

# Sharpening Our Focus in Biblical Evangelism

## “How Do I Communicate the Gospel?”

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### Introduction

### The Goal of Evangelism

Our goal in evangelism is to demonstrate to people their need of Christ and to explain how they can enter into a relationship with Him and to then give people an opportunity to respond by receiving Him as their Savior and Lord. Our goal is not to read through the 4 Laws and run, but rather to make sure the issue of salvation is clear to the person. He doesn't necessarily have to agree with you (although we hope he does...), just understand what you are communicating. Remember - success in witnessing is sharing Christ in the power of the Spirit and leaving the results to God.

(Diagram)

### The Issue

The issue at stake in evangelism is eternal life. John Stott has said:

“If in this world we deliberately reject Jesus Christ through whom alone we may find eternal life, we will die eternally in the next world. Hell is a grim and dreadful reality. Jesus himself spoke of it...”

“But Christianity is a rescue religion. It declares that God has taken the initiative in Jesus Christ to deliver us from our sins. This is the main theme of the Bible. - ‘The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.’ Through Jesus Christ the Savior we can be born again, receive a new nature, and be set free from our moral bondage.” (Basic Christianity, pp. 73,81)

Concerning eternal life, there are three basic concepts that we are trying to communicate:

Because of sin, there is nothing that man can do in and of himself to experience eternal life.

- a. Romans 3:23 all fall short of God's standard
- Romans 6:23 the punishment of this is eternal separation from God
- Isaiah 64:6 God views our most righteous deeds as filth

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and thus deserving of eternal life?” If the person answers anything other than “No”, or “Christ”, ask him to read it again.

In the paragraph explaining sin, underline sin, attitude, and self-will, in that order. Ask, “What do you feel sin is?”

After Romans 6:23, point out that a wage is a payment we receive as a result of doing something - so that the payment for sin is spiritual separation from God.

### LAW 3

After Romans 5:8 ask, “What was the purpose of Christ's death?” Get them to answer, “To pay the penalty of sin,” or “As a substitute,” - something of that nature. If you sense confusion, let them read in your pocket testament either 1 Pet. 2:24, 1 Pet. 3:18, Isa. 53 (esp. vs. 6), or 1 Cor. 5:21

After John 14:6 ask, "On the basis of what we have been saying, why could Christ make such a narrow-minded statement as this (to be the only way to God)?" We want them to conclude that Christ could say He was the only way, because He was the only one to pay the penalty for man's sin.

After completing the diagram ask, "What has taken place in history that allows God to forgive sin?" Get them to answer, "Christ's death on the cross."

#### LAW 4

After Ephesians 2:8,9, there are several questions you should ask:

Say, "There are 3 religious words in this passage that are often misunderstood." Underline grace, saved, and faith and ask them to give you a definition for each. Then give them the right definitions. Write definitions in the margins around the verse (Eph. 2:8,9):

Grace = God's unmerited love

Saved = Rescued (Ask, "What have we been rescued from?"

Answer: "The penalty of sin.")

Faith = (means 2 things: use e.g. of tightrope walker over Niagara Falls)

agree with certain facts

depend upon these facts

Ask, "In the sense we are talking about it, what do we place our faith in or what do we depend upon?"

Answer: "Christ and His death on the cross."

Therefore, faith means: to depend completely upon Christ and His death on the cross for your sins.

#### THE PRAYER

Make sure that the person realizes that the prayer is an expression of faith. Underline "I need you: and explain, "In other words, acknowledging our separation from God and that we need Christ to bridge that separation."

Be sensitive: If he communicates a hesitancy to the question, "Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?", share with him your observation of his hesitancy. Ask, "Is there any reason why you couldn't pray that prayer?" Again, we ask these questions to be sensitive and to make sure he understands.

#### EXPLAINING THE ISSUE

What do we do when we have shared with a person and we're still not sure that they have gotten the picture? Once again there are some questions we can ask, but this time the questions are intended to help us understand where the person is.

"Why don't you want to receive Christ?" This tells us if the person has any misunderstandings about what it takes to receive forgiveness of sin. If the person replies that there is something he doesn't want to give up or have to do, he doesn't have the picture.

"If you were to die tonight, would you spend eternity with Christ?" or "Would you go to be with Christ?" If the person is not sure, show them how they can be a "know so" Christian (not a "hope so") by turning to 1 John 5:11-13. Ask them these questions:

"What does it say God has given to us?" Answer: "Eternal life."

"How do I get that life?" Answer: "By having the Son."

"When do I get that eternal life?" Answer: "When I receive Christ."

"How can I be sure that I have received Christ?" Turn back to Rev. 3:20. Answer: "By making sure I've opened the door of my life to Christ and put my faith in Him." "Does this make sense?"

"If you were to die tonight and come face-to-face with God, and He asked you why He should let you spend eternity with Him, what would your answer be?" This shows us what the person is trusting in for his standing with God. If the person answers anything other than that he has believed in Christ (or accepted Him, etc.) show him 1 John 5:11-13 and tell him "This passage here tells us what God is looking for."

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But suppose I say, "Hey Mike, you can't swim, can you?" So I say, "Let me show you how to swim." I stop and anchor my boat and jump in alongside of him and demonstrate the Australian crawl. "See how I blow these bubbles when my head is under water." I show him the stroke, how I cup my hands and everything. Then I say, "Mike, if you will follow my example, someday, some way, everything will come out okay and you will get to shore." And I get back in my boat and leave. I only frustrated him. If Christ came simply to be our example, we're the most frustrated people in all the world. Christ didn't come to be our example. We can't live up to His example.

Suppose that I take compassion on Mike and I pull him in over the side of the boat. He's now relaxing there in a lounge chair, enjoying the cruise - I have saved his life. We get about 50 miles from California and I say, "'Boy, Mike, you really make me mad. I saved your life and you sit there so happy-go-easy. The least you can do to show your sincerity is to swim the last 50 miles.'" And I throw him out. I haven't really saved him; I offered him temporary probation but not salvation. So if Christ comes and says, "I died on the cross to get it in motion, but the other part of it is giving money every week, living this type of life, following this list of 25 rules - then you'll get in ...;" if Christ says this, he hasn't offered us salvation.

I become Mike's savior when I pick him up, take him along to shore, and set him on the dock. I have saved him. Christ has been our Saviour when He made the total and complete payment for our sins.

Remember above all else - don't argue or blow your cool. Our purpose in evangelism is to communicate the claims of Christ in a spirit of love. All that we have been called to do is make sure the person before us understands the gospel. Drawing men to Christ is the responsibility of God's Spirit. Don't try to do His work!

#### DIAGRAM FOR ILLUSTRATION #4 ABOVE

(Diagram)

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|--|---|
| 1. Give you rule book                                      | Follow Christ's teaching                              |
| 2. Be an example   | Follow Christ's example                               |
| 3. Save you -you're not sincere enough--<br>throw you back | Trust Christ + demonstrate sincerity<br>by good works |
| 4. Save you  | ONLY way Christ is really your                        |
- Savior