
Viewpoints for Successful Evangelism, pt. 3

As I mentioned last month that beginning this month we will be looking at some viewpoints that are especially crucial to maintaining a high level of enthusiasm in evangelism from "The Parable of the Sower" that can help in two areas:

1. It helps to remove the discouragement and prevent the apathy that paralyzes so many today.
2. It also helps instill enthusiasm in serving as laborers in the vineyard of the Lord!

The parable itself is found in Luke 8:4-8, and the explanation is found in Luke 8:11-15. The first principle we can glean from this parable is that...the POWER is in the seed (i.e. the word)! The Word of God has always had the ability to persuade people, as it achieves its intended purpose (Isaiah 55:10-11). The author of Hebrews wrote, that the word is both "alive and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12). This is especially true of the gospel, which is the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). If people are going to be converted, it will not be through smooth speech or fancy presentations involving "high-tech" equipment, but through the life-changing truth of the gospel which Paul and the other apostles preached and of which we are to preach. We can certainly use modern equipment but the truth is still something that is spoken to others. True conversion will occur only if we plant the right "seed." There is a chance we don't get the desired result, because we don't sow the right seed!

But even when we plant the right seed, we sometimes often do not see the desired results we intended. That's where understanding the reason why helps one to maintain the right viewpoint...the results depend on the type of SOIL! In the Parable of The Sower, we see that the right seed, when sown, still produced different results, even though it was the same seed. One result there was no reaction whatsoever. Two others had only temporary success. Only one out of the four resulted in bearing fruit! Where do we put the blame?

- On the SEED? No!
- On the SOWER? No!
- On the TYPE OF SOIL? Yes!

The three-fold purpose of *The Unveiled Gospel* is as follows.....

1. To help our subscribers grow in their Bible knowledge through articles from various writers.
2. To offer our subscribers Biblical weekend seminars to encourage the faithful.
3. To assist our subscribers in evangelizing their own communities.

For more information, please call Danny @ 719-980-0587 or Tom @ 719-964-8493.
You can also send an email to info@theunveiledgospel.org.

To subscribe, send email to danny@theunveiledgospel.org or tom@theunveiledgospel.org. Please include how many copies are needed for congregational or personal subscriptions. Also, include address, contact name, phone number and email address. All subscriptions are free for now. Still, any donations made to this domestic mission work would be greatly appreciated. To donate, please send checks or money orders made out to *The Unveiled Gospel*, P.O. Box 132, Kim, CO 81049.

Thanks to all.

This illustrates where the area of responsibility lies. The sower fulfills his responsibility by sowing the seed (Ezekiel 3:17-19). If the soil rejects the seed, the soil is responsible; the sower should not feel accountable (Matthew 10:14-15; Acts 13:44-46).

The positive implication is this: Every time we sow the seed, we are successful! If a person rejects it, we have not failed, they have!

What is the significance of this perspective of evangelism? We need to learn the joy/excitement of sharing the Word for its own sake! There is joy in sharing Christ with others (BRETHREN we've got GOOD NEWS!), whether or not people accept Him (we are glad to serve our Lord in this way!). Of course, we are delighted when someone believes and truly receives Jesus as the Lord of their lives, but we should consider it as the "icing on the cake." Even if we don't experience the "icing," we can still enjoy the "cake!"

Another implication of this principle concerns our goals. They should center on how many are being taught, not converted! Too often, we make the number of baptisms (conversions) the measure of success or even faithfulness on the part of the teacher. But even the most faithful teachers may find themselves in circumstances like JEREMIAH or JESUS, where very few people responded to their message. Should we count them as failures? Rather, let us count them as faithful, if they have faithfully sowed the seed!

Next month we will continue with the parable of the sower, showing different viewpoints of evangelism as we further our study.

~Danny Aragon, church of Christ, Kim CO

The Staff at *The Unveiled Gospel* is happy to offer:

1. Gospel Meetings – designed to encourage the brethren
2. Weekend Seminars – designed to teach participants how to evangelize
3. Door-knocking Campaigns – designed to canvass the local area in order to look for people who are looking for Christ
4. Fill-in preaching/teaching – designed to help congregations during times of preacher absence

To set-up one of these offers, please call Danny Aragon @ 719-980-0587 or Tom Wright @ 719-964-8493.

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A PLEA TO ALL OUR READERS FROM "The Unveiled Gospel" STAFF

From the time of our inception almost a year ago, our goal was and remains not only to talk the talk of evangelism, but also to walk the walk of evangelism. As the result of this goal, two awesome godly events are taking place. First, the circulation of our publication is continuing to grow. Second, the number of congregations from among the churches of Christ seeking our help to teach them on how to evangelize and/or help them evangelize their locales is growing. Consequently, we are in need of increased financial support to maintain the growth of our circulation and bring on more experienced staff evangelists to help us help the churches. We are praying to God to use all of you to open these doors to us to continue our evangelizing a lost and dying United States (Col. 4.2-4). Thank you!

EVANGELISM - MINISTRY ACTIVITIES OF The Unveiled Gospel:

February:

The Unveiled Gospel continues to work with the church in Sioux City, IA. Please be praying for the churches at Glass St. and 6th St. as they begin talking about uniting as one congregation. There is much work that can be done when (if) these two congregations get together.

March:

The Unveiled Gospel will continue working with the Lord's church in Sioux City, IA.

April:

The Unveiled Gospel will be holding an informative class on the Seminars we offer at the Fort Dodge IA church of Christ on April 29th as well as conducting their Bible class and worship hour. Please pray for this effort.

Help Needed!!

The church of Christ in Walsh, CO is looking for an evangelist to come and help them grow spiritually and numerically. This is a mission field in southeastern CO and the congregation can provide some support, but more is needed to fully support an evangelist and his family. Walsh is a community that hasn't been evangelized in a long time, so the field is white. We are a lovely community that has many souls in need to help. If you are interested in learning more about the work please contact Kenton Dykes @ 719-688-1148.

The Unveiled Gospel

We are so excited to announce the new website for *The Unveiled Gospel*. Just visit our site www.theunveiledgospel.org and let us know what you think. May God bless you all.

Practicing What Jesus Preached!

No one enjoys being put down and persecuted, but Jesus announces in Matthew 5:11, 12 that when people treat us harshly because we follow Christ, we should be glad. The true prophets of God never allowed such treatment to prevent them from standing strong and proclaiming God's Word to people who often turned against them. The beatitudes of Matthew 5:3 – 12 prescribe how true followers of Jesus are to live. We are not expected to mirror the world, but reflect Christ. The four verses following the beatitudes tell us that followers of Christ are to go about doing good works, rather than living in a cave. As the saying goes, we are to live in the world but not of the world.

Jesus uses two powerful metaphors in Matthew 5:13 – 16, salt and light, to illustrate the relationship His followers are to have with the world. We should not expect to receive high praise from men, but neither should we isolate ourselves from people of the world. We will never influence anyone by separating ourselves from them. We will never present a better way if it is impossible to distinguish us from the world. The appropriate question has often been asked, "Is the church influencing the world, or is the world invading the church?" The Sermon on the Mount clearly proclaims the side Jesus prefers.

In these four verses from the Sermon on the Mount, He speaks directly to the disciples. The crowd is present, and they are potential disciples, but this is not a message for them. It is for those who are already following Him. How about us? Are we potential, or actual disciples? These two metaphors help to determine where we are in our walk with Christ. Are we living for Him, or for personal glory? Are we taking the easy way, or the right way? These are questions we each need to ask and answer for ourselves. The same questions may be asked in each of our congregations. Jesus is not speaking to a specific individual in these four verses, but to the collective discipleship, to a group. So, are we together living like the world, or as salt of the earth and light of the world?

Salt in the first century was used to help preserve food. However, if the salt becomes impure, then it is no longer effective. The point being that we are to be pure so we can influence others. He expects us to shine through the good we do for God. We will never please God by pleasing man. People of the world have different aspirations from people of God. As the church of Christ, He expects us to do good works (Matthew 5:16) so that God will be glorified.

Searching hearts will recognize that our actions are for the Father's glory, not our own. We are expected to be the best of employees and citizens as a living testimony for Jesus. We are to be a Christ-like people in all that we say and do. People want to know that we care, before they care what we know. As salt and light, we should practice what Jesus preached.

~ Terry Smalling, church of Christ, La Junta CO

THIRTY SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE STUDY – SUGGESTION TWELVE

Suggestion twelve for Bible study is that Bible studies should begin and end with prayers asking for God's help that His word does not return empty to Him in that the one(s) being studied with are brought to Christ (Gen. 4.26; Isa. 55.6-11; Matt. 6.5-15; Luke 11.1-4, 9-10; John 17; Acts 17.24-28; Rom. 8.28; Eph. 6.18-20; Col. 4.2-4; 1 Thess. 5.16-18).

The Bible teaches praying is an act of reverent worship extended only to God. Prayers are to be addressed to the Father in the name of Jesus by intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8.26; Col. 3.17). Therein, Christ taught all Bible readers through His own recorded prayer to the Father that the Scriptures: (1) are the source of eternal life, (2) must be preached to know about eternal life, and (3) must be believed to receive eternal life (John 17.1-26). Therefore, God answers: (1) righteous prayer in ways that leads one to Jesus and eternal life (Rom. 8.28; 1 John 5.13-15), and (2) unrighteous prayer by giving one over to evils one asks for (Rom. 1.18-32; 2 Thess. 2.11-12).

In the Patriarchal Age, the lineage of Seth prayed to God petitioning Him to protect and preserve their physical way life from those who sought to destroy it (Gen. 4.1-26; 1 John 3.11-12). In the Mosaic Age, the nation of Israel also prayed to God petitioning Him to protect and preserve their transient physical to spiritual way of life from those who sought to destroy it (Num. 21.4-9; Isa. 37.1-38). In the Christian Age, the church prays to God petitioning Him to protect and preserve her progressive spiritual to eternal way of life from Satan who seeks to destroy her (Matt. 6.13; Luke 11.4; John 17.15; Rev.). God protects and preserves her via the Scriptures (1 Cor. 10.13).

Yet, prayer can protect and preserve life by petitioning God (Luke 11.1-4) to: (1) make His name holy by bringing one into His kingdom (v.2), (2) strengthen one daily with physical and spiritual bread to bring others into the kingdom by the gospel (v.3), (3) forgive one's sins purifying one to bring others into the kingdom (v.4), (4) help one forgive others of their indebtedness encouraging them to enter into the kingdom believing the Father will forgive their sins (v.4), and (5) lead one in the kingdom away from temptation to sin by constantly forgiving one's sins as answer to one's continual prayers (v.4). So, prayer helps one gain eternal life (Eph. 6.18-20; Col. 1.5; 3.4; 4.2-6).

~ Tom Wright, church of Christ, Holly CO

Elders in a Local Congregation (Part 2)

In part 1 we briefly studied Paul's first missionary journey. We noticed that Paul preached on the island of Cyprus, and then through the regions of Pamphylia and Pisida. All along the way he was making disciples and establishing congregations. But after having reached Derbe Paul did a 180 degree about face and returned to strengthen the disciples he converted. We pointed out how, even though those men had only been Christians a matter of weeks, Paul still found many of them fit to serve as elders in a local congregation (Ac. 14:23). Only through deep dedication to conforming one's life to Christ could this be possible. We need men to rise up and make such a commitment today!

Initially I want us to realize that part of "strengthening the souls of the disciples" (Ac. 14:21) included exhorting men to qualify themselves and assume the roles of leadership in the congregation by serving as elders in their local congregations (Ac. 14:23). When congregations are strengthened, they will have strong leadership.

But let's also consider how that leadership would strengthen a congregation. Elders would protect their flock from false teachers who would draw others away from the truth (Tit. 1:10-14). Elders would also teach (Tit. 1:9). That would add strength to a congregation, inciting spiritual growth. In practical terms that means that they would retain the members that were converted. But they would do more than that...

If they were faithful to the teachings of Christ (among other things) they would work with other church leaders – evangelists and teachers "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). The "work of the ministry" would most definitely include evangelism (Mat. 28:18-20) which would add new souls to the body of Christ, growing the congregation numerically in addition to the spiritual growth the elders would be encouraging to take place.

Brothers and sisters, God's plan always works – always! God's plan includes having elders in every church (Ac. 14:23). Could it be that our congregations are weak because they have no men who have qualified themselves to serve as elders and we have no men qualified to serve as elders because we are weak and have so few who are serving as spiritual leaders? This is a cyclic problem and if someone is going to offer a solution to break this cycle, it's going to take men who will turn from the world, wholly cling to Christ and never look back, serving Him with their whole heart.

So, the only question that remains, are you up for the challenge?

~ Mike Mahler, church of Christ, Sioux City IA