing the work God assigns it or works men think are good?

2 Timothy 1:13

Should we follow the New Testament pattern for the work of the church?

1 Timothy 5:16

Is the local church authorized to do everything the individual Christian is?

Ephesians 1:3,22-23

Is the local church a spiritual or a material relationship?

Romans 14:17

Is the church concerned with physical or spiritual things?

1 Timothy 3:14-15

What is the primary function of the church?

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8

Should the church preach the gospel to the lost?

Ephesians 4:11-16

Should the church build up its own members spiritually?

2 Corinthians 8:1-4

1. Should the church help the needy?

2. When the church contributes to the needy, is it having fellowship with them?

3. May the church have fellowship with sinners?

4. Which needy persons should the church help?

2 John 9

Should the church engage in activities the Lord has not given it permission to do?

Romans 14:17

Should the church be trying to feed all the hungry people in the world?

John 6:26-27

Should the church use benevolence as a means to attract the lost?

1 Timothy 3:14-15

Is it the responsibility of the church to provide recreation?

John 18:36

Should the church be involved in politics?

1 Corinthians 7:20-24

Is it the job of the church to change social institutions?

John 17:17

1. What truth should the church teach?

2. Is it the work of the church to provide secular education?

1 Corinthians 15:58

1. What kind of congregation do you want to be a member of:

- a. a nice, comfortable church that does little and expects little of you?
- b. a “live-wire” church that engages in all sorts of fun activities?
- c. a faithful church that diligently does the Lord’s work and expects you to pull your share of the load?

2. What does this say about the kind of Christian you want to be?

Is the Book of Mormon the Gospel?

Mark 16:14-20; Acts 1:1-8

1. Where were the 1st century apostles of Christ to bear witness for Christ?
2. Where were they to preach the Gospel?
3. Where would they get the power to do this?

John 16:13

Into how much of the truth of the Gospel would the Holy Spirit lead the apostles?

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

Did the Holy Spirit reveal the truth of the Gospel?

Ephesians 3:1-4

To whom did He reveal it?

Acts 20:27

How much of the truth of the Gospel did the apostles receive?

Colossians 1:3-6

Where did the apostles preach the Gospel?

Colossians 1:21-23

To whom did they preach it?

Ephesians 3:1-4

What did they do with the truth of the Gospel?

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3

What is the value of this written Word to us?

1 Peter 1:22-25

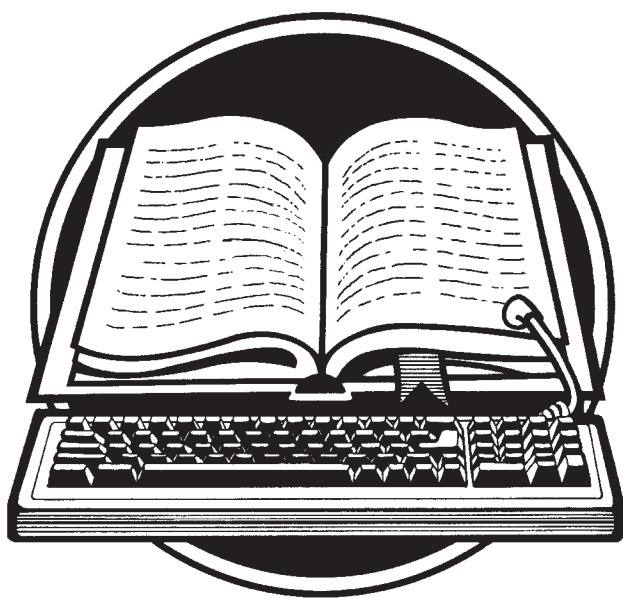
Will the Gospel ever be lost?

Galatians 1:6-9

What if an angel from heaven brings another gospel?

Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9

1. Where is this story in the Book of Mormon?
2. Is the Book of Mormon the Gospel?



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