

Evangelism in Acts

by Sean P. Cavender

The words of Jesus are clear, convicting, and concise:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The gospel is meant to be taught to everyone who is under bondage to sin. Clearly this commission was given to the apostles in the immediate context of Mark 16, yet it was also embraced by the early church in Acts 8, 11, and 13 for just a few examples of local churches holding forth the word of life.

If the church is not growing in number, why is that? Even in some of the most difficult of places the gospel was preached, a few people’s interest was piqued (Acts 17:32-34). Perhaps it is that we have failed in our obligation to evangelize like the early church did.

My fear is that sometimes we feel that as long as we have a preacher who stands in the pulpit at our meeting place then we are fulfilling the great commission. My fear is that sometimes we feel as long as we host a gospel meeting a couple of times a year then we are doing our duty of evangelism. Notice one verse in the book of Acts which describes the working of the early church.

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ,” Acts 5:42.

Examine a few things from this verse. First, teaching was done daily, not just on Sundays when the entire congregation assembled. Secondly, teaching was done in the temple where spiritually-inclined people gathered and they could ask questions. Thirdly, the teaching was also done in houses. This does not suggest the church never assembled together at a common location, nor does it suggest that there were several “house churches” in Jerusalem. What this does suggest is Christians opened up their homes on a daily basis, consistently teaching their friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and acquaintances. Fourthly, they did not cease teaching. Many times we give excuses why this is not the right time of year to have meetings, or do “extra” evangelistic work. Should the work of the church ever stop?

Imagine if members of the church cooperated together, opened up their homes, had Bible studies, Bible readings, and Bible discussions and invited their neighbors, or friends to join in these discussions. Would the number of disciples be multiplied greatly, bringing about a number of people to be obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7)?

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Editor’s Note: The Lord’s church in America today must decide to “wake up” and answer the clarion call – we need harvesters who are unafraid to go into the highways and byways and proclaim the Gospel! We must first be convicted in the truth of the Gospel enough to decide to do something about evangelism. Then we must decide to openly discuss it wherever we are with friends, neighbors and family. Third, we must look for opportunities to share the Gospel. They are all around us, if only we will open our eyes! Finally, we must not think that the success or failure of the Gospel message depends upon us. It does not! We are simply the “messengers” or the “avenues” by which the Gospel is taught. It’s up to people to decide to accept or reject the message.

If you will invite others for a Bible study, then I am more than willing to teach them in a convenient location. Your influence can open up the doors!

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