



WOW: Word Of the Week

Urgent

September 8, 2021

Urgent! What does that word mean? What is urgent in your life right now?

"When did you receive this message?" A young missionary that went to a remote village in West Africa to tell the gospel story. No one in that village of 231 people had ever once heard the gospel.

The chief reluctantly let the missionary speak to the entire village. When the villagers were told about Jesus' life, arrest, crucifixion and resurrection, they were amazed. Some wept openly. They marveled that the Son of God loved them and died in their place so their many sins might be forgiven.

They wanted to know more. One older man came to the young missionary immediately after his presentation and asked, "Son, when did God give you this message? How long have you had it?"

The missionary replied, "God gave this message to people long ago, but I only learned it a year ago."

The obviously upset man grabbed the young missionary and shook him with all his might. Through tears he cried out, "God gave you this message last year and you did not come to tell us before my mother, father, and son died?" In tears the young missionary begged for the man's forgiveness.

All around us are people who have not heard the gospel and those who need to hear the old, old story once again with freshness. All around us are people with problems so severe that only the gospel can provide relief. The gospel is God's power for salvation.

2 Tim. 4:2, proclaim the word, be urgent at opportune moments and in inopportune moments.

Be urgent, literally, stand upon, stand near, be constantly present, never get away from.

Tit. 3:14, urgent needs. Greatest necessity, most pressing matter.

I share the WOW "urgent" because the church has failed to see the urgency of Jesus' final command to go made disciples.

I do not make that claim based on results—it is possible to do God's will with meager results. God ultimately gives the increase.

I make the claim that the church has largely failed to hear the urgency in Jesus' voice, because a recent Barna poll shows that only 29% of U.S. Christians think it is urgent to share the gospel with the lost.

I realize that the survey cast a big net and may not be typical in every church.

I would like to think that among my readers and listeners, the number is greater than approximately one out of four.

I see the urgency. Our efforts are falling far behind population growth.

Mission works do not have the gospel and the salvation of souls as a first priority.

The first step is to look at our own hearts, to hear the compulsion and the conviction of the gospel.

I thought about my closing paragraph. Words can be unintentionally harsh, even offensive. I do not intend harm. My mother said, "If the shoe fits, wear it." Each one with ears to hear must hear. I do not hear to evaluate your life—I hear to evaluate my own life. In that spirit, I share this thought:

"If your heart doesn't ache for those who do not know Christ, perhaps you do not know Christ."