

Prayer and Equipping

Evangelism

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SECTION 1: UNLEASHING A HEART FOR JESUS CHRIST AND EVANGELISM

1. Introduction

Evangelism is all about Jesus, all for Jesus and all through Jesus. **Read *John 1:1-18***. This portion of scripture speaks about Jesus as the light to the world, and about John the Baptizer witnessing about the light. John prepared the way for the Lord and pointed people to Jesus Christ (***Luke 3:4-6***). So we are called to be like John and are to be witnesses of Jesus Christ to all men, so that He can save them and shine his light on them. Evangelism is about Jesus Christ receiving all the glory in rescuing souls from darkness and into His eternal kingdom. It is not about us, it is not about our gifts, but it is about Jesus Christ. We belong to Him, we are His children and we are his chosen instrument to deliver the best news the world will ever hear. Therefore, evangelism is simply witnessing about the Good News of Jesus Christ to those people who are lost or do not believe in Jesus Christ. It is about sharing the grace and truth about Jesus Christ and seeing them pass from death to life through His mighty power. You and I are tasked with the greatest and noblest task of winning souls for Jesus Christ.

The elders of Northpoint City Church (Northpoint) are trusting that during this time God will ignite you with a roaring fire for Him and for those people who are lost, dying and do not know Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that God will unleash a furious passion in you for Jesus and for witnessing about Jesus. May tens, hundreds, thousands, millions of people and nations, be touched by God through your obedience to Him. Our prayer for you is embodied in ***Colossians 1:9-14*** and ***Ephesians 1:15-23***. Our hope for you in this time of equipping is that your:

1. Faith in Jesus Christ will expound;
2. Joy and Love in knowing Jesus Christ will multiply;

3. Heart will break with compassion for the Lost;
4. Understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will increase;
5. Soul will awaken to the incomparably great power of the Holy Spirit who is in you; and that
6. Your response will be To Go and Evangelize to the world about Jesus and bring Him much glory.

We will be equipping you in the next few weeks to discover and fan into flame the gift of evangelism in you. After the period of equipping, we will go out and do what we've learnt. But first, let's call on God to set our hearts in fire for Him.

2. Unleashing a heart for Jesus Christ

Unless your heart is burning with fire for Jesus Christ, you will probably never reach a soul for Christ. Only through an intense love for Jesus and knowing Him in the most intimate way, will you be able to reach the lost for Christ. May the Holy Spirit ignite your entire being for Jesus Christ! Let's examine some men whose hearts were burning for Jesus. Consider the story of John Harper in the book *"The Titanic's last Hero: Story about John Harper"*, by Moody Adams. Consider the life stories of D.L. Moody a passionate evangelist who led thousands to Christ in the mid-1800 (see www.biblebelievers.com/moody_sermons) and spent his life preaching in the slums. Consider the life of Smith Wigglesworth, who was known as the *"Apostle of faith"*, who preached in the late 1800s and early 1900s, a mere plumber who saw thousands healed and thousands come to Christ (see www.smithwigglesworth.com). The testimonies and stories from these men will encourage you to be bold and to testify about our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we plunge into discovering the wonderful gift of evangelism given by Jesus to you, we need to look at some important considerations of our hearts. Consider the man Jesus Christ, who being the very eternal and almighty God, through whom all was made, left the glory of heaven, took on flesh and became servant, in order to rescue you and I (***Philippians 1:5-11***). Jesus was the greatest evangelist, whose example we need to follow. Jesus left heaven and came to proclaim the Gospel to you and me, so that through Him we might be saved. In ***Luke 19:10*** Jesus said *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."* In ***Matthew 9:12-13*** Jesus said: *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."* Jesus came to save the poor, the broken, the oppressed, the sinners, the religious and the lost. He is calling you and I to reveal His mercy and love demonstrated on the Cross, which has brought forgiveness for sin and peace with God.

Consider your own life and the following four questions and related considerations.

- 1) What would your life be now without Jesus?
- 2) What has He done for you? Consider the price that God paid for you and me – He gave everything to be with you and me. It cost God His Son. Consider our great salvation and

inheritance in knowing Jesus Christ. Consider the mercy, grace and love that Jesus has shown you, when all we deserved was His righteous wrath and judgement.

- 3) In view of this, what will you do for Him?
- 4) In view of this, what will you do about those that don't know Him?

He is calling you to Go. There is such joy that comes through knowing Jesus Christ and this joy is multiplied through telling the world the good news about Him. There is such an inheritance stored up for you and me in rescuing souls for Jesus – it is an abundant harvest as the Bible tells us in **Matthew 9:37**. Evangelism starts with who God is and what He has done for you and me. Once we belong to Him, He calls us to advance His Kingdom and make His glory and peace known to the world. In **John 20:21** Jesus said to his disciples: *“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”* Evangelism then becomes about what your response will be to His call. As you sit here, you can either chose to obey and to go, and experience the greatest joy you will ever experience in doing so. Or you can choose to ignore His voice, to settle and to waste your life.

Evangelism is all about Jesus Christ and it is all about your heart. I can teach you all I know, but if your heart remains unchanged, there will be no change in you to advance His Kingdom and to rescue souls. You and I have to cry out to the Holy Spirit to crush the pride in us and to break our hearts for Jesus and for the things that move Him. It is only from this place that we will be empowered to go and be effective evangelists for Christ. Evangelism is about being radical and passionate for Jesus. When people see your passion and radical love for Him, this will move people to want what you have and to follow Jesus. If you truly know Jesus, how can you not be radical and passionate for this great and awesome God? Jesus said in **Matthew 11:12** *“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.”* Although all Christians are called to be Christ's witnesses and enroll in the army of Christ, the evangelists can be seen as kind of the 'special forces' sent in behind enemy lines to uproot enemy strongholds and break open areas for the Gospel. In you there is a radical passion waiting to unleash onto the enemy and to rescue souls from the enemy for your Great and High Commander and Chief – Jesus Christ.

Evangelism is about God taking weak and ordinary people, and doing mighty and extraordinary things. In **Acts 4:12** after Peter and John spoke with great boldness before the Pharisees and Sadducees of the Sanhedrin: *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by, which we must be saved. When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”* Do not disqualify yourself from this great call – God wants to use you beyond your wildest imagination! You have been chosen to go and save the lost to Jesus Christ! It starts with an unquenchable fire in your heart for Jesus ... then the fire spreads to your tongue ... then it jumps out of your mouth to all who are around you. Kier Taylor, who is a passionate evangelist for Jesus Christ, says *“A flaming heart will find for itself a flickering tongue.”* You have been called to evangelism – that is why

you are reading this manual and that is why you attended this elective. God brought you to this place and point! Read D.L. Moody Sermon titled *The qualifications for soul winning* (refer to handout).

Evangelism is about discovering the glory of Jesus Christ and proclaiming it to others. It is realizing that the “pursuit of happiness” leads to an un-fulfilled and wasted life. It is about an incredible revelation that true life comes from wholeheartedly pursuing the glory of Jesus Christ. Jesus said in **John 13:6** “*I am the way and the truth and the life*” and in **John 10:10** “*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*” Evangelism is about having an awakening of why we were created and for what purpose, and that God has then chosen us as his Masterplan to reveal the Gospel to the lost.

In **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** the Bible says “*You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body*” John Piper writes the following in his book ‘*Don’t waste your life.*’ The reality is that if you are a Christian, you are not your own. Christ has bought you at the price of his own death. You now belong doubly to God: He made you, and he bought you. That means your life is not your own. It is God’s. Therefore the Bible says “*glorify God in your body*”. God made you for this. He bought you for this. This is the meaning of your life. God has put the gift of evangelism in you and that is why you are here at this time of Prayer and Equipping. God is at work in your life and it is He that is now calling you to fan this gift into flame (**see 2 Timothy 1: 6 – 11**).

Getting back to the worldly statement of “*the pursuit for happiness*”, it is through pursuing God’s glory and living an abandoned life of service to Him that you will pursue and discover your own joy. As you give yourself to the work of an evangelist for Christ, you will discover a joy that surpasses all knowledge and reason. As you give yourself to proclaiming the uncompromised truth of Jesus Christ to a lost and desperate world, you will feel more alive than you ever have before. As you lose your reputation for Jesus Christ, and as His righteousness explodes through you into others as they come to salvation, your name will echo into eternity and God’s Book of Life! Don’t you long to hear these words as you pass into eternity to meet the living Jesus, and there is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the splendor of his glory with arms open wide to welcome you, he would say – “Well done my good and faithful servant! Now come and sit at my table, and feast with me in eternity in the place that I have prepared for you. Come and eat from the tree of life. Come and receive your reward”?

I have to be faithful to the Word of God and issue you with this warning. The path of God-exalting joy, through being an evangelist for Christ, will cost you your life. Jesus said in **Luke 9:23-26** - “*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*” Therefore, it is better to lose your life for the sake of the Gospel than to waste it. In so doing you will find abundant life. If you live gladly to witness to the lost about Jesus Christ and see them find joy in Him, your life will be hard, your risks will be high, and your joy will be full. This elective on

evangelism is not about how to avoid a wounded life or how to find your identity in some romantic notion of a “*gift*” such as evangelism. It is about finding your identity in Christ and full-filling His call on your life to evangelize to those who are spiritually dead and who will suffer the furious wrath of God and be tormented in hell for eternity. This elective is about equipping you to step out and save the dead, resurrect them to life, and bring them into the eternal, glorious kingdom of the immortal and awesome God, Jesus Christ (***See Colossians 1:21-23***). This is the greatest privilege you and I could ever have or be a part of. It is in the adventure of the Gospel that we truly discover who Jesus is and who we are! Some of us may even die in service to Christ. That will not be a tragedy. Treasuring life above Christ is a tragedy!

3. Conclusion: The sad truth about hell

We often focus on the Good News of the love of God towards humanity, His mercy demonstrated through Jesus Christ on the Cross, His resurrection from the grave and the gift of eternal life to all who believe in Him. However, I will conclude this session with the Bad News and reality of hell as a sobering reminder and motivating factor to us to evangelize.

All those people around us, who do not believe in Jesus Christ, are like the walking dead waiting on death row for their execution. These people are “*the lost*” who are destined to suffer a righteous judgement and the full punishment and fury of God’s wrath. Their final sentence will be to spend eternity in TOTAL SEPERATION from God in a place called “*HELL*”, together with the devil and his demons, where they will be tormented and tortured for ever and ever. Read the account in ***Luke 16: 25-26*** about the rich man Lazarus that was thrown into hell. The point is that until people believe in Jesus Christ, everyone is out of God’s Kingdom and in eternal separation from Him with hell as their final destination. Once in hell, there are no second chances and eternal suffering cannot be escaped. There is no way out. No one is more full or fearsome in describing the horrors or the endlessness of hell than Jesus himself in the gospels. This is not a teaching created by the apostles or the early church. It was given to us by the Lord. The most loving man that ever walked the earth gave the strongest and fullest description of hell.

We need to learn that an essential part of Jesus loving mission to rescue sinners included then, and should include now through our evangelism, the clear conviction and warning that there is an eternal misery awaiting everyone who does not obey him. Jesus said in ***John 3:36*** - “*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him*”. In ***Romans 2: 6-8*** Paul says, “*God will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.*” The book of Revelation gives some of the most terrifying accounts of hell and what awaits those that rejected the testimony of Jesus Christ. In ***Revelation 20:15*** the Bible says “*If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*”

You and I may be that person's only opportunity to receive eternal life and escape God's wrath and hell. We have to see people for what they really are in God's eyes – Created in love for relationship with Him and reconciled through Jesus Christ, but destined to the horror of hell if we do not proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified to them. The Good News of what Jesus achieved for the world on the Cross and through His resurrection far outweighs the bad news. But the bad news is a core reality of the Gospel that has to be preached in world that just wants to hear love and peace!

Know that the elders of Northpoint are praying for you, whether you are dreaming something radical for your life, or whether you are retired and hoping not to waste your final years. Know that God has called you to rise up as His evangelist to the world for a time such as this. I thank God that you have had a realization of the gift that is in you. Our joy grows with every soul that will come to know the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ blazing through you.

4. Homework

Start praying for God to set your heart on fire for Jesus Christ and for the lost people of the world.

Start praying for a person that you know personally, whom you know to be unsaved. Start praying for his salvation in Jesus Christ.

Read the handout *Qualifications for soul winning* by D.L. Moody and scriptures given in the text.

5. Further reading

Sermons and biography of D.L. Moody - www.biblebelievers.com/moody_sermons (website)

Sermons and biography of Smiths Wigglesworth - www.smithwigglesworth.com (website)

The Gospel and Personal Evangelism (Book) – Mark Dever

Don't waste your life (Book) – John Piper

SECTION 2: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY AND WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

1. What does the Bible say about evangelism?

What are the last things that Jesus said to the disciples before He ascended into heaven? Surely what He said must have been of critical importance, and Jesus would have wanted to emphasize what He felt to be most important for the believers to hear? Well most of what He said related to evangelism. All Christians have received the Great Commission (**Matthew 28: 19-20**). ***“Therefore go and make disciples of all 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 have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*** This was one of the last things that Jesus commanded us to do as His disciples. Unfortunately, Christians have become tolerant and timid about sharing their faith to the world, and this commission has largely become the ‘Great Omission.’ In **Acts 1:6-8**, the Lord’s disciples are concerned with earthly things and questions about when God will restore the Kingdom. Jesus answers them and tells them not get caught up in these earthly things. In verse 8 Jesus says ***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*** May you discover your great calling to rescue souls for Christ, for which God has chosen you and His mighty power that is in you. I trust that as you open your heart to the Holy Spirit, He will anoint you with power to be a bold evangelist for Jesus Christ in a dark and desperate world.

You and I have an incredible hope and ministry of reconciliation for the world inside of us. **Read 2 Corinthians 5: 10-21**. It is Christ’s desire that all men should be saved. You and I may be the only opportunity that the person next to us may ever have to come to know Jesus Christ. It is when the Gospel is made known through us, that God’s power works miraculously through us to bring the lost unto salvation. This good news of reconciliation is too precious for us to keep to ourselves, we need to share it with everyone we meet as it is the best news they will ever hear. This is the truth that they are desperately searching for, which will save them and change them. Whether saved 1 day or 10 years you have what it takes, and this is not dependent on years of theology. But God has called you to open your mouth and give Him the opportunity to save people through you.

One of the most important scriptures in the Bible about evangelism concerning your and my responsibility is in **Romans 10:13- 15**: ***“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? 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. But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message? Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”*** It is your and my responsibility to Go and proclaim the message of Jesus Christ to the

world, so that they can believe in Jesus Christ. We cannot evangelize through merely living a good and upright life. We have to open our mouths and proclaim the truth that is the Gospel, which is full of power to set people free.

2. So what exactly is evangelism and what is our responsibility?

When looking at our responsibility in evangelism we need to answer the following 3 key questions? We will explore the responsibility of evangelising using the term 'witnessing'.

2.1 Question 1: Why and how do we evangelize?

From **Acts 1:8** "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*" From **Matthew 28:19** "*Go and make disciples of all nations ...*" The following points hold true:

2.1.1 Evangelism is a direct command

The '*you will be my witnesses*' and '*Go and make disciples of all nations*' from Jesus to us is not a suggestion or a comment in passing which we can choose to obey or not. Evangelizing about Christ is a command! Evangelism is closely linked to the greatest commandment as described by Jesus in **Matthew 22:37-40**: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.*" We demonstrate and show God our love for Him by being obedient and doing the Great Commission. We demonstrate our love for our neighbors (other people) by telling them about Jesus Christ and trusting God that He will save them. And our neighbors are everyone we meet in our workplaces, children's schools, malls, neighborhoods, communities and wherever else we may be. If all we do is be kind to people and do good deeds for them, this is not true love. Yes it flows out of a place of true love, but true love is revealing to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God wants us to develop a culture of evangelism and to realize that we are on mission all the time for Him and His Kingdom, every day of our lives. Let us stop thinking that we have a right to choose to evangelize, but let us remember that our lives belong to Him and that woe is us if we don't evangelize!

2.1.2 Evangelism through the power of the Holy Spirit

When Jesus saved us, he gave us the gift and power of the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses in the world. Witnessing happens from a place of empowerment by the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit has the power (dynamis-dynamite) to do something explosive when we witness of Jesus Christ. Someone described it like this: "It is an explosive, life-changing dynamic of the Holy Spirit operating through the proclamation of the gospel". We can only witness effectively about Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus the said the following about the Holy Spirit in **John 16:8-11**: *"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."* Because this power is not created by us we are free of trying to do anything else besides witness. In other words we don't have to force, try to get a decision or convert anyone, because only Jesus Christ is the Saviour and it is the work of the Holy Spirit to testify about Him to the lost. It is the Holy Spirit that brings people to repentance and gives them a revelation of Jesus Christ and their need to put their faith in Him. However, the Holy Spirit is in us and works through us to testify about Jesus. If we have not been filled with the Holy Spirit, or empowered by Him, we will never truly know him and be effective witnesses for him.

In **John 3:5-7** Jesus answered, *"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" This means that it is the Holy Spirit who gives people a revelation of Jesus Christ and leads them to being saved, or reborn in Christ. Speaking further of our responsibility in evangelism and God's, God says the following to us from **Isaiah 43:12** "I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and I am God." This scripture once again emphasized that it is God who saves and we are to be his witnesses. We should never become saviours to other people. If people become Christians and all their hope is in us, we will do them more harm and good, and this may lead to heart-ache and stress down the road.*

One of the key results of being filled with the Holy Spirit is witnessing about Jesus Christ. In fact Jesus gave these the very instructions of the Great Commission and to be His witnesses, by the Holy Spirit before He ascended to heaven. Jesus Christ lived in the power of the Holy Spirit as our perfect example. If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, witnessed by the power of the Holy Spirit, how much more should we being doing do? The Bible in **Luke 4** describes how Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, walked in the power of the Spirit and that the Spirit was upon Him which anointed Him to preach good news. See also **Mark 16:19, 20** - *"So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs."*

In the book of Acts there are multiple instances where the term 'filled with the Holy Spirit' is used. From these accounts we see that majority indicate that result of being filled with the Holy Spirit lead to a testimony of Jesus Christ. The one sure evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit in people's lives is that they testify to Jesus! In **Acts 4:33** the Bible records - *"And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."* In **1 Thessalonians 1:5** Paul writes - *"because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and*

in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake."

2.1.3 Jesus is the central theme of our evangelism

Jesus Christ' intention is that witnessing is about Him. He is central to the theme of evangelism and He is supreme above all things. **Read Colossians 1:15-23** and remember the study of **John 1: 1 – 18** in Section 1 of the manual, which speak of the supremacy of Jesus Christ. It is God's plan that in all we do and all our evangelism that we are to bring glory and honour to Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ left the glory of heaven, became flesh, took on all the sin of the world and sacrificed himself on the cross to bring you and me into right standing with God, only He is worthy of glory. In the book of *Revelation chapter 5*, John has a vision of a *'Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne'* and this portion of scripture clearly illustrates why Jesus is to be the centre of everything we say. In **Revelation 5:9** there is a vivid account of the elders and living creatures in heaven falling down before Jesus and worshipping him saying: *'You are worthy to take the scroll and open it seals because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.'* In **Revelation 5: 11-12** Jesus is worshipped in glory by all the angels: *"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"* We will explore the centrality of the Jesus and the cross under the message of the Gospel in the next section. When we realize that we are not called to witness to what mans' itching ears want to hear, but to witness in accordance with the glory of Jesus Christ, we will be set free from our limitations. In Revelation

2.2 Question 2: What does it mean to be an evangelist?

Evangelism is the process of proclaiming the Christian faith, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to nonbelievers i.e. to the lost people who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Evangelism literally translated from the Greek word for 'evangel' means one who carries the good news message of Jesus Christ. It is also more closely related to a powerful and accurate proclamation of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to unbelievers. A term closely associated with evangelism is "witnessing". The term is very appropriate as evangelism involves Christians telling others "news" of what they have "witnessed" or seen of God's grace and goodness. We witness from the Word of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and through personal testimony. All Christians are witnesses, they are either sharing Christ by life and word, or they are not. Some are negative witnesses and others keep silent about their faith. However, we need to be more vibrant and bold about our relationship with Jesus Christ so that people will realize that we have been with Jesus (**Acts 4:13**).

The common example of witnessing that most of us can relate to is the court room scene where someone is being tried for a criminal offense. If there is someone who witnessed the event he or she may be called to give a testimony of what was seen or heard. This is what the apostles were - they were first hand eye witnesses to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus but they passed this message on to the generation after them and so it has been entrusted to generations since then. Even people who have experienced similar actions against them can testify of the implications of the same crime that was committed against them. It's the same with us - we who are saved have a testimony of who Jesus is and what He has done for us regarding salvation and reconciliation with God. We have experienced this first-hand, although we might not have been eye witnesses to His death and resurrection, but we certainly have experienced the results and implications of it. In this case it is about testifying about Jesus Christ. In **John 15:26-27** Jesus says: *"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning."* Where witnessing is about Jesus Christ alone, this is called 'evangelism'.

You and I are called to evangelize about Jesus Christ, to evangelize for Jesus Christ and to evangelize to the lost and point them to Jesus Christ. Then we get out of the way and allow them to meet the Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who saves people, not us! We are merely his instruments. In **Romans 1:16**, Paul writes *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes ... For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

2.3 Question 3: What Evangelism is not?

We will be able to clearly define exactly what evangelism is through defining what evangelism is not. There is a serious concern about a number of things that people take evangelism to be, which it isn't. This case of mistaken identity can have serious consequences. Let us examine five things mistaken for evangelism, with some insights from the book "The Gospel and Personal Evangelism" by Mark Dever.

2.4.1 It is not Imposition

Probably the most common objection to evangelism today is: "Isn't it wrong to impose our beliefs on others?" Some people don't practice evangelism because they feel they are imposing on others. But when you understand what the Bible presents as evangelism, it's not really a matter of imposing your beliefs. It's important to understand that the message you are sharing is not merely opinion or belief but fact. That's why sharing the Gospel cannot be called imposition, any more than a pilot can impose his belief on all the passengers that the runway is here and not there. Furthermore, the truths of the Gospel are not yours, in the sense that they uniquely pertain to your perspective or experience, or in a sense that you came up with them. When you evangelize, you are not merely saying "This is how I like to think of God", or "This is how I see it." You are presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You didn't invent it, and you have no authority to alter it.

In Biblical evangelism we don't impose anything, and in fact we really can't. According to the Bible, evangelism is simply telling the good news of Jesus Christ. It's not making sure that the other person responds to it correctly. I wish we could, but according to the Bible, this is not something we do. According to the Bible the fruit of evangelism comes from God. Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 3:5-7; 2 Corinthians 3:5-6**: *"What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."* Therefore, all you and I can do, is to present the good news accurately, live a life of love towards unbelievers, and pray for God to convict them of their sins and give them the gifts of repentance and faith. True biblical evangelism involves no coercion or forceful imposition, but only proclamation and love. We are to present the free gospel to all, we cannot manipulate anyone to accept it. Biblical Christians know that we can't coerce anyone into life.

2.4.2 It is not Personal testimony

Some think of personal testimony as evangelism, but it is not. Surely personal testimony is a wonderful thing and can be used as an aid in evangelism, which will be discussed in the next section on the Gospel. In the New Testament we see that the lives of Christians test, prove and confirm the claims of Christ. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *"In him you have been enriched in every way – in all your speaking and in all your knowledge – because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you"* (**1 Corinthians 1:5-6**). The truth of the Gospel, which someone once shared with us, is proved in our daily lives. We should testify to this wonderful experience. We should delight in God and share our delight verbally with others.

Personal testimony can certainly contribute to evangelism, but it is not evangelism. The classic example is of the testimony given by the blind man that Jesus healed. When he was questioned after Jesus healed him, he responded, *"Whether he [Jesus] is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"* (**John 9:25**). This is a wonderful powerful testimony, but it's not evangelism. It has no Gospel in it. The man didn't even know who Jesus is. It is often the same with our testimonies. Certainly a testimony of what we know God to have done in our lives may include the good news, but it may also not. In telling people how we have seen God help us, we may not actually make clear his claim on our lives or explain what Christ did on the cross. It's good to share a testimony of what God has done in our lives, but in sharing our testimonies we may not actually make it clear what Christ's claims are on other people. In order to evangelize, we must be clear about that.

Let me share one word of special caution to drive the point home. Testimony is, of course, popular in our post-modern society, 'that's-good-for-you-age'. Society is big on letting everyone do what they feel is good for them. Who would object to your thinking you've gotten something good from Christ? But wait and see what happens when you try to move the conversation from what Jesus has done for you to the facts of the life, death, resurrection of Christ, and how that all applies to your nonbelieving friend. That's when you will discover that testimony is not necessarily evangelism.

Finally, when personal testimony is imposed as the Gospel, Jesus is the only way God but we are not the only way to Jesus. People are not confused by the Gospel, they are confused by us. We cannot strap ourselves to the Gospel, and maybe the best thing we can do is to just get out of the way.

2.4.3 It is not Social action or public involvement

Some people mistake social action or public involvement for evangelism. We could spend our entire lives trying to uplift the poor, helping the abused, getting involved good causes designed to improve society like mercy ministries, helping the oppressed, changing societal wrongs (like racism, or child slavery), providing shelter to the homeless, giving food to the hungry, bringing about greater social equity, helping the destitute in natural disasters, living a generous life style to others, eliminating crime, but this is not evangelism. Of all the actions designed to improve society, some are wonderful such as the abolition of slavery, and some are terrible such as legalizing abortion. But none of them, not even the best, are the gospel of Jesus Christ. Being involved in mercy ministries may help to commend the gospel, which is why Jesus taught, *“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16)*. Peter echoed this when he wrote that we should *“live such good lives amongst the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us” (1 Peter 2:12)*. Displaying God’s kindness and compassion by our actions is an extremely good and appropriate thing for Christians to do. Jesus taught us to have great compassion for the poor and the oppressed through good deeds towards them. But such actions are not evangelism. They commend the Gospel, but they share it with no one.

To be evangelistic, the Gospel must be clearly communicated, whether in written or oral form. When our eyes fall from God to humanity, social ills replace sin, horizontal problems replace the fundamental vertical problem between us and God, and winning favor with men through good deeds eclipses winning souls for God. Evangelism is not about good deeds, nor creating a better world, nor eradicating poverty, nor is it recruiting people for your church, but it is a declaration of the Gospel to individual men and women. Societies are challenged and changed when, through the Gospel, the Lord brings individual men and women together in churches to display his character and to pursue their own callings in the world.

2.4.4 It is not Apologetics

Like the other activities we’ve considered above, apologetics is a good thing. We are instructed by Peter to always be ready to give a reason for the hope that we have **(1 Peter 3:15)**. Apologetics is doing exactly that. It is answering questions and objections people may have about God or Christ, or about the Bible or the message of the Gospel. Apologists for Christianity argue for its truth. Apologetics can present wonderful opportunities for evangelism. Being willing to engage in conversations about where we came from or what’s wrong with this world or what is our purpose in life can be a significant way to introduce honest discussions about the Gospel. For that matter, Christians can raise questions with their non-Christian friends about what will happen after death, or the identity of Jesus Christ, or about the world ending. Any of these topics will take careful thought, but they can easily lead into evangelism.

Some of the dangers of apologetics is that you might unwittingly confirm someone in their unbelief by your inability to answer questions that are impossible to answer anyway. You may also leave the impression that if you don't know how to answer your friend's questions, then you don't really know enough to believe that the Christian faith is true either. All knowledge is limited in this world. And everyone in the world and society is seeking to rationalize everything and to work it out. However, the greatest danger with apologetics is being distracted from the core of the Gospel message. Evangelism is not defending the Christian faith, or defending the virgin birth, or defending the historicity of the resurrection. Apologetics is about defending the Christian faith or answering questions others have about Christianity. Apologetics is responding to agendas that other people have set. Evangelism, however, is following Christ's agenda, and the news about Him. Evangelism is the positive act of telling the good news about Jesus Christ and the way of salvation through him, without having to engage necessarily in apologetics of why.

2.5.5 It is not the Results of Evangelis

One of the most common and dangerous mistakes in evangelism is to misinterpret the results of evangelism – the conversion of unbelievers – for evangelism itself, which remember is simply telling the Gospel message. Evangelism must not be confused with its fruit. Now if you combine this subtle misunderstanding with a misunderstanding of the Gospel message itself, and of what the Bible teaches about conversion, then it is very possible to end up thinking not only that evangelism is seeing others converted, but thinking that it is within your power to do it! According to the Bible, converting people is not in our power. And evangelism may not be defined in terms of results but only in terms of faithfulness to the preaching the message of the Gospel. John Stott said that to 'evangelize' does not mean to win converts ... but simply to announce the good news, irrespective of the results. At a gathering in Lausanne in 1974, evangelism was defined as follows: "To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe."

Paul wrote, *"We are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death, to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?" (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)*. Note that the ministry has two different effects. As with the parable of the soils, it is not that certain evangelistic techniques always lead to salvations. The same seed was planted in various soils and places. The outcome varied not according to how the seed was planted but according to the nature of the soil. Just as Paul could not judge whether he was preaching correctly based upon how people responded to his message, so we cannot finally judge the correctness of what we do by the immediate response that we see. We need to be faithful to God by preaching the message of the Gospel. Finally one book summarized evangelism as follows:

“Evangelism is not persuading men to make a decision; it is not proving that God exists, or making out a good case for the truth of Christianity; it is not inviting someone to a meeting; it is not exposing the contemporary dilemma, or arousing interest in Christianity; it is not wearing a badge saying ‘Jesus saves!’ Some of these things may be right and good in their place, but none of them should be confused with evangelism. To evangelize is to declare on the authority of God what he has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

3. Conclusion: Evangelizing using your testimony

In the book “Billy Graham Christian Worker’s Handbook”, Billy Graham writes that in evangelism, your example is essential and our lives must reflect our profession or word. By our example we establish credibility and build confidence and trust, which prepare the way for presenting Christ. However, we need to be far more than merely an example, and we need to use our mouths to verbalize the Gospel. A Christian evangelizes objectively by sharing the facts of the Gospel, and subjectively by sharing his or her own experiences in Christ. We should not overlook the value and potential effectiveness of our own testimony. The first real impression some people will get concerning Christ’s power to transform a life (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) will be through hearing about what Jesus has done for us. Paul shared again and again his Damascus road experience (**see Acts 9 and other**). Note how in **Acts 9:20**, Paul immediately began proclaiming Jesus and that Jesus is the Son of God. He didn’t wait for many years or undergo theological training in the Gospel. He began evangelizing immediately through his testimony and through his revelation of the saving work of Jesus Christ.

We need to realize that we as Christians have been saved by the Gospel (by the grace of Jesus on the cross), through the Gospel (through hearing and responding to it) and for the Gospel (for being a witness of Jesus Christ to the world). From the day we are saved by Jesus Christ, we have a testimony, and this is powerful! God is able to use our testimonies to reach the lost and to make His saving power known through our personal example. Through our experiences and testimonies, the lost sinner, who is trapped in a similar sinful and a lost way of life, is able to relate to us and our experiences. Our testimonies are able to unlock the hearts of the unbeliever, and present a door for the Gospel. Remember that all of us have different testimonies and that God wants to use the story of your life to reach a certain group of people that others may not reach.

The testimony of a changed life is powerful and will move others to seek Christ! God is able to use our testimonies to reach the lost and to make His saving power known through our personal example. In my own life, I used to be a womanizer, an alcoholic, a liar, a man of unclean lips, a party-animal, a member of a secret cult called the Freemasons, a self-centered individual, a man of a depraved mind, a lustful man, a womanizer and a new husband who had messed up his marriage after only 6 months. I was the worst of sinners, very lost and far from the truth of God. But one day when I hit rock bottom and my life lay shattered in pieces, I cried out to Jesus Christ and He miraculously saved me. I realized the incomprehensible love and mercy of Jesus Christ for me through His life. I realized that He had died in my place on the Cross to forgive me of my sins and to take on the wrath of God in my place. I learned that

by putting my faith in Him and in His resurrection from the dead, I would be saved, receive eternal life and be born into His Kingdom. From this point on I repented of my sins and began to follow Jesus Christ. The first year of my salvation was incredibly difficult and marked by suffering. I lost my friends, faced intense persecution and paid a high price for becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. Since then he restored me, restored my marriage, gave me a new family in Northpoint City Church, gave me a hope, gave me a future, revealed His purposes for my life and transformed me into a new creation. I am still constantly learning, growing and there is much that Christ has yet to work in and through my life. But as I stand, I have an intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ, I desire to become more like Him and I am passionate to walk in His purposes for my life.

Personal testimony can certainly contribute to evangelism, but it is not evangelism. The classic example is of the testimony given by the blind man that Jesus healed. When he was questioned after Jesus healed him, he responded, "Whether he [Jesus] is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (**John 9:25**). This is a wonderful powerful testimony, but it's not evangelism. It has no Gospel in it. The man didn't even know who Jesus is. It is often the same with our testimonies. Certainly a testimony of what we know God to have done in our lives may include the good news, but it may also not. In telling people how we have seen God help us, we may not actually make clear his claim on our lives or explain what Christ did on the cross. It's good to share a testimony of what God has done in our lives, but in sharing our testimonies we may not actually make it clear what Christ's claims are on other people. In order to evangelize, we must be clear about that. Therefore, in all we do, we have to bring people to the Cross and to Jesus Christ, for it is Him only who saves our lives (**Romans 1:16**). It is critical that when sharing our testimony, we are able to articulate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because it is the Gospel that saves people. Billy Graham writes the following on witnessing: "*We are stewards of the Gospel. The power to proclaim the greatest news in heaven and earth was not given to the angles; it was given to redeemed men and women. Every Christian is to be a witness and every follower of Christ is to preach the Gospel. We can preach by sharing our experiences with others. We can preach by exalting Christ in our daily lives. The truth is, the best sermons are both heard and seen.*" However, there is an inherent danger of falling into the trap of just being a living example, and not proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is just an excuse not to evangelize. With reference to **Romans 10:13-15**, sinners will never hear the Gospel and come to believe in Jesus Christ, if we don't open our mouths and preach to them. We will now turn our attention to examining the basic facets of the Gospel message.

The following are key ingredients of an effective and Christ-centered testimony:

1. What my life was like before I received Jesus Christ;
2. How I met Him and receive Him (i.e. the instrument/s and circumstances that God used to save me);
3. What my life has been like since I received Him (i.e. what He has done in me since I became a Christian and what change has occurred); and

4. A revelation of the Gospel i.e. Creator God, Sinful Me, The work of Jesus Christ (the Cross and Life) and My Response (repentance and faith in Jesus Christ).

5. Homework

Read attached Sermon of John-Mark Kilian: *At the foot of His Cross there is mercy for sinners and life evermore*. I have used my testimony in this sermon as a tool to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers.

Your homework is to in 1 - 2 pages write down your testimony, using the ingredients indicated above and what you have learnt in the Evangelism elective to date, as though you were writing it to your unbelieving friend (the one you were praying for) in the hope that they would respond and be saved. Remember that your testimony must point them to Jesus Christ and to His saving work. This testimony will be a powerful practical tool that you can use into the future in your evangelism.

6. Further reading

Billy Graham Christian Worker's Handbook. A topical guide with Biblical answers to the urgent concerns of our day.

Mark Dever – *The Gospel and personal evangelism* - Book

Sermon by D.L. Moody – *The Lord's work* – refer to handout

Sermon by Smiths Wigglesworth – *Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon thee* – refer to handout.

SECTION 3: THE GOSPEL MESSAGE OR THE “GOOD NEWS”

The Christians of the first century “*turned the world upside down*” (**Acts 17:6**) because they had a sense of urgency about the Gospel message of Christ. Paul said “*Woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel*” (**1 Corinthians 9:16**). We will now examine what is the Gospel message. But before we do, we will briefly examine witnessing by example and testimony.

1. Introduction

Christianity is all about good news, which is really the best news the world has ever heard. It is through the preaching of this news to the lost that they are to hear, believe in Jesus Christ, call on His name and be saved. This is why it is good news, as it saves the undeserving and unworthy sinner and brings them into the everlasting Kingdom of Jesus Christ. We are not worthy of such a great salvation, but we have free access to it by God’s grace and through faith in Jesus Christ. You and I deserved the wrath of almighty God for our sins, but Jesus Christ took our place and bought us peace with God through his blood shed on that cross. That is why the good news is too good to be true, especially as all we need to do is to respond and believe. We don’t even need to fix our cursed condition or try and be a good person to receive it. Through the good news, the sinner becomes conscious of his sinful powerless condition, has a revelation of the one true righteous God, receives mercy for his sins, finds the amazing grace of the finished work of Jesus Christ on that cross, puts his faith in Jesus Christ, gains everlasting life, receives the gift of the Holy Spirit and rises a new creation in the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. And yet that news often gets scrambled and confused. That which passes for the good news too often becomes a very thin sheet spread lightly over our culture’s values, becoming shaped and formed according to the norms of society and mans’ opinions, rather than the truth of God. When this happens, it is no longer good news, as the truth that sets man free from his separation to God and his sinful condition, is completely lost. It is the offensive truth of Jesus Christ that saves us, not the societal poison of “*love all, make peace and be a good person*”.

In past centuries Christians used to be tainted as aggressive and offensive in their evangelism of the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. Through the uncompromised preaching of the Gospel in days gone by, millions of people all over the world came to know Christ Jesus and revival broke out in many places. Those days are gone. Today Christians lean strongly towards offering Jesus as appealing to society or not offering Him at all. We tend to sugar-coat Jesus because we don’t want to offend anyone and we want to preserve our reputations. Rather, we let the customer, or the person who is offended, define what is appealing, what we should say and what we should believe. As a result we compromise

on the Truth of God for an empty appealing or enjoyable or powerless portrayal of Jesus Christ. We therefore stop speaking the good news of Jesus Christ, because it becomes too offensive, or even worse, we stop believing it. What also happens is that the person receiving the good news finds it to be arrogant instead of humble and loving. We then feel guilty and become apologetic to the person who is offended. In this situation we then tend to change the good news so that the other person will not feel unloved and we conform to *“God is loving to everyone and He will not offend anyone”*. When this happens, the inherent power of the Gospel, in God unto salvation for all who believe, is completely lost. The root of the problem is an epidemic fear of man rather than a fear of God, and a tragic self-preservation of ourselves rather than losing everything for Jesus Christ. The result is that in the name of marketing savvy or sensitive communication, cowardice capitulates to the world, and we surrender the offensive truth of the good news about Christ’s uniqueness and supremacy above all things. We lose the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation and instead compromise that there are many roads to salvation and multiple saviors.

3. The Gospel Message

Fundamentally the Gospel is the revelation of who God is, who we are, and how we can be reconciled to Him. Unfortunately, in a world where self reigns as king, we have a dangerous tendency to misunderstand, minimize and even manipulate the Gospel in order to accommodate our assumptions and desires. It is therefore imperative that we understand what the Bible says is the Gospel. We will now examine

- 1) Who truly is God?
- 2) Who truly are we?
- 3) What or who we truly need and,
- 4) How we need to respond?

In writing these sections I have sought to challenge you in your walk with Jesus Christ. As you read these sections, remember the following two questions for your life:

- 1) Am I following Jesus Christ with everything I am and everything I have?
- 2) Is Jesus Christ being glorified in and through my life?

If you and I are not following Jesus in the manner that the Bible teaches, then how can we possibly expect those that we evangelize to do the same?

2.1 Who truly is God?

The Gospel reveals the glory of God. According to the Bible, He is sovereign Creator of all things (***Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 24:1-2***). He knows all things (***Job 37:16***), sustains all things (***Psalms 36:6; 104:24-30***), and owns all things (***Deuteronomy 10:14***). He is holy above all (***1 Samuel 2:2***). He is righteous in all

His ways (**Deuteronomy 32:4**), just in all his wrath (**Romans 3:5-6**), and loving towards all he has made (**John 3:16; 1 John 4:16**).

We often mask the beauty of the Gospel by minimizing God's attributes. If we are clearly to preach the Gospel, we need to understand God's attributes as described in scripture. We always portray God as a "Loving Father to all He has made", and He is certainly that. But He is also a wrathful judge. In His wrath He hates sin. Habakkuk prayed to God: "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil, you cannot tolerate wrong (**Habakkuk 1:13**). In the first 50 Psalms in the Bible, God speaks more than fifteen times about His hatred for sin, his wrath towards liars, and so on. In **John chapter 3 (3:16 and 36)** we find one of the most famous scriptures about God's love but also one of the most neglected about God's wrath.

The Gospel reveals the eternal realities about God that we would sometimes not face. We often sit back and enjoy the benefits of God that He loves us and is there to help us always, while ignoring God as a Judge who has the power to damn us and throw us into hell. We are afraid that if we really look at God in His Word, we might discover that he evokes greater awe and demands deeper worship than we are ready to give Him. But this is just the point. We are not ready to give ourselves to him and to obey him because our hearts are set against him. God's revelation in the Gospel not only reveals who he is, but also who we really are.

God created man and women for relationship and fellowship with Him. He created man and women in His image and in a state of perfection, before sin and death entered the world. He placed them in the Garden of Eden, which was a kind of heaven on earth, to rule over all and to steward the garden and all life. Read **Genesis 1: 27 – 2:25**. And until now, His plan is to have fellowship with man through Jesus Christ. In **John 3: 16** Jesus said of himself – "*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" The whole of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is about Jesus Christ, through whom God's attributes are most revealed to man i.e. **John 1:1 - 18**. In verse 1 the Bible says: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*" The Bible says of Jesus later in verse 14 – "*The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us*". The Word of God is the revelation of who God is, and this revelation became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, to understand the person and work of Jesus Christ, it to understand God. But the portion of scripture clearly reveals us or man in **John 1:10 – 11** – "*He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.*"

2.2 Who truly are we?

The core truth of the Gospel is this: People are spiritually dead, just as corpses in a cemetery are physically dead, and only words from God can bring them to spiritual life. The reality is that until Jesus saves us, we are the "Living Dead". We are like the murderers waiting on death row for their final punishment – execution and death! Except the judgement and wrath of Almighty God is to throw the spiritually dead into hell for eternal torment and torture where not even death is luxury.

This is the reality about humanity. We are born with an evil, God-hating heart. **Genesis 8:21** says that every part of man's heart is evil from childhood, and Jesus words in **Luke 11:13** assume that we know we are evil. Many people say that "Well, I have always loved God", but the reality is that no one has. We may have loved a god that we made up in our minds, but the God of the Bible, we hate. In our evil we rebel against God. We take the law of God, written in His Word and on our hearts (our consciences), and we disobey it. This is the picture of the first sin by Adam and Eve in **Genesis 3**. Even if God has said not to eat from the tree of knowledge, we are going to do it anyway. We know that because of Adam and Eve's sin, sin entered the world, death entered the world, and so all of man is fallen (i.e. all of us are born with sin and decaying bodies because Adam and Eve's DNA is in us) – see **Romans 5: 12-21**. All of us rebel against our Creator's authority over us. The seas, the mountains, the winds, the rains, all go where He tells them to go! All of creation responds in obedience to its Creator, until we get to you and me. We have the audacity to look God in the face and say "No!"

Jesus said that anyone who sins is a slave to sin, and Paul went as far to say that they are captive to the devil himself (**John 8:34; 2 Timothy 2:26**). And because we are slaves to sin, we are blinded to God's truth. Ephesians 4:18 tells us that we are darkened in our understanding and our hearts are like stone. According to **2 Corinthians 4:4**, we can't even see Christ because of the depth of our spiritual blindness. The Bible describes us as enemies of God and objects of his wrath. We are spiritually dead and eternally separated from God (See **Romans 5:10-12; 6:23; 8:10; Ephesians 2:1,3;5:14; James 4:4**). What's worse is that we can do nothing to change our status before God. No one who is morally evil can choose good, no man who is a slave can set himself free, no woman who is blind can give herself sight, no one who is an object of wrath can appease that wrath, and no person who is dead can cause himself to come to life.

The Gospel confronts us with the hopelessness of our sinful condition. But we don't like what we see about ourselves in the Gospel, so we shrink back from it. We live in a world of self-improvement, survival of the fittest and intellectual evolution. We think that certainly there are steps we can take to make ourselves better. So we modify what the Gospel says about us. We are not evil, we think, and certainly not spiritually dead. We are good people and our lives are just fine. Haven't you heard of the power of positive thinking? I can become a better me and experience my best life now. Because of our self-sufficiency, self-esteem and self-confidence, we simply add some Christian or religious tick boxes and steps or prayers that we need to follow for us to be alright in the end. The new-age Gospel says that "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life". This is all true, but until we accept Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the Bible says "**You are an enemy of God, dead in your sin, and in your present state of rebellion, you are not even able to see that you need life, much less to cause yourself to come to life. Therefore, you and I are radically dependent on God to do something in our lives that we could never do**".

In the Gospel, God reveals the depth of our need for him. He shows us that there is absolutely nothing we can do to come to Him, or to initiate salvation. God has to open our eyes, set us free, overcome our

evil, and appease His wrath. He has to come to us. Now we are getting to the beauty of the Gospel or the Good News.

2.3 What (or Whom) we truly need?

All religions, other than Christianity, believe that God is far from us and up on high. They believe that humanity must climb an impossibly never-ending mountain of religious rules and regulations in a desperate attempt to get close to God. But what if I told you that the God of the Bible doesn't wait for people to try and come to Him, He comes to us? Let me introduce you to Jesus. This is the Gospel. As long as you and I believe that salvation is found through self-improvement or religion, we find ourselves in a sea of other religions that actually condemn the human race by exalting our supposed ability to get to God. On the other hand, when you and I realize that we are morally evil, dead in sin, and deserving of God's wrath with no way out on our own, we begin to discover our desperate need for Christ.

Our understanding of who God really is and who we really are, drastically affects our understanding of who Christ is and why we need Him. For example, if God is our loving Father who only wants to help people, then we will see Christ as a mere example of love. We will view the Cross as just a demonstration of God's love in which he allowed Roman soldiers to crucify his Son so that sinful man would know how much he loves us. This is a woefully inaccurate depiction of everything that the Cross is. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus sweated blood and cried out to His Father to take away this cup if possible. Jesus was not afraid of the Cross or of what the Romans or Pharisees would do to Him. Jesus was not referring to his physical crucifixion. This "cup" is a reference to God's wrath and divine judgement (***Matthew 26:39; Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:22; Jeremiah 25:15; Revelation 14:10***). Jesus was trembling the garden because He was the Saviour who was about to endure divine wrath for you and me. This is why Jesus sweated blood and tears. All God's holy wrath and hatred towards sin and sinners, stored up since the creation of the world, was about to be poured out onto Jesus, who would take your and my place on that Cross. What happened on that Cross was not about nails being thrust into Jesus hands' and feet, but about the wrath due your and my sin being thrust on Jesus' soul. In that Holy moment, all the Holy wrath and judgment, that was due you and me, came hurtling down like a rushing torrent on Christ himself. And in that moment God turned His face away from Jesus because He could not bear to see your and my sin on His One and Only Son. Jesus drank the full cup of God's wrath, in your and my place, and for us. He was the sacrifice that ransomed us from sins and bought us peace and acceptance with God. He was a substitute in your and my place. He redeemed us from the slavery of sin, and gave us His righteousness and perfection with God.

This is the Gospel. The just and loving Creator of the universe has looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent his Son, God in the flesh, to bear his wrath against sin on the cross and to show his power over sin in the resurrection so that all who trust in him will be reconciled to God forever. When we understand who truly God is, and who we truly are, then we can truly understand how much God loves us and what price He had to pay to rescue us back into relationship and right-standing with Him. This is why the news is almost too good to be true.

In the book of Acts, and in **1 Corinthians 2:2**, we see that the Apostle Paul preached Jesus Christ, Him crucified and His resurrection. If we are to clearly understand the Gospel and to preach the Good News, we need to understand what Jesus achieved on the Cross and through His resurrection. We will deal with this in point 3 of this section.

2.4 How should we truly respond?

So how do we respond to the Gospel? We cannot limit the response to our traditional church practices of inviting people to pray the sinners prayer, or raising their hands to receive salvation, or merely inviting Jesus to come into your life. David Platt says that our attempt to reduce the Gospel to a shrink-wrapped presentation that persuades someone to say or pray the right things no longer seems appropriate. We do not find these phrases in the Bible, and we also do not find an emphasis on people accepting Jesus. David Platt writes that we have taken the infinitely glorious Son of God, who endured the infinitely terrible wrath of God and who now reigns as the infinitely worthy Lord of all, and we have reduced Him to a poor, puny Savior just begging us to accept Him. He writes that do we really think that Jesus needs our acceptance? Don't we need Him? No! Rather a more appropriate response is required. Surely the Gospel invokes more than just a prayer or invitation?

It invokes a radical surrender of all that we are and all that we have to all that He is. **Read Luke 9: 23-27 and Luke 14: 25-33.** In **Luke 18:18-25**, a rich man came to Jesus and asked Him what He must do to inherit eternal life. The rich man had observed all of the law and then Jesus responded the following in verse 22 – *“You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”* The God of the Bible demands **TOTAL SURRENDER AND TRUST IN HIM ABOVE ALL THINGS**. When we lead people to Jesus Christ for salvation, we need to consider whether we are telling them the truth and whether their salvation is authentic. In the light of this, Jesus' words at the end of the Sermon on the Mount are some of the most humbling in all scripture – **Read Matthew 7:21-23**. Jesus was not speaking here to agnostic persons, or to atheists or irreligious people. He was speaking to devoutly religious persons who were deluded in thinking they were on the narrow road that leads to heaven when in fact they were on the broad road that leads to hell. The danger of deceiving people, with a sugar-coated message to invoke a fake response, is very real. Responding to Jesus is not a one-time response or intellectual decision to follow Jesus. The grace teaching says that we can come to Jesus for salvation and then we can carry on sinning because we are under grace. This teaching is deluded and much evangelism today is along these lines. Millions flock to this teaching, but the risk is that we are leading millions of souls astray.

The Good News of Jesus Christ leads us to a much different response. Here the Gospel demands and enables us to turn from our sin, to take up our cross, to die to ourselves and to follow Jesus. David Platt writes that now salvation consists of a deep wrestling in our souls with the sinfulness of our hearts, in the depth of our depravity, and the desperation of our need for his grace. Jesus is no longer the one to be accepted or invited in but one who is infinitely worthy of our immediate and total surrender. When

we realize this, then we can understand what grace truly is and what real love means and how infinite is the mercy of Christ. Read Ephesians chapter 2. In **Ephesians 2:8** the Bible says *“it is by grace you are saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the Gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”* We are saved from our sins by the free gift of God’s grace, which is something that only God can do in us and that we cannot manufacture.

But the gift of grace involves a new heart and new desires. For the first time, we want God. We see our need for Him, and we love Him. We seek after him, and we find him, and we discover that he is indeed the great reward of our salvation. We realize that we are saved not just to be forgiven of our sins or to be assured of our salvation in heaven, but we are saved to know God. So we now yearn for Him. We want Him so much that we abandon everything else just to experience him. **THIS IS THE ONLY PROPER RESPONSE TO THE REVELATION OF THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL, OR THE GOOD NEWS.** This is why you and I and those we evangelize to, cannot settle for anything less than a God-centered, Christ-exalting and self-denying Gospel.

Also read the following scriptures on the response to the Good News and how to follow Jesus: **John 3: 16-21; John 5: 24-27; John 6:35-58; John 14: 5-14; Romans 10:8-17.**

However, the Gospel message would lack power unless it is rooted in the work of Jesus Christ. Paul, the great apostle of the faith, resolved to proclaim Jesus Christ, Him crucified and resurrected. Therefore, the next section examines some key truths that we should be explaining in our message to those that are lost.

3. The key truths of Jesus Christ

When we read through the book of Acts and looking at the life of Paul and the other Apostles, there were 3 key truths, which they proclaimed about Jesus Christ, which we are to proclaim in our evangelism i.e. *that*:

1. Jesus is the Christ i.e. He is God;
2. Jesus had to suffer on the Cross; and
3. The resurrection of Christ.

We cannot compromise on these 3 truths. Sadly, it is these 3 truths that are been watered down by the church. The enemy and a pluralistic belief system that says, *“there are many saviours and many roads to God – whichever one you chose is right”*, have come distort and hide these truths. And it is these 3 truths about Christ that set the world free. We have to ask ourselves, is this the message that we are speaking in our workplaces, to our friends, in our communities, in our schools, in the malls, in our sports etc.? Or are we preaching a wishy washy watered down consumer message which is acceptable to all? The purpose of this section is to equip us from the Word of God in some key facets of these truths, which will help us to evangelize about Jesus Christ.

3.1 Jesus is God

Our conviction and revelation from scripture has to be that Jesus is the Christ, or is the one and only true God. In other words, we need to be absolutely convinced of the truth that Jesus is God. Without this conviction everything we do and say will lack power and effectiveness. For this we need to examine what Jesus said about this.

Jesus clearly and repeatedly said of himself that he is God. Jesus taught this himself and it is recorded in scripture. Christians did not make this up. In **John 6:38 – 60** Jesus claims that He came down from heaven. He stated that He is the bread of life. He was sent from the Father. In *verse 40* Jesus said *“For my Fathers will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”* The Bible says in *verse 60* that on hearing Jesus words, many of his disciples said, *“This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it.”* The truth of Jesus will bring offense, rejection or acceptance.

See **Mark 14: 60 – 65**. *“And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you? But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, “I am”, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds in heaven. And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witness do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving of death.”*

On a prior account Jesus was speaking about himself and saying that he knows the Father and the Father knows him. See **John 8:56-59** - *“You father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad. So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out to the temple.”* Jesus claimed eternity in saying that he existed before Abraham, who lived about 2,000 years B.C. Further in naming himself “I am” Jesus was declaring himself to be the same God who revealed himself by the title “I am” some 1,400 years prior when he spoke out of a burning bush to Moses (**Exodus 3**). As a result those who hated Jesus rightly understood him as declaring himself to be the eternal God who saved Abraham and called Moses. Consequently, they called him a blasphemer for claiming to be God and imposed the death penalty on the cross. See also **John 10:30-33**. Jesus said *“I and the Father are One”*.

In history many people have claimed to speak for God, and today it is even more rife. Examples are Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad, Gandhi etc. But none of them ever claimed to be God, and took they took the time to ensure that people knew this. Jesus was the only person to ever claim this. Therefore, either he was a lunatic, a liar or he was telling the truth. And the fulfillment of scripture, from the prophets of the old testament, to what Jesus said of himself and what would happen, proves that he is God. To disprove what Jesus claimed about himself, is to disprove that Jesus could forgive sins on the cross, that the resurrection is false, that Jesus did not ascend to glory, that the coming judgement will not happen,

that the return of Christ and the hope of eternal life for all who believe in him is not true. This means that people in world do not need to repent and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

3.2 Jesus had to suffer on the Cross

What Jesus accomplished on the Cross is being watered down in our preaching in the world and our churches, so that we can accommodate many other saviours, religions and gods. The cross is the height of offense to a non-believer in Christ, because it means that He is in need of a Saviour and acceptance of what Jesus did on that cross to save him/her. The doctrine of what Jesus accomplished on the cross is called Atonement. In order for us to understand why Jesus had to suffer, we have to understanding the following facts:

1. God is holy and without sin;
2. God made us holy and without sin;
3. Sin results in death;
4. Jesus was sinless;
5. We are sinful;
6. Jesus became our sin (**2 Corinthians 5:21**) – “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”; and
7. Jesus died for us.

The word “for us” has huge implications. Read **Romans 3:21 – 26**.

3.2.1 Jesus died as a substitute in our place

The Bible says in **Romans 5:6** - “*You see at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.* Jesus was a sacrifice of atonement for our sins. Jesus died as a pure and perfect lamb sacrificed for us, to make atonement for our sins. In the Old Testament, the high priest had to make atonement for the sins of the people and himself, through the slaughtering of un-blemished animals and through their blood. He would then give this as an offering to God, or a substitute in place of the people, as the law demanded. The law demanded that all of break it are guilty of death (Read **Leviticus**). **Romans 2** explain the coming judgement and wrath of God against sinners. It explains that sinners will perish. Because death is the penalty for sinners, the only way that the death of sinless Jesus can be understood is in terms of substitution. The sinless Jesus literally stood in our place to suffer and die for us. In doing so Jesus is our savior who alone can take away the curse we deserve because of our sin. God’s holy wrath, judgement and punishment that we deserved for our sins, Jesus took on himself in our place (**Isaiah 53:5**) – “*But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our inequities, upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.*”

We also need to understand that it is the blood and perfect sacrifice of Jesus that cleansed us from our sin and made us right with God. **Hebrews 9:14** “*How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that*

*lead to death, so that we may serve the living God". **Hebrews 10:10** "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." **1 Peter 2:24**: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds we are healed."*

Martin Luther coined this Great Act of Mercy and Giving of Eternal Life as **THE GREAT EXCHANGE**: He said "On the cross Jesus exchanged his perfection for our imperfection, his obedience for our disobedience, his intimacy with God the Father for our distance from God the Father, his blessing for our curse, his peace with God for God's wrath on us, his righteousness for our un-righteousness, and his life for our death."

Without Jesus taking away our sins on the cross, there is no forgiveness for sins and only eternal punishment and wrath. That is why understanding the cross is crucial to salvation.

3.2.2 Jesus declared us "Not guilty"

Jesus **justified** us on the cross. Because we are sinners, there is a debt to pay for our sin. We are like murderers, who receive a legal sentence when pronounced guilty i.e. the death penalty or life imprisonment for our crimes. In terms of the law we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We have all broken the letter of the law, and therefore the legal verdict against us is "Guilty". This debt is death. **Romans 6: 23** says "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." As God is a holy, just and righteous God who cannot tolerate sin. Therefore, the justice of God is in question. In his forbearance he left sins unpunished ... As he is a just God, he had to take out his wrath. God took out his full wrath for our sins on Jesus on that cross. As a result Jesus paid the full ransom for our sins on the cross. That is why the cross is such an amazing gift, but so many reject this gift. Therefore, when people believe in Christ as their savior, they are justified. From a negative point they are pronounced "Not-Guilty" of their sin, and from a positive point they are declared as righteous. Even though we are all sinners and not perfect, God will declare those who put their trust in Jesus as not guilty, but righteous. Therefore, no one can be declared righteous by merely observing the law.

Furthermore, through Jesus Christ we are "imputed righteousness". The term implies that because Christ died to pay the penalty for our sin and lived a life of perfect righteousness that can be imputed to us. Therefore we stand before God as though we have never sinned. When the devil accuses us before God, God sees the righteousness and blood of Christ. He does not see our sin.

We have to understand that we have to accept Christ through faith in order to be justified i.e. believing in him and what he did on the cross. The reality is that there is a day of judgement and wrath coming. Those that have not accepted Christ as the Lord and Savior will face the full punishment of God for their sins. Christ took on the full wrath of God on the cross for us who would believe in Him. He therefore deflected God's wrath away from us to himself, which is called propitiation. But there is no turning of God's wrath away for those sinners that do not believe in Christ. Therefore, the central theme in

justification is that although people clearly and totally deserve to be declared guilty, God declares them righteous because of their trust in Jesus. This righteousness is:

- A free gift from God
- Given through His grace (not because of anything we have done)
- Through redemption that came from Jesus

Through Jesus Christ's death on the cross we also receive "redemption". A word taken from the slave market. The basic idea is that of obtaining release by payment of a ransom. Paul uses this word to refer to the release from the verdict of being pronounced "Guilty", with its liability for judgement. This also refers to deliverance from slavery to sin, because Christ in his death paid the ransom to set us free."

3.3 The resurrection of Jesus Christ

In **Luke 24: 1 – 3** the Scripture is clear that the resurrection of Jesus is both fact and faith. The historical fact is that Jesus Christ alone has risen from death. Because Jesus conquered death, we can live with certainty of what awaits us on the other side of the grave. We can live with full assurance in our own eternal life and resurrection one day. The resurrection of Jesus is the most known and celebrated miracle in the history of the world. It is the core issue of our Christian faith. John Stott stated that "Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion. The concept of resurrection lies at the heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed." The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 15:3-8** that Jesus appeared to the Twelve disciples after his resurrection. He then appeared to more than 500 people, who were still living at the time when Paul wrote to the Corinthians. He appeared to all the apostles. Therefore, there is compelling eye witness cases of Jesus resurrection.

Read the following scriptures concerning the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: **1 Corinthians 15:14**: "*If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.*" **1 Corinthians 15:17**: "*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.*" Mark Driscoll states that if Jesus did not bodily rise in victory over death, then Christianity is nothing more than a cruel hoax dreamt up by liars to give false hope to gullible fools. Christianity rests on the certainty of Jesus resurrection in history. All four Gospels describe the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances of Christ. The book of Acts insists on it throughout. Paul regarded the Resurrection of as indisputable proof of the message about Jesus as Judge and Savior is true (**Acts 17:31; 1 Cor 15**). Jesus resurrection demonstrated his victory over death (**Acts 2:24**), It vindicated him as righteous (**John 16:10**) and indicated his divine identity (**Romans 1:4**). It led on to his ascension and enthronement. It guarantees the believer's present forgiveness of sins and justification, and is the basis of resurrection life for the believer here, now and in when Christ returns.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead then there is no victory over death, he is a liar and he is not God. This would mean that he did not ascend into heaven and is now not seated on the throne. This would mean that He is not coming back one day and that you and I have no hope of eternal life when we die. All is

uncertain! The sad truth is that we celebrate the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ over Easter all over the world. Many people believe in the historical fact of the resurrection of Christ, but have not come to put their faith in Him.

4. Homework

Share your written testimony and the Gospel with the unsaved person that you have been praying for. Invite this person for coffee, lunch or trust the Holy Spirit to give you the right approach and opportunity. Pray, be bold, rely utterly on the Holy Spirit and just do it! This is where the rubber hits the road and where we need to begin evangelizing. I have faith in you. Jesus has faith in you and has called you. Even if you think that you've messed it up when you've done it, Jesus looks at your heart of obedience to Him and your desire to make His name known. This is what counts! Jesus is the God of the supernatural and uses our weaknesses and broken words to do extra-ordinary miracles.

5. Further reading

See evangelism pamphlet handout.

Marc Driscoll and Gerry Breshears – *“Vintage Jesus”* – (Book)

David Platt – *“Radical”* – (Book)

John Piper – *“Don’t waste your life”* – (Book)

J.I. Packer – *“Concise Theology, A guide to historic Christian beliefs”* – (Book)

John Piper – *“Jesus, The Only Way to God”* – (Book)

John MacArthur – *“Ashamed of the Gospel?”* – (Book)

SECTION 4: PRACTICAL OUTWORKING OF EVANGELISM

1. How Should We Evangelize?

With reference to Section 2 of the manual, we evangelize by preaching the Word and spreading the message (*see Romans 10:17*). Okay, but how particularly should we spread the Word? This is a more important question than some people have realized. Whatever the specific means may be, publicly through various media, privately by personal conversation, through print and sermons, or through conversation and group study - how should we spread the gospel? I want us to consider this in a couple of ways. First, and most basically, there is a certain balance that we want to strive for in our evangelism, a balance of honesty and urgency and joy. Too often we have only one, or at best, two, of these aspects rather than all three. The balance is important. These three together most appropriately represent the gospel. And then secondly, some practical suggestions for spreading the gospel are made.

2. Honesty

We need to be honest. We need to tell people with honesty that if they repent and believe, they will be saved. But they will need to repent, and it will be costly. We must be accurate in what we say, not holding any important parts back that seem to us awkward or off-putting. When considering how to evangelize, many people don't like to include anything negative in their presentation, so they rather share a Gospel of love, grace and freedom. But according to the Bible, although freedom and love is a wonderful aspect of our message (*John 8:32 – 36 and John 3:16*), sin and guilt are at the very heart and core of the gospel. Making people aware of their lost and sinful condition is part and parcel of sharing the good news of Christ. If you read the summaries of Peter's sermons in the early chapters of the book of Acts, you will see that Peter is breathtakingly honest about the sin of those to whom he's speaking. Peter was faithfully following the method Jesus had used with Peter and the others just a few months before, saying, "*Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple*" (*Luke 14:27*). Remember that although people are created in the image of God, the Bible teaches that people do not accept the truth and are by nature estranged from God, and we must be honest about that. What is repentance? It is turning from the sins you love to the holy God you're called to love. It is admitting that you're not God. It is beginning to value Jesus more than your immediate pleasure. It is giving up those things the Bible calls sin and leaving them to follow Jesus. To hold back important and unpalatable parts of the truth is to begin to manipulate and to try to sell a false bill of goods to the person with whom we are sharing. So however we evangelize, we aren't to hide problems, to ignore our own shortcomings, or to deny difficulties. And we are not to put forward only positives that we imagine our non-Christian friends presently value and present God as simply the means by which they can meet or achieve their own ends.

a. Urgency

We need to be urgent. Also, though, if we are to follow a biblical model of evangelism, we must emphasize the urgency with which people ought to repent and believe if they will be saved. They must

decide now. They certainly shouldn't wait until a "better deal" comes along. People might be careful enough with their money to wait to sign up for a cell phone plan or to renew their current plan until they've looked around on the Internet, maybe phoning and getting two or three offers and then comparing them all. But there's no point here in waiting for a better offer for forgiveness. According to the New Testament (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 10; all of Hebrews**), Christ is the only way. **Acts 4:12** says: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." How else would we suggest that sinners and the holy God be reconciled? And if Christ is the only way, then what are we waiting for? We don't know that tomorrow is ours, and we shouldn't act as if it is (**James 4:13**). **Hebrews 4:7** says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (**See also Psalm 95:7 - 8**). Jesus once told this story: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but didn't find any. So, he said to the man who took care of the vineyard for him, "For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?" "Sir," the man replied, "leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down." (**Luke 13:6 - 9**). We need to emphasize our urgency in getting people to respond to the Gospel, as the time of opportunity will end and tomorrow may never come. Jesus is coming back, in His glory and with His angels, at an unexpected time), to judge the world and to fetch His church (**Matthew 24: 30 – 51**). We also know that God gives us life, and he takes it away. So some of the unsaved people you know, and to whom you desire to witness to, may die tomorrow never having responded to the Gospel. The time that we have is limited and the amount is uncertain, but the use of it is up to us, so be urgent in your evangelism! In **Ephesians 5:14b – 17**: "Wake up, o sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

b. Joy

We need to be full of Joy. If we added no joy to the balance in our evangelism, we would be pretty grim, angry and aggressive evangelists. Who would want to respond to a message that has no joy? This is nothing short of breaking the law on people's heads and this wouldn't seem so much like good news. It would be imbalanced and inaccurate, because Scripture uses so much love language in relation to the gospel. We are built to love and be full of joy. In **1 Peter 1: 8 – 9** the Bible says: "*Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*" This news is good exactly because we want to spend an eternity with him. The truth of this news of a restored relationship with God brings us great joy. So we should joyfully tell people that if they repent and believe they will be saved. It is all worth it, despite the cost. Which one of the people recounted in **Hebrews 11** would not say that it was worth it? The Lord Jesus himself endured the cross, we read, "*for the joy set before him*" which refers to the elect or 'us' (**Hebrews 12: 2**). Jim Elliot said: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." What do we gain in coming to Christ? We gain a relationship with God himself, which includes forgiveness, meaning, purpose, freedom,

community, certainty, and hope. Read **Ephesians 1, 2 and 3** of who we are in Christ Jesus and what we have gained. Chapter 1 speaks about all the spiritual blessings we have gained in Jesus. Chapter 2 tells us about the amazing saving mercy, love and grace of Jesus towards sinners, and that we are no longer foreigners/ aliens but part of God's family and co-heirs with Christ to the promise. Just because we are honest about the difficulties, we don't have to mask the blessings or deny God's specific goodness to us through the gospel. We don't have to make the demands of the gospel sound worse than they are simply to make it all sound credible. We should tell others the good news with joy.

2. Practical suggestions

We should employ the following practical suggestions in our evangelizing to the lost.

2.1 Pray

Remember the importance of prayer in your evangelism. When Jonah was saved from the fish, he said, "*Salvation comes from the LORD*" (**Jonah 2:9**). If the Bible teaches us that salvation is the work of God, then surely we should ask him to work among those we evangelize. Read **John 17, John 6:44 and Romans 10:1**. Jesus did. It is God's work to draw people and to save them. Therefore, we should ask him to do it. We can work and witness for the salvation of someone, but only God can finally bring it about. When you evangelize, remember to pray.

2.2 Use the Bible

The Bible is not only for public preaching and private devotionals. It can also be used in evangelizing. An interesting example of this, one we noted earlier, is found in **Acts 8**, when Philip came to the Ethiopian official. The official was reading **Isaiah 53**, a famous prophecy about the Messiah. Philip, as it says in **Acts 8:35**, "*began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.*" The Bible is God's Word and is inspired by God's Spirit. God's message can go out not just through your words and mine, but through his own inspired words. And we can know that he will take a special delight in showing the power of his Word as he uses it in conversions. Watch the power and majesty and love and penetrating conviction of Christ come through the stories, the works, the teachings and words of Jesus Christ in the Bible. Referring to the clear teaching of the Bible also shows our friends that we are not simply giving them our own private ideas; rather, we are presenting Jesus Christ in his own life and teaching. It is God's Word coming to us that his Spirit uses to reshape our lives. In your evangelism, use the Bible.

2.3 Be clear

When you share the gospel, think carefully about the language you use. We need to be careful in our conversations to take the meaning of words for granted. Words such as "God," "prayer," "heaven,"

"good," "moral," "judge," "sin", "repentance", "salvation", "born-again", "saved", "justification", "sacrifice", "redemption", "atonement", "the Holy Spirit", "Jesus", "Judgement" etc., are all words that we need to define and be clear about. If we are merely trying to take people through a quick, persuasive sales presentation to get them to say "yes!" then they would be saying yes to much that they don't understand. We need to be both engaging and clear when we present the gospel. None of us ever has a complete understanding of the gospel, but we must have a clear idea of the basics of our message, and we must be clear in our expression of them. If there is a likely misunderstanding, we should address it. We should speak in such a way as to be understood. Refer to Section 3 of the manual on what are the basics that constitute the Gospel.

2.4 Contextualize

Contextualization means relating to people in their context, understanding their culture or ways or passions, and using communication that they can relate to. When we understand these, we will discover keys that can unlock the doors of their hearts for the Gospel to be presented. So, for example, when we talk about justification (and we should), we should make sure to define it. For example so often it's often been noted that Paul began with the Old Testament when he was speaking to Jews, but when he spoke to a group of Greeks in Athens (**Acts 17**) he began by quoting their own sayings. As he wrote to the Corinthians, *"To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. . . . To those not having the law I became like one not having the law . . . so as to win those not having the law"* (**1 Corinthians 9:20 - 21**). When contextualizing, use your testimony to get sinners or the lost to relate to you, and so that they can see you are not some super-religious freak, who was always this way. Relating to people in their context, can build trust and allow you to present the Gospel. A good way to uncover people's context is to ask questions? Jesus did this in the parables, which encouraged people to search themselves for the truth and to have a personal conviction of this. Jesus also used parables to bring about deep spiritual truths in a way that people could relate to and understand. Remember that Jesus Christ was the greatest evangelist and we should study the gospels (**Matthew, Mark, Luke and John**) to see what Jesus said and did. Furthermore, questions will reveal the gods and idols that people are worshiping i.e. the things and people that drive them and bring them joy. This is a great entry point for the Gospel, when you no someone's God.

2.5 Be willing to offend people

One part of providing clarity when we share the gospel, sometimes missed by earnest evangelists, is the willingness to offend. Clarity with the claims of Christ certainly will include the translation of the gospel into words that our hearer understands, but it doesn't necessarily mean translating it into words that our hearer will like. Too often, modern evangelism seeks to manipulate the gospel message so that it does not offend people. A gospel that in no way offends the sinner has not been understood. Look at Peter at Pentecost in **Acts 2**. How did Peter witness to those he wished to see saved? He said to them, among other things, *"Let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ"*. We must be clear about the fact of sin (**Isaiah 59:1 - 2; Habakkuk 1:13; Romans 3:22 - 23; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8 - 9; Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:5 - 6**). We must be clear about the meaning of the cross

(Matthew 26:28; Galatians 3:10 - 13; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). We must be clear about our need to repent of our sins and to trust in Christ **(Matthew 11:28 - 30; Mark 1:15; 8:34; John 1:12; 3:16; 6:37; Acts 20:21).** In the Gospels we see that people only responded in 2 ways to Him – they either rejected and hated him, or they accepted and loved him. They were never left in between or undecided. How can we really evangelize without being clear about what the Bible says about these issues or about Jesus? People should either accept or reject what we are saying, that is if we are telling them the truth.

2.6 Provoke self-reflection and be-friend people

Something typical of our age is a heightened defensiveness that leads people to discover things for themselves rather than hearing things from other people. The desire for original discovery is what's behind the "journey" language that some use today. "Let people find the truth themselves. Defensiveness is natural to the fallen human heart, so we want to do our best to help people hear the good news. We want to live and talk in such a way that we provoke people to reflect on themselves, on their own desires and actions. We can do this by asking good questions - questions about the origin of life or about how they understand bad things in this world. We can ask about what they're struggling with in their lives, and what they think the answer might be. We can even ask them what they think about death, and Jesus, and God, and judgment, and the Bible, and Christianity. Ask good questions and listen to their answers. Explore them. You may be helping them to enunciate and articulate their own thinking for the first time ever. This is what you do for someone you love, and you surely love the person you're witnessing to. Insofar as you have opportunity, befriend people. Lower their defensiveness toward you (but not toward your message). Make suggestions of what you think is the case. Be clear in your presentation of the gospel. Pray that you will be able to put things in such a way as to undermine their disbelief and cause them to doubt their denials of the truth of the gospel. Be provocative in your conversation. In fact, try to live in a distinctly Christian "salty" way around them - in your words and actions. Make them thirsty. Make your whole life before them provocative.

2.7 Live good and upright lives

Our lives are to give our words credibility. Not that any of us can live perfectly, but we can live lives that commend the gospel. Remember Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount: *"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"* **(Matthew 5:16; see also 1 Peter 2:12).** Remember Jesus' statement in **John 13:34 - 35:** *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* In **1 Peter 2: 12** the Bible says: *"Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits."* Our words alone are not a sufficient witness - we must speak; we have news. Our lives are the confirming echo of our witness.

2.8 Use the local church

Invite the person to whom you're witnessing to the church at which you're a member or to some other gospel-preaching church. But there is so much more to church than just that. Realize that how the Christian life is lived out in the Christian community is a central part of our evangelism. Evangelism should include our way of living and our way of living together in the new society that is the local church. The church represents something (a kind of first fruits) of heaven on earth or God's kingdom on earth. And remember that this is also not a physical building or temple, but we Christians have together become the temple of the Holy Spirit. God dwells in us through the Holy Spirit. But just as we are saved for fellowship with God, we are also saved into family and into fellowship with one another (**Acts 2: 42 – 47; Ephesians 2:19**). So the community we live in will be given hope by those of us who live distinctive Christian lives, not by your church or mine, not by how similar we are to those around us (a common mistake Christians can make), but by how attractively different we are. That's why we are to live the distinctive lives that we do - because we are God's picture, God's billboard, in our city. Thus Paul wrote to the **Philippians 2: 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"*. The people around us are lost in darkness; we have the wonderful and attractive call to live out a new life in our congregations - a good life that reflects the good news. In your evangelism you can also invite people to services and special evangelistic events, but also consider bringing them into your own life, into the network of relationships that is your congregation. That may be to them as a shining star in the dark night of their lives. That may provoke them to do some honest soul searching. Lastly remember that in Matthew 28:19 Jesus commanded us to make disciples, not converts, and discipleship will only happen through the local church.

2.8 Pursue holiness

If our evangelism is to be full of the power of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**), we need to be holy and repent from sin, as God is Holy and sin will quench the Holy Spirit. Read **Romans 12:1 – 2**: *"Therefore brothers I urge you in view of God's mercy to offer up your bodies as living sacrifices, Holy and pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service and do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may know what the will of God is, His good and pleasing and perfect will."* Read also **1 Peter 1:13 – 16**. In **1 Peter 1:16** it is written *"Be holy, because I am holy"*. In order to do this we need to walk and live by the Holy Spirit (See **Romans 8: 1 – 18; Galatians 5: 16 – 26**). As Christians we need to regularly consecrate ourselves to the Lord – See **Psalm 24: 3 – 4**. We need to depend on the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. In **Psalm 19:12-14** the Bible says – *"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults, keep also your servant from willful sins, then I shall be blameless & innocent of great transgressions. May the words of my mouth & the meditation of my heart, be pleasing in your sight my Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."* In **Psalm 139:23** the Scripture says – *"Search me oh God and know my heart, try me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."* We need to repent of our sins like David did (**Psalm 51**), and it was said of Him by God that David was a man after His own heart. We need to be men and

women after the heart of Jesus Christ, then our evangelism will have power and impact. If we have unconfessed sin in our lives, it will be very difficult to lead others to the Lord, or to be a vessel for the Holy Spirit. Remember that sin grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit. Therefore, hunger for the Holy Spirit and pursue holiness. The great revivals that occurred in the 20th century were sparked out of place where people became conscious of their sin and began crying out in repentance to God and in seeking His Spirit.

2.9 Be full of love and compassion

Refer to Section 1 of the manual. When Jesus saw the 'lost' it says that He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a Shepard (**Read Matthew 9: 35 – 38**). Jesus Christ ultimately gave his life up as a sacrifice for the lost on the Cross, which was an amazing demonstration of His love. We too are to love as Jesus did. If we have no love in our evangelism, we are nothing but a 'resounding gong' or a 'clanging symbol', which just makes noise. Read **1 Corinthians 13: 1 – 3; 13**. We are to love those who are lost and who are our neighbours (**see Romans 13: 8 – 14; Luke 10: 25 - 37**). In **Matthew 22: 37 – 40** Jesus said that the greatest commandment is – *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

2.10 Be full of faith and of the Holy Spirit

Refer to Section 2 of the manual.

The following extract was written in a Biography about Smiths Wigglesworth.

“Smiths Wigglesworth took Hebrews 11:6 very seriously. He personally believed it was impossible to please God with faith. As a result, he incorporated that faith into every segment of his spiritual life, including the workings of the Holy Spirit. When the slightest breath of the Spirit came upon Smith, he would go off into a room to be alone with God. In developing this relationship, he understood the action of faith as he cooperated with the Holy Spirit. Once in a meeting, someone commented how quickly Smith was moved by the Spirit. When they asked him his secret he replied – ‘Well you see, it is like this. If the Spirit does not move me, I move the Spirit.’ Those who didn’t understand the principles of faith thought Smith’s remarks to be arrogant and disrespectful. But in reality, Smith knew how to draw the Spirit of God. It all stemmed from faith, not arrogance. If the Holy Spirit wasn’t moving, as a service began then Smith would begin the meeting in the natural state. By his faith he would focus the hearers on the Word and Power of God and increase their expectancy. As a result the Holy Spirit would manifest himself in direct response to their faith. Smith took the initiative and stirred up the gifts within himself by faith. He didn’t wait for something to come upon him and spiritually overtake him. To him, every action, every operation, and every manifestation stemmed from one thin – absolute faith! True faith confronts and it is ignited by action. To Smith, faith was the main substance that stirred the human spirit and by which the Holy Spirit operates. Once, in a large meeting in California, Smith gave the call for those people

who had not received baptism in the Holy Spirit to stand. Then he asked for all those to stand who had received but not spoken in tongues for six months. 'Now I'm going to pray a simple prayer'. Smith began 'and when I'm finished, I'll say 'Go', and you will all speak with tongues.' Smith prayed. Then he yelled 'Go'. The sound filled the auditorium like that of many waters as everyone prayed in other tongues."

We need to have a close intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit, as we cannot give the world what we don't have. We will only be filled with his love, grace, power and life, by spending much time in fellowship with Him. We need to exercise great faith, like Peter did when he stepped out of the boat and walked on water when he saw Jesus. It is faith that moves the Holy Spirit to respond and to action. Read **Hebrews 11** about the great hall of faith of men and women from the Bible that went before you and me. Let this encourage you to persevere in the great task of evangelism that God has called you to. Then persevere in this great and joyful service to the Lord (**Read Hebrews 12: 1 – 3**).

2.11 Expect miracles

When we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those people that are sinners and lost, we can expect the miraculous healings, signs and wonders. Read through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Jesus performed great miracles to prove that he was the Christ and that he was the Son of God. The miracles accompanied Jesus' preaching of the Good News. Therefore, when you and I preach the good news to the un-saved, we can expect supernatural things to happen as a confirmation of the truth of the Gospel. Read the Book of Acts. Once again we see many accounts of amazing miracles, signs and wonders accompanying the preaching of the Gospel by ordinary and unschooled men e.g. Peter, Phillip, Stephen, Paul etc. Why don't we see miracles in our modern day times? Well, the answer is that in an age of reason and scientific laws, we no longer believe in the 'unseen' which greatly diminishes our faith. Furthermore, the church has shrunk back in its preaching of the uncompromised truth of the Gospel to the world, and settled for religious pluralism in an effort to become seeker sensitive. However, when you and I rise up with great faith and step out with great boldness, the miraculous, signs and wonders will follow, to confirm our message. Jesus said this to us in **John 14:12** – *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it."* Jesus will do supernatural and extraordinary things through us, so that His glory may be made known to the world. Jesus also promised us that we would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us to be his witnesses (**Acts 1:8**). **Ephesians 1: 19 – 21** speaks about this incomparably great and miraculous power, which dwells within us. We are just sleeping and dormant to the power that we have in us in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

The following extract is taken from the Biography of Smith Wigglesworth. *"Smith was a man greatly moved by compassion. As he received prayer requests from all over the world he would cry out to God and weep on their behalf. Many times, as he ministered to the afflicted, tears ran down his cheeks. He realized that the source of all the miracles of Jesus Christ stemmed from His compassion. The following*

two ingredients are essential for miracles – FAITH + COMPASSION = MIRACLES.” It’s not that we need more power in our lives, we have all the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised already in us. We just need to use our faith and compassion for that power to operate. Smith Wigglesworth operated in some of the boldest faith ever witnessed since the book of Acts, but that faith was ignited by compassion. Smith took God at His Word and was moved by compassion for the lost and that translated into miracles.

3. Conclusion: Challenge

The challenge now comes to you and me. God has issued the call for us to evangelize and invade communities, cities and nations with the power of Heaven. Will you answer the call of God on your life? Will you dare to only believe? Is your heart so moved with love for Jesus and compassion for the multitudes of sinners, that you will take God at His Word and step out with the gift that is within you? Let it be said of you and me, “through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, were valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of evil, healed the sick and rescued sinners from hell”. **(See Hebrews 11: 33, 34)**. Stir up the gift of evangelism with in you, and invade you home, you community, your workplace, your mall, your city and your nation with the power of God. Let the will of Jesus Christ be done through you! Know that the elders of Northpoint believe in you and we are praying for you. Go for it!

4. Homework

There will be an Evangelism outreach on Saturday 3 September from 10h00 – 13h00 to put into action what we have been taught. Meet at Northpoint City Church at 10h00. Further details will be provided.

Continue to practice a culture of evangelism in your community, school, workplace, the mall and in every area you happen to find yourself.

Share your testimony with the church (speak to John-Mark) about how you stepped out in faith and shared your testimony and the gospel with your unsaved friend, as per the homework in Section 3.

References

- *Sermons and biography of D.L. Moody* - www.biblebelievers.com/moody_sermons (website)
- *Sermons and biography of Smiths Wigglesworth* - www.smithwigglesworth.com (website)
- *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* (Book) – Mark Dever
- *Don't waste your life* (Book) – John Piper
- Billy Graham Christian Worker's Handbook. A topical guide with Biblical answers to the urgent concerns of our day.
- Marc Driscoll and Gerry Breshears – *"Vintage Jesus"* – (Book)
- David Platt – *"Radical"* – (Book)
- J.I. Packer – *"Concise Theology, A guide to historic Christian beliefs"* – (Book)
- John Piper – *"Jesus, The Only Way to God"* – (Book)
- John MacArthur – *"Ashamed of the Gospel?"* – (Book)