

The Great Omission: Personal Evangelism

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Bible Text: Matthew 4:18-20; Jeremiah 31:34

Preached on: Sunday, April 10, 2011

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If you would take your Bibles this morning and turn with me to Matthew chapter four. We are going to be looking at a number of different Scriptures this morning, but we are going to begin here. And so look at Matthew chapter four in verses 18 through 20.

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.¹

Let's pray.

Our Lord, a part of the reason that you have called me to be a pastor is to use the gifts and the responsibility and the authority you have given me to equip the saints. So the saints may do the work of ministry unto the edifying of the body of Christ.

Lord, the sermon I am preaching this morning has everything to do with equipping your people to labor as your disciples in the ministry of evangelism. And so, Lord, I pray that your Holy Spirit will attend all that is said and done and that you will drive home to our hearts the reality and the responsibility that we have to make Christ known to those who are around us. Help us, oh Lord, forgive us for this great sin of omission that we battle with constantly and help us, Lord, to more fully fulfill the things that you have shown us in your Word. For we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to begin this morning by asking you a question. The question is this. Is Berean Baptist Church of Austell, Georgia, an evangelistic church?

Now I want to tell you what I don't mean by that. I do not mean are men called to faith in Christ and repentance from sin from this pulpit. You already know the answer to that question. They are regularly. We call sinners to faith in Christ regularly, don't we? I don't even mean is your pastor evangelistic as important as that is, as important as it is for me to labor in personal evangelism. I don't even mean how many ministries or programs do we have that are evangelistic. We do have them. You know they are there.

¹ Matthew 4:18-20.

They are announced constantly and the opportunity is given for any of you to participate in those ministries.

Those aren't the questions that I am interested in this morning, though. When I ask you the question: Is Berean Baptist Church evangelistic? You need to understand I hope you always know this, these lovely yellow walls around us and these black girders above us and this towel beneath us is not Berean Baptist Church. It is not comprised of the blocks or the wood or this pulpit or the sheet rock or the paint. That is not what Berean Baptist Church is. The reality is: You are Berean Baptist Church, because the Church is people. This is just the place where Berean Baptist Church meets on Sundays and on Wednesday nights. That is it. That is all this place is. But you are the Church.

So my question is this. Are you evangelistic? Answer that question and you have the answer: Is Berean Baptist Church evangelistic? Because you are Berean Baptist Church.

You are probably like me. I suspect you are because you are here, that you have come to believe that what we call the reformed faith is the faith of Scripture itself. You believe the doctrines of free and sovereign grace because you are convinced the Bible teaches the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, not because a confession teaches it or this person or that man or this personality, but rather because you see it in Scripture. And we believe, do we not, that we have come to see a clearer grasp of the gospel than is often spread in evangelicalism, that apart from the free and sovereign grace of God there is no salvation, because sin has so ruined us that not only it is not just an issue of we will not come to Jesus, it is the issue that we cannot come to Jesus unless it is granted by a sovereign God.

We believe this. But is it not true that far too often under the reformed faith we get to a peace where the label frozen chosen has reason to stick, because we are more interested in getting the gospel right than we are in getting the gospel out.

Our Arminian friends sometimes we believe that some of them do not have a very deep gospel. They have a gospel two inches deep and they are wanting to thin it even more by spreading it more. However, we believe there is enough of Christ preached by our Arminian friends that there are truly people converted under Arminian preaching. How many of you were converted under Arminian preaching? I was.

Someone said this past week at our associational meeting, "It seems that most converts are converted and baptized under Arminian ministries and then they come to our reformed ministries. And why is that? Is there a reason for that?"

Brethren, we have been given a tremendous treasure and if we believe we have a purer gospel than should we not be all that more zealous to bring it out to those who are lost, because it is not going to do anyone any good if they never hear it. For the God who has ordained the salvation of the elect has also ordained the means through which they are saved. And it is the hearing of the gospel.

And are we supposed to be a come and see church hoping that the lost know where we are and come and find us or are we to be and tell church. Or are we supposed to be both. I think that is the answer. We are supposed be both. We are supposed to be a come and see and a go and tell church.

But it begs two questions, two questions that are very important for us to ask and to answer and this is going to be the two questions that frame my preaching this morning.

The first is this. Who must cast the net of the gospel? And the second is this. Where must you cast the net of the gospel? And since I am saying “you” in the second question, you probably know what I am going to say in the first.

But let’s ask those two questions and seek to answer them from God’s Word.

The first is this. Who must cast the net of the gospel?

In verse 18 we read of something that happened in the second year of our Lord’s ministry. These events took place at the beginning of his second year of ministry. One year had already passed. As a matter of fact, you may not recognize it here, but as you compare Scripture with Scripture there is evidence that Jesus had a relationship with Peter and Andrew for a year before this event took place.

They had first met in the southern region of Judea and, apparently, Peter and Andrew and James and John and others ministered alongside of Jesus off and on for a period of a year before this event took place. But the time came where Peter and Andrew were turned back to their home up in the northwest region of the Sea of Galilee, the city of Capernaum where they, again, reengaged in their... in the fishing industry which is what they did for a living.

“And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.”²

Now the word “net” here in the original Greek is the word casting net. What was a casting net? Well, probably Peter and Andrew were waist deep in the water or they may have been just slightly offshore in their boats. And a casting net was a round, circular net that had attached to its outer circumference a group of lead weights. And what you did is you took that net and he spun it and he cast it out over the water so that it opened up complete, landed on the water and the nets would sink down to the bottom. And if there were any fish underneath the net, it would trap those fish and then by the means of ropes attached to the net, the fishermen would begin to drag the net back into the boat or back onto the shore where they would collect the fish and then take them to market where they would sell them and they would get their money.

² Mathew 4:18.

Well, Jesus is using something that they were familiar with, the fishing industry, to teach these men who would eventually be his apostles, to teach them something about evangelism.

He says to them in verse 19, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”³

Now the first thing we need to notice about this is this is a call to discipleship. He is saying, “Be my students. Be my followers who sit under my instruction and who learn to imitate my example.”

You know, we can say this for sure. Peter and Andrew didn’t wake up one day and just say, “Hey, I know how to fish.” Someone had to take them under their wing, I mean, a seasoned veteran fisherman and teach them by their words and by their own example how to fish.

I became a carpenter when I was 16 years old. I didn’t know a thing about carpentry. I couldn’t even drive a nail without slinging it somewhere. I had no basic skills. But there was a man who took me under his wing and patiently taught me—most of the time he was patient—taught me how... he taught me the skills in how to be a carpenter until eventually I was building houses from the ground up for him.

But it took many years of painstaking instruction for me to learn. Even so, it took painstaking instruction and years of practice for these men to become skilful fishers of fish. And Jesus is taking what they knew and saying, “If you will follow me, I will be your mentor. I will be your teacher and I am going to teach you how to catch something far more valuable than fish. I am going to teach you how to catch the souls of men. I will teach you by my words and when you make errors and mistakes I am going to correct you. But I am also going to show you by my example.”

All of the time, all through those three years of ministry, the disciples had the privilege of watching Jesus and hearing Jesus as he himself labored in evangelism.

So using the Lord’s analogy the question before us is this. What is the net? What is the net with which we catch men? And the answer is obvious. It is the gospel.

Paul said in Romans 1:16, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”⁴ Why? “For it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.”⁵

It is the net. It is the only way to catch men for heaven. There is no other way, but the gospel itself.

But the best fishing net in the world will do the fisherman absolutely no good if it is left hanging in his shop. He has got to take that net and he has got to cast it out over the seas

³ Matthew 4:19.

⁴ Romans 1:16.

⁵ Ibid.

or else I can guarantee you he will never catch any fish. And even so if you and I keep the gospel to ourselves, if we keep a bushel hidden over our life, if we refuse to be salt and light to the world, if we never verbally share the gospel with someone, we can guarantee this. We are not going to catch the souls of anybody for the glory of God. We must cast that net out.

But the question is: Whose responsibility is it to labor in casting the net of the gospel into the sea of humanity? Who is responsible to labor in evangelism?

Well, certainly in a peculiar manner it is the calling of those who are pastors in a peculiar manner.

What did Paul say to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter four? He said, “Do the work of an evangelist.”⁶

He was talking to a pastor.

And, “fulfill your ministry.”⁷

Doing the work of an evangelist, reaching out to the lost and crying and calling for men to come to Christ is a part of the labor of a pastor, certainly no one would question that.

But the question before us is this. Is it limited to just the officers of the Church? And my answer and you probably know what I am going to say is, no it is not. It is the responsibility of all who have come to know Christ to make Christ known to others without exception.

Notice in the calling here. It is interesting that Jesus did not say, “Follow me and I will make you apostles.” He did not say, “Follow me and I will make you pastors.”

As a matter of fact, it would be sometime later when Jesus would gather all the multitudes together and he himself would pull 12 out of the group who had been serving with him faithfully and name them apostles. But until that date these men had no idea that that was what God, Christ was going to do. The call was simply, “Be my disciple. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”

In other words, they did not wait until they were officers in the Church to become fishers of men. They became disciples and therefore became fishers of men.

Now I want to take you through several Scriptures to prove the point and to show you this point illustrated in a number of ways.

Turn with me, first, to Jeremiah 31. All right, now this flock, I am sure, knows much of Jeremiah 31 by heart, because this is the place where God prophesies through Jeremiah

⁶ 2 Timothy 4:5.

⁷ Ibid.

that there is coming a great day in which God will make a new covenant with his people. And I want to focus your attention on the third blessing. There is four effectual blessings in the new covenant. I want to focus your attention the third blessing of it which is found in verse 34.

“No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD.”⁸

Under the old covenant, you could be one of the children of Israel and it may be that you had a saving knowledge of Jehovah or it may be that you didn't. As a matter of fact, the majority of those who were part of the old covenant did not know the Lord. But what God says is the new covenant is going to be far greater than the old covenant. For every single last person who is an heir of the new covenant is going to know the Lord. You are not an heir of the covenant if you don't know the Lord. This is where we depart with our dearly beloved paedobaptist friends who say to us that our children by virtue of their natural birth to us are heirs of the new covenant who say, “No, you don't become an heir of the new covenant by natural birth. You become an heir of the new covenant by spiritual birth, by being born again by God's Holy Spirit.”

And that is when we become heirs of the new covenant.

But I want you to notice something. Jeremiah is anticipating a glorious day in the future that that not yet arrived, because if you look at what he is saying he is describing the labor of evangelism.

“No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me.”⁹

What is evangelism but counseling others to know the Lord?

Repent of your sins and believe in the gospel that you may come to have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ because Christianity is a living, breathing relationship with a reconciled God who has been reconciled to us through the blood and righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ.

We are teaching people to know the Lord. But Jeremiah says a day is coming when we will no longer teach our neighbor and our brother to know the Lord because they will all know me.

And it is obvious, is it not, that what Jeremiah is speaking of is the age that is to come. That is, in this present age there is evangelism and there is world missions, but there will no longer be evangelism or world missions in the age to come because there will be no need for it, because in the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness dwells,

⁸ Jeremiah 31:34.

⁹ Ibid.

there will be no lost people there. And o there is no reason to go and counsel. All the true heirs of the new covenant will be in that place and there will be no need to counsel them.

But is there a need to counsel the people to know the Lord now? Indeed, there is. But please notice who Jeremiah anticipates will be telling others to know the Lord. Notice it again.

“No more shall [what is the word?] every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’”¹⁰

But until Jesus comes again, every man is to be teaching his neighbor and every man is to be teaching his brother to know the Lord.

We have come to know Christ. It is our obligation to make him known to others.

Second Scripture, turn to Mark five. In this chapter we read of the Gadarene demoniac. Do you remember him? He was the man so wild that nobody could chain him. Nobody could restrain him. He was full of a legion of demons and he came running, screaming, bleeding at Jesus. And Jesus had just stepped off the shore with his apostles and I have told you before if I was one of the apostles I would have jumped back in the boat and paddled like there was no manana. But Jesus confronts him and he rebukes him and you know what happens. He rebukes the demons. He casts them into the swine. The swine go rushing headlong down the slope. They run into the Sea of Galilee and they down. And the people come and they see the man who formerly had been demon possessed sitting, clothed and in his right mind. And they are full of fear, because they had tried to bind him with chains. They had tried to restrain this man. They had heard his cries in the middle of the night. You know, imagine putting your kids to bed and then hear this man howling like a mad man off in the hills and they are saying, “Mom, dad, what is that?”

You have to tell them about this evil, wicked, demon possessed man and lock your doors hoping that he will not come near your house. He meets Jesus one time. And he meets him that one time and the man is in his right mind. He is clothed and the people are astonished because they are astonished at the authority of the one who has authority even to command the demons.

And so they ask in their fear. They ask Jesus, “Please depart from our country,” because they were so scared.

Notice in verse 15.

Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to

¹⁰ Ibid.

plead with Him to depart from their region. And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.¹¹

So here were the people, the multitude saying, “Please leave us.”

And Jesus honored their request.

But the one who had been delivered from the demons he is pleading, “Please let me go with you.”

And look at verse 19.

However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.¹²

Now I love what William Hendrickson says about this text. He says, “Jesus honored the request of the people to leave, but not before he left them a missionary.”

Here was a man who was no officer in God’s church. Here was a man who was a babe in Christ by a few minutes. Literally the spiritual umbilical cord had just been cut. And yet what does Jesus tell him to do? He doesn’t say, “Become a great theologian or a great scholar,” as wonderful as that is. This man wasn’t a great theologian or a great scholar as far as we know. He had just been demon possessed a few minutes before. And now he is a new babe in Christ, but what does Jesus tell him to do?

“Tell the surrounding multitudes what great things the Lord has done for you.”

And Bible says he didn’t just go to the people right there. He went through all the 10 cities telling everyone everywhere what great things Jesus had done for him.

I want to suggest to you that the Gadarene demonian may be a model for you. Maybe you think I am not articulate. Maybe I am not very gifted. Maybe I am not eloquent of speech. I am not a great theologian. I am not... And all these things. I am not articulate. And I just feel very inadequate.

Well, to be honest with you, I am something of a theologian. I have some gifts of teaching and I feel very inadequate, too. But I suggest to you, you may not be a great articulate theologian, but you can do this much. You can tell others what great things Jesus has done for you. You can tell them I have a great Savior. I am one beggar telling another beggar where I found bread. And I found a Savior because I am a great sinner, but I have a great Savior and I would love for you to find that great Savior, too.

¹¹ Mark 5:5-18.

¹² Mark 5:15-16.

Let's turn to another Scripture and before we part from here we are going to be turning to John four, but it is interesting. I don't know that there is a greater evangelist in all the gospels outside of Christ himself than this man who was the Gadarene demoniac.

Turn to John four. I am sure you know what John four is all about. This is the woman at the well, the Samaritan woman. She came and had some water. She was coming to draw water and Jesus said, "If you knew who you were talking to you would ask for that living water."

She didn't understand. She said, "Well, give me that living water so I don't have to come back anymore."

She didn't get what he was saying. He was speaking of spiritual water, not physical water. And look in verse...

And it is interesting. He asked her the question

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."¹³

How did she get the clue? And she immediately proceeds to change the subject. Let's talk about worship. Let's talk about religion. Let's talk about something else. This is getting a little too uncomfortable.

Jesus allows her to, but then he reveals that he is the Messiah.

"I who speak to you am He."¹⁴

Look at verses 28 to 30.

"The woman then left her waterpot..."¹⁵

Interesting. She forgot the entire reason she had come.

¹³ John 4:15-19.

¹⁴ John 4:26.

¹⁵ John 4:28.

...went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him.¹⁶

Now skip down to verse 39.

“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’”¹⁷

They came to Christ though the testimony of a woman who had been divorced five times and was living in a sinful, immoral relationship with a man, the sixth man. And yet she found Christ and immediately she went and she told others about the Messiah she had found.

Well, again, whose responsibility is it?

Another Scripture. Turn to Acts chapter eight. Acts chapter eight is just after Stephen has been martyred and Stephen was in... and when Paul saw the joy that came to people over Stephen being put to death, it emboldened him to persecute the Church all the more.

So in verse one of chapter eight it says:

Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.

Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.¹⁸

Now here is what I want you to get. Essentially what Paul was saying is, “I am going to huff and puff and blow your church down. I am going to extinguish their life of this cultic sect called Christianity. I am going to blow and extinguish their light.”

But what he did not realize was he wasn't blowing out a candle out. He was blowing on a dandelion, because as the persecution came, the Church responded as Jesus had commanded them to. What did Jesus say in Matthew 10?

“When they persecute you in this city, flee to another.”¹⁹

¹⁶ John 4:28-30.

¹⁷ John 4:39.

¹⁸ Acts 8:1-4.

¹⁹ Mathew 10-23.

But I want you to notice something. Their officers were stuck back in Jerusalem. Everyone was scattered except the apostles. Their pastors were still in Jerusalem. It as the common man in the pulpit, as it were. They didn't have pulpits in those days, but whatever they had, wherever they sat. Those were the people who were scattered and they went everywhere, the Bible says, preaching the Word.

The word "preached" here means they announced the good news. Everywhere they went.

Now there is a 19th century pastor by the name of James Alexander. He is the son of Archibald Alexander. He comments on this text this way.

Quote, "As he said that all except the 12 were scattered, he now says that all who were thus scattered preached the Word. Some would infer from this that none but the preachers were expelled. But it is far more natural to understand the verse as referring not to preaching in the technical or formal sense, but to that joyful and spontaneous diffusion of the truth which is permitted and required of all believers, whether lay or clerical, ordained or unordained."

In other words, it was the people of God themselves, the common man, the common woman in the pulpit who as they were scattered took the gospel with them and the gospel began to spread because the people of God were spreading.

We can multiply such examples, couldn't we? But I hope it is obvious that to be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to have Christ teach you to be a fisher of men. And you do not have to be an ordained elder or deacon in the Church in order to share the gospel. It is the labor of all of us.

Now there is a qualifying, an important qualifier here. We do have to look at our unique circumstances and the unique ways in which God has gifted us. And that is going to affect the frequency of our evangelism and it is going to affect the manner in which we evangelize. In other words, a woman who has a number of children who are small and in her home and is a homemaker, is not going to have all the opportunities that some others may have to share the gospel. She has the opportunity share the gospel with her own children. But does she have all the opportunities to run off to the jail and go to these different places. Not necessarily. Her circumstances are going to keep that from happening.

And, furthermore, we need to assess our own giftedness. You know, I have been in churches and I am sure you have, too, where there is a lot of pressure put on us where it says, "Come to the visitation army on Tuesday night and we are going to go cold turkey to people's house we don't even know, knock on the door and share the gospel with them."

Well, that is not an illegitimate method of evangelism. But how many of you feel really uncomfortable in that kind of situation? I do. Now I could get up in open air and preach and I am ok with that. But knocking on somebody's door cold turkey that is hard.

You see, we have to assess our own giftedness. There are people who may feel very uncomfortable going into a prison context to share the gospel. I could live there. I am always thankful they let me out at the end instead of giving me an extended invitation to stay. But I feel comfortable there. You may not. That is ok.

The question is: Where has God gifted you? None of us can do everything. But all of us must do something and so you have got to look at your unique circumstances and your gifts, assess them and say, “Lord, how can I use the gifts you have given me, the personality you have given me to share the gospel with the lost.

So having answered the question—and I hope the answer is clear—who should preach the gospel, who should share the gospel? Who should cast the net of the gospel? All of us.

Where must you cast the net of the gospel?

There are two seas in Israel. There was the sea of Galilee and there was the Dead Sea and I promise you the apostles never wasted their time casting a net into the Dead Sea.

Do you know why? The Dead Sea is dead. There is nothing to catch there. And even as they learned to fish in the Sea of Galilee, many times they would say, “We have toiled all night and we have caught nothing.”

And evangelism can be just like that, can't it. It gets frustrating. We have toiled all night and we have caught nothing. We have nothing to show.

Jesus would say, “Well, cast your net over here.”

And he would direct them providentially to catch something and suddenly there would be this great harvest of fish.

I sometimes think it is a good thing the apostles became apostles because they didn't seem to make much money being fishermen. Every time you read about their fishing they never catch anything unless Christ came around.

But there is a similar reality for us. But the question is: Where do we cast the net in order to catch the souls of men?

And I will submit to you that there are three spheres in which we cast the net of the gospel. They are, first of all, the home; secondly, in the church; and third, in all the world.

So let's go through each of those spheres and talk about and I hope to be very, very practical here about how we are to share the gospel.

So, first of all, in the home. You must cast the gospel net in your own home by which I mean you must evangelize your own children.

Brethren, I hope you count it a blessing that your children can be under the sound of the preaching of the gospel, but there is a sense in which your children should hear the gospel more from you than they do from me. And I mean that because I don't live with your children. You do. And they should hear the gospel from your lips and hear the Word of God proclaimed for your lips. They should be instructed in the ways of righteousness from your lips and from your example because you are the one they are with. God has given you a unique window into your children's soul that he has given no one else. And you must avail yourself of that.

As a matter of fact, there is a man named John Peyton. He was a Scottish missionary to the New Hebrides which are islands that are full of cannibals. They eat people. The first missionaries that ever landed there that they literally ate them. And John Peyton went to that place, but while he was still in Scotland, before he was sent out, he spoke of a young man, an eight year old child by the name of John Sim who died as an eight year old of consumption.

And he tells this story in his autobiography and says this.

Quote, "Shortly before his decease he, that is John Sim, said to his parents, 'I am going soon to be with Jesus, but I sometimes fear that I may not see you there.'"

Imagine your eight year old telling you that.

"Why so, my child," said his weeping mother?

"Because," he answered, "if you were set upon going to heaven and seeing Jesus there, you would pray about it and sing about it. You would talk about Jesus to others and tell them of the happy meeting with him in glory. All this my dear sabbath school teacher taught me and she will meet me there. Now did not you, my father and mother, tell me all these things about Jesus if you are going to meet him, too?"

Their tears fell fast over their dying child and he little knew in his unthinking eighth year what a message from God had pierced their souls through his innocent words.

What a travesty for our children to look at us and say, "You never taught me the gospel. What an awful, heart breaking thing.

So how do you do it? How do you evangelize your children?

First of all, by conversing with your children about the things of the Lord all throughout the day. Jesus is not just a part of our life. He is not an appendage added to our life, he is life itself.

“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory,”²⁰ says Paul to the Colossians.

Christ is our life. And I wonder do our children get that. Do they see that about our lives? You know the Scriptures in Deuteronomy six and verses six and seven says, “

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.²¹

That is, all throughout the day, as much as you have contact with your children, taking those opportunities and those little windows that God suddenly in his providence opens up to pour the truth of the gospel in to your children.

Brethren, love home schooling. That is great. But make sure your home schooling is gospel saturated. It is full of Christ and him crucified.

Do you teach your children that the narrow gate is not less narrow for them because they are homeschooled or because they have been raised in a Christian home? But they must find that narrow gate and by God’s grace they must enter that narrow gate if they would enter into life.

Secondly, by leading your family in family worship as often as you can.

I don’t know how many of you have a regular habit established of leading in family worship, but what a joy it is. And you are depriving yourself of a great blessing if you don’t do it. To have children hearing their Father read the Scriptures to them. What a blessed thing that is and to explain the Scriptures, to teach them the catechism so they can understand solid doctrine, to sing praises. You don’t have to wait to the Lord’s Day to sing God’s praise. You can have your children join you in singing God’s praise to kneel together.

One of the sweetest things for you to hear is to my children praying for our missionaries. And so often they are praying a very simple, but what, how sweet they are. To take my... sometimes I take the globe down and I will say, “Here we are in Georgia.” And I will point to Georgia. And I will say, “When you cross this little pond called the Atlantic Ocean, here is Scotland or here is Ireland and here in Ireland is Matthew Brennan and the [?] Baptist Church. And this is his picture. This is what he looks like. These are his two sons, Simon and Timothy. We want to pray for the work in that place. It is full of Roman Catholicism, children. Those people believe you have to be saved by your works. But Matthew Brennan is there to tell people you are not saved by your works. You are

²⁰ Colossians 3:4.

²¹ Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

saved by the works of another. You are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ alone. Let's pray for [?] Baptist Church."

And singing those praises together.

What did Paul say to Timothy? He said, "From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures."²²

Where did he learn the Scriptures?

Well, 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul commends Timothy and says, "I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."²³

It is a sweet thing to think about, to think about whatever the ancient equivalent of a rocking chair was and to see grandmother Lois and mother Eunice holding little Timothy in their arms and singing the songs to him, reading to him the Scriptures so that from his earliest of days he was hearing the Scriptures, being immersed in the gospel which ultimately bore fruit making him wise unto salvation.

You say, "How soon should you start?"

As soon as possible. It is not possible to start too early. It is always possible to start too late. Start as soon as you can, when they are little bitty babies even begin telling them, hearing the words of Scripture, immersing them in the Word of God.

Third, the third way we minister to our own children and teach them the gospel, this may surprise you. By the loving and consistent use of the rod of correction.

Have you ever thought of the rod of correction as a means of grace? Proverbs 23 verse 13 and 14 says this.

Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell.²⁴

Now why is that? Because when we correctly and lovingly administer the rod of correction consistently with our children, we are teaching them law and gospel, aren't we? We are teaching them there is right and wrong. We are teaching them there is sin that must be punished.

I had the sad labor one time of trying to share the gospel with an 18 year old boy whose father had always bailed him out of every problem. His sin got him in all kinds trouble

²² 2 Timothy 3:15.

²³ 2 Timothy 1:5.

²⁴ Proverbs 23:13-14.

and daddy was always there with his billfold and his checkbook to bail him out and to just kind of slap his hand, but not truly consistently apply the rod of correction to him.

And as I told that young man, tried to tell him, "You are going to give account for your sin. There is a day of judgment coming," I could tell it wasn't registering. Because all of his life somebody had always bailed him out. And the idea that he was responsible for his actions and his sin was foreign to him, because his Father had indulged him and spoiled him all of his life.

Brethren, we need to faithfully administer the rod. When I give my children discipline I always quote the Scriptures to them. I say:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.²⁵

My children can quote that by memory. They didn't learn it in family worship. They learned it under the discipline.

Sometimes your children will say... you ask them, "Why did you do what you did?"

And they will say, "Because I am bad."

And that is important. They are learning their heart is depraved. Brethren, we need to faithfully administer the rod. In love, yes, but we need to administer it nonetheless.

Fourth and finally, fathers, teach your children by your Word and example to call the sabbath a delight.

Listen to what J C Ryle says [?] parents back there you can get a copy. I need to order a few more copies, but this is what he says in duties of parents.

Quote, "Train them to have as a diligence and regularity about the public means of grace. Tell them of the duty and privilege of going to the house of God and joining in the prayers of the congregation. Tell them that wherever the Lord's people are gathered together, there the Lord Jesus is present in a special manner and that those who ask of themselves must expect, like the apostle Thomas, to miss a blessing. Tell them of the importance of hearing the Word preached, that it is God's ordinance of converting, sanctifying and building up the souls of men. Tell them to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but to exhort one another to stir one another up to it and so much the more as we see the day approaching, Hebrews 10:25. Do not allow them to grow up with a habit of making vain excuses for not coming. Give them plainly to understand that so long as they are under your roof, it is the rule of your house for everyone in health to honor the Lord's house upon the Lord's Day and that you reckon the sabbath breaker to be a murderer of his own soul," end of quote.

²⁵ Ephesians 6:1-3.

I had to say to men before, “Brother, you are teaching your family by your Word and by your example. The forsaking the assembling of ourselves together is the normal Christian life and when your children grow up they will imitate your pattern and I suspect your grandchildren will never even darken the door of a local church.”

Does that trouble you? It should. Brethren, it is not enough simply to have family worship. It is not enough to have private worship as important as those are. God himself commands us to not exclude ourselves from the public gathering of his people because there is a special manner in which God meets with us on the Lord’s Day in which he does not meet with anywhere else.

He does meet with in other places, certainly. We don’t believe in the exclusivity of the Lord’s Day, but we believe in its inclusiveness and its centrality. And, brethren, you must be faithful with your children in this regard.

The second thing, we must cast the gospel net in our own families, yes. But we must also cast the gospel net inside the local church. I will be highly culpable as a pastor if I assume that everyone before me is truly a born again believer in Christ. I must warn you, from time to time, against the dangers of false conversion and certainly must constantly call men to faith in Christ. And if I can use a good old fashioned bit of advice, do you want a legitimate method of evangelism is to invite people to come to church with you. What a better... can you think of a better place for a lost person to come than in the midst of the assembling of the saints full of God’s Holy Spirit in the midst of God’s praise hearing God’s people testify and our men give exhortations and the preaching of the Word.

What a very important thing. It is legitimate to say, “Hey, brother, hey, man, why don’t you come and come to our church and you can come to our house afterwards and we will have some lunch together.”

It is a legitimate way.

What did Paul say in 1 Corinthians 14? He spoke of the man who his an unbeliever or uninformed. He comes in the midst of your assembly. He falls upon his knees and he worships God and declares, “Truly God is among you.”

Even the lost discern the manifest presence of God in the midst of his people and it is used of God to bring him to salvation, to conversion.

But I am not going to dwell too long upon casting the net inside the Church because, admittedly it is a little bit like shooting fish in a barrel.

I want to move to the third and the final sphere which is we must take the gospel to the world. We must never be sitting around waiting for the lost to come find us. We can

barely get believers to come to a Reformed Baptist Church can you? We have got to take the gospel out to them.

What did Jesus say in Luke 14? In that place he said to his apostles, verses 21 to 23. He said:

So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.'

"And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.'²⁶

Look at verse 23.

"Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'"²⁷

Don't wait for them to come to you. Go out to them. Take the invitation to enter the kingdom out into the world.

J C Ryle calls this the aggressive system of evangelism, not the passive system. We are not going to be just a come and see church. We want to be a go and tell church as well.

But how do we do that? Well, five suggestions.

Number one, by actively participating in the evangelistic ministries of the local church. Find something you can do. Pray that God will open up again the Friday night opportunity to go to the Roslyn Detention Center. You know some of you can't come because of time and schedule and distance. I know that. If you can't come to that, come to the assisted living home. If you are scared of going into a prison because you are afraid of people beating you up, go to the elderly assisted living home. I am pretty sure they won't beat you up.

You can probably outrun them, right? But you can take the gospel to them and we don't just go in and you don't just go in sit unto a sermon. We always have a sermon. We begin with some singing and some sermons and some praying. But then we sit down with these inmates. We sit down with these elderly ones and we get to share the gospel with them one on one. That is open to any of you. The assisted, Roslyn, when we get to go to Roslyn, it is limited to those that are ages 18 and up, but you are welcome to come, men or women because there is a women's service and there is a men's service. And some of

²⁶ Luke 14:21-22.

²⁷ Luke 14:23.

our ladies have had an opportunity to witness to some of our guards and share the gospel with them.

Well, why don't you avail yourself of the obvious.

The second thing, God is giving some of you men gifts to preach. Throw out something radical. Have you ever considered open air preaching? It was a legitimate method. Jesus used it. Paul used it. Peter used it. George Whitefield used it. John Wesley used it. Many men in history have used it.

Well, if you are going to do it, you need to be wise and discerning about it. Never go by yourself. It is a very foolish thing to go in a public square by yourself and start preaching the gospel.

You need to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. You make sure you check before you go with the appropriate authorities to make sure that what you are doing is legal and right. Don't go there being... assuming you are going to be a martyr for the First Amendment. You be faithful to submit to Caesar. And render to Caesar the things that are Caesars. Take with you witnesses so if there is ever an accusation made against you, there will be other witnesses.

This became a very important issue for us a few years ago when a woman. I was preaching in the open air and a woman called the police on us. And thankfully Dan [?] was there with me and he was able to testify what I was really saying versus what this woman said I was saying. And I am not saying I was perfectly right or discerning in everything that I said, but what I am saying is there were witnesses there and, of course, there was no trouble and finally I just looked at the officer and said, "So what law have I broken?"

And, of course, what he found was I had broken no law. I had simply exercised my First Amendment right. And I had checked before I had gone to make sure the things were above the board.

But some of you may have that giftedness. But maybe you don't. And I am not saying that you have the gift of preaching that necessarily you need to do open air preaching. But what about starting a Bible study in your own home? You could have it as frequently as you desire to. You could invite friends and neighbors and around go around and pass out flyers and say, "Hey, we are going to start having a Bible study on Friday night or Thursday night or whatever."

And sit down and open the Scriptures together and teach them evangelistically. You could take them through... if you want to take them to the gospel of John you could take J C Ryle's expository thoughts on the gospels. It is a very simple and devotional and read through some of that and help that be a way of discussing things.

So you have got gifts to teach, use them. Employ them in your neighborhood.

Fourth, what if God has not given you opportunity, gifts of teaching and preaching. Well, there is one of the most effective tools of evangelism out there is probably the grace of hospitality. To invite lost people into your home and to sit down and to share the gospel with them.

Our brother David Vaughan who is our missionary and to Noble, France, I heard him give a report last year during our general assembly about what the Lord is doing in France, which France is a very, very hard place. And he talked about, he showed slides of men who had been... who were now members of the church and he says, "See this man? He used to be an Atheist. Three years ago he was an Atheist and three years later I baptized him."

He said, "How did God reach these people? It wasn't that he started coming to our church and hearing the gospel from the pulpit, our people started showing love to them and opening their homes to them and inviting them in. And sometimes if they felt incompetent to really answer their questions, they would invite me to come and so I would come and I would sit and eat a meal with them and I would sit there and have dialogue and these people... and our flock's homes with these people who are sitting across the table sharing the gospel with them and showing them this practical sample of love."

Think about it. How many times did Jesus lead people to Christ over the dinner table? So many times. That dinner table became his pulpit from which he shared the gospel with others.

There is a fifth practical thing and this will be the one I end with. When you go out to eat, if you are able to go out to eat. I know sometimes financial constraints keep you from going out to eat, but if you do go out to eat leave a tract for your waiter.

As a matter of fact, I would encourage you. Get a hold of ultimate questions. The reason we have ultimate questions on the back table is so that you will take them and use them. As a matter of fact, there is a big stack of them out there today. Don't take them if you are just going to let them sit and catch dust. If you are going to give them out, you can take them and use them.

You will see here, this is how we like to leave a tip when we go out to a nice restaurant, my wife and I. We will leave ultimate questions. Inside of it we have an invitation to come to our church and you will see we have a tip in there.

You say, "That is kind of a hefty tip, isn't it?"

Well, perhaps. But you don't want them to throw it at you as you are leaving out the door. You might want to think about that.

And giving a little bit more of a generous tip, how much is their soul worth? And if a little bit more generosity causes them to think about it and take it seriously and read it, is it worth it?

Now, again, if you are financially strapped and can't do it, don't do it. I understand. But give them something tangible.

Now how many of you like Mexican food? Ok. Well, if you like Mexican food don't leave ultimate questions, leave [?] all right? Give them something in their own language, something they can understand. There are some of those on the back table, too. We will order more if we run out.

But you might ask yourself, "What if I get rotten service? What if the waiter is just a jerk and I don't even want to leave him a tip or maybe just leave him a penny so that they know that I didn't forget, I am just telling them how bad they were."

Well, congratulations. God has providentially given you the opportunity to return good for evil.

I heard a story. It stuck with me about something that happened in the early 1970s. There was a man who, I guess he went to a Huddle House or a Waffle House to eat breakfast. In those days you could eat an entire meal for a dollar fifty or something like that. His waitress was arguing with one of her other waitresses. She did not get to him for the longest time. Finally, after he was sitting there for a long time she gave him a menu. He ordered, made his order. She came in, spilled coffee all over him and didn't even notice, not scalding coffee. She went back and never did get and deliver his food until finally when she did it was completely cold. He ate it cold and when it came time for him to leave he paid his bill and he left a 20 dollar bill with his tip.

That was big money in those days. For you and I it is probably big money now, right, these days. But he walked out and the waitress saw what he had left. She grabbed the 20 dollar bill. She followed him outside the door and said, "Sir, you accidentally left this."

And he looked at her and she had ignored him the entire time. He looked at her and said, "No, that is your tip."

She said, "This is my tip? Sir, I spilled coffee all over you and pretended I didn't notice. I brought your food to you late and I brought it cold. I don't deserve this tip."

And he said, "You know, I know. But I could tell you are having a very bad day. And I wanted to be a blessing in it."

She began to weep and she said, "Last night my husband left me."

And he began to share the gospel with her and that young lady became our sister in Christ that day.

That has touched me because I think to myself, you never know. You never know the ways in which the Lord may use us to plant a seed in the hearts of people.

And so as we are going out we need to be conscious of what is around us.

Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few."²⁸

There is no shortage of lost people who need the gospel. There is no shortage of opportunity for you and I. the reality is, if we really want to be evangelistic we will be. We will find the ways to share the gospel with those around us. It is a matter of having willing hearts and it is a matter of having eyes to see the opportunities that are about us and saying, "God, help me to discern those opportunities and avail ourselves of them."

Is Berean Baptist Church going to be an evangelistic church?

We all need to grow in this, don't we? Are there any sins of omission greater than our prayerlessness and our failure to evangelize the lost?

Let's not... I told our assembly this last week. I said, "You know, sometimes we get accused of being the frozen chosen. I long for the day when I get accused of loving sinners too much, because that is what Jesus was accused of. He eats with tax gatherers and sinners."

I am not there yet, but I sure want to be. How about you?

Let's be faithful to broadcast the gospel where God has placed us.

Let's pray.

Lord, we so need your help. We could not ask for a better teacher than the Lord Jesus himself to teach us. But, Lord, we know that it is not just in the pathway of hearing or knowing our responsibilities. It is in the pathway of effectual doing that you meet us and teach us and, Lord, we have to learn from our mistakes. We have to learn from failures. We have to learn from awkwardness and we have to be stretched beyond our comfort zone. But, oh Lord, you are faithful to teach us in those ways. Help us to be faithful, Lord. Help us never to make the gospel less narrow than you have made it, but, Lord, through Legalism and pride help us not to make it any more narrow than you have made it either. Help us to be faithful and, Lord, we would pray that not only would we cast the net, Lord, we want to catch souls. We want to see conversions. We want to see fruit that remains for your glory and for your honor. We pray, oh Lord, that you will grant this in your grace and that we will see new believers added to our church even daily who are

²⁸ Mathew 9:37.

being baptized and being brought under the authority of the Church and taught to obey all things whatsoever you have commanded them. Help us, Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to invite you if you are...