

Practical Evangelism 2019 Pt. 2

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, February 10, 2019

Main Theme – A multipart series concerning evangelism and practical application & techniques.

WORSHIP & PRAYER

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Women's Ministry – Tuesday, February 12, from 6:30–8:30pm
- Workshop – Biblical Principles of Finance w/ Ginger (Feb. 22–23)
- Potluck Supper – Taking place the final Sunday (February 24 Post)
- Children's Church Volunteer Training – During the Potluck Supper

MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers. Two offerings will be collected this morning:

- 1) The 1st offering goes to support this local work and community outreach
- 2) The 2nd offering goes to support our regular missionaries (foreign/domestic)

NOTE – I would like to play a video during the offerings this morning. Give ear, as it will work to set the stage for the Sunday morning message. VIDEO – John Piper (Responses to the Great Commission)

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- **CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH**
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INTRODUCTIONS

As always it is wonderful to see you. I look forward to these moments of corporate worship and instruction. I pray that you are ready to receive what the Lord has for you today. Please have your Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

KEY – The video I played during the morning offering (featuring noted pastor and theologian John Piper) identifies three responses to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ:

- 1) GO – We can cross geographical and cultural divides to preach the Gospel as missionaries.
- 2) SEND – We can prayerfully and financially support/sponsor the work of foreign missionaries.
- 3) DISOBEY – We can reject and/or neglect His Commission to ‘preach the Gospel to all nations.’

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

NOTE – Piper notes the need to reject disobedience, allowing the Lord to use you as either a SENDER or as a GOER. In the realm of FOREIGN missions, I share his perspective and the rather BINARY choice to go OR to send. But in a BROADER sense, we must endeavor to operate as BOTH...

i.e., We are called to be senders AND goers.

1) SENDER – You and I have the responsibility to support the work of the church prayerfully and financially (that the Gospel may go forth). I do NOT understand how one can be a Christian for any meaningful amount of time and never learn to faithfully tithe and give offerings.

2) GOER – You may never set foot on a foreign mission’s field, but YOU ARE a missionary to your cultural content. i.e., You are to serve as a witness, representative and ambassador for Christ Jesus. That is His call and mandate upon your life!

NOTE – Every time you leave this building, you enter into YOUR mission’s field!

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 3

Since we are called to be GOERS (specifically), let us strive for greater degrees of effective service. That is the heart behind this series on practical evangelism. I want to equip you to fulfill the mandate of the Lord, that this world might be changed for Christ!

NOTE – It is NOT my job to do the work of the ministry alone (as a professional member of the clergy). Biblically, it is my job to train you to do the work of the ministry! Consider the following:

Ephesians 4:11–12a (NIV)

11 Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service

Ephesians 4:11–12a (ESV)

11 . . . He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry

KEY – There is work to be done and it is time we ALL get involved in getting it done!

THE GROUNDWORK SLIDE

Thus said, let's get into TODAY'S material—material that will certainly spill over into next week.

KEY – Scripture presents various methods of evangelism (unique means of sharing the Gospel).

-This morning I would like to BEGIN to:

- 1) Identify app. 3 of 6 evangelistic methods
- 2) Illustrate these methods using biblical account
- 3) Offer commentary regarding contemporary apps.

Please follow along with me closely. We have much to cover in a relatively short amount of time! Again, we will finish what we introduce next Sunday morning!

LET'S DELVE IN...

METHOD #1 ANIMATION

The FIRST method/means of evangelism is CONFRONTATION

NOTE 1 – I recognize that confrontation is a rather strong word.

NOTE 2 – I recognize it seems out of place in the sphere of eff. evangelism

NOTE 3 – I am NOT telling you to be rude, judgmental or ugly in sharing your faith

-Lord knows that we have all seen/experienced this (e.g., Pensacola – throwing Bibles, etc.).

KEY – I AM stating that there is a place to honestly ADDRESS sin and its biblical consequences. i.e., There is a time when we must CONFRONT people with the reality of their crimes against God and corresponding judgment.

NOTE – This is a vital facet of presenting the GOSPEL. How can you call people to turn to Christ for the forgiveness of sin when you won't spell out what sin is and the consequences thereof? How can you call people to the glories of heaven without warning them of the horrors of hell? How can you speak of God's mercy/love apart from God's wrath/judgment?

-The GOOD News (i.e., Gospel) shines brightest against the backdrop of the BAD News!

KEY – Biblical witnesses never shied away from confronting people with the reality of their sin...

EXAMPLE – Many of us know that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was a significant day in the history of the Church. On that day—empowered by the Spirit of God—Peter was used to reach 3,000 for Christ!

Q. But do you know that confronting them for their crime/sin was a HUGE part of his sermon?

Acts 2:22 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

22 "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; **and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.** 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25 David said about him:

"I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest in hope,

27 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,

you will not let your holy one see decay.

28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

29 “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord:
 “Sit at my right hand
 35 until I make your enemies
 a footstool for your feet.”

36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, **whom you crucified**, both Lord and Messiah.”

NOTE – Peter confronts them with the message of the Risen Jesus who is both Lord and Messiah/Christ. Wonderful news! But he didn’t shy away from the fact that THEY had culpability in Crucifying Him (as the Jewish nation rejected its Savior). They had sinned against heaven and that was a DANGEROUS spiritual condition!

Q. And what was their response to this confrontation (i.e., identification of their crimes)?

Acts 2:37–41 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this **corrupt** generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

KEY – In the course of your witness, there will be times when you must honestly CONFRONT sin. You must address its reality, its horrors AND the means whereby we can find forgiveness (Christ)!

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

METHOD #2 ANIMATION

The SECOND method/means of evangelism is PERSUASION (INTELLECTUAL)

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

KEY – We are to persuade people to faith in Christ by preparedly and respectfully ANSWERING the questions they have. Oftentimes there is an INTELLECTUAL component to this, as people DO have sincere questions of the logical, rational and historical underpinnings of our faith.

NOTE – I recognize that faith is a tremendously SPIRITUAL thing (i.e., it transcends the human mind, reason and logic). However, that does NOT mean the Christian faith is an irrational, illogical and unreasonable thing! I do NOT believe that Christians must check their brains at the door. Rather, the field of Christian APOLOGETICS is a rich field worthy of study (e.g., C. S. Lewis, Ravi Zecharias, R. C. Sproul, Francis Schaeffer, Josh McDowell, etc.).

Q. Why is it worth examining the logical, rational and reasonable underpinnings of our faith?

A1 – PERSONAL BENEFIT! You will discover that your faith (as transcendent as it may be) is logical, rational and reasonable. Many believers are secretly afraid that their faith is somehow nonsensical – i.e., it cannot withstand the scrutiny and questions of more educated minds. It has withstood 2,000-years of this and more!

A2 – Some people will ONLY be won as their questions/concerns are answered and addressed...

KEY – Thus, there will ALWAYS be a place for intellectual persuasion!

EXAMPLE – Perhaps the greatest example of THIS method of evangelism takes place in Acts 17. Paul was far from Jerusalem and the culture of those who accepted the One True God. He was in Athens: the seat of intellectual learning (primarily informed by a pagan worldview).

-Consider his address to the Athenians through the FILTER of Peter's instruction:

1 Peter 3:15b (NIV)

15 . . . Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

Acts 17:16–31 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, **“May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?”** 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

24 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

29 “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

NOTE – Paul shares the Gospel message in a manner that is sensible to the Athenians. It is less of a sermon and more of an (intellectual) appeal to consider the wonder of Christ and the reality of His resurrection. NOTE...

- 1) He was respectful of them (even opening with a compliment (v. 22) (w/out compromise)
- 2) Paul was willing/able to provide answer for his hope in Christ (providing A’s to their Q’s)
- 3) Paul worked to build bridges between his faith & their worldview (w/out compromise)
- 4) Paul used sources they were familiar with (v. 28) (v. ‘quoting’ Bible passages at them)

Q. How could Paul do this so expertly? He had prepared himself rigorously and was led of God!

Q. And what was their response to his attempt to persuade?

Acts 17:32–34 (NIV)

32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

KEY – In the course of your witness, there will be times when you must respectfully contend with the questions people ask of you, working to persuade them to a place/posture of faith in Christ without compromise. Be prepared to give ANSWER/REASONS for your hope in Him! There is no shortcut! Study, Study, Study!

METHOD #3 ANIMATION

The THIRD method/means of evangelism is PERSONAL TESTIMONY

FYI – This is a topic we will look at more closely in the weeks ahead. Thus, I will NOT go too deeply today! However, there is a place in the realm of Christian evangelism for sharing what the Lord has done in, for and through you. After all, it’s DIFFICULT for people to argue against things that you have personally experienced!

NOTE – Let’s consider an example of this from John 9.

1) Jesus brings healing to a man born blind...

John 9:1–12 (NIV)

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. 7 “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, “No, he only looks like him.” But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

10 “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked. 11 He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.” 12 “Where is this man?” they asked him. “I don’t know,” he said.
2) Let’s consider the subsequent outflow from this event...

John 9:13–25 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. 15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

16 Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.”

But others asked, “How can a sinner perform such signs?” So they were divided.

17 Then they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

18 They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. 19 “Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?”

20 “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. 21 But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23 That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God by telling the truth,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.”

25 He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. **One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!**”

Q. Do you see what the formerly blind man did? He appealed to his TESTIMONY!

-There were many things he did NOT know – but he knew what he had experienced in Him!

Q. And what was THEIR reaction?**John 9:26–34 (NIV)**

26 Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

27 He answered, “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

28 Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”

30 The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. 32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

34 To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out.

NOTE – Not EVERY story has a happy ending! Yet regardless of the result, we are told to preach the Gospel. Utilizing our testimony (the story of what the Lord has done) is a fantastic tool that we can and should AVAIL ourselves of!

KEY – In the course of your witness, there will be times when you must testify to what the Lord has done in, through and for you. It is difficult for people to argue with someone you have personally experienced or witnessed.

-YOU have a story to tell! TELL it!

SUMMATIONS

This morning I have put forth 3 of 6 methods/means of evangelism (more to come next week):

- 1) CONFRONTATION** – Confronting people with the reality of their sin and its consequence(s)
- 2) PERSUASION (INT.)** – Contending with the Q's people have in a sincere, respectful 'manner'
- 3) PERSONAL TESTIMONY** – Sharing how the Lord has operated in your life and on your behalf

KEY – Next Sunday morning I will COMPLETE the remaining methods of evangelism and offer some needed COMMENTARY. In the meantime, put into practice what you have learned today (prayerfully! God bless!