

“Evangelism is Sharing Good News” 2 Timothy 4:1-8

Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ is
a calling for the entire body of Christ.

Work of Evangelism
Life of Evangelism

Work of Evangelism

2 Timothy 4:1-5, NKJV

¹ 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: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ 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; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

There are those who have been called to be evangelists. This is a gift of the Holy Spirit listed by Paul in his letter to believers in Ephesus.

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13, NKJV)

These individuals with the spiritual gift of evangelism are by no means separated from those who have received other gifts of the Spirit. All of God’s children are called to be involved with at least the support of the rest of the body as they engage in carrying out their spiritual gifting. Those who are gifted to be evangelists, apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers are still called to take part in and support those who have the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, helps, and administration (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31). Evangelism is meant to be the activity of all God’s people in the same way it is more than an event that is engaged in by believers in Christ.

The work of evangelism must be properly understood by those who are gifted as evangelists as well as those who are spiritually gifted in other areas of the body of Christ. The charge Timothy received from Apostle Paul was also being applied to all believers. Apostle Paul intended for his personal letters to individuals and congregations to be shared publicly. This can be seen in many places in Paul’s writings but is often overlooked. The greatest evidence of this intention of public reading of these letters is the fact they are in the canon of Scripture, and lives are changed because it is the Word of God given to mankind through the Holy Spirit’s leading. It must be remembered that, “²⁰ ...no

prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21, NKJV).

Therefore, God is charging those who are in Christ to “² *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*” (2 Timothy 4:2, NKJV). It is true that everyone in the body of Christ is not called to be a preacher. Therefore, most who read this verse assume it is specifically meant for those who have the spiritual gift of preaching. Those who are spiritually gifted to preach are tasked with intentionally taking opportunity and studying God’s Word to bring forth messages to encourage and educate the people of God. Educate them to do what, though?

The Greek word that is translated “preach” is *kērrusō* which means to herald, especially divine truth, preach, proclaim, publish. This is something all God’s people are called to be actively doing. The woman at the well who Jesus talked with proclaimed Christ,

²⁸ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹ “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:28-29, NKJV)

The shepherds who came and visited Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem were heralds of Christ,

¹⁶ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. (Luke 2:16-18, NKJV)

Those who were scattered when persecution arose in Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen all preached the word regardless if it was their specific gifting or not.

³ As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.

⁴ Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. (Acts 8:3-4, NKJV)

These people were involved in preaching the word simply by sharing what they had seen, heard, and knew. They were doing it without any preplanned preparation. The shepherds did not go back to the fields to discuss how their message would be best delivered; they were unconcerned about how their message was going to be received. The woman at the well suddenly was unconcerned about what others thought or said about her; she immediately went and shared with everyone she encountered her encounter with Christ. This is what it means to be prepared “in season and out of season”.

God is always thorough in all His Word. The charge to preach is defined in what this entails by the leading of the Spirit through the pen of Paul. “*Convince, rebuke, exhort*” are all things that are meant by this charge to preach the word.

The most convincing is that which is discovered and experienced personally. Other people can speak about the benefits of a product or activity, but it is only the opinion of

someone else until a person uses or participates in the activity themselves. Spiritually speaking, those who proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ must be convinced of what they are saying before anyone else will even be willing to listen to what is being said. Take for instance the three examples that were used previously about the woman at the well, the shepherds, and those scattered from Jerusalem who went out preaching the word.

They were convinced and believed first in their hearts that what they were saying was true. They went out in excitement about the truth God had revealed to them and immediately shared it with everyone. The woman at the well was coming to the well in the middle of the day when everyone else came during the cool of the morning and evening. She was avoiding the other ladies. Her past was certainly a topic of discussion and the names she would have been called would have been upsetting. Yet, talking with Jesus and believing Him to be the Messiah as He claimed, there was no holding her back; what the other people of her town thought about her was overcome by the joy that now replaced her shame (John 4:6-29).

The Shepherds were in the fields watching the flocks when they were greeted in the night by the angelic host. They lead a quiet existence separated from people most of the time caring for the temple lambs. In a moment their lives were transformed by the message they received about the Christ child born in Bethlehem. They went and saw everything as it had been told to them. Their response was to wake the overcrowded town of Bethlehem with news which was the beginning of the end of death's reign over mankind. These lowly shepherds went out preaching the word to all about the Christ's birth in spite of their lack of training (Luke 2:8-20)

The believers in Jerusalem and the surrounding area enjoyed the fellowship and unity immediately following the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:40-47). This was not what Jesus commanded those who believed upon His name to do. The disciples were given the commission to go and make disciples, baptizing, and teach them all His commandments in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8). The sharing of the Good News of Jesus Christ was minimal outside of Jerusalem and Judea until the believers were scattered by the persecution initiated by Saul of Tarsus' approval of the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1).

Those who went out preaching the word were participating in evangelism regardless if they were gifted by the Spirit or not. Everyone who believes on the name of Christ is responsible for sharing Christ with someone else every day from the moment they first believed. Those who the Spirit gifted as evangelists will certainly be far more fruitful as it comes much more naturally to them by the power of the Spirit. Evangelists are still responsible for the rest of the fruits of the Spirit and must be supportive of others who were gifted in other ways than they were gifted.

The woman at the well, the shepherds, and all the believers who were scattered were all able to convince people of who Christ was simply because they first believed it themselves and then lived their lives upon that reality. Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ is far more convincing when it comes from a person who reorganizes their life around Christ as Lord because people can see faith in action.

The correcting and encouraging part of evangelism comes as believers engage in questions and challenges their lifestyle brings from others. The question of "why" arise from the conviction people would experience by the Spirit's presence and give opportunity to express correction of sinful ways, as well as encouragement to believe on the name of

Christ and stop living for self. The early Christians faced these things, but the time has arrived when “³ ...they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4, NKJV).

It is the responsibility of all who believe in Christ to, “⁵ ...be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5, NKJV). The work of evangelism is the activity of all God’s children because it should be happening naturally as they live for the Lord. Their speech will reveal the mindset of Christ’s Spirit within them. Their conduct will reflect God’s character. Their love will give evidence of God’s love through them in how they treat one another. Therefore, the people of God are to be prepared to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed no matter if it is a planned event or the door God unexpectedly opens in the conversation with another person in the course of the day’s events. The work of evangelism occurs naturally when the people of God are living a life of evangelism.

Life of Evangelism

2 Timothy 4:6-8, NKJV

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ 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.

Apostle Paul clarifies to Timothy and all who follow Christ what it means to live a lifestyle of evangelism by saying, “⁶ ...I am already being poured out as a drink offering...⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:6-7, NKJV). The drink offering under the old covenant was connected to freewill offerings or peace offerings to God. These were voluntarily given by the worshiper in expression of praise, thanks, and gratitude towards God in acknowledgement of blessings received. Paul’s reference to his life being poured out as a drink offering was his way of willingly giving all of himself even to death in order that God would be glorified through his life.

A life of evangelism is one that is lived for the Lord as Paul encouraged believers to do throughout his ministry. Apostle Paul expressed this idea to believers throughout his ministry.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:8-11, NKJV)

¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:11-14, NKJV)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20, NKJV)

⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith (Philippians 3:7-9, NKJV)

The fight Apostle Paul fought was the resistance to his fleshly desires of his sinful nature. This battle is ongoing from day to day. Those who are in Christ are new creations with the ability to say no to sin and yes to God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The denial of self will always be something that the people of God will need to actively take part in daily.

The race Paul speaks of running is not against anyone else, but a running after the Lord searching out His will. God's people must continue to run from temptation and sin as Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife who attempted to seduce him with pleasures he knew were not his to enjoy (Genesis 39:10-16). There are things that must be left behind and abandoned if they hinder the work of the Lord in the life of His child.

Faith in Christ is worth everything, even to the point of forfeiting one's life or to endure all anguish and trial that each day brings. Faith is mere words until it is put into actions that make little or no sense in human logic, but are demonstrations of trusting God in spite of all the struggles of life. Paul kept the faith because he practiced faithfulness with each new challenge. There were many times Paul's agenda was changed and clear direction was difficult to discern in where God was calling him to minister.

⁶ Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. ⁷ After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. ⁸ So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 6:6-10, NKJV)

It must have been difficult for those who were with Paul to grasp why the Holy Spirit would forbid them from going anywhere to preach about Christ. Yet, that is exactly

what was taking place. Paul was turned away from Asia, Mysia, and Bithynia. It was in Troas where the Lord made his direction clear through the vision of the man pleading for the apostle to come into Macedonia to teach and preach there. It was faith Paul exhibited during the time of going from place to place to preach but being turned away by the Holy Spirit.

The life of evangelism is a life that lives by faith and not by sight. There is no human logic that can understand all that God does since He is infinite and creation is finite. God encourages people to trust Him rather than attempting to explain everything about Him when He said through Isaiah,

*⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

*¹⁰ "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,*

*¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:9-11, NKJV)*

It is impossible for God to make complete sense to mankind in all things. There is no capacity for people to understand all that God does, the fullness of His being, or even begin to breach the how God works all things for the good of those who love Him and are called by Him. Yet, God has given us enough information and illustration from His Word and through the life of Christ to trust Him even though His ways and thoughts escape human comprehension.

Apostle Paul knew there was a crown of righteousness laid up in heaven for him so that upon his arrival onto the shores of God's heavenly kingdom he would be able to bow and present to Christ the glory honor the Lord deserves alone. Living for God rather than for self is a concept which is foreign and confusing to a world that is dead in sin. Those who are alive in Christ must live in such a manner that is continually giving themselves fully to the work of sharing the Good News of Christ Jesus with all people everywhere with joy, creativity, and passion.

The people today refuse and deny the truth; they stop up their ears and shout in an attempt to drown out those who speak truth. This must never discourage or prevent the people of God from faithfully proclaiming the Word of God and doing the work of evangelism or living a lifestyle of evangelism. God has promised and proclaimed that when His Word is spoken and lived out in the lives of His people it will accomplish everything He intended for it to do. Results are not the responsibility of God's children; faithfulness in carrying out His commands, obedience to His will, and complete trust in Him even though unanswered questions abound is what God's children are responsible for in this life.

All this is impossible in the strength of God's people alone. Praise the Lord it is by the power of the Holy Spirit residing in the lives of His people that all this can be accomplished, is being fulfilled, and has been shining the light of His presence even now in these spiritually dark times. Therefore, let the people of God not be discouraged but rejoice in knowing Christ is returning soon.

There is no time to waste! The people of God must share the Good News with all before it is too late for those who are now still dead in their sins.