

Evangelism

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[0:00] Earth has received a transmission from outer space. You know, scientists scan the horizons with these great big telescopes, trying to hear some electronic pulses or something.

! A message has been received from outer space, from another world, in fact, from a higher intelligence, far higher intelligence than man. An extraterrestrial life form has sent his message to our planet.

And what's more, even more, he's come in person! And he reaches out still to every human heart across the globe with this message, this vital message.

And I want to talk about this all-important message that we need, that every man and woman needs. This important message that he wants to communicate and how he wants to communicate it, to pass it on.

Have you heard the news? Have you heard the news? There's some news that we all need to hear. And you won't find it in the advertiser, but you'll find it in God's newspaper, the Good News, the Bible.

[1:08] There's good tidings of great joy. Good tidings of great joy. The Gospel means, number one, joyful news. It means glad tidings.

It means joyful news. In Luke 2, verse 10, we see there, if you'd like to turn to Luke 2, verse 10. And Luke 2, verse 10, the angel of the Lord came, the glory of the Lord shone.

And it says, The angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Unto you this day is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Good tidings of great joy. And it's for all people.

It's an open invitation. Now that word, good tidings, is the word, evangel. Evangel. And it's often, throughout the Word of God, the word, evangel, or gospel, and sometimes it's used to bring, to announce good news.

[2:13] Good news. It's used over 50 times in the Word of God. And normally it's translated with a form of the word, preach. Often times it's that word, evangel.

Or a like form of that word in the Greek. Evangelism. Evangelism. That's my message this morning. Evangelism. It means a declaring of the good news message.

The good news. The glad tidings. The joyful news. It's a sensational message. It's glad tidings. The gospel brings joy. It brings joy. Turn with me if you'd like to Luke 15.

A number of accounts there. The first one, from verses 1 to 7, talks about a lost sheep. Talks about a man who has a hundred sheep, and 99 of them are all safely in the fold.

Yet, he's lost one of them. So he leaves the 99 who are safe, and he goes after that which was lost, until he finds it. And verse 5, when he has found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

[3:24] It's great. It's glad. It's wonderful news. But when the shepherd finds that lost little sheep, straying, in peril, likely to freeze to death, or starve to death without care, and it's glad tidings.

It's good news. And he says, rejoicing. And likewise, there's a story about the lost coin. And the woman who had lost a coin, and she looks through the house, and sweeps it, and turns everything inside out and upside down to try to find it.

And it says, verse 9, when she has found it, she calls her friends, her neighbors together, saying, rejoice with me, for I have found the peace which I have lost.

Isn't it frustrating when you lose something? I know I mentioned it last week. I lost those car keys, and I still can't find them. But if I was to find those car keys that I lost, oh, I'd be so glad.

Especially because they cost so much to replace these ones with a beep beep on them. They're about \$300 or something if you lose one of them. But wouldn't it be good if you find your keys? You know, if you find whatever's lost, oh, I'm so glad I found that.

[4:34] But especially if it's something really important to you. I know someone was sharing earlier today how they got a special photograph that's very important. It's a treasure to them. And they were so glad when they found it, weren't you, Kathy?

A special photograph. It really meant a lot to her. And she was so glad that she found it. That's the picture here of the Gospel, isn't it? The Lord Jesus is talking to people and they're saying, this man received sinners.

And he says, the lost sheep, they were so glad when they found it. The lost coin, so glad when they found it. And then it goes on about the lost son. How the father was so glad when they came home. And when he came home. And to those who believe in Christ's great joy. In Acts 8 verse 8, it says, when they received the Gospel, the good news, the evangelist Philip declared the good news to the city.

It says there was great joy in that city. That's Acts 8 verse 8. And we could think even in the book of Philippians. One of the books that the Apostle Paul wrote, Philippians, it's been called a letter full of joy.

[5:36] Paul is old and worn. He's in prison. But some 20 times in the book of Philippians, you might like to read it. It's a short book. It's full of encouragement. It's full of joy, of peace, of comfort.

He talks about the words, being content, of thanksgiving, of rejoicing. Here was Paul. He'd suffered much. He had an awful time. If anyone had reason to complain, Paul had suffered so much with scourging.

He was stoned nearly to death by the crowd. He was in prison, afflicted, tormented. And in Philippi itself, he had been scourged, lashed by the whip.

His back was all torn and bleeding, cast into the inner prison. And his feet were made fast in stocks. He was chained and shackled. But at midnight, he and Silas were there singing praises to God at midnight.

He's writing this from prison now in Rome to the Philippians, the people from Philippi. But he is still rejoicing. He's still rejoicing.

[6:39] Some men would have been discouraged. They'd have thrown in the towel. They'd have said, oh, they'd have had a whinge session or a pity party. But here was Paul.

The Jews had slandered him and harassed him. Many of his converts had proven fickle and false. Yet Paul, he wasn't moping. He was rejoicing. And he was writing this letter to the Philippians, saying to them in verse 12 of chapter 1, he talks about the things that have happened to me have fallen out rather for the progress of the gospel.

He was interested in the progress of evangelism, the progress of the gospel. He says, the things that have happened to me have helped spread the word of God. So I'm happy about that. And he says, rejoice in the Lord always.

And again I say, rejoice. Philippians 4 verse 4, a really easy one to remember. Rejoice in the Lord how often? Always. And again I say, rejoice.

Whatever the situation. And the gospel is joyful news. It's joyful news. And secondly, what is the gospel all about? Who is it all about?

[7:52] It's about the Lord Jesus, isn't it? It's about the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the gospel. The Lord Jesus is the gospel. We see in Acts where it talks about this word preaching or evangelism, evangelizing.

In Acts 5, for example. In Acts 5.42. And daily in the temple and in every house they cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

That word preach means evangelize. They cease not to teach and to evangelize Jesus Christ. To evangelize Jesus Christ. To give the gospel which is Jesus Christ.

In Acts 8.35. In Acts 8.35. It goes on. Philip was there. He opened his mouth. And the situation was with a eunuch, an official from Ethiopia. And he began at the same scripture and he preached unto him Jesus.

That's what he preached. That was the evangelism. That was the gospel. The gospel, the good news, was a person. Jesus. And in Acts 11.20. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they would come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

[9:05] That word again, preaching, it means evangelizing. It's the same word that we get the word evangel, gospel. What was their message? Their message was the Lord Jesus. That was the message.

And really it's the central message, isn't it? You see many cults of our world today where they get off track. And they get away from the Lord Jesus. He's not the central message anymore. The Saviour, the Lord Jesus, is the central message.

And His salvation is the central message. It's when they go off on tangents and get distracted and sidetracked. You know, whether it's signs and wonders or healings and what not.

But Jesus and His salvation. Jesus the Saviour. That's the gospel message. Or whether it's fanciful stories of Latter-day prophecies or concentrating on a name like Jehovah, for example, or the Jehovah's Witnesses.

They're missing the point. The message is Jesus. The gospel is Jesus. Jesus Christ and Him crucified. So we see it's joyful news.

[10:11] And the message, the gospel message is Jesus. And so who does the king choose to deliver his vital message? God transmits this most important message through people.

People just like you and me. Ordinary, everyday, garden-variety people like you and me. The gospel is given by just ordinary people.

Just ordinary people. If we were to get in a time machine and travel back to Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, there would have been people just like you and me.

You know, sometimes I think we put them on a pedestal and think that they're wearing halos or something or, you know, how people picture them or paint them.

But really they're just like you and me. If we had been there at that time or that moment or that place, there would have been people, human beings just like you and me. Ordinary people.

Ordinary people.

[11:07] And that's the wonderful beauty of it. That you and I have got a place to play, a part to play, just like the disciples of the New Testament. And 2 Corinthians 4 verse 7 tells you about the wonderful privilege that you have.

The wonderful privilege that every one of you have that believe. If you're a Christian this morning, Michael's got a wonderful treasure inside of him. He's got a lovely house now.

But more important than that, more important than all that money he's got in the bank, is that treasure, that treasure that Michael's got. Amen? Isn't that right, Michael?

And Don too, he's got all this money stashed under his mattress at home. Amen. But Don, there's something more important. There's something more precious.

More precious. There's a treasure. There's a treasure. And it's inside of you. Amen. In 2 Corinthians 4 verse 7 it says, But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

[12:13] It's a wonderful treasure, isn't it, Robert? It's a treasure. That knowing of the Saviour, that knowing of Christ, isn't it? Modest. To know Christ. To know Him. To have experienced Him.

To have received Him. June. To have Christ in you. The hope of glory. It makes you want to jump and sing, doesn't it? Amen. Just ordinary people.

Here's a song. It's ordinary people with an extraordinary message. Here's a song that someone wrote. Just ordinary people. Just ordinary people.

God uses ordinary people. God uses ordinary people. He chooses people just like me and you. Who are willing to do as He commands.

God uses people that will give Him all. No matter how small your all may seem to you. Because little becomes much as you place it in the Master's hand.

[13:11] Just like that little lamb who gave Jesus all he had. How the multitude was fed with the fish and the loaves of bread. What you may have may not seem much.

But when you yield it to the touch of the Master's loving hand. If you say yes, then you'll understand how your life could never be the same. Just ordinary people.

My God uses plain old ordinary people. He chooses people just like me and you who are willing to do everything that He commands.

God uses people that will give Him all. It doesn't matter how small your all may seem to you.

Because little becomes much as you place it in the Master's hand.

Ordinary people. Maybe you're feeling a bit ordinary. Maybe you're feeling a bit humble and a bit insignificant. But you're just an ordinary person. God can use you.

[14:08] Believe it today. Friends today, if you trust Him, He can use ordinary people. And evangelism is passing on the Gospel, the good news to those who don't know it.

It's communicating God's message of mercy. And this all-important work, this vital work, is being given to you. Ordinary people. Ordinary people.

God's not looking for superstars with their names in lights. Or big showy fancy ministries. Or super-duper evangelists that fly in and fly out.

He's looking for ordinary people like you and me. Ordinary believers. Brothers and sisters, God wants to use you to communicate His message. And evangelism. Look at that word.

Someone pointed it out to me in something that I read. The word evangelism. Evangelism. It's got the word angel in there.

[15:07] Evangelism. Or the evangelism. Or the evangelism. It's got the word angel in there. And angel means a messenger. It means a messenger.

In Luke 7, 27, it describes John the Baptist. It says, This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger, as the word angel. In the Greek.

I send my messenger, my angel, John the Baptist, before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. John the Baptist was called an angel, a messenger. And likewise too, you're an angel.

Linda, you're an angel. You're a messenger. You're a messenger, Moses. God's messenger to this world, to your people, to our nation, to this community, to the people that you mix with and share with and work with.

An angel, you're a messenger of good tidings. And just as John, you're a voice. A voice of one.

Crying in the wilderness. Crying in the wilderness. Maybe they'll treat you like they treated John the Baptist.

[16:09] But you've got to be faithful. Deliver it. Just as he did. You've got a vital role. And just to turn to Corinthians 5, verse 20, if you'd like to turn to that one. If you're able.

2 Corinthians 5, verse 20. You're a messenger. You're a messenger. A vital messenger with an important message. It says in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 20. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. He says, you are ambassadors.

As though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. God's making his appeal through ambassadors.

There's no greater honour than to proclaim his message. Now, we know that people who are ambassadors for our country, it's a very important job, isn't it?

[17:10] As they go, as an ambassador, maybe an ambassador of China would come and station themselves in Canberra. They represent China in Australia. The Indian ambassador represents the nation of India in Australia.

A very important job. A very important responsibility. Well, friends today, you are an ambassador. You are an ambassador, Robert. For heaven. For Christ. For the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

You're his ambassador in this nation. You've got an important responsibility, David. Joan. You've got an important responsibility as an ambassador for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

And we have this message that he has commissioned to us. He's given this message to you, to me, to relay to this people of this nation, this vital message that the world needs to hear, the vital message that God's mercy has offered to a lost and dying world.

We're ambassadors for the King of Kings. Our citizenship is in heaven. That's where we belong. We don't belong to any earthly country anymore, really and strictly.

[18:15] I mean, I've got dual citizenship. I've still got a UK passport that has expired. But I was born in the UK, in the fair land of England.

And then I became naturalised, an Aussie citizen. I took a citizenship ceremony and became a citizen of Australia. But really, I count those butters dust, really, because my citizenship, your citizenship if you're a Christian, you've got a citizenship in heaven.

You've got an entitlement to a heavenly inheritance, to a wonderful eternal home. And here stationed us here for the meantime. You know, really, they made a mistake with my passport. I've got to tell you this today. But on my passport, they stamped that I've got permanent residency in Australia. It's a mistake. It's a mistake. I'm not a permanent resident of Australia.

You're planning to go somewhere else. Yeah, I'm planning to go somewhere else after Australia. Amen. Now, when I leave this country, I'm not going to be a permanent resident of Australia. I'm a permanent resident of heaven. Amen.

[19:17] I'm already, I'm already belong to heaven. I'm already part of his kingdom. And we're in meantime, we're a representative down here below. We're sent on a mission. We're here to take his message as God's agents.

And he's commissioned you. What a privilege that you've got this message to share, to tell. And I know different ones are ministering in different ways, June, with the young people. It's a wonderful privilege to be able to share the gospel message, the good news, the joyful news with young people, with teenagers, and with older people.

And every one of you has that wonderful ministry, that wonderful message, that wonderful privilege to speak for the King. And we are here as his ambassador to declare the message.

Now, sometimes they don't treat ambassadors very well. Sometimes they blow up embassies, don't they? Sometimes it's a dangerous job to be an ambassador. When the war breaks out, look out if you're an ambassador.

But an ambassador doesn't take rejection personally. When you declare the message of Christ, when you declare the joyful news, the good news, the glad tidings of the gospel to people, sometimes they're going to spit in your face.

[20:26] I was one time with a crowd of people and we were doing some open-air preaching, and they were throwing carrots at us. You know, people can do things that are not very pleasant when you're declaring the message.

But they're not really attacking you. They're attacking the Saviour. They're rejecting Christ and His message. And an ambassador doesn't take rejection personally. He's accepted or rejected not on his own merit, but because of the one he represents.

When they reject you and they reject the message of the gospel, they're rejecting the Saviour. An ambassador stands in the place of His sovereign. The honour and reputation of his country are in his hands.

Everything he does and says reflects on the one who sent him. So as an ambassador, look out, people watching you. See, as a Christian, we are a representative of the King of Kings.

There was a story about a new ambassador was appointed to a nation of Japan. And it was in the US. He was a US ambassador. And the Secretary of State, the high-flying official from the government, was preparing this ambassador to leave the USA and to go and represent the USA as the ambassador in Japan.

[21:39] He had this interview with his ambassador-to-be. And he had this big globe on his desk, a great big globe of the world. And he said, you have to go over to the globe and prove to me that you can identify your country.

And most of the time, the people, these ambassadors-to-be, they'd spin the globe and they'd put their finger on the countries which they were being sent. But this newly appointed ambassador to Japan, the guy spun the globe and he put his finger on the USA.

That's my country, he said. And the official said, I've been telling all the ambassadors ever since, never forget, when you're over there in that country, that your country is the United States.

You're there to represent us, to take care of our interests and never forget it, and you're representing the best country in the world. Probably differ with that statement. But, you know, he was saying that the USA was the best country in the world.

You know, you're there to represent the country that is sending you. Likewise too, brothers and sisters, you're here to represent the kingdom of heaven, the king of heaven. You're here to represent the interests of heaven here on earth.

[22:48] And we're foreigners. We're strangers and people. We don't really belong here. We don't really belong to Australia. We don't really belong to planet earth. We belong to heaven, don't we?

We belong to the Lord Jesus, our Saviour. And we've got really no ties here. And we've got written instructions. The ambassador is given written instructions, the Bible.

God's word is your instructions. And really, the church is the embassy of heaven. It's the embassy of heaven on planet earth. The embassy, not the building, but the people of God, the church.

God's people, your brothers and sisters. We're an embassy. We're an embassy on planet earth, aren't we? Stationed here to serve. And the embassy is a bit of their land on foreign soil.

At the embassy, the ambassadors work out their strategies to carry out the objectives of the king they represent. And likewise too, we're ambassadors. Let's get the instructions from the king and follow them.

[23:53] Let's obey what he's told us to do. And at the embassy, the ambassadors send back messages to the king regarding their needs and help. And likewise too, when we get together as God's people, we send our needs.

We seek the help from the king, don't we? In the embassy, so to speak, of the church of God. At the embassy, so to speak, the ambassadors gain encouragement from the other workers, from the co-workers.

An ambassador. That's what you are. You're an ambassador. And it says in 2 Corinthians 5, as Paul uses that picture of an ambassador in 2 Corinthians 5 verses 18.

He tells us here that all things are a God who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. And he's given to us the ministry. This ministry, this wonderful privilege of serving, of reconciliation.

And he says that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing or counting their trespasses unto them. And he's committed unto us, to you.

[24:59] He's committed to you the word, the word of reconciliation. And now then we are ambassadors for Christ. We are his representatives, Paul says. We are his ambassadors on planet Earth.

As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's death, be reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

So just to quickly sum up here, what's the ambassador's responsibility? The ambassador has a message. A word of reconciliation. You've got a message, a vital, critical, fundamental message. A message that everybody on planet Earth needs to hear. In every language, in every tribe, in every tongue. Every nation needs this message. Every individual man, woman and child needs this message that you have in your mouth.

And he says, what should we do with it? We should beseech. We should urge people. We should beckon people. Urge people to be reconciled to God. And how can we be reconciled to God?

[26:04] Now, reconciliation, it's a word often bandied around in our world today. Reconciliation means a joining together. Coming together. And it's a wonderful thing that reconciliation means a coming together.

A joining together. At the moment, if we're lost, there's a separation. There's a big wall of separation. There's a big barrier. The Bible says your sins are separated between us.

Sin is like a barrier. You try to talk to God, you can't reach him. You can't reach him. There's a barrier there. There's a separation. There's a wall there. There's a barrier. Reconciliation means God takes it away.

And he reaches out to us. He reaches out and he receives us. That's what reconciliation means. And we're brought together with God. He embraces us. He receives us. As we receive him.

And we receive his gift. And he's given to you, to me, the word, the message of reconciliation. That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Bringing us back together to himself.

[27:06] By Christ, his hand reached down and brings man to himself. You're an authorised messenger of this message. Now some people think, oh, I've got to get more training.

I've got to go and study and study and know it back to front and inside out, from cover to cover, before I tell anyone. If you're a Christian, confess Christ.

Confess Christ with your mouth. Tell others about the Saviour. You don't have to be more trained or more skilled. You just have to be a voice.

Open your mouth and represent him to the world. And he commands us to do it. In Mark 16, it says that we are commanded to take this message. It's not optional. It's essential.

And the need is real. Just 2 Corinthians 5.11 tells us of the great need. It talks about the terror of the Lord. We know that God is going to judge. It talks about the terror of the Lord.

[28:05] Terror! Scary! We're here at terrorists today, don't we? God says that he has terror. He's angry. He says he's angry at the wicked every day.

And one day his judgment will fall. Friends, God has got a terror. There's an anger. There's a... He hates sin. But he loves the sinner.

And friends, he extends his hand of love to you today. To receive him. Don't turn him away. Don't reject his love. Receive him. Receive.

Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. We don't want anyone to suffer God's judgment and wrath and anger. In Luke 16, we know the account of the man who was in hell.

And he lifted up his eyes, being in torment. And he cried out, Can you send someone to tell my brothers and my family? I don't want anyone to come to this terrible place. Friends, it's a terrible thing.

[29:05] It's an awful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, if you're not right with him. John 3, 18 and 36, it talks about, Believe on the Lord, and you shall be saved.

But if you believe not, the wrath of God, the anger of God, will fall on you. God's anger. And just lastly, 2 Thessalonians 1, verses 8 and 9, it tells us that he's going to come with flaming fire, with vengeance on those who do not know God.

There's going to be anger. God is rightfully angry. He's got a reason to be angry. Imagine if you sent your only begotten son, you sent your only begotten son into the world, to die so that mankind could have everlasting life.

And some people say, Nah, not interested. Imagine how God would feel, wouldn't he be angry? My son died for you. He sent his blood for you.

And yet you reject it. You spurn it. You count it as nothing. Friends, he's got reason to be angry. And yet, in love he extends that welcome.

[30:17] Now, don't reject it. God is real. Heaven is real. Hell is real. And people who reject the message will face his judgment.

He says, He's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Now, for some, they don't want to hear it. We know. They don't want to hear it. They don't want to know about salvation.

Or they think they've got some salvation by their own effort, or strength, or good works. And you know, we were down, some of us were in Adelaide recently, and we were preaching in the open air there.

And a man was saying, You're disturbing me. You're disturbing me. And he was trying to have a conversation with someone else. And really, you know, I had to say, Look, you need to be disturbed.

People need a disturbance. People need to get disturbed. And to get uncomfortable, to get discomfited, because they're riding the helter-skelter to help.

[31:16] They're riding that road that is going to lead to their destruction. The broad way that leads to destruction. They're going down that road, like most of the populace.

And it's a downward, horrible place to go. We don't want anyone to go there. We want to disturb people, that they get discomfoted, that they get uncomfortable, and they want to get right with God. Knowing the terror of the Lord with dissuade men. And friends, maybe you're feeling like, Oh, it sounds good. And yeah, I know I should.

I know I should be a witness. And I know I should be an ambassador. And I know I should tell people about the Gospel. And you don't have to stand on a street corner or wear a sandwich board. You can pass a message on. But in simple form, pass a Gospel tract. Help with Sunday School. Tell someone that you work with what Jesus has done for you.

[32:14] So simple and just ordinary people can do it. Just ordinary people like you and me. And we can ask the Lord as they did in Acts 4. Lord, grant unto thy servants boldness, that we may speak thy word.

And when someone says, What must I do to be saved? It's a simple answer. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. It's simple. It's not technical.

It's not complicated. It's not something that you need to be qualified in. You are authorised. You are His messenger, His ambassador.

And friends, I have an announcement to make. An announcement to make. And so do you. There's good news. There's good news for planet Earth. There's good news for modern man. And we can declare it.

We can show it. We can proclaim it. It's joyful news. It's glad tidings. It's tidings of great joy. Of great joy. Joyful news.

[33:14] What's the Gospel? It's a person. It's Jesus. It's Jesus in you. It's the Lord Jesus. He's the one, the only one who can do anything for mankind.

And how does He deliver the message? Through just ordinary people. Just like you and me. So spread the good news. Spread the good news. Take it far and wide. Spread it.

Take it with you. Communicate it. Be a voice. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you today for everybody present. Lord, for your word that is life to us and truth. Help us, Lord, to tell others as you give us grace and strength to.

Grant your servants boldness, Lord, that they may spread your word. Lord, that we might be a messenger of that wonderful glad tidings. That joyful message that people need so desperately. Lord, that they might take it seriously. They might turn to you. And Lord, for anyone present who has not yet taken that step, they'll say, Lord, save me. Save my soul. I don't want to go to hell.

[34:13] I want you to pay my sin. I want you to pay for my sin. And thank you for doing that. Lord, thank you for everyone here, for our homes and families, for our lives ahead.

As you give us days ahead, let us use them wisely for your glory. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.