

5 Barriers That Keep Us From Evangelism

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[0:00] Does Jesus' death alone save us? Yes or no? Yes. Okay. You'll say no.

That's good. I have two of the older gentlemen disagreeing.! That means I'm probably in safe ground. Does Jesus' death alone save us? Yes and no?

If Jesus just died but stayed dead, would we be saved? No. We have a risen Savior, and it's His resurrection that brings us life.

And it's His death that washes away our sins. And so, salvation is this two-sided coin. Jesus' life and death, and then His resurrection.

And in the same way, we die, and we come to new life through Him. And that is what our memory verse talks about today, Romans 6.8, which begins, Now if we died with Christ.

[1:07] Will you say it with me? Romans 6.8, Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.

Jesus' life and His resurrection is our great hope that we have life to live in this world, a new life, a new birth, where we can be free from sin.

And that's the context of this verse, that we are no longer dead to sin because we have been united with Christ, and because He has been raised, we are raised to new life.

Today we are going to talk about evangelism again and barriers that keep us from evangelism. Next week will be the last week on that topic, and Pastor Aaron will be coming in after that and taking this class.

Before we begin, we want to pray and ask God's blessing on our time. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, Father, it's good to be with you. It's good to meet with your people, to learn from your Word, to sit at Jesus' feet.

[2:20] And that is where we want to put ourselves, at Jesus' feet, to not elevate our own thoughts and our own understanding above what He tells us in His Word.

Will you give us humble spirits, obedient hearts that are willing to receive instruction and correction, rebuke, and to be trained in righteousness.

Holy Spirit, will you come and attend your Word? Give us clarity of thought. Give me clarity of thought and expression that your Word would go forth and transform your people.

Thank you that you do not leave us where we are. But you are the God that changes us while you never change. And we pray that you would bring us more into the likeness of Jesus Christ this morning.

And it's in His name I pray. Amen. So where have we been? Where have we been? We saw in the first week that evangelism begins where?

[3:30] With God. With the Trinity. Each person of the Trinity is so madly in love with the other person that they have to share their glory. And so the creation of this world, the death of Jesus Christ, everything that God does is for this purpose that His glory would be spread.

And evangelism then is our joining with God in the work that He is doing. I was struck this week in 1 Thessalonians as I was reading in my devotions.

Paul refers to Timothy in 1 Thessalonians and he calls Timothy God's co-worker. God's co-worker. Can you imagine that?

You're at work and someone comes up to you and says, who are you working with there? You say, me? Me? I'm working with God. That should thrill your heart that you get to work with God.

You are God's co-worker in evangelism. So evangelism is essentially spreading God's glory. It's setting up a telescope so that sinners who are in love with idols can see God's glory and give up their idols and have their hearts captured by the majesty of God.

[4:56] That was the first week. The second week, we talked about evangelism begins for us in prayer. We have to do things that we cannot do.

We have to see people saved and we can't do that. God alone saves. We need the Holy Spirit to go into a person's heart and take them from total depravity to repentant joy.

And we don't have that power but the Holy Spirit does so we pray. Next, we said evangelism is living visibly before others.

Jesus has called us to be a salt, to be salt and light in this world and that means we have to be in contact with unbelievers. We have to shine as stars in a crooked and depraved generation.

We can't hide behind the clouds. We can't put our light under a bushel. So to do that we said we must befriend sinners and love them so that our light and our salt will have the effect that God wants for it to have.

[6:08] And I was so encouraged last week with David Vaughn's report of the Gange family. Do you remember them?

They have been instrumental there in Grenoble for bringing several families through their home into the church and God has used them to save those families.

So the Gangeers invited these unbelievers into their homes and they showered them with love and hospitality and that led to a Bible study and remember David said I would shoot them up and I can't believe that they would come back the next week but what was happening?

Well the Gange family would call them on the phone and show them their love and their affection and talk to them and ask them how they're doing and pour out their love for them and they would come back.

And week after week and year after year God has been blessing the Gange family in that way. And that is what we all need to be. That is what I need to be.

[7:17] Where I am a light and my household is a light for unbelievers and so that in us and through us they can come to the people of Christ they can hear the gospel they can be saved.

So this week we want to turn our attention to the barriers that keep us from living as salt and light. Barriers that keep us from speaking the gospel to unbelievers.

As I look at my life as I look at our church sort of in general and Reformed Baptists and Christians in general there's a variety of issues that keep us from evangelizing.

And these aren't particular to us these aren't our special problem but we're not immune to them.

None of us are. And so this is the week where we have to look into the scriptures and look into our own hearts and look in the mirror and say we need to change.

We have spots here and they need to be washed out. So five barriers then to evangelism. The first is lack of confidence.

[8:40] lack of confidence. You're at work and there's this guy that you've wanted to speak the gospel to that you've wanted to talk to and it's lunchtime and you're sitting there at your table and he comes down and sits by you and you start to say to yourself okay this is what I've been waiting for this is my opportunity here's my chance I've wanted to talk to this person let's do this.

and then you say to yourself next okay what should I say what should I say I'm not sure how can I turn this conversation to the gospel this isn't going to start out a gospel conversation so somehow I have to get it in there I don't know how to do that and what about if he doesn't if he says I don't believe in Christianity and I don't believe in God and in the Bible what do I say then I don't know I don't know about that and we start to get anxious and we start to realize I don't know what I'm supposed to say I don't know what I'm doing here and I'm going to say something and it's going to embarrass me and it's not going to work out so I need to think about this some more I'll do this next time I need to think about what I can say has that ever happened to you?

you kind of go through that process start to go but then all these issues start coming out it's a lack of confidence that we have in our own abilities to say the right thing it's a lack of confidence in knowing if we can answer the challenges and so we don't evangelize well how do we overcome that barrier? how do we overcome that barrier? I think the first thing that we need to say to ourselves before we say anything else is there is no temptation that has seized you except what is common to man it's not unusual for me to be anxious about evangelism to be unsure about what to say we aren't the first to struggle with lack of confidence Paul himself struggled in that way from time to time there were times when he didn't know what to say he didn't know the right way to say it but that did not keep him from evangelizing what did he do?

Colossians 4 shows us what he did he writes this and pray for us too that God may open a door for our message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ for which I am in chains and this is the part that we want to notice pray that I may proclaim it clearly as I should he says pray that I may proclaim it clearly as I should because there are times when we struggle to make the gospel clear to someone there's challenges and we don't know exactly what to say and the way to clarity Paul tells us is through prayer that is where we find the words that we need to say so Paul struggled he knew his weakness he knew his fears and his anxiety and so what did he do he wrapped them all up and he gave them to Jesus and that's what we need to do he didn't overcome his anxiety his lack of confidence by humming to himself

[12:14] I'm good enough I'm smart enough and people like me he didn't take it that way he said oh lord I don't know what to say in this circumstance I don't know what to say to this person will you help me Paul's weakness and his lack of confidence in his own abilities didn't mean that he pulled himself up by the bootstraps it meant that he went to the lord in prayer he learned to trust and rest in Jesus power and remember Jesus said go and make disciples and I'm with you to the very end of the age basically wherever we go and no matter what circumstance Jesus is going with us and Jesus I don't know if we think about him this way but Jesus was the smartest man to ever walk the face of this earth do you believe that he was the best preacher that ever walked the face of this earth he was the most cunning debater that ever walked the face of this earth a

Pharisee never stumped Jesus a teacher of the law never tricked Jesus no one ever out thought Jesus now we might be stumped that's true that's going to happen to us but we have to remember we're going with Jesus and so what do we do when we come up to a point where we don't know what to say we have a resource in him that gives us the ability to go forward so we pray we pray so that's the first barrier a lack of confidence and it's overcome by prayer the second barrier to evangelism is over commitment over commitment perhaps you hear these lessons on evangelism say to yourself you know what I am so busy I don't know if I have time to be doing this I don't know if I have time to be letting people into my home and getting to know them I don't know if I have time to let more people into my life and spending the time and emotional energy to pursue them with the gospel I'm teaching on Wednesday night I have the children's sports that we have to go to and I'm already involved in a discipleship ministry with a young lady at the church I'm working a lot I don't have time to become friends with the unbelieving family down the street and let me say at the very beginning I totally and fully appreciate how busy most of you are conscientious Christians are always the busiest Christians they're the ones that see a problem and they put themselves out for it they hear an opportunity and they go for it and they spend themselves on it and that's how many of you are that's how many of you are and praise the Lord that's his work in you but if we're too busy to evangelize there's something wrong if we're too busy to evangelize then we are too busy so let me ask you what are some of the ways that we can make sure that we don't over commit to so many other things so!

the evangelism gets put on the back burner or another way to ask the question what are some of the ways that we can use our time evangelistically that's for discussion very good so that's sort of we start with Lou's comment if this is important to us then we're going to make opportunities it's going to find its way to the top of the priority list and Dale reminds us here you know what it's not like this is something that we have to do that is all by itself we can include it in a lot of other activities Roger I think did you have so is there any good excuse for being over committed is that is that a valid barrier really no so what do we need to do with our schedules if we say hey I'm too busy what do we need to do with our schedules cut something out I think we have to look at it and say [16:55] I have to obey God before I do anything else and so the things that I maybe like to do if I don't have time to have people in my home if I feel so rushed that I don't have time to talk to unbelievers then something needs to go and we need to look at our lives look at our schedules and make sure evangelism has the priority that it deserves this is the thing that God is doing in this world is this the thing that I'm doing in my life we have to give it the priority we deserve or it deserves excuse me is there any other comments anything else yes very good that's why I said at the beginning conscientious Christians are always the busiest because we don't we have this inclination if I can help I'm going to God's done that in our hearts but we have to realize that we're finite we have only so much time only so much energy Roger right when we say over committed most of the time it's not like I'm going to schedule on

Tuesday night from six to seven to evangelize it's it's in the way of my life and I have you know people come into my life like people came into Jesus life and if we are so committed on getting our schedule done and our schedule is so full there's no time for some flexibility where we can stop and actually talk to people then we're too busy and that you know there's no rules for that that just is wisdom that we need from God and so that brings us back to Jesus and we need wisdom for that we need to be like him but we also need to be busy and doing things let's move on that's the second barrier is over commitment the third barrier and these kind of get increasingly more difficult they our shoes get tighter and tighter the third barrier is intimidation I don't want anyone to raise their hands but were any of you afraid when something in you was fearful when Barack Obama became president and the Democrats swept into office and now they have a majority Lou I didn't want anyone to raise their hand you know now they have a majority and it seems like a liberal very secular government is in place when that happened gun sales you guys probably have heard this they went through the roof why people were afraid they were afraid that that was the doom of freedom the destruction of capitalism you know conservatism is done and many Christians saw that as a permanent change towards the worst may be might not be no one here knows the past like it or not is giving way to the future and there's a cultural war going on in our country and it seems apparent to me who's on the winning side and who's on the losing side we're living in an increasingly pagan country and the result is that many Christians react with fear and intimidation we're afraid for ourselves we're afraid for our children we think of our grandchildren and we're afraid for them we're afraid of what this world is going to do to us and what it's going to do to the things that we cherish and love we're afraid and so we shut down we keep quiet we get in our bunker the world cows us into and instead of going on the offensive we back down instead of talking more we talk less and out of fear of man we hold our tongue let me ask you is that a proper response for the Christian community for our church to take what do you guys think Roger right yes this is the opportunity to show extraordinary faith in God whereas before it shined we shined less brightly now it's the time to shine more brightly fear is not the proper response for a Christian turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 12 Luke chapter 12 and this is a very familiar passage and we just want to read about eight verses here and see what Jesus says about the fear of man and evangelism the fear of culture and evangelism Luke chapter 12 and we'll begin at verse 4 I tell you my friends do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more but I will show you whom you should fear fear him who after the killing of the body has power to throw you into hell yes I tell you fear him are not five sparrows sold for two pennies yet not one of them is forgotten by God indeed the very hairs of your head are all numbered don't be afraid you are worth more than many sparrows [22:41] I tell you whoever acknowledges me before men the son of man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God but he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God and everyone who speaks a word against the son of man will be forgiven but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven when you are brought before synagogues rulers and authorities do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say are we to be afraid of men no are we to be afraid of the people in power no are we to be afraid of our culture no five sparrows are sold for two pennies and not one of them are forgotten not one of them is forgotten and we are much more important to God much more precious to God than those God will certainly care for us are we to

God yes this whole passage is this tension between the fear of God being truly holding him in reverence and also realizing that he loves us very much and both of them come together and tell us don't be afraid of men they don't have you don't have anything to worry about from them so the way around this barrier of intimidation if you find this creeping up in your heart is to meditate on the truths of this passage God loves us and he cares for us remember perfect love drives out fear love and fear cannot be in the same heart and so we cannot be so overflowing with the love of God that we can be afraid of men Christ love compels us into this world we love Christ and we know that Christ loves us and so that moves us despite all the threats and enemies that we face and so we focus our attention not on men not on this culture and not on the things that they're doing but we focus on

God we say what can God do to me what has God said about me how does God feel and think what has promised! intimidation so that's the third barrier intimidation the fourth between that we

can put up between ourselves and evangelizing the lost is condemnation condemnation and let me describe what I mean by condemnation and then let me ask you how can we keep that or how does that keep us from evangelizing so condemnation is the attitude of strong disapproval towards sinners where we judge them as guilty and worthy of punishment we see their sins and something within us wells up with hatred and with disgust and from that point on we view them as vile and worthy of death we judge them try them and sentence them and then kill them in our own minds that's what I mean by condemnation so you're watching the evening news and the first story that comes up is the coverage of a gay parade and you watch as these men go walking by across your TV screens what is your reaction are you sickened by it probably should be does something start boiling up within you these people are ruining our country these people are so disgusting and I hate them why do I have to live in these times where these people get to do what they want to do I wish I never had to see them again I wish they would just get out of my life that I never had to think of them they're gross they're perverts I wish they'd just disappear perhaps that's our first take on it let me ask you did Jesus stop there did he stop with disgust no Jesus wept over Jerusalem was he disgusted no John 3:17 says that

Jesus didn't come in the world to judge it but to save it there will be a time for judgment there will be a time when sins are paid for there will be a time when we will judge the angels themselves but now is not the time today that's not today today is the day of salvation today is when Jesus is withholding judgment and he's offering salvation to sinners!

[28:05] He's offering salvation to men who are steeped in a gay lifestyle today he's offering hope to pornographers and to drunks and to men who beat women he's offering them salvation if they repent he will save them so do we take sin seriously yes absolutely we don't belittle it in the least we call it what it is we don't cover it up but on the other hand we don't take on board this attitude of condemnation where we judge men and just cast them away we take Jesus attitude on after all who needs the sick the well or who needs the doctor the person who's well or the person that is sick it's the sick that need the doctor Paul's attitude wasn't condemnation either he sought the lost to win them do you remember in first Corinthians six he says do not be deceived neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of

God and that is what some of you were but you were washed you were sanctified you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God that is what they were but something wonderful happened someone loved them enough to go and tell them the gospel it didn't come out of the air they weren't changed magically someone probably Paul went up to them and talked to them and through that they were saved Paul's evangelistic efforts didn't get stuck in the rut of condemnation where every time we see a sinner we're overwhelmed with disgust and so we don't evangelize so let me ask you how does condemnation keep us from evangelizing and how can we overcome it how does it keep us and how can we overcome it yes that's the that's the way we overcome it

I mean it was the Pharisees that had the hang up it was the Pharisees that wouldn't have anything to do with sinners because they were self righteous so when we get rid of self righteousness and we see ourselves for what we are we see the rock that we were dug from then it puts things in perspective Jim I think that's a good point that's what I was trying to say with there's a day when we will judge men we will judge the earth we will judge angels but that is not today Jesus isn't sitting on the judgment throne assigning men heaven and hell right now finally today is the day of salvation so we can't usurp his authority we can't go past beyond what he's doing why can't we have a spirit of condemnation and evangelize at the same time right can you fake love can you really fake love no an evangelism has to be driven by love we can't go up to someone that we hate and really seek their good it won't work they'll see right through us we'll give up it just doesn't work will we have any hope if we've already judged tried and sentenced them will we have any hope for that person no what's the point of evangelizing if they're going to hell we have to get over that we have to get over that

Roger right if he does it will be despite of us and we don't it's not a good policy to work have God work despite of us we have to keep moving on the that's the fourth barrier the fifth barrier is separation and this is the most difficult one there's pitfalls on on either side that we have to avoid so let me ask you another trick question should we separate ourselves from this world yes no good yes how should we whoever said yes I heard a yes okay yes and now since we do we are to be pure

holy undefiled no what's the answer on the no side who Dennis you said no right I don't know the question is should we separate ourselves from the world and you said no the first time okay how no can we turn in our Bibles to 2nd Corinthians chapter 6 2nd Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 14 we want to read a few verses here 2nd Corinthians 6 verse 14 do not be yoked together with unbelievers for what do righteousness and wickedness have in common or what fellowship can light have with darkness what harmony is there between Christ and Belial what does a believer have in common with the unbeliever what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols for we are the temple of the living

[34:05] God as God has said I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their God and they will be my people that is covenant language that's how the Bible talks about us being in covenant relationship with God therefore verse 17 come out from them and be separate says the Lord touch no unclean thing and I will receive you I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters says the Lord almighty since we have these promises dear friends let us purify!

ourselves from everything we separate ourselves from sinners yes yes and no this is how it's yes we don't participate with them in their sin we don't get in the yoke with them as they plow in the field of sin we don't walk with them in the darkness we don't worship with them as they worship idols but we purify ourselves from everything that contaminates us we perfect holiness out of reverence for God we separate ourselves from sinners out of reverence for God and remembering that we are in a covenant relationship with God we are in covenant with God and I think that is the fundamental question that we have to ask ourselves when we're trying to decide should I have a relationship with this person or should

I not the question is does this relationship I have with this unbeliever may with a woman but not violate my relationship. I can join with them in projects and I can do things with them. I can serve them and minister to them. I can listen to them and hear them without violating my covenant relationship with my wife. The point of violation comes when my heart is drawn into them and I pursue that relationship in sin and for the reasons of sin.

And so to protect myself from that in my marriage relationship, I can't say I'm married to Stephanie and so from now on I will have no contact whatsoever with any woman. I will never do anything with them. I will stay at home and I only come out when she is with me and I can't, we can't separate ourselves from all contact. I can't separate myself from all contact with other women. What is, if I take that route, I have to leave this world and I'm not going to leave this world. Rather, I protect myself by staying faithful to my wife, by loving her primarily and absolutely. And so we separate ourselves from the world in the sense of we don't let them mess up our relationship with God.

Our relationship with God is the first thing. We love him. We love him absolutely and primarily. But that means, that doesn't mean that I can't have any relationships with unbelievers. There's all sorts of different kinds of relationships that we can have with unbelievers that come short of violating our covenant relationship with God. And that's kind of what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5, isn't it? That if we want to avoid all associations with the sexually immoral and all the idolaters and swindlers, we have to leave this world. And he, of course, says that's impossible. Let me ask you, what was Jesus' stance on separation? Hebrews 7 says, Jesus was holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners. But at the same time, he was called the friend of sinners. He held the one and the other, and he held them both together. Remember when Jesus called Matthew to the discipleship, the tax collector Matthew. Matthew threw a big party, and there were the lowlifes there. And there was [38:50] Jesus there, and the Pharisees had a problem with it. But what did Jesus say? It isn't the healthy that need a doctor, it's the sick. So I'm their friend. I eat with them, and I drink with them, and I talk with them because they need me. Did that make him unholy? No, that made him loving. Did that make him impure?

No, it made him gracious. So then we, as individuals, have to follow Jesus' example. We have to have the same stance as Jesus. We should be holy and blameless and pure and set apart from sinners. But at the same time, we have to be considered and call ourselves a friend of sinners. We have to hold the two together.

So the bottom line is, the salt has to get out of the salt shaker. The light has to get out of the closet and shine. So what would you think of a bunch of doctors that they came to work every day, they came to their clinic, and as soon as it was opening time, they locked the doors because they were afraid that they would get sick. So they locked the doors so the patients couldn't come in.

What would you say to those doctors? You'd say, you need to get over yourselves. You need to get over yourselves. You need to do your job. And that's what I think Jesus was saying to us. If we're so afraid of getting sick, then we need to realize it's not the sick, or it's not the healthy that need a doctor, or it's the sick. So the medicine of the gospel can't be called in over the phone. Sometimes we do that. The gospel can't be called in over the phone. The illness needs diagnosed in person. The medicine needs to be given in person. The patient needs regular checkups in person. And so we have to get close to the sick if we are going to heal them, if we're going to be what God has called us to be.

And so we can't lock the doors of our hearts and our homes and our families and our church against the sick because we're afraid of catching something. We instead, out of love for them, out of love for God, go into this world and seek to save the lost. And so out of a passion for God's glory, out of a love for sinners, we reach out to them and love them.

[41:13] So those are the five barriers. We're almost done. Lack of confidence, overcommitment, intimidation, condemnation, and separation. Maybe a good exercise for us is to look at these things, look into our hearts, and see what's keeping us from evangelizing. And find it out and take it to Jesus. And may he make us to be what he wants us to be. Well, we're dismissed.