

Biblical Evangelism - Launch Out Into The Deep

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[0:00] Evangelism. Evangelism. Evangel means the good news. The great news, isn't it? The best news about Calvary.

! And we think about the Lord Jesus and His example day by day, naturally, met with people and talked with them. For example, the woman at the well. And think about how each one of you and I need to make time to evangelise.

Make time for it. Make time for it. Because it's like with anything, if you don't make time for it, it doesn't generally happen. And it's like along the lines of last week as I was talking about discipline, about having self-discipline.

Put something in your schedule that says, I'm going to commit at least that time to do some kind of evangelism. Some kind of witnessing. Some kind of passing on the message. Now there's opportunity for that as a church. Some of the folk here go and witness in Rundle Mall.

Evangelism. What is it? Someone has defined it like this. It's just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. We're all beggars. We all need to have bread. And this is the bread of life we're talking about.

[1:17] A missionary called Robert Moffat put it like this. We shall have all eternity in which to celebrate our victories, but we have only one swift hour before the sunset in which to win them.

We've only got that segment of time as we prayed earlier. We don't know how much time we have. So make time for evangelism. Use your time wisely. We're looking at Luke 5. If you've got your Bibles there, or just listen in.

As we touch on an account where the Lord Jesus encountered some fishermen. Luke 5 from verse 1. And it came to pass that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret and saw two ships standing by the lake.

But the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets. And he answered him to one of the ships, which were Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing.

[2:30] Nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes and their net broke.

And they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship. And they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not! From henceforth thou shalt catch men. Fishers of men. Fishers of men. Fishers of men. Are you one? Why don't Christians witness? Why Christians don't witness? There's maybe lots of excuses.

[3:37] Lots of weak excuses you could give while you're not a witness for Christ. Maybe you just like disobey. You just disobey.

You just disregard Christ's commission. You disregard his beckoning, his plea, his exhorting of you to go. You just disobey the word of God.

I disobey the word of God. I'm not outside of this. Maybe you just plain don't care. You just don't care. You're saved. You're on the glory train, the glory hallelujah train.

You don't care. You don't care. That you're just being selfish and keeping it to yourself. You just plain don't care about lost souls. Maybe that's another reason. Or maybe, and this is probably the most common one, you're afraid.

You're afraid. You're fearful. I can be afraid. I'm often afraid. In fact, it's been said that folk can witness regularly.

[4:38] Every time they witness, they're afraid. It's normal. Get used to it. I want to talk about witnessing and three aspects of witnessing. Firstly, there's a commission. There's a commission.

There's a commission to witness. A command. We need a wake up call church. I need a wake up call. It's a command. It's not an option.

Hudson Taylor said this. The Great Commission is not an option to be considered. It is a command to be obeyed. Now, we may not travel the seas and go to another land to witness, as this man did. But we've got a whole mission field all about us. But it's been said, only about 2% to 5% of Christians witness. Now, I'm not sure how many people we've got in this room here today, but only 2%, 2 out of 100 people actually witness for Christ.

Only 2 out of 100. That's pretty poor, isn't it? If you've got great news, if you've got the Gospel, the good news, if you've got the greatest news, the greatest things since sliced bread, and before it, you've got the greatest and best news that you can ever impart to another human being, why would you keep it to yourself?

[5:56] Why would you? You disobey, you don't care, or you're just plain afraid. But it's a command, it's not an option. Vance Haffner and all-time preacher said, it is not our business to make the message acceptable, but to make it available.

We are not to see that they like it, but that they get it. Sometimes when you're witness, you might get a punch in the nose, or close to it, but it doesn't matter.

You've got to, they need it so vitally, they need to hear it. And because you love them, you want them to hear it. It's not that you want to get them annoyed.

William Booth said this, the old-time founder of the Salvos, he said, No sort of defence is needed for preaching outdoors, but it would take a very strong argument to prove that a man who has never preached beyond the walls of his meeting house has done his duty.

A defence is required for services within buildings, rather than for worship outside of them. Look at the revivals and reformers of old, they preached outside of the church buildings.

[7:06] We need to get the message beyond the walls, outside the walls to the community at large. And it's often the claim, I know, in the witnessing, especially the open-air witnessing style of some, that you get hecklers come, and say, Oh, keep it to yourself, do it in church, but not out here.

You know, they don't want to hear it outside the walls of a church. It's okay if it's contained within the stained glass windows, but start taking it to the streets, and you're going to raise some shackles on people's necks, and they're going to get stirred and loud.

What does the Lord Jesus say to you, to me? He says, verse 4, Let down your neck. Let down your neck. Stop talking about it and do it.

Verse 5, And Simon answered unto him, Master, we've told all the night we've taken nothing, a big fat zero, nothing, sills. We haven't caught a thing.

An excuse. And you might, maybe you've witnessed for a long time, and you've seen a big fat zero. But, nevertheless, at thy word, he says, I will let down the neck.

[8:23] But there's a new Jesus today. There's a new Jesus on planet Earth. There's a new age Jesus. Just says, he just says, keep cool.

Even better, just be lukewarm. Don't get too radical. Follow me and take an easy chair of Christianity.

Don't rock the boat. Don't make waves. The new Jesus says, you don't have to witness. You put your hand up and prayed the prayer.

Now just coast along till you get to heaven. You don't need to stir anyone up or put yourself out or do some fearful thing like witnessing.

But the real Jesus, the real Jesus, the Jesus of the Bible says, launch out, launch out. Get in the boat and launch out into the deep. He says, let down your nets.

[9:19] It's like someone put it, float your boat and wet your net. Get out there and do something for Christ. And I will make you fishers of men.

He says, follow me. He's going to show you how. You're not on your own. He's there with you. Obey his command. We must tell them. We must tell them.

Who else is going to? And persevere. All the night they'd been at it, they felt like having a good sleep. You know, they weren't about to go back out there again in the deep.

Peter was probably fit to go to bed. But persevere. It takes time and patience. It's like, I know someone was telling me about, you know, we're thinking about taking the youth group on different activities.

And someone said fishing. And they said, fishing is like watching the paint dry. You know, it's a bit like that, isn't it? I know fishing isn't my favourite recreation activity. But sometimes when you're out there fishing, you do get something.

[10:23] I know Paul's a keen fisherman. But it takes a lot of fishing to catch a fish, doesn't it? Usually. It had been all night. No success. They wanted to give up. But the Lord Jesus says, keep on keeping on.

Keep on going. It could take years of witnessing to see one person saved. I've heard of stories where people have been witnessing and praying for someone to get saved, to become a Christian. And it could be 50 years of prayer before they get saved.

It could be a long time of letting down the net. Just keep putting it in. God has given you a fishing licence. You don't need a certificate to put on the wall.

You've got a fishing licence today from the Lord Jesus Christ to go fishing. And he says to you, Matthew 4 verse 19, follow me and I will make you fishers of man.

The Holy Spirit has commissioned you like he did to Philip. Go to that chariot and hang around that chariot. And then a witnessing opportunity happened for Philip.

[11:26] Ask the Lord, make me a fisher of souls. Tell me where to cast the net. How to do it. Every moment of a Christian's life really is a witness for Christ. So number one commission.

You've got one. And you've got a licence for it. You're allowed. You're permitted. In fact you're commanded to use that licence to fish. To tell others as it were, as a fisherman catches fish, as a Christian, where to introduce others to Christ.

Secondly, you've got a compassion. Or you should have. You should have a compassion. As a Christian, think of the compassion Christ showed to you, to me, to save us out of the dread misery, out of the gutter of sin.

And that path of destruction that we were headed down, the compassion of Christ, shouldn't we have experienced it? Want to find that compassion for others.

Robert Munger put it like this, evangelism is the spontaneous overflow of a glad and free heart. In Jesus Christ, it's natural that that glad and free heart will want to tell others who are captive and lost.

[12:36] Have you that compassion? That compassion! Compassion! Compassion! For lost people! Oswald Smith said, Oh to realise that souls, precious, never dying souls, are perishing all around us, going into the blackness of darkness and despair, eternally lost.

And yet to feel no anguish, shed no tears, no no travail. How little we know of the compassion of Jesus. If we believe the Bible, people are in danger without Christ and they need this eternal life changing message.

Do we really believe it? There's joy in this message. Spurgeon said, Even if I were utterly selfish and had no care for anything but my own happiness, I would choose, if I might, under God, to be a soul winner.

For never did I know perfect, overflowing, unutterable happiness of the purest and most ennobling kind, till I first heard of one who had sought and found the Saviour through my means.

It's the most joyful thing you can have. It's the most blessed experience you can have, to have another trust Christ through your message, through your witness.

[13:52] It's the greatest thing that you can experience, to have another trust Him, through the words and the life you live. Be encouraged to think of that.

Fishing for men. Here's a quote,

Think about it, day by day too. Witnessing isn't necessarily a specific place or method, it's your whole lifetime. There's a young man who was a skilled mechanic, he was driving a visiting clergyman from his hometown, 50 miles across the country.

On the way they passed a huge factory, had 20 buildings, over several hundred acres. And the man said, do you see that red fielding over there, with the grey stone?

I work on the second floor on the south side. There are 74 of us in that department, and as far as I know, I'm the only one in all that crowd, whoever goes to church or tries to live a Christian life.

[15:47] Sometimes I have to remind myself that, as far as that department is concerned, I am all there is of the Christian church. I don't do good work. If I don't do good work, then the church has failed, as far as those men are concerned.

If I can't be relied upon, then the church is undependable. If I am careless, then some poor, unfortunate soul may have to pay for the church's carelessness. It's pretty serious business being the church in the midst of 74 other people.

Where you live, where you work, where you shop, where you walk, you are the church. You are Christ to them. Take it seriously. Compassion.

Compassion. Keith Green said, I'd rather have people hate me with the knowledge that I tried to save them. Now, Friday night, there was a man, he was virtually frothing at the mouth, no joke. And he was laying into these preachers. The police had to come and take him away. Because the preachers were in danger from this man. He was frothing and breathing.

[16:52] He was bent to bite them. It's not a national man with their teeth. It was virtually that kind of picture of this man. So hateful. So hateful of Christ. So hateful of the Gospel.

So hateful of the cross. So hateful of these men and women declaring the message. That might face you. But it's the compassion. I saw the compassion in these preachers.

They weren't trying to hurt the man. They were picking him up off the ground and helping him.

Because he had some disability. And they were trying to encourage him and talk quietly and calmly to him.

And not pressing charges, although they could have done. But the Gospel gets a reaction. But you, as God's people, need compassion to take it to them.

And Charles Burton said, if sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees.

[17:55] Let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for. You have a commission. And you need compassion. David Brainerd, an old time missionary, said, I care not where I go, where I live, how I live, what I endure, so that I might save souls.

When I sleep, I dream of them. When I awake, they are my first thoughts. No amount of scholastic attainment, of able and profound exposition, of brilliant and stirring eloquence, can atone for the absence of a deep, impassioned, sympathetic love for human souls.

Compassion. Do you have it? Do you have it? I pray we would have that. That concern for souls.

John Wesley, you have nothing to do but to save souls.

Therefore, stand and be spent in this work. And go not only to those that need you, but to those that need you most. Because it is not your business to preach so many times and to take care of this or that society, or matter or business, but to save as many souls as you can, to bring as many sinners as you can possibly to repentance.

Now, there's some unlikely people witnessing. I saw some unlikely people Friday night doing some witnessing. A woman in a wheelchair who could scarcely utter a word.

[19:18] She's got some lacking abilities in many apparent ways, and yet she was there, and Pastor Neil, she sits outside his outreach shop there in Waymouse Street.

She sits there, she gets a disabled cab to bring her there. Faithfully, Friday night, she sits there in her wheelchair and hands out tracks. It's about all she can do.

She can't even, she can scarcely talk. Yet she is a witness for Christ. A witness for Him. An unlikely person. Unlikely people do open air preaching.

For some people you would think, well I can't imagine them preaching in the open air, in a vocal way, in a public manner. You would think that's an unlikely person.

You wouldn't think that they would do that. But yet they stand there faithfully and they deliver. To the best of their ability. Unlikely people. They have compassion. It's compassion that drives them.

[20:18] They're not there because they're getting some kind of recognition. If anything, they get criticism. And Christians too. Christians too. You know, when I've seen some folk witnessing, some of the people who come up and criticise are the Christians.

Well that's a bit, you know, that's a bit, getting a bit, a bit in your face there with what you're saying. You know, talking about hell, talking about damnation. Talking about the cross.

Maybe we could modify that message and make it a little bit more palatable, a bit more, a bit more comfortable, a bit more, so that people will, a bit more sweet.

Give me both. A bit more sugary. But yet, that vital message is the, if the message people need.

Well I'm with you. If there's a need of salvation, if there's a danger of damnation, then wouldn't it be better to say so than to not?

It's imperative that we care and that we reach out. Leonard Ravenhill, another preacher said, Could a Mariner sit idle? Has he heard the drowning cry? Could a doctor sit in comfort and just let his patients die?

[21:30] Could a fireman sit idle? Let men burn and give no hand. Can you sit at ease in Zion, with the world around you damned? William Booth once had an audience with me, another audience with King Edward of England.

His Majesty, highly commended the Salvationist for his unflagging zeal. And of how he did a wonderful work among the poor. How revealing was Booth's reply to the King's blowing words. He said, Your Majesty, Some man's passion is for art. Some man's passion is for fame. My passion is for souls.

Compassion. We've seen the commission. We've seen the compassion. Thirdly, The communication. It's about your lips. It's about your feet.

Have you got this item of the Gospel armour on? No. We talk about the helmet, the salvation, the belt of truth, the sword of the spirit, the shield of faith and so on.

[22:33] What about shoes? The shoes of the preparation of the Gospel of peace. God says, Put on the whole armour of God. There's shoes you need to get on your feet.

The feet and seats. For those who are not familiar, it's only about the armour that clothes us as a Christian. And the armour of a soldier includes shoes. And the shoes as illustrated of taking the Gospel.

Those feet are made for walking. Amen. And these feet are going to walk right out of here. I'm getting a bit flippant here. But these feet are made for walking.

Put the shoes on and take the Gospel. Jesus needs your shoes to be filled with your feet and your mouth to be filled with his word to take it and declare it and give it. And to be workers together with God.

Fellow workers. Stud said, I want to live within the sound of a church or chapel bell. I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell. We need to go to where the people are.

[23:34] Go to where the fish are. Whether it's Rundle Mall. Whether it's the train stations around here. Whether it's the shops. I know there's limitations, but there's opportunities. Where the letter boxes are.

Go to where the fish are and fish. I'm just a nobody telling everybody about somebody who can save anybody. Be a contagious Christian.

Luke 5-6 They enclosed a great multitude of fishes and their net broke. When you honour God, when you obey God, God will bless. You may not see it in such measure as that, but in eternity you'll see the fruit.

Be faithful. Follow. God will work. And it's going to take care of these fishermen as they went out on the Sea of Galilee. It was courageous. It was tough. The Sea of Galilee, I'm told, was at times famous for the storms and the rough waters.

The Lord Jesus in John 21 talks to like account where He says, Throw the net over the other side. Maybe try something a bit different. We think of these folk. There's different ways to witness.

[24:44] You know, in the city there's people witnessing, singing gospel karaoke. You know, Pastor Neil Sanctuary Baptist Church, they got some hymns there. They get a karaoke machine.

People sing these hymns into the karaoke machine. And they're right next door to a pub. And sometimes, sometimes if they're lucky, they might get some of the drugs come and join them. Alright? You know, that's a bit weird. Well, it's a bit different. It's not my style. But, it's a way. It's throwing the net over the other side.

It's, whether leaflets, whether it's open air, whether it's personal evangelism. Whatever the way that God puts on your heart. Whatever strategy.

Jim Elliot, another missionary said, Lord, make me a crisis man. Let me not be a mile post on a single road, but make me a fork. That men must turn one way or another in facing Christ in me.

[25:42] That you are the decision point. That you can challenge people to make a decision. It's one or the other. There's no in between. You can't have it both ways.

And cast your net. God wants this church to be a powerful soul winning force. It's about communication. Be a communicator. Don't miss this piece of the armor. The feet shot with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

The different ways. I know as a young person at school, year 12, he started a student fellowship. To reach out to our fellow students when I was in matric.

And there's different ways. Down at school yard. Some of our folk have got outreach to schools in different ways. Where it's through the youth group. This youth group is not so we can just have a wild fancy time.

And kick a ball around. And have a lot of fun and entertainment. This youth group is a missionary outreach. This youth group is an evangelistic opportunity.

[26:45] This youth group is an opportunity, a chance for you to touch young souls at the most precious time. The most open time. The Sunday school is an outreach.

It's not so we can have some entertainment for the young people. It's so we can have an outreach and declare the message of salvation.

Whether it's handing out tracts. Whether it's talking with people. Whether it's open air in word or song. Or whatever it means. You may not be one to stand on a street corner.

But you can be part of the renter crowd. Maybe pretend to be a heckler. That helps bring a crowd. Whatever it takes. By all means save some.

By all means save some. Even if you're just standing there. You might get a chance to talk to someone next to you. What do you think about what he's saying? Get a load of this. And you can start to make some conversations.

[27:45] Drawing to a close now. A.B. Simpson said, Press on our heart the woe and put in our feet the go.

The woe. The woe of hell. Of the loss. Of your neglect. Woe is me. Woe is me if I preach not. If I don't declare it.

Woe unto me. Woe unto me. Woe unto me. Shame on me. Shame on me. Shame on me. If I do not. Press on our heart the woe. And put in our feet the go.

The go. The go. Spurgeon said, Our great object of glorifying God is to be mainly achieved by the winning of souls. To glorify God. Win souls.

Or do something. Do something. Anything. Anything is better than nothing. That's happening. The gospel is not something we come to church to hear.

[28:41] It's something we go from church to tell. How do I do this? I've exhausted you. You might feel. Well, it's just too much for me.

I can't even think how I could do this. It's just. It's overwhelming. I'm fearful. I'm afraid. Don't put your confidence in the flesh. Don't put your confidence in the flesh. Even in your own flesh.

Especially not your own flesh. Don't put your confidence in your flesh. Put your confidence in Christ. Put your confidence in him. He said, I've never spoken in public. I don't see how I could talk to that large congregation. My knees would shake. I'd become paralyzed with fear. He did that. And what he means to you. He did that. To those of those of those of those of those of those of those of a humble layman was asked to give a talk before a large congregation he said I've never spoken in public I don't see how I could talk to that large congregation my knees would shake I'd become paralysed with fear the preacher said you will do alright just tell the people how Christ saved you and what he means to you how Christ saved you and what he means to you he did that and all fear vanished it's simple really you don't have to memorise some pattern or some form or formula tell them what Christ means to you what Christ has done for you