

# Why Do Personal Evangelism

By *Ron Boatwright*

To evangelize means to proclaim the good news of the gospel of Christ. Jesus in giving the Great Commission to the eleven apostles says in Matthew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you." Imagine that Jesus saying these words to eleven of us today and we were one of the eleven. What would be our reaction? Impossible? Incredible? Absurd? Or Lord don't you see there are only eleven of us? Or would we think "Yes Jesus really means me also." We are also under this obligation to teach others. Jesus had just commanded the eleven to go teach and to teach those who were converted to observe all things he had command them which included that we are also to be taught to go and teach.

Paul says in Romans 1:14, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise." In like manner today we are debtors to every non-Christian because we have the good news that can save his soul. This places us under obligation to share the gospel with the lost so they can be saved. Because someone loved us enough to teach us the truth, shouldn't we do as much for someone else? What if you were unsaved and doomed to Hell, wouldn't you want someone to teach you the saving gospel of Christ?

If people have not heard and learned the gospel they cannot obey it. In 1 Peter 4:17 the question is asked, "What shall be the end of those who do not obey the gospel?" The answer is given in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 which says when the Lord comes He will come "In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." We should not want to see anyone lost but as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men." People are going to be lost forever if we don't teach them now!

The Lord doesn't want anyone to be lost. We read in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord...is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." They can only come to repentance when they know what to do. We also read in 1 Timothy 2:4, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth." Because of what the Lord has done for us, we have the obligation to teach others so they can come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:37, "Woe

is to me if I preach not the gospel." How are we going to answer the Lord if we haven't bothered to tell the good news to others?

Our Lord in teaching His disciples, tells them in John 4:35, "Do you say there are still four months then comes the harvest? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest." Our Lord was speaking of the spiritual harvest of souls who would be lost in eternity if they are not harvested. There is an urgency to teach the lost for Jesus says in Matthew 9:37-38, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." We must work in the Lord's harvest because if we don't then those we could have taught will be lost and we don't want that to happen.

In the first century the good news of the gospel caused such great excitement that "And daily in the temple and from house to house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus" (Acts 5:42). We need to be as excited today. And even when they were being heavily persecuted, some even to death, we read in Acts 8:4, "Therefore those who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." What should stop us today? We are not being persecuted. We have many more advantages. We have the automobile, the airplane, the telephone, the Internet, and the printed page. We are without excuse.

Teaching the lost is the work the Lord has commanded each of us to do. Successful evangelism is accomplished one person at a time. Evangelism is not only to be done in distant lands, but we must also teach those near us, our next door neighbors. God will be with us as we teach His word to the lost. We will be successful because we read in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." When we do what the Lord says to do we will not fail.

When we teach the lost we cause all of Heaven to rejoice. Jesus tells us that there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God when one sinner repents (Luke 15:7, 10). The joy of teaching one the gospel and seeing them obey it is beyond description.