

Evangelism—Again!

By Bob Young

Introduction

We live in difficult times. It appears that Christianity is losing its grip on the world; more and more are rejecting Christianity.

The problem is not only external. Many Christians are more committed to a cause than a faith, more committed to doctrine than duty; creed than conduct. Many are choosing logic over living, more committed to a territory than truth; wanting to affirm a position. This may be our downfall.

Thus, a reminder: we must never lose our emphasis on good-news-ing, evangelism, euangelion, eulogy. The church wants to know how to have an exciting, evangelistic, exuberant, exhilarating evangelism effort. No one knows that it's good news until they know the bad news. Not need to be saved if not lost. Not need to be found if not lost.

How can we focus on the good stuff, gospel, good news. How can we put Jesus as center, Lord, priority, purpose. We have not understood this. We get up early to go hunting or fishing, reasonably early for work or school, not at all for the Lord. We must understand priorities—for ourselves, for others.

The challenge in preaching is the challenge of evangelism.

Guideline #1: don't feed dead people.

Guideline #2: evangelism is a lot like courtship.

Text: Acts 24:25, at a more convenient time, I will call for you.

The Greek word, *metakaleomai*, appears 4 times in NT, all in Acts.

Consider the background and story of Acts 24.

Literally, when I find time/have time/take time (*lambano*). When I take time, I will call for you.

When will we find/have/take time....to be parents, for ministry, for visits, is difficult because it costs us something. At some point, the time is past.

Someday the bell tolls, the question comes, What did I do with my life? I want to know, I want to understand.

- Spent 20 yrs (1/3) getting ready. It is hard when you are young to see the importance of getting ready.
- Spent 20 years in ministry with 4 churches, over half of that time in one church.
- Then life took a big turn. Next 20 years were spent in ministry, more getting ready, MA, post-graduate study, DMin, academics, missions, ministry/missions, more academics, more ministry/missions.
- Now what? What do with the 20 years I hope to have?

What have I learned? There is never a convenient time. And, there is never a time to quit, never a time to rest on one's laurels and accomplishments. Every day is new and fresh; every day has potential; every day can be filled for God.

In developing a sermon one has a biblical text, and one has life.

In this sermon, build a bridge from where we live to the text before us.

Note that this text speaks of a call from a man to a man. This is not God's call to man. This is not man's call to God. This is connections, relationships, spirituality, Christianity.

1 Call of convenience, 24:25, Felix to Paul, non-Christian to Christian.

Do non-Christians call for Christians today? Why? Felix hoped for a favor, Paul shared Christ. Do we use the opportunities God gives? When someone calls, do we ask what they need as much as what they want.

Paul preached: righteousness, truth, judgment to come.

But...there was no perceived need, any threat was easily ignored, Felix did not want to think about it, when I take the time (but I won't). He was hoping for money (v. 26), he would show the Jews pleasure (v. 27).

Those who call from convenience never get there—unless someone intervenes.

The call of convenience is good intentions, but no action. I intended to....but did not. To Felix's credit, he did call, even from the wrong motives.

Many procrastinate and delay. Or begin and quit (as the thorny ground in Jesus' parable).

John 2: some are concerned, but mostly inconvenienced.

John 6:14-15

Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira

John Mark

Acts 17:32, Mars Hill

2 Call of concern, 20:17, Paul to Ephesian elders, Christian to Christian

Paul was concerned—read the text...

Because he cared

Because there were needs, threats, challenges

The call of evangelism is not a call of convenience, but a call of concern. In evangelism, we must....

- Tell what God did.
- Tell about the cause and the effect of the cross. CAUSE – CROSS – EFFECT/CURE

Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus? John 3

Why was the woman at the well interested in Jesus? John 4

Why did the man obey, pick up his mat and walk? John 5

Why did the blind man seek out Jesus? John 9-10

Why did Mary and Martha call for Jesus? John 11

3 Call of conviction, 10:32, Cornelius to Peter, non-Christian to Christian

How is this event distinct?

Convicted people act differently; evangelism is not only born of concern but of conviction.

John 9, I know he healed me

John 11:21

Acts 17:11, turning world upside down

Acts 16, same hour of night

Conclusion/Application

What moves you?

Convenience → concern → conviction

There is no reflective Christianity. We evangelize and tell the story....

Not because kids are hungry

Not because people need prayer, need saving, need anything

But....because of what God does for such a person

Consider an illustration from courtship —why does a couple date?

Because she needs a husband, no

Because he needs a wife, basically selfish

There is a deeper dynamic at work

When we are moved with biblical motivations to evangelize, we go everywhere....

Cultivating interest

Developing interest

Checking interest

Listening

Someone told you the good news, yes they loved you, but their love was a function of their nature, not of yours. It was not that you deserved anything, or that you earned it, were smart, fast, good. This is agape love.

Evangelism depends on those who have the good news....

See a need, because of what HE will and can do.

When will you take time to let God bless you?

How many will pray this week (daily) to let God bless (not because of duty or because of others' needs).

How many will study....

How many will be kind....

How many will worship....

How many will listen for teaching opportunities....

One question remains: how many need to get rid of sin (Isa. 59:1-2) so God will and can bless you.