

## Our Philosophy of Evangelism

### What is Evangelism?

- Evangelism is not simply living a good, moral life.
- Evangelism is not inviting someone to church.
- Evangelism is not a personal testimony.
- Evangelism is not serving someone or doing a good deed for someone.
- Evangelism is not social action or political involvement.
- Evangelism is not apologetics.
- Evangelism IS the verbal communication of the gospel by saved people to lost people.

*“Evangelism is not making a proselyte; it is not persuading people to make a decision; it is not proving that God exists, or making a good case for the truth of Christianity; it is not inviting someone to a meeting; it is not exposing the contemporary dilemma, or arousing interest in Christianity; it is not wearing a badge saying ‘Jesus Saves’! Some of these things are right and good in their place, but none of them should be confused with evangelism. To evangelize is to declare on the authority of God what he has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” – John Cheesman (taken from “Nine Marks of a Healthy Church” by Mark Dever)*

*“To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.” – John Stott (taken from “Nine Marks of a Healthy Church” by Mark Dever)*

### Key Biblical Terms for Evangelism:

- euangelizo (verb) – “I communicate good news”
  - Found 43 times in the NT
  - Most frequently found in Luke, Acts and Paul’s epistles
  - Often translated into English as “preach the gospel”
  - Luke 4:18; Romans 1:15; 1 Cor. 1:17
- kerusso (verb) – “to proclaim in the manner of a herald”

- Found 61 times in the NT
- In the NT it is not always referring to proclaiming the gospel, but often it is used in that regard.
- Romans 10:14-15; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thess. 2:9
- martureo (verb) – “bear witness”
  - Throughout the NT this term either refers to (1) what someone has seen or (2) what someone has seen and verbally gives testimony of.
  - Acts 14:3, 23:11

*“A distinction is often made between evangelism and ‘witnessing.’ Rather than evangelism dealing with the verbal and witnessing the non-verbal elements of the Christian life. I suggest that they both speak of verbally testifying of Jesus Christ. Many other passages deal with the Christian’s lifestyle. A witness in the courtroom always needs to testify verbally in some way, so that the court reporter can accurately record what is said. So with the Christian if he is to be a witness of Christ, he must speak of Christ.” – Dr. Tom Johnston, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*

- laleo (verb) – “speak”
  - This term is found throughout the NT in reference to speaking the gospel
  - 1 Thess. 2:2,4; Acts 4:31; Phil. 1:14

## What is the Gospel?

The good news that the just and gracious God of the universe has looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that all who have faith in Him will be reconciled to God forever.

Whenever we talk about the Gospel, it is helpful and important to remember the four essentials: God, man, Christ, and response.

- **God** is both our sovereign Creator and our righteous Judge.
  - He is our Creator: We belong to Him (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 40:28, 43:15; Romans 1:19-20, 9:20-21)
 

*You alone are the Lord. You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before You (Neh 9:6)*
  - He is our Judge: We are accountable to Him (Romans 2:6-11)

*Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity (Ps 98:9)*

- God therefore has the right of ownership over us by virtue of creating us, and He has the right to punish or reward us by virtue of his royal, judicial office. And because God is both our Creator and Judge, we are doubly accountable to Him for our all our behavior – word, thought, and deed.
- **Man** was created by God, in God's image, to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. But man sinned against God by disobeying His holy law. Man therefore separated himself from God's holy and satisfying presence, and incurred His wrathful displeasure.
  - God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Gen 1:27).
  - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23).
  - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18).
  - Man lacks the ability and goodness to reconcile himself back to God and appease His wrathful displeasure.
    - We are morally evil (Genesis 8:21; Luke 11:13)
    - We are spiritually sick (Matthew 9:12)
    - We are slaves to sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:16-20; 2 Timothy 2:26)
    - We are blinded to truth (1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 4:18)
    - We are children of wrath (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:3; James 4:4)
    - We are spiritually dead (Romans 5:12, 6:23; Ephesians 2:1, 5:14)
- **Jesus Christ's** death was the substitute payment for the penalty that we deserved for our sin. His death is God's only provision for the forgiveness of man's sin and the appeasement of God's wrath against him.
  - His life displayed the righteousness of God (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22)
  - His death satisfied the wrath of God (Romans 5:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

*All we like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him (Isa 53:6)*

- His resurrection conquered the power of sin and death and demonstrated the power of God (Colossians 2:9-15)
- **We are called to respond** to this good news in repentance and belief – turning away from our sin and self-sufficiency toward God, and trusting in the shed blood of Jesus Christ as the substitute penalty that we deserved to pay for our sin.
  - Christ is the basis of our salvation (Ephesians 2:4-7)
  - Faith/Repentance is the means of our salvation (Mark 1:15; Luke 24:46-47; Galatians 2:15-16)
    - Faith involves Turning...
      - ...from our Sins
      - ...from our Selves
    - Faith involves Trusting...
      - ...in Jesus as Savior
      - ...in Jesus as Lord
    - Faith includes...
      - ...a knowledge of Christ
      - ...an assent/agreement of Christ
      - ...a commitment to Christ
  - Works is the evidence of our salvation (James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Colossians 1:27-29)

### What are the Biblical Metaphors for the Gospel?

- **Redemption** teaches us to think about the Gospel in *economic* terms.
  - Jesus has bought and brought us out of slavery to sin. Christ's death was the price paid for our freedom from sin. It is how God has redeemed us from our slavery to sin.
  - *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us* (Gal 3:13).
- **Reconciliation** teaches us to think about the Gospel in *relational* terms.
  - As God's rebellious creatures who were made in His image yet disobedient to His will, He has now restored our fellowship with Him, and His with us, by the death of His Son Jesus Christ.
  - *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life* (Rom 5:10).

- **Justification** teaches us to think about the Gospel in *legal* terms.
  - Christ's death deals with the reality of our guilt before God and the punishment we deserve. When God identifies us with Christ's death, we are declared not guilty. Christ gets the penalty of our sin, and we get the status of His righteousness.
  - *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor 5:21).*
- **Spiritual Warfare** language teaches us to think about the Gospel in *military* terms.
  - Christ's death and resurrection effectively gave Him victory over spiritual forces.
  - *When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him (Col 2:15).*

### What the Gospel is NOT...

- An offer of Life enhancement: The "Good News" that Jesus can improve your life.
  - "If you come to Jesus then He'll give you purpose in life"
  - "Jesus will give you the peace, joy and lasting happiness you are looking for"
  - "Come to Jesus and you'll find the love and acceptance you have been looking for"
  - "If you come to Jesus then He'll take care of that addiction or problem you are struggling with."
  - "Accept Jesus and He will fill the void in your heart"
- The "Good News" of the modern gospel is that Jesus can improve your life; while the good news of the Biblical gospel is that Jesus came to rescue you from God's just punishment for your sins.
- The "Good News" of the modern gospel addresses one's "life" problem, while the "Good News" of the Biblical gospel addresses one's "sin" problem.
- While the Life Enhancement gospel (or what some may call the "man-centered" gospel) employs the four essentials of the gospel, it defines them by man's perceived needs. Therefore, the gospel can be tailor made for each individual. For instance, if we're witnessing to someone who's just lost a loved one and is lonely, we present God as one who will provide needed companionship. Or if someone just doesn't feel happy, then we present God as the one who can give those pleasant happy feelings.
- Specifically, the Life Enhancement Gospel is characterized by several things:
  1. Low view of God. Love is God's chief attribute. The best way to view Him is as a friend who fulfills our every need.

2. Low view of man's sin. He's not that bad. His primary needs are love, help, friendship. He's incomplete, not a child of wrath.
  3. Low view of Christ. He exists primarily for our benefit. He is the means by which we will experience the abundant life.
  4. High view of man. Man's needs being fulfilled is the primary priority.
- Life enhancements (meaning inner qualities such as peace and joy) are legitimate fruits of salvation but not a drawing card for leading people to salvation.

### **Who Should Evangelize?**

Many today believe that evangelism is a job for specialists only. Many believers who are convinced of the importance of evangelism are equally impressed that the pastor, staff, and itinerant evangelists are to accomplish the task. Others believe that those with the gift of evangelism should be the ones sharing the gospel.

Reading through the New Testament, we don't find the call to evangelism being limited to Paul or even to the apostles. At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20)

Is this a commission for every believer or just the pastor or gifted one?

- The early disciples took to heart the Great Commission as they evangelized constantly. (Acts 5:42; 8:25; 13:32; 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:18)
- The Bible seems to indicate that all believers have received this commission. We don't just read of the apostles spreading the Gospel.

Acts 8:1-4

"On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."

- Elsewhere throughout Acts we see many instances of "lay evangelism"

Acts 11:19-21

"Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.

Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling the Good News about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord."

- Just as many other commands directed to the disciples aren't limited to the disciples alone so it is with evangelism. The disciples are also exhorted to "love" one another; no one believes this command should only be obeyed by professionals or specialists.
- Christians aren't exempt from sharing their faith if they don't have the gift of evangelism. Many Christians don't have the gift of service but they are expected to still serve. Other Christians don't have the gift of mercy but they are still expected to show mercy.

### **How Will We Evangelize?**

We will intentionally seek to engage the people of Kansas City with the gospel through:

- **Natural relationships.** We will be very intentional about establishing sincere relationships with those in our neighborhoods, community and places of employment. Within these meaningful relationships opportunities abound to sew threads of the gospel and verbally communicate the gospel of Christ. Today, people are much more willing to listen to a friend talk about the truths of the gospel rather than a stranger. Relationship is not essential for evangelism, but it sure helps. See "Church Planting Timeline" for many ideas
- **Corporate body life.** We want unbelievers to see the gospel and Christian love in action. Therefore, we will take great pains to invite unbelievers into our Christian relationships and community.
- **Worship gatherings.** Our worship gatherings are primarily geared for an audience of Christ-followers. However, as a church plant we expect many non-Christians to be present, therefore we will strive to make sure that the preaching and musical worship is understandable without watering down doctrine and truth. Our overarching desire for unbelievers at our worship gathering is that they would be challenged with a true picture of the glory and majesty of God as found in the gospel of Christ.
- **Community outreach events.** We will plan specific structured activities and events for the purpose of serving, developing relationships and building trust with those in our neighborhood and community. These events are also an easy way to start up conversations about Jesus and our new church start.
- **Service and compassion ministries.** Scripture is clear that showing mercy to those in physical and emotional need is a clear evidence and expression of the gospel message. It also provides a tremendous opportunity to share the truths of Christ with those who are overlooked, abandoned and in need of real hope.

- **Verbal proclamation of the gospel.** Giving ourselves to the five areas listed above is much easier and less controversial than verbally proclaiming the gospel to someone. Therefore, by human nature we will always have a tendency to shy away from sharing the gospel in favor of random acts of kindness and simply being a good neighbor. We must never forget that the point of all we do is not to just develop a new friend or serve the needy, but to preach the gospel of Christ. We believe the five areas listed above our great opportunities to do just that.

### **How Will We Relate to those Apart from Christ?**

We will seek to embody the following characteristics in our relationships with non-believers:

- *Deep Compassion:* We will convey deep compassion and care for those who do not know Christ, because Christ has richly shown us compassion when we lived in rebellion against Him (Matthew 5:43-48, 9:36; Romans 9:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:7b-8).
- *Humble Consideration:* We will exhibit an attitude of humility in our relationships with unbelievers, because we know we are saved only by grace alone, not because of our superior insight or character (Titus 3:1-10; 2 Timothy 2:25; 1 Peter 3:15).
- *Favorable Reputation:* As far as it depends on us we will strive to maintain a positive reputation and live above reproach among unbelievers when it comes to our motives and character (Acts 2:47, 5:13; 1 Timothy 3:7, 6:1; Titus 2:5, 8, 10; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-7a, 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12, 15, 3:16).
- *Graciousness:* Our conversation with unbelievers will be filled with grace (Acts 4:29-31; 2 Corinthians 3:12; Colossians 4:5-6; Philippians 1:20; Ephesians 6:18-20).
- *Deference:* We will yield and forfeit our personal freedoms in order to not become an unnecessary stumbling block or gospel hindrance to non-believers (1 Corinthians 9:19-27, 10:32).
- *Perseverance/Courage:* We will continue to hold fast to the gospel and our allegiance to Christ even when we are opposed or persecuted by those we take the gospel to (Matthew 5:10-16, 10:1-42, 16:24; Mark 6:7-13, 8:34; Luke 9:23-27, 10:1-12, 12:1-12, 14:27; John 20:19-23).
- *Gentleness:* We will strive to respond with love and gentleness to those our message offends and to those who reject us (Matthew 5:43-48, 10:16; 1 Peter 2:21-25, 3:8-12).