



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

*Special Study*

## **RECOVERING THE LOST ART OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM**

Mark 16:15-20; Acts 1:8; John 3:1-7; 4:5-29

Personal evangelism is the person-to-person sharing of the gospel of Christ with sinners with the aim of leading them to salvation. The primary purpose of Christ coming into the world was to die for the salvation of man (John 3:14-18; 1 Timothy 1:15). He came to seek and to save the lost. He could not allow any other thing to becloud His vision of saving the lost. He came for that purpose and died for it (John 6:15; 19:37; 1 John 3:8). Christ preached to great multitudes who came from many regions to hear him (Luke 15:2; Matthew 4:23-25). He also used the personal evangelism strategy to reach individuals and families. He used different approaches to reach different people. (1) With **Nicodemus** Christ used a direct approach: "**Ye must be born again**" (John 3:1-7). (2) With the **Samaritan woman**, He used an indirect approach: "**Give me to drink**" (John 4:5-7). (3) With the **woman caught in adultery** by the Scribes and Pharisees, He used a situational approach (John 8:2-11). He applied the same approach with the informants who told Him of the Galilaeans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. "**Jesus answering said unto them, 'Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish'**" (Luke 13:1-3). Jesus reached out to His twelve disciples whom He called apostles through personal evangelism (John 1:29-51; Matthew 4:19-22; Luke 6:13).

For a local church to grow, the members must go and preach the Word right where the sinners are. Many sinners do not go to church, therefore, the church must go out to meet them where they are: in their houses, offices, town or village square, civic centres, playgrounds, hospitals, prisons, schools and marketplaces (Acts 20:20; 17:16-31; 16:20-34). No other business should thrill the heart of a New Testament believer than personal evangelism. Winning the lost is a task that must be done; failure to carry it out carries great consequences.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING PERSONAL EVANGELISM**

John 3:16-18,36; Ezekiel 3:17-21; 18:4; 33:1-16; Romans 1:14-16; Matthew 10:32,33; John 4:35-38; 9:4; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31.

Sinners cannot get saved without the preaching of the gospel. It is the soulwinner's duty to preach to them. The implication of neglecting personal evangelism includes (1) the loss and waste of ripened harvest, (2) requirement of sinners' blood from negligent soulwinners (Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:1-16), (3) Christ being ashamed of Christians that neglect to witness (Mark 8:38), (4) loss of soulwinners' reward (Daniel 12:3; Proverbs 11:30), (5) spiritual decline and stunted growth of the local churches, and (6) delay in answer to prayer. The consequences of neglecting personal evangelism on the part of the sinners, the soulwinners and church are so great. Every believer must therefore wake up to this great responsibility. We must rise up to renew our first love for Christ (Revelation 2:1-5).

## **COMPELLING NECESSITY OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM**

1 Corinthians 9:16; Jeremiah 20:9; Matthew 9:36; John 9:4; Acts 4:20; 18:5; 20:22-24; Ezekiel 3:17-21; 2 Corinthians 5:11a; John 4:35; Romans 9:3; 10:1; 1 Corinthians 9:22; Psalm 90:12; Mark 5:18-20.

Personal evangelism is a compelling necessity for every believer. It is not the will of God that anyone should perish: He wants all men to be saved. The Lord Jesus Christ was not only involved in personal evangelism but also sent out His disciples to do so. They were to preach to every creature everywhere.

Paul the apostle said, "***For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!***" (1 Corinthians 9:16). To him, souls are more valuable than any other thing in the world.

It is an obligation for every believer to personally bear witness of Christ and the task is urgent in view of (i) shortness of time, (ii) the brevity of life (Psalm 90:12; John 9:27-29), (iii) reality of eternal judgement of the lost (Psalm 9:17), and (iv) the need for believers to be free from the blood of all men (Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:1-16). Concern for our loved ones, members of our families, tribesmen, friends, co-workers and neighbours requires us to witness to them (Romans 9:3; 10:1). The vastness of the harvest field that is waiting for labourers should compel us to assist before they are wasted.

## **COMMITMENT NEEDED FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM**

Isaiah 6:5-8; John 9:4; Luke 4:43; John 18:37; 1 Corinthians 9:16; Acts 4:13-20; 19:15-19; 20:20-24; Romans 1:14-16; 2 Timothy 2:3,4; Psalm 126:5,6; 1 Corinthians 15:58.

Commitment is an act of devoting oneself entirely to a given cause until the goal is achieved. Personal evangelism requires individual commitment. Our Lord Jesus Christ was personally committed to it. He said, "***I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work***" (John 9:4). Believers must be determined to preach to all men till the end of their lives on earth. In spite of trials, hardship and afflictions, a soulwinner must never give up.

Every spiritual effort must be made in order to sustain the zeal and fire for personal evangelism. This could be done through constant praying, yielding to the promptings of the Spirit to preach, regular reading of literature and listening to messages on evangelism, making deliberate plan to preach the gospel everyday, and maintaining the freshness of the Spirit (Acts 8:23,24; 1 Timothy 4:13; Romans 10:17; Acts 17:17).

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