

# The Great Commission and Prejudice

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please turn your Bibles to the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 11.

! This morning we are completing our four-part sermon series on the Great Commission.! This final message, our attention will be directed to verses 11 through 11 through verses 19 through 26. Acts 11, beginning in verse 19.

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke with the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the heirs of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. And he came and saw the grace of God, and he was glad. And he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for a whole year, they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we are grateful this morning that we are able to gather once again to lift our voices and song, to cry out to you in prayer. And now, Lord, to sit under the preaching of your word, that you may feed our souls, that we may be convicted, that we may grow. And Lord, we ask for grace to hear as we should. I ask for grace to speak as I should. And then, Lord, would you grant us all willing hearts to obey all that you say to us this morning. We pray that you would, whatever your word is, you promise that you would do, and that you be glorified in all that is said and done.

[ 3 : 19 ] Amen. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. What comes to your mind when you hear the word prejudice? If you're like most people, you probably default and think about racial prejudice.

Although racial prejudice is perhaps the most widespread form of prejudice, it's not the only form. And so it's not unusual to see a person who might be fighting one form of prejudice, and then in their own lives they practice other forms of prejudice. I think we can all have blind spots as it relates to this big issue of prejudice that is beyond racial prejudice. So what does prejudice mean?

Prejudice means to judge in advance, or to prejudge something or someone. And so we judge people, we judge situations in advance, not based on having personal knowledge of the individuals or the situation, but we do it in advance. And so anyone in particular who may fall in that category, we judge them in advance based on how we view people in that particular category. And I think our starting point this morning has to be that all of us have prejudices. All of us have biases in different ways and varying degrees. And while humanly speaking, some of these prejudices and biases that we have are rooted in experience and environments that we grow up in and that we expose to, the truth is the root cause of all prejudice is sin. Psychologists won't bring us to that point. They will talk about any number of influencing factors in our lives that will cause us to see people and see situations the way that we do. But the root cause of prejudice is sin. And sadly, this is even true for Christians. The sin of prejudice in all of its forms and all of its manifestations is sin among Christians as well. And it's a reminder of a sad reality. The sad reality that when we come to Christ, we are

Christ, we still battle with sin. And oftentimes when we have these prejudices, these prejudices, as they relate to people, can cause us to relate to people in particular ways, those of us who are believers, so much so that we don't engage them in particular ways, don't engage them in particular ways, don't engage them with the gospel that we have come to believe and the Savior that we have come to know. And this is what we see in this passage before us this morning. In this passage that we just read, what we see is that prejudice against some people hinders the Great Commission, but



like Samaria and to get an appreciation of the hatred between Jews and Samaritans, we recall the story of the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4.

But to faithfully proclaim the gospel and fulfill the Great Commission, the disciples were going to have to overcome these prejudices. But Jesus commanded them to stay in Jerusalem until they had received the power of the Holy Spirit, and then they were to go on their mission.

So in chapter 2, we see the day of Pentecost came, the Holy Spirit came upon those who were in the upper room, they were filled with the Spirit, they spoke in tongues. And then in verse 5, we see, in chapter 2, verse 5, we see, now there were dwelling in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.

[ 13 : 32 ] This was by divine design. The church was soon going to be started, and God in his providence brought people to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, and the church is going to begin out of this.

But those in Jerusalem were not only Jews. We see in verses 8 through 11, a list of the languages present, and then in verse 11 in particular, we see that there were Jews and non-Jews.

They're referred to as proselytes. So there were Jews and non-Jews who were present on the day of Pentecost. And then we read that Peter preaches, and at the end of his sermon, people respond, and some 3,000 souls are saved, and the church begins.

And then, when we go a little further into the book of Acts, in chapter 6, we come to the first indication of racial disharmony in the church.

In verse 1, we read, now, in these days when disciples, when increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

[ 14 : 56 ] Now, these Hellenists, these would have been Jews who spoke the common language, which was Greek.

And it showed that they were not faithful Jews because they did not maintain the traditions, they did not maintain the language, and maintain, obviously, many of the customs. But yet, they're all in this church together now.

And this clearly was no accident. This was not a few people being overlooked. This was systematic, systemic prejudice neglecting the Hellenist widows while caring for the Hebrew widows.

This was open and blatant prejudice. And when you think about this, this is prejudice among God's people.

this is not prejudice to unbelievers, to strangers. This is prejudice towards those who were in the church. So imagine what the treatment for unbelievers would be by those who operate in this kind of prejudice.

[ 16 : 11 ] How do you think they would treat unbelieving Hellenists when they would neglect needy widows simply because they were Hellenists.

Jews but not faithful Jews in terms of maintaining all of the traditions. And then we come to chapter 7.

In chapter 7 it's the stoning of Stephen. Remember in chapter 11 this is what was referenced that these people were scattered abroad because of this incident in chapter 7. And then in chapter 8 in verse 1 we read about the great persecution that arose in the church in Jerusalem and how they were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles.

And what's interesting here is that it seems like these disciples had to be persecuted to go where the Lord sent them to go. it seems like they were not going based on their own volition.

They were not going based on a burden to carry the gospel and fulfill the great commission beyond Jerusalem. And so the Lord sovereignly allows persecution to disperse them into the areas of Judea and Samaria.

[ 17 : 37 ] And we read in chapter 8 how the Samaritans received the gospel. And this was a very incredible thing because again Samaritans and Jews hated each other.

And then chapter 10 we have the account of Peter and the vision that he had and the Lord telling him to go with these men who had come from the house of Cornelius.

And he goes to Cornelius' house, he preaches to his household, and Cornelius and his entire household are saved and they are baptized. baptized. And then we come to chapter 11 where we find our text.

But in the opening verse of chapter 11, here's what we read. Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also received the word of God. This is a strange thing to them because they weren't doing it. So Peter went up to Jerusalem. When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him saying, you went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.

[ 18 : 52 ] But Peter began and explained it to them in order. So Peter begins to tell them, hey, here's what actually happened. And then in verse 18, we read their response to Peter's explanation.

In verse 18, we read, when they heard these things, they fell silent. And they glorified God saying, then to the Gentiles also, God has granted repentance that leads to life.

This was a remarkable thing for them. And what we are able to see is that really, though they recognized that, it didn't change their hearts, at least many of them.

And it now brings us to the text that we are considering this morning. Again, we are told in verse 19 that those who were scattered abroad because of the persecution that arose over Stephen were sharing the gospel with Jews only.

people. But again, the gospel is for all people. So there's no way to justify this kind of conduct.

[ 20 : 12 ] And again, I know how easy it is for us to be startled that they were acting in this way and overlook the fact that we can have our own prejudices that can prevent us from sharing the gospel with particular people, just as these Jews were doing.

The reality is what happened with them continued, and it continues even to this day. As I was preparing this sermon, I came across an article by a lady by the name of Christina Cleveland, and the title of the article is, Does Christianity Make People Prejudiced?

Here's what she writes. It's no secret that the evangelical church is divided along racial ethnic lines. Evangelicals rarely engage in meaningful interactions outside of our mostly homogenous church groups. Indeed, sociologists Michael Emerson and Christian Smith report in their book, Divided by Faith, Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America, that over 90% of all American churches are composed of congregations that are at least 90% homogenous.

further, even though the landscape of American society is increasing in diversity, American churches are decreasing in diversity.

[ 22 : 05 ] perhaps even more troubling is that social psychologist Deborah Hall and colleagues have found a significant correlation between Christian religiosity and racial prejudice.

people have people that are of one particular ethnic description, over 90% of them, 9 out of 10.

if you find 10 churches, 9 out of 10 will have all people who are very much alike racially, ethnically.

And then she is making the point that though the U.S.

today is growing in diversity, churches are becoming less diverse. People are clustering more to those who are like them. And then she quotes this Deborah Hall who has done some study to show that there seems to be some relationship between the more religious a Christian is and the more racially prejudiced they are.

Now I share this quote this morning because we don't have similar studies and a similar quote in our country that we can draw from. But I think we can all agree that by observation we would have a similar reality in our own country.

[ 23 : 49 ] That largely churches are divided along racial ethnic lines. On this island and on other islands in the Bahamas.

And I believe it's a reflection that we share the gospel with those who are like us if we share it at all. We reach out to those who like us whether we if we do that at all. And again what I don't I don't dispute the study I don't I don't know the study but what I will dispute in the study is this.

The root of it is not Christianity doesn't make people prejudice. The more steeped you are in Christian religiosity as the author refers to it doesn't make you more prejudiced.

What makes us prejudiced is sin. Sin is the root of prejudice. And sin remains an ongoing reality for all Christians.

[ 25 : 05 ] And over time we have to become less sinful and more Christ like and that's what the Bible calls sanctification. And so this morning I really want us to think about this issue of the Great Commission and prejudice in a very personal way.

And I want us to consider the question what prejudices might I have that are hindering me from sharing the gospel with particular kinds of people and thereby hindering the Great Commission.

What biases do I have towards particular kinds of people that cause me that will cause me to not share the gospel again?

It's bigger than race. It's bigger than race. And if we can find it to race and we miss a whole lot of the prejudices that take place, in our lives that alienate us from particular people who we do not share the gospel with.

As I thought about this, I think there are two common prejudices, entrenched prejudices, that we have in our country that like these Jews who had these deep rooted prejudices towards foreigners, Samaritans in particular, but foreigners in general, we likewise have these prejudices that we have grown up around, that have gone on for generations, and if we aren't aware and if we aren't careful and if we aren't repentant, we can have these prejudices operating in our lives and they can cause us to relate to people based on those prejudices and will hinder us sharing the gospel with those people and indeed it will hinder the

[ 27 : 18 ] Great Commission. The first one is social prejudice. It's a very big one in our country. Social prejudice. It has to do with being prejudiced against people because of their social status, their standing in society, based on their economic position, their education, the way they speak, the way they dress, where they live, the trappings of the life that they have, the kind of car they drive perhaps, the school they attend.

And these tend to shape how we view particular people, whether we make an effort to reach out to them or not reach out to them, whether we take an interest in them, whether we seek to befriend them.

It's the kind of person we would want to maybe invite for a meal or invite to our homes. And again, the functional effect is that it affects the Great Commission.

Because if we're not interacting with these individuals and we are functionally prejudice towards them, then we minimize the opportunities that we have to reach them with the gospel.

We want us to think about this. Think about it in the context of your workplace. Those of you who are students, think about it in the context of school. think of it in the context of the businesses we go to, the businesses we patronize or the people who come to maybe our homes and they do services for us.

[ 29 : 17 ] How do we see those people? How do we think about them? How do we interact with them? What goes through our minds as we engage them? Who are the people we tend to gravitate towards and why?

And who are the people we tend to pull away from and why? Social prejudice is deeply rooted in our society and we need to be aware of that because if we're not, we will impede the opportunities that we have to share the gospel and to be involved in the Great Commission.

I talked earlier about how sometimes we can be fighting one form of prejudice while practicing another and I think we do that a lot of times not being aware that we do it in this country.

For example, with Donald Trump being the president, a lot of people are just bashing Trump. He's a racist. He's this. He's that. And then we turn around and we show social prejudice.

We will complain about a person who would show prejudice towards another race.

[ 30 : 43 ] If a parent, for example, says to a child, I don't want you to marry a black person or a white person, which would be the opposite race, we would be troubled by that and protest that.

But then we turn around and we tell our children, well, don't marry a person who is of that social standing or of that particular economic standing. And it's the same prejudice and it's all rooted in sin.

And it doesn't just stop in that area where we can say it's confined just to the marriage area, but I'll share the gospel with them. And no, we don't share the gospel with them either. And then the second big prejudice that we have as Bahamians, the first is social prejudice, the second is national prejudice.

And that's being prejudice against people because of their national origin. And we all know in the Bahamas that the largest expression of this is prejudice that Bahamians direct towards Haitians and those of Haitian descent.

It's a long standing prejudice in the country. And sadly, even Christians engage in it. people that we are prejudiced against, we're not going to share the gospel with them.

[ 32 : 31 ] We will not have spiritual concern for the people against whom we hold prejudices. prejudices. We need to be aware of that. These are hindrances to sharing the gospel, hindrances to advancing the Great Commission.

You know, a lot of times we think about the opportunities that we have to share the gospel and to reach out to people. And you know what we do? We tend not even to consider some of the opportunities that we have because of prejudice.

Because of prejudice. Someone could ask us, well, I want you to just think about all the people in your world who perhaps don't know Christ, who you can reach out to.

And I'm not saying this is true for all of us, but just based on how this issue runs deeply in our country, many of us would not consider some individuals based on national prejudice.

And so whether the prejudice is social, whether the prejudice is national, or whether it's racial, just as it was for these Jews in Acts 11, it's going to impede the Great Commission.

[ 34 : 02 ] We need the Spirit's help to convict us and to change us and help us by grace to repent and to reach out to all people, no matter who they are, no matter what their background, no matter what they've done, and to share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

But this passage not only highlights prejudice and how it hinders the Great Commission, it also highlights openness and how it advances the Great Commission.

So that brings me to my second and final point. Even though there were Jewish believers who were not sharing the gospel with others based on their prejudice, there were some faithful believers who were doing otherwise.

We see this beginning in verse 20 where it says, but there were some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists, also preaching the Lord Jesus.

And look at the next verse. The next verse says, and the hand of the Lord was with them. And a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

[ 35 : 39 ] Here's the beauty of these two verses. First of all, they were preaching Jesus Christ. They weren't preaching all kinds of other things that people can get engaged in when they have differences with other people.

They were preaching Christ because Christ is the gospel and Christ is the heart of the Great Commission and preaching Christ is the basis upon which men, women, boys and girls are able to repent and turn from their sins.

And Luke tells us in verse 21 that the hand of the Lord was with them. that statement is distinctively absent from the Jews who were only sharing the gospel with the Jews.

These were different Jews. These were the but some of them Jews who were doing otherwise, who were going against everything they knew, everything they grew up believing about other people.

The gospel had so transformed their lives that they were breaking barriers and they were going counterculture and sharing the gospel with these other people.

[ 37 : 00 ] We read in verse 22 that the report came to the church in Jerusalem. Again, this is a big deal. The Gentiles, again, are getting saved. The report goes back to Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas to Antioch to check it out.

And look at what it says in verse 23. When he came, when Barnabas came, Barnabas saw the grace of God. And see, brothers and sisters, this is what the gospel does.

This is not just a group of people who are behaving and changing the way they used to live and stopping some things and starting some new things. No, these are people whose lives were transformed by the gospel.

And Barnabas comes to check out the authenticity of this message they heard. These Gentiles in Antioch had been converted.

And he came and he saw the tangible evidence of the grace of God at work in their lives. And Scripture says, and he was glad. And he exhorted them, all of them, to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose.

[ 38 : 17 ] And again, to his credit for Barnabas, we see that he was a good man. Verse 24, he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And so a great many people were added to the Lord.

And so Barnabas goes and he looks for Saul of Tarsus and he brings him back and together they teach this church. for a whole year and we read this wonderful statement, this last sentence in verse 26, and in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

These individuals who these other Jews were refusing to share the gospel with, it is these individuals who so expressed what it means to follow Jesus Christ that they were called Christians. By others who observed it, they didn't give themselves this title, others called them Christians based on their lives.

Now think about this, this is quite an amazing outcome. Because the Lord was with these Jewish believers who were willing to go against their national prejudices against foreigners, they shared the gospel with these foreigners and we have this outcome that we read about the church in Antioch. [ 39 : 49 ] They were open where others were prejudiced. the gospel was preached, people were saved, the great commission was advanced. And what's quite remarkable about this is this begins a shift that you will see in the book of Acts.

It begins a shift where the focus of God moves from Jerusalem and the Jews and it moves to Antioch and the Gentiles. all because there were a group of Jews who were faithful to the great commission who did not allow their prejudices to prevent them from reaching out to these individuals in Antioch.

And as a result, people were saved and a very strong church was built. even today when people refer to us as Christians or we refer to ourselves as Christians, it goes back to these people in Antioch and it goes back to those faithful Jewish believers who shared the gospel with them.

Brothers and sisters, there is no group of people, there is no individual to whom the great commission does not apply and you and I have no right whatsoever to withhold the gospel from anyone because of biases and because of prejudices that we have.

God sends the great commission to all people, to all kinds of people. It doesn't matter who they are, it doesn't matter what they've done, it doesn't matter what their circumstances are. We must be open to sharing the gospel with all of them.

[ 41 : 45 ] There's a growing group of individuals for whom I have a burden to see us individually and us collectively engage and reach out to.

And that is those who are involved in a lifestyle of homosexuality or who are gender confused or otherwise confused about human sexuality.

And it is very easy for us to treat them the way these Jews in Acts 11 were treating the Gentiles, the way they were treating non-Jews.

It's very easy for us to have a stand-off, hand-off approach towards them. It's very easy for us to make jokes or laugh at jokes that other people make but we don't engage them.

The gospel and the Great Commission is for all people. There is no distinction. And some of us have these individuals in our circle of relationships whether they be family members, whether they be friends, whether they be co-workers or fellow students.

[ 43 : 14 ] We relate to them in all kinds of ways but we don't share the gospel with them. Who knows where openness to share the gospel would lead?

And again, it's not likely that we're going to be burdened for people whom we ridicule or scorn.

Not very likely. And I think one of the things that should help us is to realize that we have more in common with every single sinner than we realize.

Because for one thing, God does not distinguish sin. We're all sinners and it matters not what kind of sin. We're all sinners and we need the same grace of God to save us and to help us to battle sin, saying no to sin and to say yes to righteousness.

And so here's what I want us to consider this morning. Are there groups of particular people, individuals, or individuals to whom we need to be open, more open to sharing the gospel with?

[ 44 : 45 ] As you think of your circle of relationships, are there particular people to whom, maybe functionally, you are not sharing the gospel with, who you need to share the gospel with?

Are there people in our lives for whom we have no spiritual burden even though we know they don't know Christ, even though we know that from all that we can see they're on their way to a crisis, hell?

Do we have a burden for them? And you know, sometimes we talk about praying for people, and we need to do that, but we need to pray for ourselves and ask the Lord to help us and ask the Lord to give us burdens where we should have them, that we may share the gospel with people who we just don't naturally seem to have that burden to share the gospel with, and when we pull that back, it's really rooted in prejudice.

God's God's love to God's love to pray for them, but we need to pray for ourselves and ask him, the Lord, to help us to share the gospel, not out of duty, but out of burden, out of a genuine burden for the soul of lost people.

God's love to know, know, God's know, God's God's love to God's love to! love to!! chewing chewing chapter 9 through 10, where John says, After this, I looked and behold a great

multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

[ 47 : 27 ] Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

And God has sent us with the Great Commission as we go into the world, as we engage people, we are to share the Gospel, knowing that salvation belongs to the Lord.

And so this morning, may all of us who belong to Christ be faithful to the Great Commission, and as we have opportunity, let us be open to sharing the Gospel with all people, no matter who they are, no matter where they're from, no matter what they've done.

And in so doing, we will contribute to this glorious picture of the redeemed church in heaven, which one day will become a reality.

Let me pray, and then I'll take some questions. Heavenly Father, would you help us to be aware of any functional prejudice in our lives that prevent us from sharing the Gospel with particular people and thereby hinder the Great Commission.

[ 49 : 01 ] Help us to see the opportunities that we have to reach out to those in our circle of relationships, bucking our culture, bucking our biases, bucking our prejudices by the grace of God.

God, help us to recognize that beyond all the layers that we would put on people and see them in particular ways, that beyond those layers is an eternal soul who need to hear the Gospel.

And so, Lord, I pray you would work in our hearts, would you help us to ponder deeply these things in our lives and then, Lord, help us to respond and be faithful to share this good news with all people.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Do you have any questions this morning from any part of the sermon? Any questions?

What do you believe someone's reaction or response should be if they look around their congregation and it looks like a homogenous congregation?

[ 50 : 42 ] What should be the thought process and should they actively go looking for people who are different or distinct? That's a good question. No, I don't think that we are called to build what I would call politically correct congregations.

And for example, when we think of the United States, there are particular parts of the United States where one could say it's almost a virtual impossibility for the church to be other than homogenous, whether it is all white or all black.

I mean, there are some large concentrations of people of one particular ethnicity. And so those churches will look like that. I think where we should be concerned is where that's not the reality in which we live.

In other words, the world outside, right around us, looks different from our church. And I think that's where we really want to be concerned.

And I don't think that we need to be saying, well, I'm just going to go get some other looking people and try to get them in. But I think what you should be doing is thinking on a personal level, well, what does my own world look like in terms of the people I'm reaching out to?

[ 52 : 03 ] And whether you may have opportunity to reach out to people who are different from you, but because of blind spots, because of prejudice, biases, whatever, you've not just been doing that.

I know that in some cases there are churches in the United States that have set that as a goal and so they pretty much almost go into recruitment mode to just bring people in so it looks different.

I think that's artificial. I don't know that that really works. I think it needs to be organic. I think it needs to be natural. I think we need to recognize that all people in our lives are candidates for sharing the gospel.

And let me just say this practically. I mentioned work. I don't think that what I'm saying this morning is a license to be sharing the gospel when you should be working.

I'm not saying that at all. I mean, you go to work, you're supposed to be working, not preaching. But you may have opportunities to do that during lunch or before work or after work in some other setting or context.

[ 53 : 13 ] but I do think, clients, that the first reaction should be look in my world and see whether I'm just not reaching out to people as I really should.

So yeah, I think it should begin more personally and it shouldn't be cosmetic just to have a particular appearance. But heaven is going to be very diverse and so we'd be better off for getting that diversity even now.

Anyone else? I have actually two-part question. The first part goes, I guess, before when you were talking about before we get to the topic of prejudice just going out and doing the Great Commission. Sorry again, Amanda. I didn't hear that. Sorry, just going out. It's a two-part. So I think that some of the things or some of the instances that I would encounter or perhaps other persons is that when you do go out and you want to share in the Great Commission, in Acts, they said the disciples were asked to wait for the promise of the Father, Acts 1, verse 4 through 5, which was, I guess, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes when you want to engage persons or share or proclaim the gospel, you're posed with questions or perspectives that kind of get you stuck.

[ 54 : 48 ] How do you advance in those types of scenarios? That's a very good question. here's the way I would respond to that.

I think if we wait to, quote unquote, sorry, Pastor Ross, can I just add another part to that? And is there a direct correlation in the act of waiting to be baptized in the Spirit, like the disciples were asked to do to wait, is that a direct correlation to us as persons wanting to go out and share in the Great Commission with others?

Is that something we too need to wait for before sharing? All right. That's a, the second part is a bit more involved in the first. There's another question after that.

What's that? You have another one? After that. Okay, this is a three part question. Okay, so this first one, I'm trying to, trying to remember the exact words you used.

Yeah, I think that if we wait to feel prepared, we'll never go.

[ 55 : 58 ] Now, the Lord gives a promise. The Lord gives a promise that he will be with us. And I will tell you that, and he even says it this way, he says, a different context, he's saying to his disciples, if you're arrested, you're brought before the magistrates, he said, don't even premeditate what you're going to say in that moment.

I will fill your mouth with words. Remember that when we are engaged in the Great Commission, we're not doing this on our own. Jesus promised, he says, I will be with you to the end of the age. And so we're praying and we're trusting the Lord to help us, give us clarity in sharing the gospel, give us wisdom in responding.

And one of the things I think that should really help us is this. If a person says something to you that you don't know the answer, you say, I don't know. I don't know. But I will try to find out and I'll get back to you.

So we don't need to feel pressure to know every single thing. And we can still trust the Lord to use whatever we share with that person. And once we share the gospel clearly, we've evangelized.

[ 57 : 06 ] Christ died for our sins.

Now there's a bigger part to that in the sense that the sins point to the fall, Christ's coming points to the grace of God and our need for that grace.

And those who put their trust in him, Scripture promises that they will not be turned away, they will be received. So I think the most important thing that we need to be concerned about when we share the gospel is being able to clearly share the gospel.

Not necessarily being able to answer every objection that that person brings to us. We share the gospel, we leave it with them, we trust the Lord to work and for the Spirit to work.

And I think the other part of it too is to remember that sometimes the objections we get are really distractions. And so we need to find ways to bring them back to the gospel, recognizing that they're sinners, recognizing that there's only one way to God and that's through Jesus Christ, recognizing the need to repent and to turn from sin.

[ 58 : 22 ] And I think it's really just doubling down on the gospel as opposed to getting into all of what we would call apologetics. Because at the end of the day, giving the best answer to a person still is not enough to save that person.

If God doesn't act on that person's heart, they'll never know Christ. So answering all the questions alone is really not enough. So going back now to what you shared about you asked about waiting for the Spirit.

Now remember that the reason the disciples had to wait is because the day of Pentecost had not come. And that was when the Lord was going to send the Spirit, empower them, and inaugurate the church.

So the waiting was not a precedent that we should all so and so follow. And remember that I don't know if you were here when I did the second part to in this series, but we believe in accordance with this particular verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 13 it says, for in one spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and were all made to drink of one spirit. so there are those who believe that there is a subsequent experience when you come to know Christ and they believe that there is some subsequent experience in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. [ 60 : 02 ] We would not hold to that. We believe that what Scripture says here, for in one spirit we were all baptized into one body, all of us, and we were all made to drink of the one same spirit.

Now that has different manifestations in people's lives for a myriad of different reasons. The gifts that God chooses to give, etc. But one part I'll comment on to try to bring some insight into it without making it too long, is there are those who believe that the evidence that you're baptized in the Holy Spirit is that you speak in tongues.

Those who teach that whole denominations are based on that. But in the same passage, what we see is that the Apostle Paul actually undercuts that.

And what he says starting in verse 27, he's ending this section of the letter and he writes, Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

And God is appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

[ 61 : 23 ] And then he begins to ask a series of questions. Are all apostles? The obvious answer is no. Are all prophets? Again, no. Are all teachers?

No. Do all work miracles? No. Do all possess gifts of healing? Obviously no. Do all speak with tongues? No. And then he says also, do all interpret?

The answer again would be no. So what scripture does call us to though is when we consider what it says over here in Ephesians chapter 5 and starting in verse 18 it says, and do not be drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.

This means to be filled with the Spirit in an ongoing way, not just a one-time experience. So you'll have people who say, oh, I was baptized in the Holy Spirit 20 years ago. Well, no.

The Bible says we have to be filled with the Spirit in an ongoing way. And just in the passage we looked at in Acts chapter 2 where Peter promised, he said, if you believe that you're going to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as for you, your children and those who are far off, as many as the Lord your God shall call.

[ 62 : 46 ] And that promise was fulfilled to them, but we don't see them speaking in tongues in terms of it being recorded in that way. So what I would say, Amanda, is that there is no call or need for us to wait for a particular experience that was a one-time thing for the disciples because they were waiting for the Spirit to come.

And what we are called to do is we are called to be filled with the Spirit in an ongoing way. And so I think we just need to be dependent upon the Spirit, trusting the Spirit, aware that the Spirit is helping us as we evangelize, as we share the gospel.

and I do believe that we can trust Him to empower us to be bold and to be clear in preaching the gospel. And I end on this point before I let you ask your third question.

We have to remember that being faithful to share the gospel is fulfilling the Great Commission, not being able to answer every single objection that a person brings to us.

Once we share the gospel, we trust the Lord with it, and He will watch over His word, and He will perform it as He chooses to do. So I hope all that is kind of roundabout, but I hope it's helpful. Absolutely.

[ 64 : 08 ] And the third question is based more on the topic of prejudices. You mentioned how Christians have prejudices. You spoke to how Christians have prejudices, but I think also too going into the community.

Because people perceive Christians with certain prejudices, they too receive them with those prejudices. So how do you engage persons without transmitting a feeling of judgment?

Because I believe that's one of the prejudices that non-persons perhaps feel when a Christian is going to share the gospel with them. This is what I've had in conversations.

Often perceive or originally approach with the mindset, this person is just coming to judge me. This person is going to say I'm a sinner or you're going to hell or something weird like that.

That's exactly what somebody's actually told me. So how do you engage those types of persons without transmitting that feeling or sensation or perception of prejudice?

[ 65 : 18 ] Yeah. That's good in the sense that when you recognize the existence of that, so I think recognizing that that exists, we try our best not to identify with those who may come across in that particular manner.

I think a couple of helpful things I would share is that one, I believe that if we make distinctions with sin and we have what I would consider an unbiblical view of sin, we can have the tendency of coming across more as being judgmental than we should.

So for example, let's say that maybe someone is trapped in some sexual sin. If we see that sexual sin as so gross and so severe and worse than other sins in terms of the power of Christ to forgive and to heal, that can come across in our tone and how we may be talking to the person.

I think we want to just help people to see that we are broken people and sin as an expression of that brokenness and Christ is the one who by his grace is able to one, forgive us and to help us in our brokenness.

So I think that would be one part that I would recommend that we are aware of. But I would also say that we need to be aware that the gospel is offensive.

[ 67 : 00 ] The gospel is offensive. And there's nothing that we can do if we're going to be faithful to the gospel to remove the offense of it. Now we don't need to add to the offense by how we come across, but the gospel is offensive because it does say that we are sinners and we are so desperately sinful, that to address our condition, God had to send his son to die on a cruel cross, take our place, that those who put their trust in him would be forgiven.

And so we don't want to try to take the edge of the gospel. We want to be faithful to proclaim the gospel and trust the Lord with the results. Remember, in sharing the gospel, we're not coming across as salesmen.

We're not trying to convince a person. Only the Spirit can do that. So I think your impulse is right that when you're aware of how some people would believe that maybe you're just trying to judge them, but beyond that it's just really trying to not come across as putting a particular sin so high, like, oh, you really need Christ because you did that or because you do that versus somebody else who may be a white-collar sinner and not doing those kinds of things.

And then last, just really trusting the Lord to use the offense of the gospel to convict sinners of their need to Christ.

Thank you. You're welcome. And over here. Is it prejudice to tell your kids that they should marry only Christians?

[ 68 : 58 ] Like, make sure? No, not at all. Not at all. Not at all. That's obedience to what God's Word says. And God's Word is very clear on that.

And so you wouldn't want to go contrary to God's Word. I mean, that's being faithful to God's Word and being faithful to them as well.

And I do think that it is wise to share it up front because if you don't, when emotions get involved, it becomes more difficult to hear.

So you don't want to be sharing it with them when somebody brings home John or Mary and say, but they don't like to go to church. you want to share it well in advance.

But they know. All right. Anybody else? Okay. Thanks for asking those questions. Oh, one more.

[ 69 : 56 ] Sure. This is not related to the subject, but Halloween is coming and we are having some problems with it. Maybe everyone is having... Yes. So we are trying to explain our kids that they should not be doing it, but if you could share some of your views to have to talk to the children about this, we would really appreciate.

Yeah, I would have to give that some thought. I'm not up on that right now just to say how you may want to share with them, but I do promise that I'll send something out and I'll actually share it with everyone.

I'll share some thoughts on Halloween. Thank you. Yes.