



“Engaging in Gospel Work”

2 Timothy 4:5

Idea: Soulwinning is the chief business of the Christian.

Intro: Please take your Bible, hold it up high, and repeat this with me. “This is God’s very Word given to me. I am who it says I am. I can do what it says I can do. And I have all that it says is mine.”

As a church of born-again followers of Jesus Christ, we are a people of the Book. We unrelentingly believe that the Bible is God’s voice to us. We are committed to the authority, sufficiency, and inerrancy of Scripture. The Bible is our final authority, and it takes precedence over our opinions, emotions, and preferences. We are who it says we are. We can do what it says we can do. And we have all that it says is ours.

Do you believe this?

If you said, “Yes,” then why is it that so few Christians regularly live out the command of Matthew 28:19? “*Go therefore and make disciples...*” The modern church of America has failed to exemplify the evangelistic zeal of the first century church.

A. T. Pierson said this of the early church:

“Upon the primitive evangelism of the early church God set His seal confirming it with signs following and adding to the church daily so that the most rapid and far-reaching results ever known to history were achieved within one generation. With none of our modern facilities of transit and publication...the gospel flew from lip to lip until it reached the bounds of the Roman Empire. Within one century such one-by-one evangelism shook paganism to its center and the priests of false faith saw with dismay their idol shrines forsaken.”

What is it that can give hope to the atheist, humanist, and hedonist who believes that this life is all that there is, yet still feels like there should be something more? What can heal the brokenness so pervasive in our culture? There is rarely a week that goes by that we don’t hear of a mass shooting, a sexual scandal, or a terroristic threat. The divide is great! We’re broken as a culture. Families are broken. Marriages are broken. Individuals are broken. What is the answer to all the brokenness? I think it is safe to say that the answer is not more education or wealth. There has never been a time in history with more information readily available to everyone. And there has never been a more prosperous time in history than today in America. The Bible tells us the answer is the gospel. The answer is the good news of what Jesus Christ has done to heal the brokenness

within each person. And God has commissioned His children with the responsibility and privilege of taking the answer to everyone in this broken world.

“Soulwinning is the chief business of the Christian; indeed, it should be the main pursuit of every true believer.”
– Charles H. Spurgeon

Read 2 Timothy 4:5.

Inquiry: Last Sunday we learned from the first five verses of chapter four that the Bible is sufficient and all we need in our preaching and teaching. It mandates and dictates what our ministries are and how they are to be conducted. It alone contains the message we stand upon and proclaim to others. It is this message that we are commanded to proclaim to sinners who are lost and without hope.

Let’s look at this biblical idea of engaging in gospel work. I want you to see first three implications that flow from Paul’s direction to “do the work of an evangelist.” Then, we will look at some truths regarding the work.

Implications of the Gospel

1. The gospel has enough power to change the world.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...
– Matthew 28:19a

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. – Romans 1:16

The gospel alone has the power to shake off every chain, to wipe away every stain, and to heal every pain. This is made clear through the gospels and letters to the church. In Mark 5 we find a beautiful story of how Jesus powerfully changed a man’s life.

There was a man in the area of the Gerasenes who was possessed by legions of demons. He lived among the tombs. He was a monster of a man. No one could chain him up or keep him in prison. His appearance and actions created fear in the hearts of everyone in the region. They avoided him at all costs. Then one day, Jesus showed up on the bank of the Gerasenes. The man immediately met Jesus there. The demons knew who had just landed on their territory. After a conversation and a struggle, at the command of Jesus, the demons left the man. The incident scared the local herdsmen, so many of the people from the nearby city came to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found something amazing. Read Mark 5:15. Jesus had changed this man’s life. He was brought from death to life. His life was different in every way, so much so, that when Jesus was departing, the man asked to go with the Lord (vs. 18).

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Through it God changes lives. Through it He heals the brokenness of the adulterer, the liar, the drunkard, the addict, the abuser, the religious, and the self-righteous.

The gospel has enough power to change the world. And if I believe this, I have to do something with the gospel.

2. A gospel-centered church is not one where the pastor simply preaches the gospel, but one in which the entire church shares the gospel.

Who is responsible for doing the work of an evangelist? Obviously, Paul is instructing Pastor Timothy in this passage, but is the instruction meant only for him? When striving to interpret and understand Scripture it is wise to understand each passage in its larger context. In other words, what does the rest of Scripture have to say about this subject? We find that there are gospel commissions in each of the four gospels and Acts (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8). There are also many other instructions in the epistles for believers to engage in the gospel work.

This work and commission has been given to the church's leaders and laity. It is too big of a work for a just handful of people. It takes everyone. We cannot nor should we expect for every lost person to walk through our doors. If they do, will they hear the gospel? They absolutely will hear the gospel and be given an opportunity to respond. Jesus, however, commissioned us to a "go and tell" ministry not a "come and see" one.

"We ought not to regard the Christian church as a luxurious hotel where each Christian may dwell at his ease in his own inn, but as a barracks in which soldiers are drilled and trained for war." – Charles H. Spurgeon

How did the gospel spread so quickly during the days of the early church? Was it because Peter, Paul, and the apostles were such incredible orators? No, the gospel spread and changed thousands upon thousands of lives because each believer in each church took responsibility for the proclamation of the gospel where they lived, worked, and played.

A gospel-centered church is not one where the pastor simply preaches the gospel, but one in which the entire church shares the gospel. And if I believe this, I have to do something with the gospel.

3. The future of the world depends on the average believer being able to proclaim the gospel in everyday life.

I mentioned earlier that Jesus commissioned us to a "go and tell" ministry not a "come and see" one. Fifty years ago, we built big churches off a "come and see" ministry platform. The culture identified with the church. The people were familiar with the Bible and the gospel. Today, this is not the case. In many ways, the church is like the mall. Once upon a time, everyone in the community came to the mall at some point. It was a place to shop, eat, and meet people. Today, malls and box stores are closing all over the country as more and more people choose to stay home and shop online.

Once upon a time, everyone in the community came to the church at some point. It was the place to build relationships, network with others, and find solutions to life's problems. Today, church attendance and involvement is plummeting as people choose to stay home or fill their calendars with other things.

How can we fulfill the Great Commission with a "come and see" philosophy when the people are not interested in coming and seeing? We cannot and will not fulfill it. We must return to the Great Commission's command to go and tell.

God has commissioned you to take the gospel to those you know and interact with where you live, work, and play. Who better to reach them than the indigenous person in those circles of influence? This will require you to:

- know the gospel
- be able to share the gospel
- possess a life that bears witness to the gospel

The future of the world depends on the average believer being able to proclaim the gospel in everyday life. And if I believe this, I have to do something with the gospel. This leads us to some truths we need to know about the work of an evangelist.

5 Direct Truths of the Work of an Evangelist

1) This is a direct command to obey.

It is not up for debate. It is not a suggestion. The Great Commission is a direct command from the Lord Jesus. The instruction in 2 Timothy 4:5 is also God's command to us through Paul. We will obey or not?

2) This is a calling, above all.

Commands are to be obeyed regardless of how one may feel about them. But alone they can be dry and crusty. It is hard to be excited about following the rules. This is why the Lord goes a step farther and calls us to join Him in His global mission of reaching the world with the gospel. The sense of calling adds passion and zeal to the mandate as believers realize they have been invited to participate in something glorious and eternal. Let us remember that God has called us to join Him in His mission.

3) This is a multi-faceted work.

Most likely the Lord has sent others to help you reach the people in your networks. It is a process that may take years to complete and many witnesses along the way. Some break up and plow the ground. Some come along and sow the seed. Others water and cultivate. Eventually the seed takes root and a new life comes to be.

4) This is a focus with a goal in mind.

Gospel work will not just happen in your life. It requires focus and intentionality. One good practice to have is a list of lost people you are praying over. Pray daily for their salvation. Pray for opportunities and boldness to share the gospel. Pray for God to bring others into their path who will share the gospel. Pray and share with focus, having their salvation always as the goal on your mind and heart.

5) This is evaluated and rewarded in the end.

Evaluation and rewards are good motivators. Thankfully, the Lord provides both of these for us. Put yourself under the mentorship of another believer who is a soulwinner. Learn from him or her. Allow that person to evaluate and help you get better.

And never forget that you will be rewarded for your faithfulness. There is the reward of seeing a person you have invested in come to faith in Jesus. And there is the reward of hearing Jesus one day say, "Well done."

Conclusion: "Soulwinning is the chief business of every Christian." If this is true, then it means that the Lord has placed you where you are for the purpose of engaging in gospel work. God has placed you where you live, work, and play for the gospel. He has placed in you your particular school for the gospel. The friends you have and the businesses you shop are all part of God's sovereign mission to redeem men, women, boys, and girls. He has called us to join Him in the global mission of redemption...to engage in gospel work.

This reminds us of the good news that Bible declares.

Good News – You are loved by God. He designed you. You were made by Him and for Him (Col 1:16). You were designed to perfectly relate and to be in relationship with Holy God.

Bad News - You are sinful and broken. You possess both an inherited and a self-inflicted wound. The sinful nature of Adam in the Garden has been passed down to you, and you were born into the world in rebellion against the God who created you for Himself. Your sin is under the just wrath of Holy God. Sin has produced brokenness in your lives. You choose to sin because it is your nature, further wounding yourself. Therefore, apart from Christ, you are as far away from God's purpose and desire for your life as you can get.

Best News - The gospel declares that God the Son has paid the penalty for your sin. Romans 5:8 says, "*God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" He offered His life as a substitute for you and experienced the wrath of God the Father against your sin. So that now, you can experience forgiveness for sin by placing your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You are given a choice to make?

Through the gospel we understand that we can know God. We can be set free, made whole, and forgiven of all sin. We can grow into maturity in a new life in Jesus.

Today, let us thank God for His gospel that has brought us into relationship with Jesus Christ. Let us respond to it in faith and repentance of sin. Let us recommit ourselves to proclaim it to those who are still dead in their trespasses and sins.