

Who's Job Is Evangelism?

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[0:00] The living God speaks to us through his living word, Romans 10, 1-15. Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

! For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God, and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Christ is the end of the law, so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law.

The man who does these things will live by them. But the righteousness that is by faith says, Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven?

That is to bring Christ down. Or, Who will descend into the deep? That is to bring Christ up from the dead. But what does it say?

[1:17] The word is near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart. That is, the word of faith we are proclaiming. That if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord.

And believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified.

And it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the scripture says, Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then can they call on the one that they have not believed in?

[2:21] And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?

As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. You may keep your Bibles open there to Romans 10.

Though we will be looking at several other passages as we go along tonight. What is it in your home that doesn't get done as frequently as it should?

Or perhaps as soon as it should be done? Or with as happy a heart as it should be done? What job is avoided as much as possible by everyone in your house?

Maybe it's doing the dishes and they pile up in the sink. Or emptying the dishwasher and so they pile up in the sink. Maybe it's mowing the lawn that no one likes to do.

[3:28] Taking the trash out, vacuuming, doing the laundry. At my house the job that nobody likes to do is ironing. I really, really don't like to iron.

And sadly, neither does Aaron. And that means that sometimes at our house, and I checked with Aaron before I talked about this tonight, so it wouldn't be like the man on the video this morning in Sunday school.

But anyway, sometimes the ironing at our house can pile up because it's really the least favorite job in the house. And it gets to be such a pile that it gets overwhelming.

And then finally Aaron will tackle it. Occasionally I will. You can probably tell when Aaron's ironed and when I have. And it's usually mostly my stuff that needs to be ironed, which is, anyway, it doesn't get done as often as it should get done.

And I suspect that there are similar tasks at your home that no one wants to do, and so they're only done when it becomes absolutely necessary. And even then, maybe there's a struggle as to who is going to do it.

[4:34] You do it. I did it last time. You made the problem. You fix it. Let's make the kids do it. Not an option in our house. Five-year-olds, at least our five-year-old, is not qualified to operate in iron, especially with his brothers around.

But oftentimes you'll find there's a struggle as to who should do it. I fear that in the church, oftentimes the job that no one wants to do is personal evangelism.

We put it off and we put it off, but unlike our domestic jobs around the house, we never reach a tipping point. It never piles up where it has to be done.

We look around and most of the seats are full and there's lots of churches in Bremen, which must mean that there's lots of Christians, and so I don't really need to do evangelism. And so we never reach that tipping point that we do in our homes.

And so many times, evangelism isn't done at all. And when we talk about it, maybe there's a struggle as to who should do it. Well, it's not my job.

[5:46] It's the pastor's job to do it. He's the preacher. It's his job to preach the gospel, the good news about Jesus. And so he should do it. And the pastor says, well, I have to be in my study every week, preparing a message and out caring for the flock, and so I don't have time to be out evangelizing.

And besides, my sermon is an evangelistic one, and so I'm doing my part to evangelize. And really, it's the congregation's job to bring in family members and friends that need to hear the gospel.

And so if they don't bring him in, I can't do anything about that. I'm just going to preach the gospel. Maybe people begin to point fingers at each other. The wife thinks it's the husband's job because she's just at home all day with the kids, and she doesn't know anybody anyway.

And the husband doesn't understand why his wife hasn't invited the neighbor that she sees every day out in the yard. And the parents wonder why the kids haven't invited their friends, and the kids point their fingers back at the parents, and this family points their finger at this family over here, and evangelism doesn't get done because we're all thinking that someone else should do it.

Who is to do the work of evangelism? That's the question we want to answer tonight. To ask and answer. We've seen what it is.

[7:07] It's sharing the good news about Jesus Christ and how sinful men can be made right with their Creator before whom they have a serious problem. It's telling people about Jesus Christ and how they can be forgiven of those sins.

We've seen why we ought to do the work of evangelism. It's out of love to God. The two greatest commandments. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. And if you love God, you will want people to love Him.

Other people. And so you will tell them about Him. So they too will worship God. And it's out of the second commandment. The second greatest commandment, which is like the first, love your neighbor as yourself. And because of the good that our fellow men need, we tell them about Jesus. How they can be right with God and avoid the great punishment that is certainly coming. But whose job is it to do those things? Well, it's His. Immediately.

Maybe some of you are thinking, it's that guy's job over there. Tonight, I want to convince us and convict us from the Scriptures that it is each of our jobs.

[8:10] In a special primary way, it is the pastor's job. And we will talk about that. But it is every part of the church. Husbands, wives, children, families.

And not just other husbands and wives and children and families. You. It is your job to be telling people about Jesus Christ. And remember as we go tonight that we're talking about something that shouldn't be like ironing or mowing a lawn that is dreaded and feared and avoided to tell other people about the Jesus who has saved us from our sins is a privilege.

We should be eager to do it. Glad to do it. Thankful that we have the opportunity to do it and eager to spring at those opportunities. It's not like, for me anyway, doing ironing.

It's like sitting down to a delicious meal with a lovely dessert to follow. Something everyone in the house looks forward to and enjoys. And so it should be with evangelism. What a blessed message we have.

Did you know that right here tonight that you can be saved from your sins? That's the glorious message of evangelism. You've sinned against a holy God. You deserve punishment.

[9:26] But Jesus came in our place and took that punishment that we deserve. And so if you come to Him in repentance and faith, you can be saved from your sin. That's a good message.

It's the best news that there is. That's true for you right here tonight. That's the privileged message that we have of telling other people. It shouldn't be dreaded. It shouldn't be avoided. It should be our delight.

It is our privilege. And so when Jesus says in Matthew 28, Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I've commanded you.

and surely I'm with you always to the very end of the age. Who is He talking to? Well, He's talking to the church. Right then He's talking to His disciples.

But you hear that promise. I'm with you always even to the very end of the age. And we're not to the end of the age yet. And those disciples that heard that commission aren't here anymore. But the commission is still valid because it's still the end of the age.

[10 : 31] And that means that it is the church that is to be doing that commission. To be making Jesus known. Making disciples. And then teaching them to obey.

How do we break that down? What does it mean that that commission is the church? Is the churches? We want to see two main things tonight. One, it is the duty of the ordained ministers in the church.

I'm thinking tonight of pastors and missionaries. It is their job to do evangelism and primarily so. And secondly, it is the job of every individual who is in the church. Let's start with that ordained formal minister of the gospel.

It's the work of pastors. You remember the early church was formed after Pentecost. Peter preaches. 3,000 are added. And what happens to those 3,000 saints in Jerusalem?

Well, they gather together and they begin to meet. And we read in Acts 2 that they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

[11 : 33] That's the result of evangelism is people being saved. How did that happen in the church? Right from the very beginning it happened through the apostles' teaching. The apostles were the leaders of the church.

These are the regular means of grace. The things that the church did on a regular basis. And as the church gathered and did those things, people were saved. It was the work of the ministers.

We're right here in Romans 10. Make no mistake about it. The public preaching of God's Word is the primary means that God has ordained for evangelism.

The spread of the gospel and the saving of men's souls. In verse 15, the passage talks about those who are sent. Those who are chosen by the church and sent by the church to do that work.

Especially missionaries in view here, but true of ministers in a local church as well. It's talking about ordained ministers. The formal ministry, John Murray says that these are authorized messengers.

[12 : 32] Christ's spokesmen. And only the person upon whom He has laid His hand may act in that capacity. These men are to do the work of the ministry. And it's through that preaching of the gospel.

The church selects these men. They send them to preach the gospel. And it's through that that people hear about Jesus. That they believe in Him. That they call upon Him. And so are saved. Now in this series on evangelism, we're going to be focusing and we have been focusing primarily on personal evangelism. You talking to this person over here. Not the public preaching of the Word, but in doing that, I don't want to overlook the importance, the significance of what goes on right in this pulpit in churches around the country and around the world every Lord's Day.

This is the means that God has ordained. How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Unless the church sends them out to do that work? This is the means.

The primary. The most important means that God has ordained. And as we focus on personal evangelism, I don't want you to lose sight of that. This is probably the only night that we'll focus on this at all.

[13 : 39] But don't forget it. It's the preaching of the Word. If you read a book on personal evangelism, it might elevate personal evangelism until it looks like this is the only means that God uses to save sinners.

It's not. It starts here. In the pulpit, I say, yes! We're off the hook. Wait. I have more to say tonight. Wait for the rest of the message.

But before we move on, clearly pastors are not off the hook. It's our duty to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and how men can be saved through belief, through trust in this Jesus.

While not neglecting at the same time the growth and development and discipleship of the Christians who are already in the church. There must be a balance in the public ministry of the Word. But this is why we almost always seek to have something of the Gospel in our messages, even if it's not the main focus of the passage that we're preaching.

Because it is our task to proclaim that Gospel. But this has implications for everyone in the church as well. Not just the preachers. It means that inviting others to come and to hear the Word preached is a form of doing evangelism.

[14 : 56] God has given the church, we might say, experts in theology, in the Gospel. He's given them pastors. And what better way to have people hear the truth than to bring them to church?

To hear the pastor preach. In some ways, like having doctors, I'm thankful for people that are trained in first aid and that can do some emergency field work or for moms that are capable of taking care of cuts and scrapes and bruises and things that happen to their children.

But people who are severely injured and truly sick will be best treated by a doctor. And so the best thing that you can do for someone like that is to get them to the doctor. Someone who's trained, who's been, they've gone to school for that.

That's what they've learned. That's what they know. They're experts. I say you take them to the doctor. Shouldn't it be the same when those who are spiritually sick are in need? Which is always get them to the church to hear the Word of God proclaimed.

Another word for preachers is that we can't get off the hook of personal evangelism. One-on-one work by saying, oh, I preached the Gospel today. I've done my work of evangelism.

[16 : 10] Do you know what those same apostles that preached every day or weekly in the book of Acts? They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. You know what else those apostles did? They went from house to house.

Acts 5 and verse 42, day after day in the temple courts, there's public, and from house to house, private and personal. They never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news.

That's our word, evangelizing. They never, from house to house, they evangelized. And so a preacher can't say, well, I preached. I've done my job of evangelism. No, there must be something from house to house, something personal in the principles that we'll see in a moment that apply to individuals, apply to pastors too.

I want to talk for a moment about missionaries as well tonight. The church has settled ministers that preach the Gospel, but the church also sends ministers out to do that in other parts of the world. that early church at Antioch where Paul and Barnabas were. They preached the Gospel. I believe that they went from house to house evangelizing, but also they sent out men to do that work to the ends of the earth.

[17 : 19] Acts 13, we read, in the church at Antioch, while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

They ordained these men for the work of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth. That work of evangelism is to be done by missionaries sent out by the church.

Here in Romans 10 and verse 15, again, how shall they preach unless they are sent? How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. That's our word again. How beautiful are the feet of those who evangelize good words.

There's good, good. It's such a good message. He says it twice. They evangelize the good news. And they're sent out by the church to do it.

It's what Jesus had commissioned His disciples to do earlier before the Great Commission that we know so well. Another commission in Luke 9. When Jesus had called the twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure disease.

[18 : 20] And He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So they sent out and went from village to village preaching the Gospel. That's our word. Evangelizing. healing.

And healing people everywhere. And that means that we as a church must be supporting and sending and praying for missionaries to do the work of spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

It's their duty to preach that message so that people in all corners of our world might hear the truth and be saved. And so when we support missionaries, we're doing evangelism through them. when you sacrificially give to the church, you're supporting the work of evangelism. And so as we go through this series and as we've been going, it might seem as though sometimes we're beating you up over evangelism.

Oh, you don't evangelize enough. You need to be doing more evangelism. But in many ways, be encouraged. You are doing the work of evangelism. What a blessing to have people that bring visitors as you did even this morning.

[19 : 26] What a blessing to have people in the church that give sacrificially for the advancement of the Gospel here and abroad. What a blessing to have people that pray. That pray for their pastors.

That pray for the spread of the Gospel here and for missionaries who are doing it abroad. In many ways, you are doing the work of evangelism and I thank God for it. Now that said, all of us, starting with me, have work to do in the area of personal evangelism.

Which though it is not the primary means God has ordained for the salvation of men, it is one of the means He has ordained as we want to now see. We're going to turn our attention now from that former ordained ministry of the church now to individuals within the church.

You're not off the hook. And so, be ready to hear. We're going to look at some principles that show that individuals are to do evangelism and then some examples. Where we see people in the New Testament doing exactly that.

J.I. Packer says, But the commission to publish the Gospel and make disciples was never confined to the apostles, nor is it now confined to the church's ministers.

[20 : 41] It is a commission that rests upon the whole church collectively and therefore upon each Christian individually. Now let's demonstrate that from the Scriptures. that it is the duty of children of God to share the Gospel with others.

Turn over with me, if you will, to the book of Acts in chapter 1. Acts 1. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit, we find, is given to everyone who believes.

It is not a special second blessing for really spiritual Christians. It is given to everyone. And we see that, first of all, at Pentecost.

And notice what Jesus says. This is directed to His disciples, but see what He says in verse 8 of Acts 1. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in Algeria and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

The Holy Spirit was to be the power for their being witnesses of what Christ had done. And that Holy Spirit came in power not just to the apostles that He's talking to here, but to all of His followers that were gathered at Pentecost.

[21 : 52] Look at verse 15 with me in Acts 1. In those days, Peter stood up among the believers a group numbering about 120. And then, they go through the process of choosing a new apostle to replace Judas.

And Matthias is chosen. So, that's the group that we're talking about. There's this group of believers about 120. And then chapter 2. In verse 1, when the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now, Pentecost was a once-for-all deal, but the giving of the Holy Spirit is something that we still have and it's given to every believer.

You notice that not just the apostles had tongues of fire and received the Holy Spirit. All of the people that were gathered together there received it. Empowering them to be witnesses for Christ to the ends of the earth.

[23 : 00] And now, not just preachers, not just pastors, not just really holy Christians receive that empowering Holy Spirit that is the power for us to do the work of evangelism, all Christians receive that Holy Spirit just as they did on the day of Pentecost.

Turn over to Philippians chapter 2. Now, one of those apostles writing to the church at Philippi. Philippians chapter 2.

And if just for a moment you go back and look at the beginning of verse 1, you notice who he's writing to. Chapter 1 and verse 1. Paul, Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi together with the overseers and deacons.

It's not just to the elders, the overseers and deacons at Philippi. It's to all the saints along with the elders. And what does he say to them? To those believers in chapter 2. Verses 14-16.

Do everything without complaining or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

[24 : 22] You notice he says to all the saints that they are to shine like stars in this dark, crooked, depraved generation. That reminds you of anything? Jesus' words? Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

And this is for all believers to shine like stars as you hold out the word of life. As you offer that word to others. Some translations have hold it fast which I'm not sure how to translate but I think both of them eventually make the same point.

If you're holding fast the word of life you're going to live according to that word. And people are going to see it in you. And if you're holding it out you're going to be telling them about it. But this is for all the saints at Philippi.

It's for all of God's church to be holding out that word of life. To be telling others about it. You don't have to turn there but Peter's first letter is written to God's elect.

His chosen ones. Strangers in the world. Scattered. It's not just to ministers and to this group. Peter writes the familiar words that we've already looked at in this series.

[25 : 26] But hear them again. Chapter 3 and verse 15. Always be prepared. All of you God's elect. All of you of God's children scattered throughout the world. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have.

You. You tonight are always to be ready to tell someone about the gospel because isn't that the reason for the hope that you have? The gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's for all of God's people. We've looked at Matthew 12 and verse 34. Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Not just for ministers, for all of God's people.

It's a statement of fact even. It's not just a command. It's how it is. What's in your heart will come out on your lips. And if Jesus is in your heart and you're taken with Him, then you will speak about Him to others.

And Jesus goes on, the good man brings good things out of the good stored up in Him. Turn over with me to 1 Corinthians 10. Thank you for your being willing to turn to these passages.

[26 : 33] I think there might just be one or two more that we'll turn to after this one. 1 Corinthians 10, beginning in verse 31. This is the Apostle Paul and he's writing to the church at Corinth.

Not just the leaders of the church, but to the whole church. And he says in verse 31, So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the church of God, even as I try to please everybody in every way.

For I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, so that they may be saved, follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.

Verse 1 of chapter 11 belongs with the end of chapter 10 there. And Paul says that we are to follow His example. And what is His example? He is not seeking His own good, but the good of many so that they may be saved.

That was Paul's goal. It was what he worked for. It was what he labored at was to make Christ known. That was being good to the people around him. That's what he wanted.

[27 : 42] And he says, you follow my example. Your desire, your goal should be for the salvation of the people around you, just like Paul's. And so we, like Paul, should do whatever we can to please everyone in every way, not seeking our own good, seeking the good of others by telling them the truth of the Gospel.

You don't have to turn there, but Proverbs 11 and verse 30, the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who wins souls is wise. We know that Proverbs lays out for us the way of wisdom and the way of folly and God's children are to walk in the way of wisdom and that has all sorts of implications for us.

The way of wisdom. It affects the way we relate to other people. It affects our relationships with men and women and boys and girls. It affects the way of wisdom. It affects how we raise our children, how we spend our money, how we live our life every day, who we fear and who we don't fear, how we use our tongue.

All sorts of implications for walking in the way of wisdom, which is the duty of all of God's people.

One of those implications has to do with evangelism. He who wins souls is wise.

Another mark of wisdom is the winning of souls. If we are wise, we will be about that work, seeking to draw lost sinners into the kingdom.

[29:08] In other words, the command to love God and to love our neighbor are not just for leaders in the church. They are really spiritual people. They are for all of us.

They are the most basic of God's commands. And we must fulfill them in evangelism. If we fail in telling those around us the truth of the gospel, we are failing in loving God like we should and loving our fellow men like we should.

In some ways, it is like running an effective business. It is not always good to compare the church to a business, but I think it works here. It is not just the CEO and a few managers, a few of the higher-ups that do all the work.

If you have a business full of people that do not do any work, your business is going to fail. You've got to have people that aren't in positions of authority. They've got to do their job or the business won't work.

And so in the church, if you have a bunch of members who sit around and do nothing, we'll miss the mark in all sorts of things. It's not the pastor's job alone to do the work of caring for one another, of hospitality, of encouraging and rebuking one another, of loving one another, of bringing one another back when we stray.

[30:22] That's not the pastor's work alone. And if we fail in these things, the church will fail. And it's true of evangelism as well. All in the church must participate in it.

Even as we've seen from the Scriptures. And now, I want to turn to some examples to demonstrate that this was not just the theory in the church in the New Testament.

It was their practice. Individuals, people who were not ordained ministers of the Gospel went out and they told other people about Jesus. And God used it and blessed it.

We'll start, and I'm sort of cheating a little bit here, I'm going to start with two of the disciples, but it was at the very beginning before they even knew what being a disciple meant. As soon as Jesus called Andrew, do you know what He did?

You know what Andrew did? As soon as Jesus calls him. It's in John chapter 1. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and had followed Jesus.

[31:21] The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, we have found the Messiah. That is the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. First thing, Andrew follows after Jesus.

And then the first thing, he goes and he gets his brother. And he tells him, we found Jesus. And he brought him to Jesus. I know that he's a disciple. He's one of the apostles. But this is before that even really started.

So at the very beginning. First thing he does is to tell someone else. Same with Philip. The next day, Jesus decided to leave Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, follow me. Philip found Nathanael and told him, we have found the one Moses wrote about in the law and about whom the prophets also wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Nazareth? Can anything good come from there? Nathanael asked. Come and see, said Philip. He couldn't be put off even by someone arguing with him. Oh, we might start in on evangelism and somebody says, I don't want to hear it.

Can that be? Can anything good come out of the church? But we don't say, okay, I quit. I give up. Philip didn't quit. He said, come and see. And he brought him to Jesus.

[32:31] An individual going out and getting another individual. You remember, the severely demon-possessed man that Jesus delivered. So severe was his possession that there was a legion of demons in him and he would cut himself and he lived among the tombs and you couldn't keep him clothed and you couldn't keep him chained and people were afraid of him and they would avoid the area where he was.

He was so severely handicapped by this demon-possession and Jesus demonstrates the remarkable, awesome power of God and delivers him from that possession.

And people come and see him clothed and in his right mind and they're amazed at what they see. And this man, he wants to follow Jesus. He wants to be like one of his disciples. He wants to go with him. And we say, good, another follower.

And Jesus says, no, you stay here. Jesus did not let him, but he said, go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.

You see, this man wasn't an ordained minister of the Gospel. Jesus told him to go home and to live his life and to tell the people that he met what God had done. And you know what he did? Just that. So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him and all the people were amazed.

[33:47] This ordinary man goes and he tells of God's mercy. People are amazed. You say, well, he's got a radical story to tell.

He was radically delivered. That's compelling stuff. Haven't you been radically delivered? You were on your way to hell enslaved by your sin.

And Jesus set you on the way that leads to life. That may not be as outwardly remarkable as the demoniac, but it is as remarkable. He was saved from his sins and so have you been.

And so you tell that remarkable story to others around you. Turn over with me the last time to Acts chapter 8. Sort of the last time.

You'll have to turn over two pages after this. But Acts 8. Acts 8. Stephen has just been stoned.

[34:52] And we read in the first verses of Acts 8, and Saul was there giving approval to his death. On that day, a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem.

And all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church going from house to house.

He dragged off men and women and put them in prison. You notice who it was that was scattered. It was everybody except the apostles. They were not the ones who were scattered.

It was the rest of the people in the church. I believe that some, I don't think the whole church was scattered because we find others still in Jerusalem after this. But many of them were scattered.

And notice what it says in verse 4. Acts 8. Those who had been scattered, not the apostles because they were still in Jerusalem, but those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

[35:49] And you know what? That's our word. They evangelized. They told the good news wherever they went. Telling people how they could be saved from their sins.

They gospelled. They evangelized. And then later in chapter 8, a detailed example is given of Philip. And you say, Philip was ordained. He was a deacon in the church.

That's right. But why were the deacons ordained? Remember, they were ordained so that the apostles could give themselves to the ministry of the word and to prayer. And so the deacons' primary job was the waiting of tables, the caring of those who were in need, the distribution of the funds so that the widows were all cared for.

Their job wasn't the preaching of the word. They were deacons so that the apostles could give themselves to that. Now, this is Philip the deacon. Not a minister of the gospel, but a deacon.

And we're not going to read it, but you know the story of how the Spirit sends him to the chariot and he goes up and he hears Isaiah the prophet being raised. He says, Do you understand what you're reading? And he explains to him the gospel and how he can be saved through the work of Jesus.

[36:54] This is Philip, a deacon in the church. And then, to Acts chapter 11, verses 19-21. What were the results of these scattered ones evangelizing everywhere that they went?

Acts 11, verse 19. Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen, the ones we just read about, traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.

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, the Lord's hand was with them and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

That was the result of those scattered ones, those ordinary individuals in the church under persecution going out and preaching the gospel. Many turned and were saved. And you know, this is the start of the church at Antioch.

The church that sends out Paul and Barnabas on those missionary journeys. Started by ordinary people speaking of Christ. John Calvin says of these scattered ones, he says, if we desire to be counted their brethren, let us prick forward ourselves, let us urge ourselves forward so diligently that we never be weary of furthering the doctrine of Christ.

[38 : 19] I hope you never get tired of telling people about Christ. If you want to be brethren, Calvin says, and the scriptures say to these scattered ones, we must tell others.

It was true of the Thessalonians. We heard it last week from 1 Thessalonians 1. Paul writes to them and he says, you became imitators of us and of the Lord. In spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's message rang out from you. The church in Thessalonica, the Lord's message rang out from you. Not only in Macedonia, in Achaia, your faith in God has become known everywhere. Could it be said of us that God's message is ringing out from us? The scripture is full of precept and example displaying that individuals in the church are to be about the work of declaring the good news.

So are you a member of Christ's church tonight? It's for you to be telling people about Jesus and how He can save them from their sins.

[39 : 23] What sort of people then do we need to be if we are going to be used of God to spread the good news?

First of all, we must be a saved people. Perhaps that's obvious, but we need to have experienced the miraculous new birth, the deliverance from the power and penalty of sin before we'll be able to tell anyone about it with any sort of conviction.

This is what the Lord has done for me. It's the demoniac's message. It's our message. Be convinced of it. Remember what God has done for you. And go and tell others, do you know Jesus tonight?

Does He know you? If so, then you should be telling others about Him. You can know Him tonight if you don't. Come and trust in Him right at this moment. And then go and tell others about Him.

Has it been a long time since you were converted? Maybe you need a refresher. Go back and dig out your testimony. The one that you wrote when you were baptized and read it. And be reminded of what God has done for you.

[40 : 28] You know, but go back and read your own testimony. If you can't find it, at least if you remember here at Grace Fellowship Church, I bet Pastor John has it in the file. And you ask Him for it. And you read and remember what God has done for you.

And go and tell us. We have to be a saved people. We have to be a people that are willing to serve. There's an old Scottish Presbyterian, an elder in the 1800s.

And he said, what a change would appear on the church and the world if each professing Christian were doing something, something for Christ. Even though it were a very little, might not the wilderness soon be turned into a fruitful field?

Are we willing to serve others, to be used of God, to think more importantly of others than of ourselves? We must be servants at heart. We must be a people of prayer. We'll talk more about the place prayer has in evangelism and how if we don't pray that God will bless that message, then it won't be blessed.

But think of prayer on other terms tonight. Are you not doing the work of evangelism and you know that you should be? Then you need to go in prayer, confess, repent, and say, God, help me.

[41 : 43] Help me to be courageous. Help me to be bold. Give me the words to speak. You know my fears, Lord. You know my hesitation. You know my backwardness. You know all of the excuses and the reasons that I have for not doing evangelism.

Tear all of those down, Lord, and give me grace and strength to obey your word, to obey your command. We must be a people of prayer. We must be a people of love as we saw last time.

Do you love God? Do you love your neighbor? If we've been saved, we will love God and our neighbor. Do you? We must be a prepared people.

Peter says, if we're not ready, we'll miss opportunities God sets before us. Be ready to give an answer. And so the question for us tonight is, are we evangelizing?

It's a task for the church, for the ministers in the church, and for all of the individuals in the church, and so are we doing it? You have friends and neighbors and co-workers and teammates and family members that need to hear the good news of the gospel.

[42 : 49] Are you telling them? Do you know that there are people that you can reach with the gospel that I will never be able to reach? I don't have the relationships that you have with your friends and your family members.

I don't have the rapport with your teammates that you have. There are people that you will be able to reach that I will never be able to. Maybe you could bring them in to hear the gospel. I can reach them then, but if they don't come here, I will never be able to reach some of those people.

Do you know that there are people that you know who will never hear the gospel unless you tell them about it? Not just me or anybody else. They won't hear it unless you tell them or unless you bring them to hear about it.

And so what does that mean? It means that we need to be about the work of telling the good news of our Savior, Jesus Christ, to a world that is lost and needy. It will not be an easy task.

We must do it only in the strength of the Holy Spirit, by His power, with much prayer, and dependence upon God, but we must do it. And so may God make us a people that are willing to open our mouths and to speak for our Savior.

[43 : 59] Let's pray together. Our Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You that You make it plain to us what our responsibilities and duties are, and we pray that You would give us faithfulness, courage, boldness to go and to tell other people what You have done for us in Your Son, Christ Jesus.

We pray that we would take this responsibility on ourselves and fulfill it even as You have set before us in Your Word. make us to be faithful evangelists who speak of Christ to those that we meet, to those that are in need.

Help us to love You that much, to love our neighbor that much, so that we can't help but speak of You. Help us with these things. Forgive us where we fall short and give us even greater measures of Your Spirit that we might be enabled for this task to which You've called us.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.