

NBC CAMP 2020

Principles for Effective Street Evangelism

Text: Acts 5:42

Introduction:

1. In Acts 5:42, we see the outworking of Christ's command to evangelise the world.
2. The word 'preach' is the Greek word *euaggelizo* (ευαγγελιζω) which means to evangelise, to proclaim good news/tidings. The noun form of the word is always translated as 'evangelist' in the New Testament. Refer Acts 21:8 & II. Timothy 4:5.
3. The Early church evangelised in two main spheres:
 - A. Privately – house to house
 - B. Publicly – to the multitudes

I. **Common Objections to Street Evangelism**

A. **Objection:** It's too confrontational.

Answer: The Great Commission demands a direct approach for the proclamation of the Gospel. "...*Go ye into all the world, and **preach** the gospel to every creature.*" (Mark 16:15). The word 'preach' here means to herald or proclaim. Grammatically, the word '*preach*' is the central command in this verse. The word '*go*' is also an implied command but it doesn't have the same imperative force as the word 'preach'.

B. **Objection:** Some churches have given street witnessing a bad name by exhibiting a harsh, un-Christlike spirit.

Answer: The fact that someone misuses a biblical method or perverts it in some way does not mean that we throw it in the bin entirely! Sometimes in our zeal to distance ourselves from an error, we move past the point of biblical truth and rob ourselves of a precious truth.

C. **Objection:** It's not safe

Answer: We do need to take due care when witnessing on the streets not to unnecessarily provoke a dangerous situation. However, our trust must be in the Lord for protection. "*The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but **safety** is of the LORD.*" (Prov 21:31). Staying in pairs or small groups can help with this. Ladies should not be by themselves.

Answer: If we do happen to suffer something for the cause of the Gospel, is that to be despised? Consider the example of the Apostles. "...*and when they had called the apostles, and **beaten** them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, **rejoicing** that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*" (Acts

5:41-42) Consider the teaching of Christ. *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matt. 5:10) Polycarp who was a disciple of the Apostle John was martyred for his faith by burning at the stake. His final prayer as he was bound for the fire was: “O Lord God Almighty, the Father of your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of you, the God of angels, powers and every creature, and of all the righteous who live before you, I give you thanks that you count me worthy to be numbered among your martyrs, sharing the cup of Christ and the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and body, through the immortality of the Holy Spirit. May I be received this day as an acceptable sacrifice, as you, the true God, have predestined, revealed to me, and now fulfilled. I praise you for all these things, I bless you and glorify you, along with the everlasting Jesus Christ, your beloved Son. To you, with him, through the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and forever. Amen.”

II. Witnessing to Individuals on the Street

A. The Scriptural Basis

1. We are to go into the highways and byways
Luke 14:23 – *“...Go out into the **highways and hedges**, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”*
2. The Early Church evangelized in public areas
 - a. Acts 5:42 – *“And daily in the **temple**, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”*
 - b. Acts 8:4 – *“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where **preaching the word.**”*
 - c. Acts 20:20-21 – *“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you **publickly**, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
3. The Apostle Paul disputed in the market place
 - a. Acts 17:17 *“Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.”*
 - b. ‘disputed’ = to reason, discuss or dialogue.

B. Practical Suggestions: Refer last lesson

III. Distributing Tracts on the Street

- A. Many people won’t stop and talk on the street as they are busy going somewhere. Our job is to seek to scatter the Gospel seed into as many hearts as possible.

- B. Ask a thought provoking question or make a brief statement as you hand a person a tract. For example:
 1. Have you thought about where you will spend eternity?
 2. Are you ready to meet God?
 3. Have you had your sins forgiven?
 4. Here's something that will tell you how to escape God's judgment.
 5. Read this: it will tell you how you can know God personally.
- C. Sometimes a brief phrase/question like this will open up an opportunity for further conversation.

IV. Preaching to Multitudes on the Street

- A. C.H. Spurgeon: "No sort of defence is needed for preaching out of doors; but it would need very potent arguments to prove that a man had done his duty who has never preached beyond the walls of his meeting house."
- B. Old Testament Examples
 1. Noah in the ship yard

II. Peter 2:5 – *"And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, brining in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."*

2. Jonah on the streets of Nineveh

Jonah 3:1-5 – *"And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."*

- C. New Testament Examples
 1. Christ in the open air
 2. Peter on the day of Pentecost
 3. Paul on Mars Hill in Athens
- D. Church History Examples
 1. Reformation Period
 2. 18th Century Revival
 - a. George Whitefield
 - b. Wesley Brothers
- E. Practical Suggestions
 1. **Preparation:** Prayer, fasting & Bible study.
 2. **Place:** Find an open space with a good flow of people. Avoid shop fronts if possible.

3. **Presentation:** Endeavour to show a loving spirit in your body language and demeanour. Don't pace around like an angry Gorilla whose favourite bananas have been stolen or like a wild bear about to swat someone with his paw.
4. **Projection:** Speak with volume but don't scream at the top of your lungs in an abrasive manner. Use some elevation if possible. A step ladder or a small stool is great. Don't try to preach into a strong head wind, you'll just swallow your own words and not many will be able to hear you. Your voice will tend to carry further if you have a wall or solid object behind you.
5. **Preaching:**
 - a. Remember to not only preach God's judgment against sin, but also God's love and compassion for sinners.
 - b. Don't be afraid to preach a short message over and over on the street. You tend to have a new audience every couple of minutes so learn to condense the Gospel message into a couple of minutes and then preach it through several times.
 - c. Quote the Word of God frequently. God's Word is powerful. Our hope is that maybe one phrase or one sentence will awaken someone as they walk past.

V. Navigating Hostile Responses

- A. Stay in groups of at least two people or more if at all possible.
 1. Christ sent His disciples out two by two for a reason.
 2. The Apostle Paul was hardly ever alone on His missionary journeys.
- B. Respond to verbal abuse with grace. You want to maintain a good testimony for the Lord not only to the individual but also to those watching on. "***A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.***" (Prov 15:1)
- C. Don't be afraid to quote the Scriptures to someone opposing the Gospel message. The Word of God is quick and powerful.

Conclusion: The story of Frank Jenner