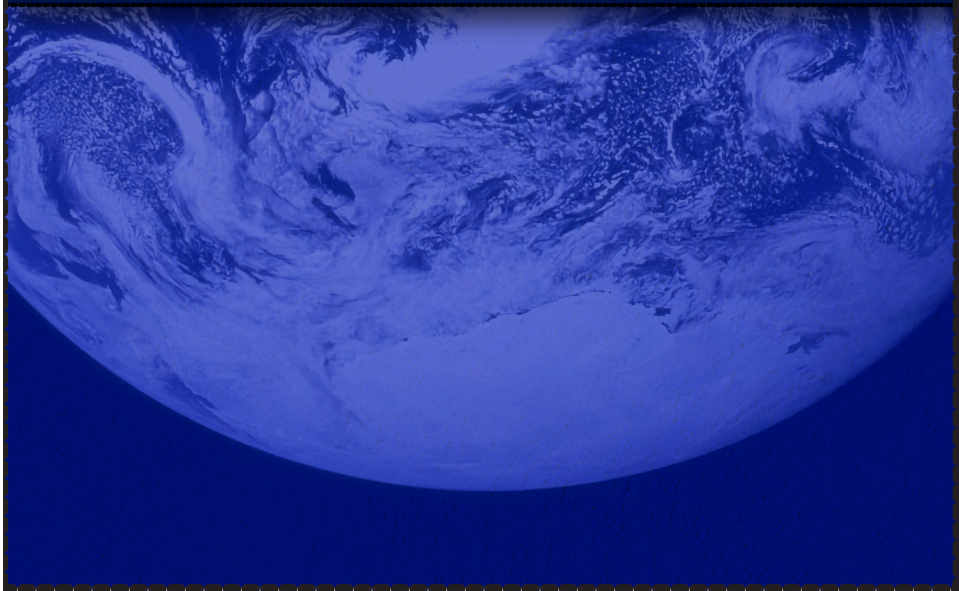


**ARE WE FULFILLING
THE GREAT
COMMISSION?**



BIBLICAL ANSWERS
TO THE REASONS WHY WE DON'T SEE
THE GREAT COMMISSION FULFILLED

INTRO

BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO THE REASONS WHY WE DON'T SEE THE GREAT COMMISSION FULFILLED

This message was originally shared at a church years ago but is now needed more than ever.

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.””
-Mark 16:15

“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 that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
-Matthew 28:19 & 20

See also: Lk. 24:47 & 48; Jn. 17:18; 20:21; Acts 1:8

Today, I want to be a recruiting officer for Jesus, my Lord, for the army of God.

“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Matt. 9:37 & 38

WE NEED LABORERS! They are FEW. This has always been a problem. In the average church in America, it is only a few who do most of the work and the rest are spectators. Concerning Evangelism, statistically, only 2 % of Christians share their faith on a regular basis.

An excerpt from an article by Rick Wood, Editor, Mission Frontiers Magazine, Jan./Feb. 2011, page 4, from U.S. Center For World Mission, states:

“If we as a church succeed in every area, but fail to make disciples who can spiritually multiply, then ultimately we have failed. Yet if we fail in every other area, but succeed in spiritual multiplication, then we have succeeded. (Tom Nelson)

Our churches in the West seem to be succeeding at lesser things while failing at Jesus’ core strategy for world evangelization. We are succeeding in collecting tens of billions of dollars each year to gather large crowds into beautiful and expensive church buildings on Sunday. We have succeeded in putting on a great show and developing programs that attract people to our churches. In the process we have put an unbearable burden on our pastors to do nearly all the ministry while failing to activate the laity. As a result many pastors are skating on the edge of burnout, while the majority of church members do not see that God has any other role for them except as spectators.

In short, we are largely failing to develop mature followers of Jesus who are able to make disciples who can make disciples.

The people in our churches are not growing to spiritual maturity where they are able to carry on the work of spreading the gospel within our own culture,

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not to mention cross-culturally to every tribe and tongue. This is having a devastating impact on our ability to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth.

The dirty little secret of missions is that we are sending missionaries all over the world who have not demonstrated the ability to make disciples who can make disciples. Most have not seen or participated in effective models of church-planting or discipleship at home, but we send them out in the hope that going cross-culturally will turn them into effective church planters and disciplers. This is wishful thinking at best, and it has to change.” end quote

The Sunday morning church service is the biggest spectator sport there is in America. It should be a body ministry (1 Cor. 14:26, 1 Cor. 12) but the structure of our church services leads people to think all we need to do is give our “tithes” to support the pastor to do all the work since he is the main one ministering on Sunday mornings.

Even the world, looking in from the outside, gets the impression that the pastor is the one to contact for spiritual needs. We are the ones that give them that impression, by telling people to go to church and hear a salvation sermon rather than sharing the gospel ourselves.

In America, the church is stagnant, at best- we are not growing. Our youth are leaving the church at the alarming rate of 70% or more after going to college. In Western Europe, the church is actually dying out!

So, we see we have a problem. Not enough of us are actively sharing our faith. Now I will go through a list of some excuses we make or reasons why, I believe, we have this problem and the scriptural solution to see change in our lives of those who make up His church. So be like the Bereans and search the scriptures for yourselves to see if what I am saying is true and how this might apply to you personally. (Acts 17:11)

REASON #1: “IT’S NOT MY GIFT. I’M NOT CALLED TO BE A PASTOR, MISSIONARY OR AN EVANGELIST.”

Let’s put this to the test of reason. Is it your “gift” to give to meet people’s needs? Or is it your “gift” to show mercy to others? According to the Scriptures, these two things can be “gifts” that some people have.

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

-Romans 12:6-8

Does that mean that because some people have these “gifts”, the rest of us who are poor or “ungifted” are excused from giving to meet others needs, when able? Or does it mean that those who don’t have the “gift” of showing mercy, aren’t accountable to be merciful and forgiving? Of course not! We are all commanded to care to meet the needs of others and to show mercy as God has shown mercy to us. So it is with the command to preach the gospel. Lk.

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12:32-34; Mt. 6:14,15; 1 Jn.3:14-18; Jms. 2:15-17; Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19, 20.

I know some Christian leaders teach that the command given to the Apostles to preach the Gospel to the world was only for them. This is simply not true. Consider what Jesus said:

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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 that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”
-Matthew 28:16-20

Notice what Jesus said in verse 20: “Teaching them (new believers) to observe all things I have commanded you (Apostles),” that means we as believers in Christ are responsible to fulfill the Great Commission.

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’”
-Mark 16:15, NKJV

While it is true that not all are pastors, missionaries or evangelists, the command to preach the gospel is given to us all. For the pastor, evangelist and missionary, It is their primary focus. For the rest of us, we should be doing it whenever we can, and not put it all on those who do it full time as if it's not our responsibility... not to mention the fact that it is VERY rare for the church to even support local full time evangelists, which makes it imperative that every Christian shares their faith. Every Christian has people in their lives; family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, school mates, and you are Jesus' ambassadors, to bring the gospel to them. The evangelist, pastor and missionary can't reach everyone. We are all accountable to God to love the people that He has put in our lives, enough to share the gospel with them. The apostle Paul revealed that he understood this when he said, “I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.” Acts 20:26; 18:6

“When I say to the wicked, “You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.” -Ezekiel 3:18 & 19

“Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, “Surely we did not know this,” Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it?”
-Proverbs 24:11 & 12

REASON #2: “I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SHARE MY FAITH.”

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It is written in 1 Pet. 3:15, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

As the article stated, the reality of most of the leadership of the churches in America are not equipping the saints to minister the Gospel. It seems reasonable to me to expect that most Christians should be equipped to share their faith within the first year of their conversion, and would be telling others about what Jesus has done for them immediately, just as the apostle Paul did, being an example for all of us to follow.

“Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?””
-Acts 9:20, 21

This is one of the contributing factors as to why the church is full of immature professing Christians; it is impossible to grow without being obedient to Christ's commands (Mt. 7:21-27; Heb. 5:11-14). Just as our physical muscles will not become strong without use, but will only grow weaker, so it is with the spiritual growth.

In Eph. 4:11 & 12 we read, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...” Notice, the first thing that is listed for the church to be doing is, “the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry” From my observation, this has been the LAST thing, rather than the first thing that happens in most churches, resulting in the sad number of only 2% who are actively sharing their faith.

I believe one reason for this is because of what Jesus said:

"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher."

-Luke 6:40

(See also Matt. 10:24-25, Jn. 15:20)

People follow their examples of what it means to be a Christian, like sheep following their shepherd. Christian leaders are called shepherds in 1 Pet. 1-4. The problem is that they produce after their own kind (Gen. 1:21-28). If they are hot and on fire for God, loving Him and love people enough to publicly share the Good News of Jesus, that's great and will cause many to follow their example. But the reality is that most do not, and refuse to deny themselves and pick up the cross and follow Jesus publicly.

"Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the

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Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."
- Luke 9:23-26

They are lukewarm and produce lukewarm Christians who follow their example, which is what most of the churches are full of, sad to say (Rev. 3:14-19). We all will give account to Jesus for what we have and haven't done without anyone to hide behind come Judgment Day (2 Cor. 5:9-11). Thank God for forgiveness and the Blood of Jesus and His amazing grace! Otherwise we'd all be in trouble.

It is important to point out that we read in Ephesians that God did not give us a ONE-FOLD MINISTRY of pastor only, to fulfill His purposes, but a FIVE-FOLD ministry. And that's not all, there are many other gifts not mentioned in Ephesians, but everywhere else in the Bible that are needed to fulfill God's plan for His people (1 Cor. 12:1-31, Rom 12:4-8). In order for the church to function properly we need all the parts of the body where they need to be or we end up paralyzed and ineffective to fulfill the great commission and be ready for Christ's second coming:

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."
-Matthew 24:14

In the Book of Acts, the Lord has given us a good example of how He did this. We see that the Church was started by God through the apostles in Jerusalem and in Judea. In chapters 1- 6 we see that others were raised up to minister, as well; Stephen, Philip, etc. In Acts 8, we see another Church started in Samaria, NOT by the Apostles, but by Philip, who sat under the apostles ministry and was raised up from waiting on tables (a position that required him to be of good reputation, FULL of the Holy Spirit and wisdom) to then becoming an evangelist and starting a church in Samaria.

"Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore, those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did."

-Acts 8:1-6
(See also 8:1-8, 14-17)

Another church, in Antioch, was not started by the apostles, but by some who had been trained in Jerusalem by the apostles.

"Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus

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and Cyrene, who when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

-Acts 11:19-26

In the book of Acts, which we have as our example to follow, we see the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry. We must follow the scriptures rather than the traditions of church we are following, today. For most Christians, if they are at all concerned for another's salvation, our current practice is to invite them to church for the pastor or a guest speaker to evangelize, rather than share the gospel with them, themselves. We have adopted the attitude that it is the job of the paid professionals, due to our traditional wrong thinking of separation of “clergy and laity”, as the “normal Christian life.” Jesus said:

“But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.”

-Matthew 23:8-11

“And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

-Mark 3:32-35

We are all responsible to obey Jesus. We are all just brothers and sisters.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

-Galatians 3:28

No one is to be a ruler, but Jesus and Jesus alone is our mediator and King.

“But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be

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served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

-Matthew 20:25-28

(Mk. 10:41-45, Lk. 22:24-27, Jn 13:1-17)

We no longer have priests ruling over God's people to support financially by tithing. We're all priests unto God, praise the Lord! (See 1 pet. 2:5-9, Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6)

We all have direct access to God through Jesus alone (2 Tim. 2:5, John 14:6, Heb 4:16).

REASON #3: THE LIMITATIONS WE PUT ON WHAT GOD MEANS BY "GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE." MK. 16:15

There are 4 things that we might do- and they are all good things- but they stop short of what it means to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to EVERY creature. Many in the church can only do some of these 4 things and that's all God expects of them. The Church as a whole cannot rely on these 4 things alone to obey Jesus and fulfill the great commission.

These 4 areas are:

1. Witnessing by our example
2. Friendship evangelism
3. Witnessing as we go along our way, as opportunities arise.
4. Inviting people to church or an evangelistic crusade or event.

Again, all of these 4 ways are good things to do to share our faith. BUT they all have limitations and should not be the ONLY STRATEGIES we use to get the gospel of Jesus Christ to EVERY creature.

Paul said in 1 Cor. 9:22, "I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some."

1. Witnessing by our example is a part of being witnesses, but a person must "hear" the words of the gospel if they are to believe them. We have all heard christians make statements like, "Live the gospel, if necessary use words." and "People don't care what you know until they know that you care.", and "You must earn the right to speak into people's lives." While all of these statements have truth in them, they are not what the Bible actually teaches. The Bible teaches us that people must hear the message of the Gospel in order to have faith and believe, in order to be saved.

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

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how

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shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!' ... "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
-Romans 10:14,15 & 17

"For this reason we also thank God without ceasing because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."
-1 Thessalonians 2:13

(See also, 1 Pet. 1:23; Mt. 13:18-23; 1 Cor. 1:18)

It is absolutely true that we should live lives that are pleasing to God, caring for others, and be careful to not discredit our message, but we must remember that even people of false religions can live respectable looking lives, but that alone will not save them or anyone (Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8 & 9; Titus 3:5).

It is the gospel message of JESUS, not us, that saves people. We can't save ourselves, let alone anyone else, by our goodness. It is Jesus alone who is good and the Savior of men. (Rom. 3:12; Lk. 18:19)

2. We cannot expect to get the gospel out to EVERY creature through friendship evangelism because there are not enough hours in the day to befriend the 2.7 billion on earth that need to hear the gospel. They would surely die before we could befriend them all. Jesus was a friend of sinners and cared more about people than anyone else who ever lived. He showed us what it means to love people by caring more about their souls than whether people liked Him or not. He knowingly lost friendships with people by telling them the truth, because the truth is the most important thing that they needed to hear, for their salvation from eternal Hell. Jesus didn't run after the rich young ruler and water down the message of the gospel truth so as to not offend him and build and keep a friendship (Mk. 10:17-31). Jesus offended many people because the truth is offensive to those who don't have a love for the truth in order to be saved.

Please, read the following verses: Lk. 6:26; 2 Thess. 2:10; Jn. 3:19-21; 6:60-67; 7:7 & 17; Mt. 23:1-39.

It is also important for us to recognize the fact that Jesus and His disciples didn't always have time when they went from city to city and place to place to develop friendships with everyone in the crowds they spoke to. (Lk. 6:43, 44; Mt. 1:38; Lk. 9:2, 6; 10:1-12; Mt. 10:5-15; Mk. 3:14; Lk. 9:60; Acts 2:14; 8:1-5; 17:17...)

3. Witnessing to people as we go along our way is inadequate because we need to go to the uttermost parts of the world, where the people are, which is out of the way of our normal travels. To fulfill the great commission, we must step outside our comfort zone and make purposeful sacrifice in obedience to Jesus command, which is given to all of us, not just the apostles.

"And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

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-Mark 16:15

“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 that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

-Matthew 28:19, 20

Notice that Jesus said to make disciples, teaching them to observe, or obey, all things I have commanded you, not some things.

4. We can not expect everyone to come to church to hear the gospel any more than we can expect a criminal to go to a police station for a free barbecue or entertainment. The Church gathering is primarily for the saved to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:18) and not for unbelievers to come to so they can hear the gospel and get saved. Evangelism, according to the New Testament pattern should be primarily happening outside the places where God's people gather (1 Cor. 14:26; Acts 2:42-47). Today, most of our churches have hidden our light behind the four walls of our churches which Jesus warned us about doing.

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

-Matthew 5:13-16

The FACT is, the MAIN way that the New Testament tells us how to effectively reach the world with the Gospel- the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to salvation- is the last priority of most in the church today. IT IS TO PURPOSEFULLY, TAKE THE TIME OUT TO GO OUT INTO PUBLIC PLACES, WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THEM.

Jesus said,

“...Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’” Lk 14:21b-23

(note: Jesus wasn't talking about inviting them to church, but salvation) and “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.”

-Matthew 10:27

This was Jesus' method and example. He left His home in heaven to come to earth to save us. He did not stay in Nazareth and start a mega church and expect people to come to Him, but He left His home and job as a carpenter to travel the country side and towns and villages to preach the gospel while on

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His way to the cross. While He was the perfect example, He did touch many along the way and was a friend of sinners, always speaking the truth, boldly, HIS MAIN METHOD WAS TO GO WHERE THE PEOPLE WERE AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THEM.

“For the Son of Man has come to SEEK and save that which is lost.”
-Luke 19:10

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.”
-Luke 4:18

“I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other cities also because FOR THIS PURPOSE I HAVE BEEN SENT”
-Luke 4:43, 44
(Kingdom of God is the same as the gospel. Acts 20:24,25)

“Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” Mk. 1:14,15,
“But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’”
-Mark 1:38
(Matt. 1:23)

In the Gospels, we see Jesus sent His disciples out to do the same thing:

“He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick...So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.”
-Luke 9:2 & 6; 10:1-12
(Mt. 10:5-15, Mk. 3:14, Lk. 9:60)

We also see that the disciples were fulfilling the Great Commission in the same way in the book of Acts - purposefully going out to where the people were and preached to them, obeying Jesus command.

“And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”
-Acts 10:43 & 43

1. Peter preached on the day of Pentecost to public crowds. Acts 2:14
2. “Daily, in the temple and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. Acts 5:42
3. They preached in the Synagogues and Temple because that’s where the people were that needed convincing. It wasn’t that they were invited by the Jewish leaders to hold a “Gospel Service”. The Jews had tried to stop them and even jailed them! Act 5:17-20
4. It was not only the apostles who went everywhere preaching, it was the whole church. “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere

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preaching the word.“ Acts 8:1-5

5. Paul preached in the market places daily (Acts 17:17), and at the Areopagus (19-34).

6. Apollos refuted the Jews publicly, concerning Jesus being the Christ. Acts 18:28

7. Paul, speaking about his ministry in Asia, said that he taught publicly and from house to house. Acts 20:20 Acts 17:19-34

And the list could go on and of how they went from city to city and country to country to get the gospel to everyone. If the early New Testament church would have followed our example of convenience evangelism and listened to what is taught in most churches today, we all **wouldn't be sitting here, today.** They stepped outside their comfort zone, and followed Jesus example. **THEY TOOK THE COMMAND TO “GO” SERIOUSLY AND PURPOSED IN THEIR HEARTS TO GO OUT INTO THE WORLD, AT THE COST OF THEIR OWN LIVES AND DREAMS, TO OBEY THE JESUS, WHO BOUGHT THEM WITH HIS BLOOD, IN ORDER TO SEE PEOPLE SAVED.**

We also see that God allowed persecution to scatter them to get them to preach everywhere in Acts 8:1-5. It is my fear that God may again use this tool to get us to obey Him. What do you think?

REASON #4: “I AM TOO AFRAID TO SHARE MY FAITH.”

Fear is a big reason why many do not share the gospel. It is written, **“The fear of Man brings a snare.”** Prov. 29:25. In Jesus' day as well as today, people fear people more than God. John 9:22; 7:13; 12:42, 43; 19:38. **WHATEVER YOU FEAR THE MOST WILL CONTROL YOU**, whether it be death (Heb. 2:14, 15), God or man (Lk. 12:4,5)

“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”
-Matthew 10:32, 33

Paul too, had a problem with the fear of man;

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,”
-1 Corinthians 2:1-4

According to God, He thinks you are qualified to preach the Gospel if you are weak and fearful because He chose Paul. Gideon, Moses, and Jeremiah also had problems with fear and inadequacies (Judges 6; Ex. 4:10-14; Jer. 1:1-10).

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the

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foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence."
-1 Corinthians 1:26-29

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”
-2 Corinthians 3:5 & 6

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
-Philippians 4:13

...but, Paul, Gideon, Moses, Jeremiah and many others, let God’s perfect love that dwelt within them and dwells in everyone of us who are His, cast out that fear. 1 John 4:18; Rom. 5:5

In light of His love for us and our hope of an eternity in heaven with Him that frees us from the fear of death, we can love God and people enough to sacrifice our lives for them. Heb. 2:14, 15

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
-Philippians 1:21

Paul and the Christians in Acts, prayed for boldness and so should we. Our fears should drive us to God in prayer that we might experience His strength and boldness.

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”
-2 Corinthians 12:9

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus. And when they had prayed the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”
-Acts 4:29-31

Eph. 6:19,20; Acts 4:13; 9:27, 29; 13:46; 14:3 18:26; 19:8

We are not facing the persecution that the Christians we read about in the book of Acts faced, so why should we, especially, be paralyzed with fear? For us, usually, the worse that happens is that someone gets upset with us and walks off. We rarely, if ever, are thrown in jail or beaten.

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“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

-Matt. 5:11 (also Lk. 6:22-23)

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."
-2 Timothy 3:12

REASON #5: "I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME, OR MONEY."

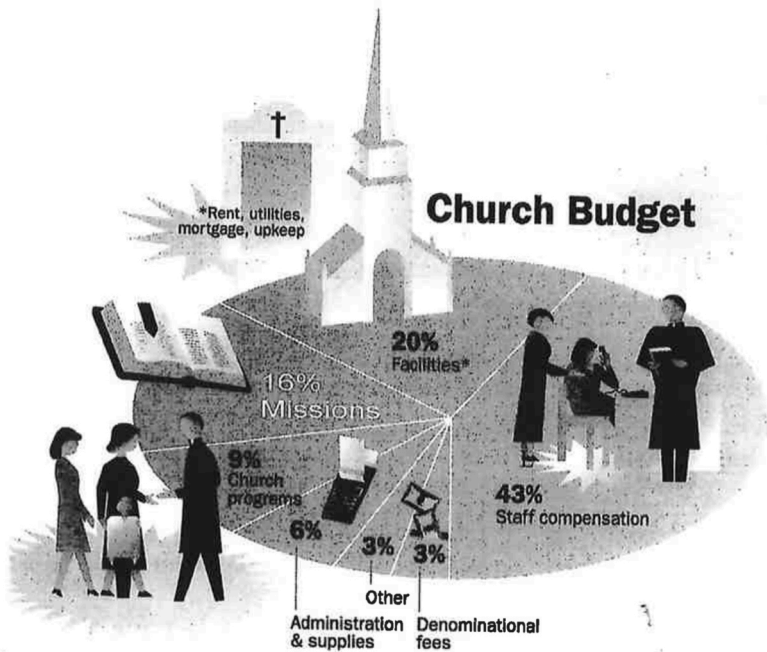
Most of us make time for what is important to us. And anything that we want to be really good at, we take the time to learn it, practice it or train for it, whether it be learning to play the piano, being an athlete or going to school to become a doctor, engineer, or whatever. You don't just become proficient at things overnight or by osmosis. We are willing to spend thousands of dollars and years of training or schooling to become good at something to make money (which Jesus called unrighteous mammon Lk. 16:11-13) for the American dream, which is temporal, meaning it has no eternal value, but show little or no desire and willingness to make the same sacrifices toward the saving of souls which are of eternal value. Jesus said,

“What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for His soul?”

-Mark 8:36, 37

If going to heaven is worth more, to us, than winning the lottery, how much is our neighbor's soul worth to us?

We need to ask ourselves....you need to ask yourselves, “What will I give in exchange to see souls saved?” What are souls worth to us? Twenty dollars per month to missions? Fifty dollars? One hundred dollars? Giving up going fishing, watching football, even the super bowl, if it meant someone could get saved? Also consider these facts from the Tim Aagard book, Paying Pastors = Consumerism (next page):



Leadership Journal - Summer 2001
Where The Money Goes
How normal are your church's budget?

“Note that only one category, Missions (16 percent), directs giving outside the church door. All other categories, (84 percent), direct the giving to perceived needs, most of which benefit those who come into the church. Where the giving goes tells us what is most important to the givers. Ourselves! This is shocking. Most saints have no idea this is very close to what their church does. I was shocked when I realized this. This is considered “normal church budgeting.”

The largest pieces of the church budget pie are devoted to providing a special location and paying a special man to deliver professionalized services mostly to the givers. There is no growth path considered beyond these “needs” for ourselves. They will always be the highest priority. No one ever graduates from the teaching. You’ve probably considered these things healthy and godly. I was taught that this was godly. I learned to “test everything.” 1 Thessalonians 5:21

The following are summed priorities (often without consideration of scripture)

- 1: It is four times more important for American believers to receive a professionally prepared sermon every week, and miscellaneous other professional services, than to send a preacher to those who have no one to tell them the good news.
2. It is more important for American believers to hear 500, 1000, or 2,000+

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sermons than for the unreached to hear the gospel preached face to face even once.

3. Funding work beyond ourselves has lost its meaning. Giving to an organization that pools the money to buy services primarily benefiting the givers, is considered generosity. The function of pooling and buying is considered giving.

4. The number of pastoral leaders in a church is limited by the budget, not how many people God gifts as shepherds and teachers. If a church cannot afford one, they will think they have no shepherd."

Please note this quote is from 2001. Now the amount is even less going to missions. I know there are exceptions and praise God for them. But the truth is, that most churches do not manage their money to make it a priority to fulfill the Great Commission. They would rather fulfill their own desires to have a church business to meet family needs and provide jobs for church leaders. They take money for themselves instead of giving it to the poor and reaching the 40% of the world who have never heard the Gospel even once. It is also truly surprising to realize that only 3% of mission giving goes to the most unreached (statistics SoM International, 2023). I believe the New Testament teaches that the poor and missionaries (Apostles) who can't support themselves should be supported. Paul the Apostle did support himself as a tentmaker and HE TOLD US TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE IN ALL THE CHURCHES. So why don't we if we want to follow the Bible?

"Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church."

-1 Corinthians 4:16-17 (NKJV)

"What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel."

-1 Corinthians 9:18

"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us."

-2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

-Acts 20:32-35

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Please look at the following scriptures regarding financial support (Mt. 10:5-15, Lk. 9:1-6, 10:1-12, Mk. 6:9-11, 1Cor. 9:1-23, 16:1-3, 2 Cor 9:1-15, Acts 20:32-35, Phil 4:14-19, 2 Thess. 3:6-11, 1 Tim 5:1-18, 6:5-6, 17-19, Rom. 15:26, Gal. 2:10). I know some scriptures get twisted to support local church leaders but the truth is there is none. For a thorough understanding of finances in the church, read Tim Aagard's free book Paying Pastors = Consumerism (timaag@gmail.com).

DON'T YOU THINK it grieves the heart of God to see financial support go to local pastors and church leaders who could work but rather chose to take from the Great Commission rather than support it?

DON'T YOU THINK it's wrong for these same church leaders to stand in the pulpits of their churches as examples of Christ when they refuse to deny themselves and pick up the cross and follow Him (Lk. 9:23)?

"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."
-1 John 2:6

"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps"
-1 Peter 2:21

"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

-Acts 20:32-35

(1 Cor. 11:1, Phil. 4:9, Titus 2:7,8, Jn. 13:15, 2 Cor 12:14-18, 1 Thess. 1:56, 2:1-12, 1 Pet. 5:2-3)

DON'T YOU THINK it is a bad witness to the world when church leaders are getting rich building mega churches rather than denying themselves and laying down their lives for others as Jesus did for us?

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

-Philippians 2:3-11

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(1 John 3:16-18, 4:11, Rom. 5:6-8, 1 Cor. 8:9, Jn. 13:1-15, Lk 9:57,58, Matt. 20:25-28, John 15:12-14, 1 Pet. 2:21-25)

DON'T YOU THINK the way Jesus trained His disciples, that turned the world upside down is the right way? He didn't send them to get schooling, but to learn by the example of being with Him over 3 years.

"Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"
-John 7:14-15

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus."
-Acts 4:13

He taught His disciples to live by faith and not demand a regular paycheck and demand benefits to minister but said to them, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Mt. 10:8, Lk 9:1-6, Lk. 10:1-12, Mr. 6:9-11, Mt. 10:1-39)?

DON'T YOU THINK that the way that is common today in raising up church leaders by sending people to Bible college and seminary is wrong? When you consider they are rarely if ever taught how to publicly proclaim the Gospel the way Jesus did, also the reality of them often going into debt to pay for their schooling. They many times end up looking for a job with the best pay and benefits to minister like hirelings Jesus warned about (Jn. 10:11-13, 1 Tim 6:6-10, Acts 20:31-35, 1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7, 2 Tim. 3:1-5, Jude 1:11) rather than Jesus' way by faith, "Freely you have received freely give" (Mt. 10:8).

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
-Romans 6:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"
-Romans 3:23-24

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God."
-1 Corinthians 2:12

"And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts."
-Revelation 21:6

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"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

-Revelation 22:16,-17

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price."
-Isaiah 55:1

REASON #6: UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS KEEP PEOPLE FROM SHARING THEIR FAITH. "I'VE TRIED TO SHARE MY FAITH, BUT NOT ONE PERSON CAME TO THE LORD."

All God requires of us is obedience, to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What the hearers do with it is between them and God. We are not required to save anyone, but only to tell them of the One Who saves. Jesus, alone, is the Savior. Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8; Ezek. 3:18 & 19; 1 Cor. 3:5-8; Jn. 4:35-38; Matt. 7:13, 14

We need to be faithful as Noah was even though only 8 were saved after 120 years of preaching! We need to realize that it is a win, win situation whether the gospel is received or rejected; whether you're praised for bringing the message or persecuted. If you simply plant a seed, you are blessed for your obedience (Rom. 10:15). If they accept the gospel, repent, and believe, EVERYONE is blessed! You've accomplished your goal and a soul is saved! (Lk. 15:7; I Thess. 2:19). If they reject you and persecute you, you are blessed as well. Matt. 5:10-12 Lk. 6:22, 23 Either way, in all three scenarios we are blessed!

If anyone had a reason to give up because of people's rejection (Lk 23:13-25, Jn. 1:11), it was Jesus. He came to His own people and they rejected Him. They wanted Him killed for no crime other than loving them and feeding the multitudes, healing their sick, preaching the Good News to them. We need to thank God that Jesus was willing to die for us when we are so unwilling to share the Good News of His love with others.

REASON #7: OUR UNBELIEF EFFECTS OUR MOTIVATION TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

Either we don't believe what Jesus said regarding hell or we haven't taken the time to really ponder it and let its reality sink in. We act as if there is no hell or like universalists, who believe that no one is really going to go there. Jesus said,

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“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”

-Luke 12:4, 5

“So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

-Matthew 13:49, 50

Over 40 times, Jesus spoke about hell and destruction in the Gospels. JESUS WAS THE MOST LOVING PERSON THAT EVER LIVED (1 Jn. 4:8) BUT HE SPOKE FAR MORE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF HELL THAN THE JOYS OF HEAVEN AS A MOTIVATION FOR PEOPLE TO COME TO SALVATION. THE CHURCH, AS A WHOLE, TODAY, DOES JUST THE OPPOSITE OF JESUS IN HOW WE APPROACH THE GOSPEL WHEN WE DO SHARE IT. WE TEND TO SHARE ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND AVOID THE TOPIC OF ESCAPING THE DANGERS OF HELL.

And yet, Paul said, “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...” 2 Cor. 5:11

See also, Rom 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 6:12-17; 14:10, 11, 19, 20; 19:11-15

The following is taken from the book, “The Way of The Master” by Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron:

“To make a very important point, I would like for you to consider the following scenario:

“An experienced big-city firefighter was charged yesterday with grave neglect of duty. Prosecutors maintain that he abandoned his responsibility and betrayed the people of the city when he failed to release rescue equipment during a recent fire, resulting in the needless and tragic deaths of a family of five.

The lead prosecuting attorney said that for more than three minutes after arriving at the scene, the firefighter sat in his vehicle, wearing earphones and listening to a CD, while a family of five screamed to be rescued from the sixth floor of the burning building. Horrified bystanders reported that, as flames licked at the mother’s clothing, she cried out in terror and fell to her death, still clutching an infant in her arms.

The distraught onlookers also said that the father held two terrified children as he was engulfed by the massive flames. This terrifying drama took place in full view of the firefighter as he remained seated in the fire truck listening to the CD.

Eyewitnesses were sickened when they discovered that the reason the firefighter had remained in the locked emergency vehicle was simply to test a new high-tech CD player that he had purchased as a gift for the fire chief.

The chief immediately distanced himself from the defendant and dishonorably discharged him from the fire department. In a prepared statement, the chief said that there were no words to describe such a betrayal

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of those the firefighter was sworn to protect.

At the trial, the defense pleaded “no contest,” but added that the defendant had gone to great personal sacrifice to purchase the expensive gift for the chief, and he hoped that the judge would take that into account when passing sentence.

What do you think would be a fitting punishment for this firefighter’s serious crime---probation? Two years in jail? Twenty years? Life? Death? What sentence would you give the negligent firefighter?

Perhaps you’re saying, “That’s ridiculous. A firefighter would never do that.” Allow me to apply the parable: IF YOU AND I ARE NOT SEEKING TO SAVE THE LOST “WITH FEAR, PULLING THEM OUT OF THE FIRE, HATING EVEN THE GARMENT DEFILED BY THE FLESH.” (Jude 1:23), ARE WE NOT, IN EFFECT, NEGLIGENT FIREFIGHTERS? That’s a sobering question, isn’t it? Am I saying that if we don’t evangelize we’re not saved? Of course not. But if we would expect a firefighter to make saving lives a priority, are we honest enough to judge ourselves by the same standard? Are we doing all we can to rescue the lost, or are we sitting passively in the pews while people perish?”

REASON #8: MANY DO NOT SHARE THEIR FAITH BECAUSE THOSE AROUND THEM, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN LEADERSHIP, ARE NOT DOING IT.

People tend to follow the examples of those around them. People believe that it excuses them somehow, if they do not know anyone who actively shares their faith. They don't want to stand out, or seem fanatical or weird. If this is your excuse, you need to ask yourself, who is your Savior, those around you or Jesus? Who will you stand before to give an account of your deeds, whether good or bad, come judgment day? Your pastor? Your fellow church members? Or is it Jesus?

Jesus said,

“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”
-John 12:48

“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”
-John 12:42, 43

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise a man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand, and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”
-Matthew 7:24-27

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REASON #9: SOME HAVE ADVOCATED THAT WE SHOULD NOT EVANGELIZE UNLESS THERE IS FOLLOW-UP TO TEACH THEM HOW TO BE DISCIPLES AND THAT WE'RE WASTING OUR TIME AND WILL LOSE THE HARVEST OF SOULS, ETC., IF THAT IS THE CASE.

I'm sure glad God doesn't think that way. He never would have saved me, my wife, or the Ethiopian eunuch. It was GOD, not Philip, that left the Ethiopian eunuch without someone to disciple Him, transferring him to another place. Read the account in Acts 8:26-40. I would not want to be one to accuse God of being irresponsible or wasting Philip's time by leading the Ethiopian to Christ.

“So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

-Acts 8:38, 39

Another example would be where Jesus did not allow the Gadarene demoniac to follow Him, to be discipled by Him, but sent him home to his family. (Mk. 5:15-20)

Paul, also, didn't always have time to stay in places where he had preached, to disciple new believers. It is much better to be saved, and un-discipled, than to be damned. Follow up is a very good thing, and we should do it whenever we can, but if we can't, we should trust God, that HE is big enough and able to take care of His own, when we can't. Jer. 32:17

REASON #10: THEY HAVEN'T BEEN BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, SO THEY DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO BE A WITNESS.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

-Acts 1:8

I understand that the church is divided on this issue, and I'm not making a statement for or against it, here, but either way, it is not a legitimate excuse to not evangelize. There are many professing Christians who claim to have the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but don't have a desire to obey Jesus in fulfilling the Great Commission. There are those who do not claim to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit but do obey Jesus' command. The real issue is, do you have the Holy Spirit or a religious spirit? You **MUST** have the Holy Spirit living in you to be saved.

“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”

-Romans 8:9

(see also, Jn. 3:3; Gal. 4:6)

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If you are saved. The Spirit of God will lead you to obey Jesus in all things, as you learn of Him, and especially, the Great Commission (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19, 20). If you are not “led” to obey Jesus, you should question whether or not you actually have His Spirit in you!

“...elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”
-1 Peter 1:2

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”
-Romans 8:14

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified.”
-2 Corinthians 13:5

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Mt. 18:11; 1 Tim. 1:15) and the Spirit anointed Him to do that.

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”
-Luke 4:18, 19

We are anointed with the same Holy Spirit, to do the same.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
-Acts 1:8

“who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”
-2 Corinthians 3:6

We should be seeking to walk as He did, as His representatives on earth.

“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
-2 Corinthians 5:18-20

“As you sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

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-John 17:18

"NOW BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE KNOW HIM, IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. HE WHO SAYS, "I KNOW HIM," AND DOES NOT KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, IS A LIAR, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN HIM. BUT WHOEVER KEEPS HIS WORD, TRULY THE LOVE OF GOD IS PERFECTED IN HIM. BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE ARE IN HIM. HE WHO SAYS HE ABIDES IN HIM OUGHT HIMSELF ALSO TO WALK JUST AS HE WALKED."

-1 John 2:3-6

REASON #11: THE LAST AND THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON WHY WE ARE NOT MOTIVATED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE LOST AND DYING WORLD, IS THAT WE ARE NOT COMPELLED BY THE LOVE OF GOD.

"For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus; that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."

-2 Corinthians 5:14, 15

Some don't have His love compelling them because they just haven't been born again of His Spirit and are not saved.

"Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord, "shall enter the kingdom of heaven. But he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

-Matthew 7:21-23;

So, again, there is some room for self-examination. 2 Cor. 13:5

Some of us are lacking the love that motivates us to seek and save the lost simply because we have left our first love and have taken for granted the mercy of our Wonderful Savior, allowing other things, good and bad, to choke out the love of God in our lives for others.

"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."

-Matthew 13:22

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent."

-Revelation 2:4-5

Jesus said, if we love Him we would obey Him.

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“If you love Me, keep My commandments....He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.”
-John 14:15 & 21a

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him.’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”
-1 John 2:3-5

Let me ask 10 hard questions to help us see how much we love God:

1Q: This is a question others have asked and I think it's a good one. If you were given \$1,000.00 for every person you shared the gospel with, from this day forward, would you share the gospel more than you do now?

If we are honest, I bet many of us would quit our jobs, or the other things that occupy our time, and commit ourselves to evangelism, because of greed, and not love.

2Q: What would you say about your own heart?
WOULD YOU DO MORE FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY THAN THE LOVE OF GOD?

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”
-Matthew 6:24

3Q: This is between you and God. What is the biggest motivation in your life?

4Q: Remember how Satan challenged God about Job's love for God? What would Satan say about you to God?

Jesus love for us, at the cross, is the greatest motivating factor this world has ever known. It has changed the world for the better, wherever people have experienced it.

It is written, **“We love Him because He first loved us.”** 1 Jn. 4:19 **“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”** 1 Jn. 4:11

WHAT OTHER RESPONSE IS THERE, BUT A GRATEFUL HEART, FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE AT THE CROSS, IN DYING IN OUR PLACE, BUT LOVING OBEDIENCE TO HIM, IN RETURN? THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE APPRECIATE THE LOVE AND FORGIVENESS SHOWN TO US IS THAT SAME DEGREE THAT WE WILL LOVE AND OBEY HIM. JESUS SAID, THAT [HE] WHO IS FORGIVEN MUCH, LOVES MUCH. “BUT TO WHOM LITTLE IS FORGIVEN, THE SAME LOVES LITTLE.” LK. 7:47

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

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-Romans 12:1

Jesus said, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Lk. 6:45
We can't help ourselves but tell others about what Jesus has done for us just like the leper and the Gadarene demoniac and others that Jesus healed. They were overwhelmed with gratefulness and spread the news about Him to everyone they could. Matt. 9:30,31; Mk. 1:40-45; 5:17-20; 7:35, 36; Rom. 10:9,10

"He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth-Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.

-Psalm 40:2, 3

"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You."

-Psalm 51:12, 13

"and since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believed and therefore I spoke,' we also believe and therefore speak."

-2 Corinthians 4:13

(Mt. 9:30, 31; Mk. 1:40-45; 5:17-20; 7:35, 36; Rom. 10:9, 10)

5Q: How much do you love God in return for His love to you, through His Son Jesus? Where do you draw the line? I challenge you to measure your love for Him while in His Presence. Plead with Him for a new, clean heart.

Five more questions by which to measure your love:

Jesus said, "This is My commandments, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." Jn. 15:12-14

WHAT SACRIFICE ARE YOU WILLING TO MAKE FOR HIM IN RETURN FOR HIS SACRIFICE FOR YOU?

6Q: He was willing to leave the paradise of heaven to come to this cursed earth- Where are you willing to go for Him? To your neighbor? To the ends of the earth? Or just to church?

7Q: He was willing to be rejected for you-by the very people He came to save, so that you could be accepted in Him rather than be condemned. Are you willing to be filled with His love to face the rejection of others with Him in hopes that they might also know His wonderful acceptance and be reconciled back to God? Or is that too much for God to ask of you?

8Q: He was mocked and cursed and endured it for you so that you could be blessed. Are you willing to endure mocking and cursing for Him? Are you willing to be so filled with His love that you would be willing to be looked at as a fanatic or a Jesus freak? Or is that where you draw the line and your love stops there? 1 Cor. 4:9-16

BIBLICAL ANSWERS

9Q: He was beaten and killed for you to be saved from hell. - Are you willing to die for Him? Or would you deny Him?

10Q: When the Russian communists took control of Eastern Europe after World War 2, Russian soldiers came to a church service there, with their machine guns, ready to kill everyone in the church. They gave the congregation a choice; Deny Christ now, and leave with your life, or stay and be shot dead. Many of them left, and after they did the soldiers closed the doors, laid down their guns and said, "Now that the hypocrites have left, it's safe for us to worship God with you." **WOULD YOU HAVE STAYED OR WOULD YOU HAVE LEFT? ARE YOU WILLING TO DIE FOR HIM?**

It would be good for us to ask ourselves these questions and answer them, measuring our love by them now, rather than later when it will be done before all heaven, at the Judgment seat of Christ. 2 Cor. 5:10 Let this drive us to Christ, now, while there is forgiveness and let this increase our appreciation for what He has done for us and our motivation to serve Him. Let us confess our sin, our lack of loving obedience, where we fall short of His glory, and be filled with His love, stepping out in obedient faith, in the mean time, knowing He will give good gifts to His children when they ask.

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin."

-Hebrews 12:1-4

(2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:6; Matt. 16:24; John 17:18; 20:21)

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