

## Key Value # 1

# Evangelism

A) [The subject is called “evangelism”](#), derived from the Greek word *evangel* (good news or gospel, occurs 75 x in N.T.).

What do we mean by evangelism? *“The sharing of God’s good news to God’s creatures by God’s people, in God’s power, to God’s glory.”*

J I Packer says it is *“to present Jesus Christ to sinful men, in order that they may come to put their trust in God, through Him to receive Him as their Saviour & serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His church.”*

B) [The activity is called “evangelising”](#). This word occurs more than 50 x in the NT. Often it is translated in English Bibles as “preaching” but the context often contrasts sharply with what normally passes for preaching in a formal setting. E.g. Philip & the Ethiopian in the desert. **Act 8:35** *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.”* Literally *“Evangelised Jesus to him”*.

So it is not appealing for decisions in some superficial way.

Nor merely gaining positive responses to invitations to church.

Nor putting family life back together. Sometimes the Gospel causes divisions.

C) [Who is responsible for evangelism?](#)

Every Christian is expected to be a witness to the Lord in some way. This is abundantly clear from the New Testament<sup>1</sup>. The communication of the Gospel was not viewed as the exclusive activity of the full time specialist. It was simply “too good to leave to the professionals”<sup>2</sup>. This explains the rapid expansion of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church. The mission was accomplished to a large extent by ordinary “untrained” Christians.

*Illustration:* Leighton Ford was speaking at an open-air crusade in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Billy Graham was to speak the next night and had arrived a day early. He came incognito and sat on the grass at the rear of the crowd. Because he was wearing a hat and dark glasses, no one recognized him. Leighton Ford says,

“Directly in front of Billy sat an elderly gentleman who seemed to be listening intently to my presentation. When I invited people to come forward as an open sign of commitment, Billy decided to do a little personal evangelism. He tapped the man on the shoulder and asked, “Would you like to accept Christ? I’ll be glad to walk down with you if you want to.” The old man looked him up and down, thought it over for a moment, and then said, *“Naw, I think I’ll just wait till the big gun comes tomorrow night.”*

Billy and I have had several good chuckles over that incident. Unfortunately, it underlines how, in the minds of many people, evangelism is the task of the “Big Guns,” not the “little shots.”

### Questions for discussion

1. If every believer ought to be able to share the Gospel, & their testimony – how can the church help towards this? How can the church equip people to faithfully present Christ, or improve any evangelism already being done? Through workshops? Facing our fears? By identifying the main objections to the Gospel & clarifying the Gospel? What kind of preparation is envisaged in 1 Peter 3:15?
2. If the above is true, what role does the evangelist/ specialist have in today's churches? How are they to be supported? Eph 4:11 **"He gave... some evangelists"**
3. What can we do together in this area as a church that we cannot do apart from each other? List our current activities. How can we improve on what we are already doing?
4. Identify the biblical basis for evangelism. How extensive is it? Consider areas like:
  - The church's involvement in the local community/ schools etc.
  - Using networks other than geographical proximity to church.
  - Wider responsibilities for a city.
  - Stimulating evangelism in other churches.
  - Supporting world evangelism.

### D) What is our motive for evangelism?

Evangelism is the payment of a debt of love we owe, to God & man. If we love our neighbour then we will try to bring the gospel light to him in every possible way. Jesus is our great example here, as in all areas of life. John 4. Luke 7:34-39.

Ernest Reisinger writes:

*What is the right motive in God-centered evangelism? There are two proper motives: 1) Love to God and concern for His glory. 2) Love to man and concern for his good.... How do we glorify God?... by doing His will....and it is His will that we spread His name and His message of His salvation.... He has given us the work of taking His message to all the world, thus our first motive must be love to God and concern for His glory. This is expressed in obedience to His revealed will. Therefore, if we are obedient to spreading God's message, He will be glorified regardless of the results. The results are past our reach, past our ability, and thank God, past our responsibility.*

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 8:4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Acts.11:19-20 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 1:8 The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia - your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,

2 Peter 3:15-16 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

John 1:41-42 Andrew first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). (42) And he brought him to Jesus.

John 1:45-46 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (46) And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Jude 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear --hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Green "Evangelism Now & Then" p 15.