

# THE BIBLICAL GOALS OF EVANGELISM

## Discipleship Message #7: A Biblical Philosophy of Evangelism, Part 2

We studied a biblical theology of discipleship and now we are looking at a biblical philosophy of the same.

- In our study in the theology of discipleship we started with our purpose and then looked at our mission, which is to make disciples (through both evangelism and edification).
- In the study of a biblical philosophy of discipleship, we want to see what the Bibles say about how disciples are made. Just how do evangelism and edification happen?

We started our study of a biblical philosophy of discipleship by studying evangelism in the the Bible.

- Last week we looked at the *means* of salvation—the components of the process that God takes a sinner through in order to save him: Conviction, the preaching of the cross, conversion, and regeneration.
- We ended that study with a question: Where's the weak link in that process? The weak link is us.

What are our responsibilities in this process of God saving a lost sinner? There are two and they are our “goals” in evangelism.

- These two goals are what God expects of us in the initial work of making a disciple (salvation).
- Our two goals (God's two expectation for us in evangelism for which He will judge us) are these:
  - ✓ **Go:** God expects us to go out into the world, to seek out sinners and be among them.
  - ✓ **Sow:** God expects us to “sow the seed” of the Gospel by speaking (witnessing) to those lost sinners.

I originally said that there were three goals in our efforts to save sinners, adding a third: “watering.”

- (1Cor 3.6) The idea of “watering” comes from this verse, but it refers to edification, not evangelism.
- In 1Corinthians 3, Paul is the one who sowed the seed and Apollos watered it.
  - ✓ Watering refers to giving the new plant the care and nutrients it needs to grow after sprouting (birth).
- Watering, in context, refers to the work of edification.
  - ✓ (1Cor 3.6) Paul watered and Apollos watered.
  - ✓ (1Cor 3.10) Paul laid the foundation and another (Apollos) builded on that foundation.
  - ✓ (1Cor 3.11) The sowing of the seed and the laying of the foundation both refer to the same thing: Evangelism.
  - ✓ (1Cor 3.12) The watering and the building on the foundation refer to the same thing: Edification.
- (1Cor 4.15) Apollos is the one who came in after Paul to instruct the Corinthians for their edification—for their maturing in Christ. Paul is the one who, as a father, begat them through the preaching of the Gospel.
- So, there are only two goals (two expectations) that God has for us in evangelism: Go and sow.

### I. The Great Commission is a Mission with Two Commands: Go & Preach the Gospel (Witness)

- A. (Mat 28.18-20) **Go** and **teach**.
- B. (Mark 16.15) **Go** and **preach** the Gospel to every creature.
- C. (Luke 24.46-48) **Go** is implicit in the indication that the preaching of repentance should be done among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. The disciples were to **go** into all nations and **preach** Christ.
- D. (John 20.21) We are **sent** (we are to **go**) with the same mission as Christ.
  1. (Luke 19.10; 1Tim 1.15) Christ was sent into this world to save that which was lost: sinners.

2. (Luke 4.43) Christ was sent to preach the Kingdom of God (i.e., go and preach).
  3. (Rom 10.15) We are sent with that same mission: Go and preach.
  4. (1Cor 1.17 cf. 11.1) Paul was sent to preach (and we are to follow his example)
- E. (Acts 1.8) Implied in the command to be witnesses in all areas, from Jerusalem to the uttermost, is the same dual command: ***Go and preach.***
- F. (Rom 10.13-17) ***Go and preach*** (we are sent to speak the Gospel to the lost).
- G. (2Cor 5.18-20) Implicit in the task of the ambassador is ***going***, and we are sent with a message to speak: the “word of reconciliation” (we ***speak*** and beseech sinner to be reconciled to God).
- H. (1Cor 1.23 cf. 1.18, 21) We are unique among the three groups of people mentioned in Scripture because we ***preach*** Christ for the salvation of lost sinners (we ***go*** to them and ***preach*** the Gospel).
1. Jews: Signs.
  2. Gentiles: Wisdom.
  3. Us/Christians: We preach Christ crucified—we preach the message of the cross, the Gospel.

## **II. Goal #1: Go – We need to seek out the lost.**

- A. The first imperative (command) of the Great Commission is, “Go!”
- B. Just as Christ was sent from heaven to earth, to seek and save lost sinners, so we are sent to the world.
- C. God expects us to go and evangelize. Our evangelistic efforts are to be concentrated on sinners outside the church.
1. Yes, we preach the Gospel in the church and, yes, it's great to invite sinners to church.
  2. But to expect sinners to come to church in order to be evangelized is like expecting criminals to just show up at the police station to be arrested.
- D. Therefore, one of our goals in evangelism is to intentionally go to where sinners are—to intentionally move our bodies to be out among sinners wherever they live or gather.
1. God expects that of us (He said, “Go!”—it's a command) and therefore we will be judged for having done it or not.
  2. But what do we do when we get there? We “go” to be among sinners... and then what?

## **III. Goal #2: Preach – We need to preach the Gospel to the lost.**

- A. We already saw the command to “go and preach” when we looked at the Great Commission. What I'd like to do now is just take a look at several passages that clarify and illustrate this point.**
1. This point cannot be stressed enough in our day and age of “relevance,” “relationship evangelism,” and “seeker sensitive” Christianity.
  2. The power to save is in the seed, not in the sower.
  3. (Php 1.14-18) Motives in preaching the Gospel are not important as important as the preaching of the Gospel.
    - a) (Rom 1.15-16) It is the Gospel that saves, not the Gospel preacher.
    - b) (1Cor 1.18, 21) God uses the preaching of the Gospel to save lost sinners.
    - c) Therefore, when the Gospel is preached (regardless of the preacher), we can rejoice!
- B. Paul provides us a good example to follow and imitate.**
1. (Acts 9.15 cf. 23.11) God called Paul to go and bear Jesus' name to the lost—to testify of Him.
  2. (Acts 13.1-5) Paul was called to go (v3) and preach (v5) the Gospel to the lost for their salvation.

3. (1Cor 11.1) We are called to this very same work.
  - a) For example: (1Thes 1.5-8) The Thessalonians received the Word (the Gospel) from Paul and then they *went out* and *sounded out* that same Word (the Gospel) *in every place*. They were so intentional in their evangelism (go! preach!) that Scripture says there was no more speaking necessary; they had had *filled* their region with the preaching of the Gospel.
  - b) (1Thes 1.7) The Thessalonians are a good example to follow! We need to be like them because they were following Paul's example of *going* out to the lost and *witnessing* to them.

**C. The Book of Acts: The early church understood the Commission to *go* and *preach*.**

1. A simple, brief survey of the Book of Acts provides a clear example of believers who were concerned with reaching the lost with the message of the Gospel. This is the pattern to imitate!
  - a) God wants us to *go* out in the world among the lost and preach, teach, speak, sow the seed of the Gospel, witness, and/or testify to them.
  - b) That's it. That's our part: Go and communicate the Gospel to lost people.
2. (Acts 2.4, 11, 14ff) The Apostles were out on the streets, among the lost, *speaking* to them.
3. (Acts 3.11, 12ff) When a crowd of lost sinners gathered, Peter *preached* the message of Christ to them (4.2: when the authorities arrived, they were upset because of what Peter was *teaching*).
4. (Acts 4.8ff) Peter preached the Gospel to the Jewish Authorities—he spoke the Word to them.
5. (Acts 4.18-20) *Speaking* is the crux of the problem, the issue at hand. No one was being “relevant” or “seeker sensitive.” No one was holding a raffle at church to bring in the sinners. They were *speaking* to sinners. They *went* to where the sinners were and *spoke* to them about the Gospel.
6. (Acts 4.29-31) When God fills a believer (controls the believer who is in submission and obedience to Him), that believer *speaks* the Word with *boldness* to sinners.
7. (Acts 5.20) God's command through His angel: Go, stand and speak! (v29) And that's why intentional evangelism is a matter of obedience (God said to do it that way!).
8. (Acts 5.42) *Daily* the believers in the early church were *teaching and preaching* Christ both in public and in private.
9. (Acts 6.11) The issue between Stephen and the lost Jews was one of *speaking*. They were upset with what Stephen was *saying*. He was preaching Christ to sinners.
10. (Acts 8.1, 4) What does God expect of us? What did the early church do? Go and preach the Word!
11. (Acts 8.5) Philip went out among the sinners and preached Christ unto them.
12. (Acts 8.25) The Apostles went and preached the Gospel in many villages returning to Jerusalem.
13. (Acts 8.26, 35) The same commands: Go and preach Jesus to the lost!
14. (Acts 9.20) Paul, immediately after his conversion, started *preaching* Christ to lost people where they gathered.
15. (Acts 9.26, 28-29) Paul continued to preach with boldness to the lost (nothing is said about “lifestyle evangelism” or “friendship evangelism”; we simply see men and women speaking to lost people about the Gospel).
16. (Acts 10.32-34) God's plan is to *send* preacher who will *speak* to lost people so that they can *hear* the Word of the Lord (v36: preaching peace with God through Jesus Christ).
  - a) This is a good example, too, of the fact that the motives of the preacher are totally irrelevant.
  - b) (Acts 10.24, 29) Peter shows up to an entire house *full* of lost people waiting for him, and when he gets there he says, “What do you want?”
  - c) There were no tears, no night-long vigil of fasting and prayer and weeping and wailing.

- d) The power to save is in the Gospel, not in the messenger! God has ordained the preaching of the Gospel as a means to save the lost.
- e) It's not about us and what we are or two or think or feel. It's about explaining the Gospel message to a lost sinner. The power to save is in the seed, not in the sower. Sow the seed!
17. (Acts 11.19 cf. 8.1, 4) God wants to scatter His people (Go!) so they can preach the Word wherever they go.
18. (Acts 11.20-21) God used the preaching of the Word to save a “great number.” No tricks. No cultural relevance. Just the plain, clear preaching of the Word to sinners where they lived.
19. (Acts 13.7) Sinners need to hear the Word of God: (v12) Doctrine, teaching.
20. (Acts 13.15-16) The Gospel goes throughout this world through preaching.
21. (Acts 13.42-49) More preaching: (v49) “Publishing” the Word of God throughout a region. And this passage shows us that the Paul's preaching resulted in other believers doing the same thing.
22. (Acts 14.1-3) Here we see a continued witness: Paul and Barnabas “abode” a “long time” speaking boldly. If we can return to the same sinners and continue to witness to them, we should.
23. (Acts 14.6-7) Go and preach the Gospel! Check out v21...
- Evangelism: We want to preach the Gospel (communicated the message of the cross) to the entire city.
  - Edification: We want to “teach many”—the many that God would give us if we would go and preach the Gospel to this city.
  - We need to stop the silliness and games, and we need to get busy reaching the lost!
24. (Acts 14.25) They preached the Word. That's what's expected of us.
25. (Acts 15.36) Paul went out on his first missionary journey (visiting cities where people knew nothing about Jesus and the Gospel), and how does describe his missionary efforts?
- Did he pour money and resources into the best praise band and coffee shop in the city?
  - No. He says, “We preached the Word.” That's what we are supposed to be doing.
26. (Acts 16.9-10) The “missionary call”: Go and preach the Gospel to those who need salvation.
- (v13) Paul spoke to Jewish women and led them to salvation in Christ.
  - (v20-21) What was it that irritated the lost sinners so much? The volume of the music in Paul's “worship service”? No. It was what Paul was teaching. He was teaching new “customs”; he was preaching repentance and faith in Christ, a changed life and lifestyle!
  - (v25) Paul continued to proclaim the Word of God for all to hear: (v30-31) which resulted in the salvation of a guy who hear him.
  - (v32) That man opened the door for more evangelism: Paul spoke unto them the Gospel.
27. (Acts 17.1-3) Paul's manner was to preach the Word—the Gospel of Jesus Christ—to sinners where they gathered.
28. (Acts 17.10, 13) Paul did the same thing over and over and over: He preached to sinners where they gathered.
29. (Acts 17.15-17) Paul spoke with sinners (religious and secular) daily in the public market.
- Here is another example of a continued witness: Paul returned to the same place each day to continue witnessing to people there.
  - Though it's not a necessity (for example: the Ethiopian Eunuch, Cornelius and his household), it seems to be a pattern Paul followed when circumstanced allowed it: When he could, he went back to the same place to preach to the same people (continued sowing the seed).

30. (Acts 17.18ff) One-time Witness: Paul preached the Gospel to the lost and (v34) God used that one-time witness opportunity to save some.
- (v18) Paul was preaching the Gospel: Jesus, and the resurrection.
  - (v30-31) Paul clearly called sinners to repentance.
31. (Acts 18.1-4) “Minimal” ministry (when you're depressed, tired, or have to work a secular job in addition to doing the work of the ministry): (v4) Weekly evangelism; a weekly outing to speak to the lost about Jesus being the Christ.
32. (Acts 18.5) More ministry: (cf. 1Cor 2.1-5) Speak, preach, and declare Christ and the cross.
- (v8) Many *believed*. How, why? “*Hearing*” (cf. Rom 10.13-17). We have to speak to them!
  - (v9) Speak! Go out to the sinners and speak to them.
33. (Acts 18.19) Again we see Paul *going* to where the sinners gather and *speaking* to them.
34. (Acts 18.28) Apollos spoke publically about Jesus being the Christ.
35. (Acts 19.8) Paul *spoke boldly* disputing and persuading sinners.
36. (Acts 19.9-10) The goal: That *all* which dwell in the region would *hear* the Word, both Jews and Greeks (both religious and secular). How do we do that? We go and we witness.
37. (Acts 19.26) The crux of the irritation among the lost, stubborn, unrepentant sinners was what Paul was *saying*.
- It was not his “lifestyle”. It was not his conduct. It was not the little fishy he had on the back of his car. Sinners were murderously mad at Paul because of what he was *saying*.
  - It's about communicating the Gospel to the lost in the clearest terms possible.
38. (Acts 20.16, 20-21 cf. 18.21) Paul wanted to *go* to Jerusalem for Pentecost in order to *testify* of the Gospel to the thousands of Jews who were gathering there for the feast.
- (Acts 21.37-22.22) Paul *testified* in Jerusalem and Jesus wanted him to *testify* (bear witness of Him) in Rome, also.
  - The desire of the Lord is that we preach, speak, declare, proclaim the Gospel. The results are up to Him—God gives the increase! He has commanded us to simply *go* out into the field and *sow the seed*: preach the Gospel.
39. (Acts 20.20-21) Paul *taught* publicly and privately about *repentance* and *faith* (the Gospel).
40. (Acts 24.24-25; 26.1-32, esp. v27-30) Paul *spoke* with the intention of *persuading* sinners to *believe*. Take Acts 24.24-25, for example: Paul *spoke* and the sinner *heard* of:
- Righteousness: God is good.
  - Temperance: You are not good (you have failed in tempering your bent toward bad things).
  - Judgment to come: God will judge you and your lack of temperance, and His standard is Himself (His goodness: moral perfection).
  - No tricks. No gimmicks. No “bridge building.” Just plain, clear, “in your teeth” preaching of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
41. (Acts 28.17-24) Once in Rome, (v23) Paul *expounded* and *testified*.
42. (Acts 28.30-31) The Book of Acts ends with the example we are to follow and imitate: (1Cor 11.1) *preaching and teaching*.
- We are called to *go* and *preach*.
  - We are expected to get out *in the field* and *sow the seed*.

#### **D. God's plan has always been similar: He sends people out to proclaim His Word to sinners.**

1. (Prov 1.20-21) God's Wisdom is found out among the sinners, proclaiming God's Word in public.
2. (Jer 1.4-10) God's design is simple: Speak His words to those to whom He sends us.
3. (Jer 20.7-9) It may not be very fun or fruitful, but it is God's plan and His will: Speak His Word.
4. (Ezek 2.3-7; 3.4-9) Regardless of the response from sinners, if God has sent us to speak, we ought to go and speak His words to the people to whom He has sent us (or else we are just as rebellious as the people are).
5. (2Pet 2.5; Gen 6.3; 7.7) This is how it's been since the beginning. Noah preached righteousness to a wicked people in a wicked land for 120 years, and at the end of it all eight people were saved.
  - a) (Mat 7.13-14; Luke 13.23-24) Jesus already told us that few would be saved.
  - b) (Luke 6.26) The real problem is when all men like us and speak well of us.
    - (1) (Luke 6.22-23) If we are living for Jesus Christ, men will hate us for it.
    - (2) We don't have to try to offend people. Jesus and the Gospel are enough to make them want to kill us (if they refuse to respond to the Gospel in repentance and faith).
    - (3) (John 15.18-21 cf. 2Tim 3.12) If they hated Jesus, they'll hate us also. And remember, Jesus had far more enemies than followers. At the end of His ministry, Jesus' "church" had a mere 120 members.
6. (John 13.34-35) One objection to address: Many people say that by our love people will know we are Jesus' disciples, that we should just love one another and that is enough.
  - a) Yes, that's true: Our love for one another is evidence we are Jesus' disciples (that we are saved). But this passage says nothing about the salvation of a sinner.
  - b) God saves the sinner through the preaching, witnessing, testifying, declaring, proclaiming, speaking, and/or communicating of the Gospel (remember: Rom 10.13-17).
  - c) When the sinner gets saved, he is regenerated (made new) by the Spirit and one of the visible evidences of that regeneration is that he will begin to love what God loves: God's children.

#### **IV. What about prayer? Is prayer a goal in evangelism? Shouldn't we pray?**

##### **A. (1Jn 5.14-15) We can most certainly pray with confidence for the conviction, repentance, and salvation of lost sinners (Paul did: Rom 10.1).**

1. (John 3.16; 1Tim 2.3-4; 2Pet 3.9) God's will and desire is that all men everywhere repent and trust Christ for salvation.
2. So, yes, we can pray for the salvation of the lost. And we should.

##### **B. However, a brief survey of the New Testament shows a different picture of the Christian's prayer life with regard to evangelism.**

1. We don't see Christians in the Book of Acts weeping and wailing, fasting and praying for the salvation of lost souls.
2. (1Tim 2.1-8) In the context of saving souls: We are to pray for the government (e.g., laws) and for those in authority (e.g., police officers), that they would leave us alone and in peace so that we can evangelize (note the "therefore" connecting the mission in v7 with the focus on prayer in v8).
3. (Eph 6.18-20) Paul asked for prayer for boldness to speak. Why?
  - a) Because he knew that God was already at work convicting sinners.
  - b) Because he knew that Romans 10.17 said that God gives the sinner faith when he hears the preaching of the Gospel.
  - c) Because he knew the weak link in saving sinners was not God but rather himself and his prideful cowardice.



4. (Acts 4.29-31) That's why with regard to prayer in evangelism in the early church we see this type of petition: God give us boldness to *speak*!
  - a) We should be praying most for those things that are uncertain, and not so much for those things that are certain because of God's promises.
  - b) If we truly want to see sinners saved, we should pray for them like Paul did: Romans 10.1.
  - c) And then we should *pray without ceasing* that God would fill us with His Spirit and give us *boldness to speak* the Gospel to those for whom we are praying!
5. Here's what we ought to pray for:
  - a) Pray for an open door to *go*.
  - b) Pray for boldness to *speak*.
  - c) But understand that your *responsibility before God* (His command to you; the Great Commission) is to *go* and *speak*. Prayer is your dependence on God to complete that task.

### **Conclusion:**

**A biblical philosophy of discipleship begins with an understanding of evangelism: How does it happen?**

**First, we studied the *means* of salvation—the components of the process through which God takes a sinner in order to save him.**

1. The Personal Conviction of the Sinner
2. The Preaching of the Cross to the Sinner
3. The Conversion of the Sinner (repentance and faith)
4. The Regeneration of the Sinner by the Spirit of God

**And today we looked at the *goals* we have in evangelism—our part in the salvation process.**

- These two goals are what God expects of us in the initial work of making a disciple (salvation).
- Our two goals (God's two expectation for us in evangelism for which He will judge us) are these:
  - ✓ **Go:** God expects us to go out into the world, to seek out sinners and be among them.
  - ✓ **Sow:** God expects us to “sow the seed” of the Gospel by speaking (witnessing) to those lost sinners.

**At this point the work of evangelism is finished and the sinner is saved.**

- What's next in the discipleship process? Edification.
- And we're going to see that God has *means* that He uses to make a disciple grow, and we have *goals* to strive to reach if we are going to participate with the Lord in that edification process (growing ourselves and helping other believers to do the same).