

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH** **“Evangelism Encourages Faithfulness”**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). Welcome to our study on how evangelism encourages faithfulness. This series of lesson is designed to encourage Christians to be faithful unto death. One of the best ways to promote and encourage faithfulness among God’s children is for us to get busy doing the work of evangelism. The more you think about the lost, and the more you study your Bible and prepare to answer its critics, the more that will encourage you to be faithful unto death. Think about all the lost people who are in the world. Jesus said that most of the Earth’s six billion people will one day be lost. In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus said,

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

We today need to be evangelistic minded because Jesus said that most people are going to go down the wrong path that leads to eternal destruction. As a result, they will spend eternity in the flames of Hell. We must be evangelistically minded.

The fact that most people are going to be lost should motivate us. But so should the wonderful blessings of being a child of God. Those blessings should motivate us to want to tell others about Jesus. The Bible says that all spiritual blessings are ours in Christ Jesus. The child of God has the blessings that have been given from Heaven and about which we read in the Bible—peace, love, mercy, and the hope of Heaven. All of those things are available to the Christian. Shouldn’t we want others to have those same blessings? The victory is ours. We are told in 1 Corinthians 15:57, “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We should want other people to have the blessings that are found in Christ. We should want them to escape torment, and find the victory that Jesus provides. Thus, we need to be evangelistic. In so doing, we will be encouraged to be even more faithful to the cause of Christ.

Today, then, I want us to examine the command that God has given us to evangelize, and how it is something that each child of God must take seriously. We then will look at some things that, if we are not careful, can cause us not to be as evangelistic as we ought to be. Then I want to sum it up by noticing the motivation. What is it that should motivate us to tell others about Jesus? The Bible teaches in several different passages that every Christian has an obligation to evangelize. In Matthew 28:18 Jesus explained that all authority in Heaven and on Earth had been given to Him. He then told them to “go, and make disciples of all nations” (vs. 19). That is not a command for the few, for those who like doing evangelism, or for those who feel like they are good at evangelism. It is a command for every Christian. We are Jesus’ disciples if we continue in His Word (Jn. 8:31). Colossians 1:28 tells us of Christ, “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” We, as disciples of Christ, have the responsibility to preach the Gospel. And every person needs to hear it.

The Bible teaches that evangelism is no different than any other command. And if we do not carry out evangelism, then it represents a failure in our lives to do God's will. We need to ask ourselves if we can do the will of God, yet ignore what God teaches about evangelism. Jesus said, "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine." We have to know doctrine in order to do God's will, and we have to be willing to follow that doctrine in our lives. In Luke 6:46 Jesus said to certain Jews who wanted to listen to some of the things He was saying, yet who did not really want to follow Him, "why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" The clear principle here is that if we claim Jesus as our Lord, and we claim to do His will, then we must realize that evangelism is part of God's will for us. If we are lax in doing that, then we have not carried out God's will in our lives. The command to evangelism is no different than any other command that God has given us. All of us would say, for example, that we have an example to study. Paul told Timothy, "Study to show yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). We realize that is a command for everyone. All of us need to study. How is Mark 16:15 any different? We are told, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Just like the command to study, so is the command to evangelize. It is a command, and we cannot be pleasing to God if we are not willing to follow it. Hebrews 5:8-9 teaches us that Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." Evangelism is part of obedience to God and remaining faithful to Him.

When we follow God's command to evangelize, it demonstrates our faith in God and His Word. A failure to evangelize demonstrates a lack of faith in God and in His Word. In 1 Corinthians 1:21 we are told that God chose "the foolishness of preaching" to save those who are lost. If God chose the foolishness of preaching, and if Romans 10:14 teaches that people cannot hear without a proclaimer or teacher, then if we have faith in the Gospel, we also must have faith in the system of evangelism that God chose. That system is every Christian going door to door in order to reach into every house to tell his friends and neighbors about the Gospel. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes by the Word of God. Do we have faith in evangelism? James 1:21 tells us that we are to "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." Do we have faith in the Word of God to be able to save souls? Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Do we really believe that God's Word will save? Are we bold enough to stand up and say what God's Word says on the matter of salvation? Evangelism on our part says, in essence, "You have said it God. I know it is true, and I am going to have faith in your Word to save, and in your method to reach the lost." When we obey the command to evangelize, it demonstrates true love for the lost. Ask yourself, "Do you love the lost?" I'm not asking if you have a deep concern for those who are lost. I'm asking, "Do you love the lost to do something about it?" Do you love the lost enough to actually get out among them, let them know they are lost, let them know that God has a plan of salvation, and that you want them to be saved? In Matthew 9:36-38 Jesus looked out across the multitude—as sheep without a shepherd. He loved them, and said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Jesus' point was that if we love the lost, we need to realize that they need help. In Mark 10 a rich young ruler came to Jesus. Jesus looked on him and loved him. He then told him that one thing was lacking in his life. He needed to go, sell all that he had, and give the money to the poor in order to be right in God's sight. Jesus had real love and compassion for the lost. If we say that we love the lost, that we do not want them to go to Hell, and that we want them to be saved, then we need to realize that in order to prove that, we must be willing to reach out and tell them about their lost state, the love of God, and how to be saved.

When it comes to evangelism, sometimes there can be things that, if we are not careful, can hinder us from doing evangelism like God wants us to. One of those things has to do with the fact that people sometime say, “Evangelism is good, and is a biblical principle. But it’s somebody else’s job.” What if everyone said that? What if everyone said, “Yes, we need to evangelize, we need to get people to do it, and it’s a great thing, but it’s someone else’s business, and they need to take care of it”? What if we said that about everything else? Is reading the Bible “someone else’s business”? Is praying “someone else’s business”? Is taking the Lord’s Supper “someone else’s business”? What if we took that attitude with everything? The church would never be what God intended for it to be if everyone took the attitude that “someone else” needs to be doing those things. We must realize that **we** are that “someone else.” It is our business to spread the Gospel. Jesus said in Luke 2: 49-52, “I must be about My Father’s business.” What was that business? Jesus came to seek and save those who are lost. That business is something in which we must involve ourselves, too. We cannot say to ourselves, “I’m not as good as someone else, I don’t feel comfortable doing it, and so I’ll just leave it to be someone else’s business.” That represents a failure to do God’s will in our lives.

Another hindrance occurs when someone says, “The things about which we read in the New Testament—evangelizing, telling people they are in sin, explaining that they need God’s love and mercy, and that they need to be saved—just won’t work today. Our society has changed. That is not the way people need to be approached today.” That is foolish human wisdom that will cause a multitude of people to go to Hell. In Isaiah 55:8-9 we are told,

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’”

Is God’s way better than man’s way? Man sometimes says that evangelism—as it is set forth in the New Testament—will not work. God’s ways are higher than our ways. Here’s why. The seed of the kingdom is still the Word of God (Lk. 8:11). The Gospel is still God’s power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). The Bible says that the Word of God is still living, powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). Just as the Christians in the first century “daily in the temple, and in every house, did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42), so we, too, need to do today. Just as in Acts 8:4 where “those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word,” we need to do the same thing today. We do not to say to ourselves that it will not work. God said that it **will** work. His ways are higher than ours. We need to step in line behind the will of God, and stop making excuses. We must realize that God’s plan of evangelism will work.

Another hindrance to evangelism that can get in our way is immoral living, which will do a great deal to hinder evangelism. If we are going to evangelize, we need to do our best to live a good, moral, Christian life. In Matthew 5:16 Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” We are to be a light to the world. If we have sin in our lives, are giving in to the lusts of the flesh, or are chasing the passions of this world while claiming to be a Christian, that will hinder people from wanting to be saved. Romans 1:18 teaches that the wrath of God is upon those who living in ungodliness. Such activity makes God angry, and He will punish such behavior. One of the things that Jesus hated the most in His day and age were those who were hypocrites. In Matthew 15:7 Jesus said, “Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you.” In Matthew 23:15, Jesus condemned the Jews as being hypocrites. He said, “You travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” Why was this the case? It was because they were **saying**,

not **doing** (Mt. 23:1-3). If we are going to evangelize, we need to live good, moral lives. That does not mean that we will never sin. Nor does it mean that we will be an example of perfection at all times. But we need to live good, loyal, Christian lives to the best of our ability.

Another hindrance to evangelism is that we sometimes do not have the knowledge of God's Word that we need. How sad it is when people have been in the church for ten, twenty, or thirty years, yet they cannot even tell their neighbors about God's plan of salvation, or why denominational error is not correct. The strongest rebuke in the Bible, I believe, is found in Hebrews 5:12—"Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food." Those people had been Christians long enough that they should have been out teaching others. Yet they needed someone to "teach them again" the first principles of God? They were "babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1-4). We need to study so that we can tell others about Jesus. In 1 Peter 3:15 we are commanded, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." We are to be ready to give an answer regarding the reasons we are Christians, and why we have the hope we do. This does not mean that we have to be ready to give an answer on every single biblical subject—such as the meaning of the images in the Book of Revelation or the figures in the Book of Daniel or things like the baptism of the dead. That is not what we're talking about. In 1 Peter 3:15 Peter is tell us that we need to be ready to give an answer for why we have hope as Christians. If we cannot do that, after having been Christians for some time, then something is very wrong in our lives. We need to be able to tell others why we are a Christian, and how they can become a Christian. That is what it means to follow Jesus and be an example to the world.

Sometimes, if we are not careful, we also can be hindered by not having the genuine concern for the lost that we ought to. It is sad that some people choose to live in sin, and choose to reject the will of God. But we cannot allow those people to affect those who might be searching for the truth. If we say to ourselves, "Most of the world is going to Hell in a hand basket, and they wouldn't want to hear the Gospel even if we preached it to them, so there is no need for us to do that," then we will miss reaching people who **do** want to hear the Gospel. Is it true that most people will reject the Gospel? Yes. But are there people who are searching for the truth? Absolutely! And we cannot allow those who have a disdain for the Word of God, or those who are apathetic toward the Scriptures, to cause us not to have the genuine concern for the lost that we ought to have. Like Jesus, we need to feel compassion and sorrow for those who are living in sin.

Since it is a command of God for us to evangelize, and since we can see and remove those things that might be hindering us from doing evangelism, then what is it that can motivate us to evangelize? Once we understand the command, know that we need to obey it, and are doing our best to live good, Christian lives, what is it that—every time we see someone who is lost and who is living in sin—will motivate us to be bold and courageous in telling that person about Jesus? Here are some things that ought to motivate each of us to evangelize.

The sacrificial love of God ought to motivate us to say something about Jesus. How can we look at God's love as depicted in the Scriptures, and not feel compelled to tell others about it? In Romans 5:6-8 Paul wrote,

"When we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Look at the love of God. When man was at his worst, and while we were still sinners, God sent His Son to die for us. How can we look at that love, see lost people who have never come in contact with the blood of Jesus, and not say something? The love of Christ should “compel us” (2 Cor. 5:14). In John 3:16 we read about how “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” We are the means or tools that God uses to reach people with the Gospel. If God is love (1 Jn. 4:8), and if it is a fact that Jesus left Heaven and came to Earth to die for the whole world, and if God has chosen us as Christians to spread the Word, how can we say, “I am thankful for the love of God,” but never say anything about Jesus to those who are lost? Isn’t that a contradiction? If we really understand the fulness of the manner in which God has expressed His love to mankind, then we will want to tell others about it.

Here is another motivation. If we have a genuine love for others’ souls, we will tell them about God’s plan of salvation. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul used this as one of his motivations in evangelism: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:11, “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” We do that because we realize what a benefit and blessing it is to receive a clean slate and a second chance. Do we really have genuine love for the souls of others? In Mark 12:28 Jesus was asked by a lawyer, “What is the greatest commandment?” Jesus responded by saying, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (vs. 30). He then said, “And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (vs. 31). Do you want to go to Hell? If you were lost in sin, would you want someone to tell you? If you were going to spend eternity in the fires of the horrible place known as Hell, would you want others, regardless of whether you liked it or not, to tell you about salvation? Absolutely! The greatest commandment is to love God, and the second is to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Can we really say that we love our neighbors if we allow them to live in sin and go to Hell—while we remain silent on the subject of their souls’ salvation?

Another motivation for us is to realize what Hell will be like. I am convinced that people today are not aware of how horrible Hell is going to be. One of the motivating factors for us in evangelism should be that we do not want to go to Hell. But second, we should not want anyone else to spend eternity in a place like Hell. What kind of place is Hell? In Mark 9:44 Jesus said that Hell is a place where “their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” We would translate the word “worm” as “maggot.” Hell is like a place where a maggot continually eats at your flesh, and no one ever turns up the air-conditioning. Think about the horror of Hell. Jesus described it as a place where there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” It is described as “a lake of fire.” It is such a horrible place that in the story of the rich man who was in torment, he wanted just one drop of water because he was in torment in the flames (Lk. 16:19-31). No one wants to go to Hell. And we should not want anyone to go there. Because of the reality and horror of Hell, we ought to want to tell others about salvation—whether or not they understand us or get their feelings hurt. We should want the lost to know that God loves them, that there is a way to salvation, and that their lives need to be changed for the better. Jesus said in Matthew 25:46 that the evil “will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

However, on the positive side, the beauty and splendor of Heaven ought to motivate us to tell others about God’s plan of salvation. No, we do not want people to be lost and go to Hell. But yes, we do want them be saved and go to Heaven. In John 14:1-4 Jesus said,

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6). We should want people to spend eternity in Heaven with God and with the saints of old. We should want people to understand that Heaven is a place of rest (Heb. 4:9). In Revelation 21:3-4 we are told that it is a place where all the sin, sorrow, and death of this world no longer exist. Heaven is a habitation made by God (Heb. 11). It is a place that has eternal foundations that will never be cast away (2 Cor. 5:1-2). And it is a place where we will encircle God’s throne, praise and worship Him, and be edified for all eternity (Rev. 4 and 5). Because of the beauty and splendor of Heaven, we should want people to know about Jesus.

But one final motivating factor has to be the brevity of life. Look at life. It is so brief and so short. It passes by in the blink of an eye. Because life is so brief, we must not delay in telling others about God’s plan of salvation. We need to see the urgency of this matter. Consider Philip and the Ethiopian nobleman, who is traveling down the road. The Holy Spirit tells Philip to go and talk to this man. He runs over and tells him about the Gospel. There is an urgency for us to spread the Gospel because of the brevity of life. That should be a motivating factor. Our friends and neighbors who have never obeyed God might die in their sins tomorrow or at any moment and be lost. James 4:14 says, “What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” The Greek word for vapor is the word that we would use for “dew” or “mist.” When you go out in the morning, you see the dew on the grass. But the Sun comes up, and the dew vanishes. That is what life is like. It is like a vapor—here for a little while, and then gone. Hebrews 9:27 guarantees each of us this: “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.” We have seventy or eighty years in general as a standard for the length of our lives, but even that is not a given (Ps. 90:10-12). Our lives are short, and we cannot boast about tomorrow because we do not know what tomorrow might bring (Pr. 27:1).

What motivates us to tell others about Jesus? The love of God does. Genuine concern for other people’s souls does. The horror of Hell, the beauty of Heaven, and the brevity of life ought to motivate us to take evangelism seriously. One of the things that we are not doing as much as we should in the kingdom of God is to reach out to others. And, I can promise you that if we take evangelism seriously, it will encourage you to be more faithful to God. It will challenge you to study. It will help you see the real meaning of life. It will tell you, in the clearest sense, what God wants you to do in this life. That is what life is all about. So, our hope and prayer for you is that you will be faithful unto death. Never ever give up. Do not allow Satan into your life. And be sure that you do what God wants you to do in the realm of evangelism. God loves each one of us, and more than anything He wants us to go to Heaven. We love you, and want you to go to Heaven as well. May you always obey the Gospel of Christ in your life.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## **STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “EVANGELISM ENCOURAGES FAITHFULNESS”**

1. What command did Jesus give in Mark 16:15?
2. According to 1 Corinthians 15:57, Christians have been given a victory. Through whom has that victory been won?
3. According to John 8:31, who are Jesus' true disciples?
4. According to Colossians 1:28, what should be one of the goals of every Christian?
5. In Luke 6:46, what important question did Jesus ask the Jews of His day?
6. According to 2 Timothy 2:15, what is one thing that all Christians should be doing?
7. According to Romans 1:16, what is the Gospel?
8. What important point did Jesus make in Matthew 9:37?
9. According to Luke 8:11, what is the seed of the kingdom?
10. According to Acts 5:42, what did the early Christians do in regard to evangelism?
11. According to Christ's comments in Matthew 5:16, what is one important part of a Christian's evangelistic efforts?
12. What motivation for evangelism is found in Paul's statement in Romans 1:18?
13. What strong rebuke for Christians is found in Hebrews 5:12?
14. What command for Christians is found in 1 Peter 3:15?
15. What motivation for Christians to carry out evangelism is found in Romans 5:6-8?
16. According to 2 Corinthians 5:14, what should compel Christians to be engaged in personal evangelism?
17. What motivation for Christians to be involved in evangelism is found in John 3:16?
18. What motivation for Christians to carry out evangelism is found in 2 Corinthians 5:11?
19. What motivation for Christians to carry out evangelism is found in Matthew 25:46?
20. What motivation for Christians to carry out evangelism is found in John 14:1-4?
21. What motivation for Christians to carry out evangelism is found in James 4:14?
22. What motivation for Christians to carry out evangelism is found in Hebrews 9:27?
23. What motivation for Christians to carry out evangelism is found in John 14:6?