

# Core Values: Neighborly Evangelism - 1

## Corinthians 9:19-23

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. Excited to be here with you guys, worshiping the Lord. We're going to read just a short passage from the book of 1 Corinthians. Paul says this, For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

To the Jews I became as a Jew in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law, though myself being under the law, that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law, not being outside the law of God, but under the law of Christ, that I may win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak.

I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I might share with them in its blessings. Let's pray once more.

Lord, we know that there is one way to God, to you, and that that is through your son Jesus and what he has done. Lord, we glory in that truth. We rejoice in that truth, that there is only one that could ever deliver us from death. But Lord, we also proclaim that truth now amongst ourselves here in this room, but also as we go out into our workplaces and lives and homes and communities.

Lord, may we treasure that truth and may it rest in our hearts, Lord, to a point where we are convicted to see the loss come to that knowledge. Lord, I pray that this morning, Lord, you'd fill this place with your presence, that you'd empower us and encourage us to be bold for you, Lord, to be patient, to be kind, to be loving, to be persistent, Lord, with those of us, with those in our communities, Lord, that do not know you. I pray that the gospel would shine forth, Lord, from our lips and from our actions as a covenantal community looking to love our neighbors with the gospel. In the name we pray. Amen. Well, we are on the sixth week now of our core values, and this week I'm excited to talk through neighborly evangelism. And the reason I've chosen 1 Corinthians 9, I just read it, of course, you read along with me, but the reason I chose this passage, it's not traditionally seen as an evangelism passage, but yet I think it contains so much for us by way of what it means to evangelize our communities. So what I'd love to do is just start this morning by even just defining the word evangelism. Now the Bible speaks a lot about this term and this concept of going out and proclaiming the gospel. So you can put up that slide for us, Nathan. This is a quick, very simple, biblical word picture of what evangelism is in the original language. So the first word you're going to see a lot throughout your Bible is euangelion. I'm hopefully pronouncing that correct.

[ 3 : 31 ] Maybe my Greek professor will listen to this somehow, some way, and be like, really, Eric? But euangelion is how I'm going to pronounce that. And this is the word for gospel throughout your New Testament. It is littered throughout the New Testament. You'll see it most heavily in the gospels themselves in the book of Acts. But for what this term means is literally good news. That's not just what the church decided, you know what, it's, we like Jesus and he's awesome, so let's call this good news. This is the actual definition. And what I'd love for us to understand about the word gospel is that yes, it means good news, but specifically, this term actually elucidates not just any old good news. But in the context of the New Testament, when it is used by the writers, it is specifically speaking of the good news of Jesus, what he has done to redeem sinners and bring them to God. Now the word euangelion is where we get our word evangel, which is a modern English term for gospel, but also evangelical. Maybe you've called yourself an evangelical or you've been grouped in one of those massive surveys that said, the evangelical America. Evangelical, I actually like this term, we should redeem it. It means this, people of the gospel. Amen to that. Evangelical. That's where we get this term, is from this Greek word. But I want us to camp real quick on this, again, this concept as it was originally intended by the authors. The picture of good news is like a messenger

writing into a town to tell the city some awesome thing. Not like Paul Revere who brought bad news writing into the town, but think more of a writer, a messenger who victoriously comes into the town, into the kingdom, bracing the gates, flying in, and everyone says, what news do you bring? And that writer says to them all, the war has been won. We are victorious. That's what this term essentially is pointing to, the picture it's presenting. So what is that good news that we would rejoice in as God's people, his kingdom, his tribe?

It's this. It's the good news of the gospel that we believe. Jesus, through his perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection, has made it so that our sins may be forgiven upon repentance and belief, and we are brought unto God whole and in right relationship, cleansed, free.

This is the good news of the gospel. Jesus defeating the power of sin and death so that we too may defeat death when we die and are resurrected into eternal life with him. Yes, the gospel is very, very, very good news, and we rejoice in that good news that Jesus has brought us. But also there's a second term that's used throughout the Bible, less so but still used a lot. Now you may notice, evangelizo. This is the verb form of gospel. So literally proclaim or announce the good news. But actually, I would offer us this.

This is literally just the word gospel or good news turned into a verb. So here's what evangelism is at its core. Gospeling. That's what this term means. So let's go into the world and gospel. That's kind of what that term means. I love that. Evangelism. So at its very core, when we say evangelism, what are we talking about? We're talking about taking the good news of Jesus, displaying it to the world by speaking it, by demonstrating it through our acts of love, and by ultimately sharing with people the very Savior that came to die for them and has great love for them. That's evangelism. We'll speak more about the neighborly part of it here in a minute, but I want to read the definition of our core value quickly.

We believe that every believer is an ambassador of the gospel message of reconciliation between God and man. Internally, we have a collective gospel witness to the world around us, simply by the way we love one another and model grace-filled community. Externally, we have an obligation to saturate our surrounding communities with the light of the gospel message by living in, with, and among our neighbors.

[ 8 : 07 ] With hearts of hospitality and service, we will eagerly love the lost and offer hope by sharing the good news of the gospel. It is the role of every believer to create gospel bridges of relationship where we live, where we work, where we play, and everywhere. So let's jump back into our passage here in 1 Corinthians 9.

Now, you may have noticed this is in a specific book by a specific author, and we seem to be in the middle of this random book. Well, let me give us a very quick context. The book of Corinthians, the first letter at least, is a book from an apostle named Paul, who was very concerned with the health of a church. Now, we've seen throughout our lifetimes probably, if you've been in church for any length of time, maybe you've seen good, healthy biblical churches, and you've seen some not-so-healthy, but trying churches, right? Paul essentially is writing to one of the latter churches. They've got a lot of things not going right. Their doctrine is a little askew, and their practice is very askew. So when Paul writes to the Corinthians in his first letter, here's what he's essentially saying. You guys need to go back to the basics. Who is Jesus? What did he do? What is the gospel? You need that pure milk so that you can eventually start to live that out. But right now, you're living out all sorts of sin. You're living out all sorts of mistakes. You're living out all sorts of how not to be a church. So I'm going to bring you back to the basics. But in doing that, he lifts them up with a gospel message, and then he tells them, hey, I am an evangelist. I have taken that gospel, and I've gone forth. That's my duty in life, my mission that God has given me. And so he gives them the gospel again from his missional perspective. And that is what you see in chapter 9. But specifically leading up to our passage in verse 19, here's what Paul is essentially saying to them. I'm a pastor. I'm a missionary. I'm a prophet. I'm an apostle. I'm a preacher. And right now, there's not a lot of people supporting me. I'm summarizing through verse 19. There's a lot of churches that have supported me, but there's a lot of things that are not happening, and I don't have the money that I probably need to to live in this lifestyle for a long time. But you know what? That's okay. I'm going to find the money elsewhere because, and I love this, he says, woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. So I'm going to continue to preach the gospel regardless of whether or not I'm being paid. That's how he leads up into verse 19. So what a humbling way to come into our text. And then in verse 19, what we're going to see this morning is that this is Paul's personal evangelism strategy. But why are we

talking about his personal strategy? Can we talk just generally about how to evangelize the world? Well, here's why

I think this is important for us. Even though this may be Paul's personal strategy that he's elucidating to the Corinthians, I believe that what he gives is an example that's worth following individually as Christians in this church, but also collectively as a body. You may not be a preacher, a pastor, a missionary, on and on. Yet the call to preach the gospel and to gospel others is all of ours.

So let's jump into our text. Verse 19. Paul says this, What might it mean that Paul is free from all? Perhaps he means that he isn't literally enslaved any group of people or culture. I'm free from them. But here's what's so great about this.

[12:02] He finishes the thought in verse, the second part of verse 19 by saying this, Although I'm free, I have made myself a servant to all that I might win more of them. And the term servant here is most helpfully thought of actually as slave. In other words, here's what Paul's saying.

I have made myself a slave to all people, even though I don't have to make myself a slave to them. That's essentially what he's saying. So what does it mean that he made himself a slave?

Well, what happens when you enslave yourself to someone? In this day and age, it meant everything. A slave had no rights. A slave had only one job, and it was to do exactly what the master wanted.

Well, that's helpful because we know that Paul calls himself, at the outset of most of his epistles, he calls himself a bondservant or a bondslave, which is Paul's way of saying, I do his will. He's my master. I have given up all rights. I am Jesus's, and Jesus is alone. But then here he says, I'm not just a bondservant of Christ, but now I'm enslaving myself to the lost. Is he saying that he's making the lost his master? No. Here's what he means. To enslave himself to the lost means that Paul is giving up all liberties and all freedoms in order that they might know Jesus.

Metaphorically, here's what Paul means. He's giving up of his energy, his time, his money, his preferences, his hobbies, the things he likes to do on Sunday after church, like go get that lunch with his family or go watch that movie that he's always been wanting to watch. Checking into March Madness and watching and seeing how his bracket's doing. The gaming sessions, the novel reading sessions, the puzzles, the board games, even the comfort of slipping into his own comfy bed at the end of a long day. Oh man, we have all things that we can relate with and enjoy. Here's what Paul just said.

[14:06] I'm giving up all of that and I'm going to enslave myself to the lost. That's how committed he is to seeing the lost come to Christ. Is that actually what Paul did though? Yes. This is a man who knew no bounds when it came to envisioning how the gospel could go forth into new areas that didn't have it.

A man who traveled for years on ships, stranded at sea, beaten for Christ, without food, without water oftentimes, without clothing, in jails, in and out of jails, who never slept in the same bed, presumably for a long period of time. This is a man who truly means it when he says, I have enslaved myself to the lost. And I pray that this would be encouraging to us in a way that we would consider what is the that we have right now in our lives that we enjoy. That may even be a good thing that we would say, you know what, I'm going to give up that in order that I might pursue one person who doesn't know the Lord. But here's what's so amazing. We also see that Paul is realistic with his evangelism.

What I mean by that is this. Look again at verse 19. It says this, Though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all that I might win, and notice the phrasing, more of them.

It would have been so intuitive for Paul to say, hey, he's already using the term all. I'm free from all. I've made a servant to all, so I might win all. Paul. No. This is wise, preaching, Apostle Paul.

And here's what he says. I want to men, I'm going to do all these things so that I will win more of them. And then I want you to look down with me again at verse 22. To the weak, I became weak, that I may became weak, that I might win the weak. Excuse me. I have become all things to all people that by all means, I might save some.

[16:10] This is worth noting and worth observing when we talk about evangelism, because here's what it means. It means that Paul is realistic with his evangelism.

Have you ever gotten into the, like I have gotten into the rut of saying, you know what, I'm fired up, I'm going to go share Jesus, I'm going to go evangelize. You've been in those highs in your spiritual life, you're like, the lost need to hear Christ.

And then you go out and you find that a lot of people don't really want Jesus. But the goal, I've done this so many times, has been set that everyone needs to hear him and everyone is going to receive Jesus.

We can defeat ourselves and what happens there is that we end up making ourselves the basis by which people get saved. But here's what I love about Paul.

He knows that the Lord is the one who saves and he knows that he is used by God to reach some. And he's okay with that. He does not state that he's become a slave to all in order to win all.

[17:12] He says he is willing to become enslaved to every single person in order to win some of them. And that's enough for Paul. And this is a helpful paradigm.

Here's my encouragement to you when it comes to evangelism. When you get that itch to go share Jesus with that person who you've been praying for for a long time or somebody you just met who doesn't know the Lord, be realistic.

Be realistic but expectant. Meaning, I know that not everyone is going to respond. But I do know that some will. Attached with that hope much assume nothing.

Lord, you can do this. You can save this person. Pray for them. Minister to them. Share the gospel with them. But also, don't assume anything about that person.

I've seen some of the most hardened people ever that you've never guessed would come to Christ turn like that and have a softened heart. And I've seen the opposite. People that you think, man, they're ready for Christ. They're just soft.

[18:16] You will never receive him. Luke 5.4 says this, put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. Who's Jesus speaking to there? The disciples.

Amongst whom he says, hey, you guys are going to make you fishers of men. Listen to me. Put your net down. I'll catch the fish. I love that paradigm. Many are called, few are chosen, Jesus said in Matthew 22.

We do not know who are chosen by God. God. So we will call all to the gospel. March Madness is happening quickly and right now, guess what the NCAA committee is doing?

They're doing one of the most thankless, horrible jobs ever. They're taking all the teams. They're saying, which teams deserve to be in the tournament? And about three o'clock today, I'm excited to see the bracket. I don't know about y'all.

They're going to release their bracket and there's going to be about ten teams that thought they had a chance that did not make the tournament. All that to say, the NCAA committee is the one that gets to pick the teams and nobody knows who's going to be in that tournament.

[19:20] But let me tell you one thing. Teams like North Carolina and Boise State that are on the bubble and don't know if they're going to make it, they did everything they could to be in that tournament.

Here's what I want to encourage us with. The Lord knows you will not save everyone you meet, nor should you aim for that. Here we have a very practical strategy. to be faithful to preach the gospel to all, expecting some to embrace him, but not all.

My dad always said to us, set attainable, realistic goals. And in the spirit of creating attainable goals, here's what I want to encourage you to do. Identify one person right now in your life. Just one.

Start there. Who is the Lord calling you to enslave yourself that they might know Jesus? As a faith community, we have enslaved ourselves to this neighborhood.

this community. And it's not that we can't be about evangelizing other regions around Spokane or beyond. It's just that our goal is this neighborhood. And we will work diligently to see this neighborhood come to Christ and hope much that the Lord could do a great work in us.

[20:29] But now let's look at verse 22. In verse 22, we see an interesting pivot here where Paul says, not just that I've, by all means, I might save some, but he says this, I have become all things to all people.

And this is a popular phrase used in the church. It's a big evangelism slash, I want to relate with my neighbor, I want to relate with the lost people next to me, so I'm going to become all things to all people.

That's a great phrase. But I want to talk quickly through this and let's break it down. What does Paul mean when he uses this phrase? It actually has a ton of application for us when we think about evangelism.

Similarly, Jesus has a similar mission statement in Luke 19. He says this, For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost. Paul, earlier in this chapter, as we already talked about, said, I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of the ground for boasting.

For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me, and woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. Seems like Paul's big idea in this passage, the thing he's circling around for us is this, that identifying with the lost is at the heart of evangelism.

[ 21 : 47 ] Or more specifically, preaching the gospel to different people requires different strategies. So what types of identifying is Paul employing here? There's four groups in our text that I want to work through with you.

And these groups are defined culturally, meaning Paul was one who participated in the customs of the people groups around him. These are groups that are locationally bound, meaning frequenting the literal spaces that certain groups of people inhabit.

Jews and Gentiles inhabited a lot of different areas and regions, and Paul and Jesus were very specific to go into each one and be in the midst of them. But then spiritually also, identifying the gospel shortcomings of a people group.

Paul does this exceptionally throughout his letters. Tim Keller, the late Tim Keller, called this cultural idols. What are the cultural idols of a community?

So let's talk about these four groups of people. And again, the heart of this for Paul is this, that when we do evangelism, when we gospel our communities, it's important for us to take into account who it is we're speaking to.

[ 22 : 52 ] So here's four groups that Paul gives us, and I hope this is helpful for us. First, those who are Jews. Notice verse 20, here's what Paul says. To the Jews, I became as a Jew in order to win Jews.

I love that. It's going to make the same sort of grammatical makeup four times in a row. To the Jews, I became as a Jew that I might win the Jews. Okay, here we go.

Isn't Paul, here's the question for us, what is he talking about? Isn't Paul already a Jew? So what is Paul becoming that he isn't already part of who he is?

Saying that I became a Jew for Paul is like saying that if I want to witness to Americans, I got to become an American. Well, Eric, you're an American, so what in the world are you talking about? Isn't Paul a Jew? In one sense, yes. Paul is a Jewish man born of Jewish blood into the Jewish community and he recognizes his Jewishness in many passages.

[ 24 : 01 ] But in one sense, no. What do I mean by that? How could he not be a Jew? Paul is no longer defined by his ethnicity before God.

God. And he subtly recognizes here his complete change of identity as a redeemed son of God joined to the body of Christ.

Paul's theology of the global church here is so rich that he refuses to recognize any label or category that subdivides out the body of Christ.

How do we know that that's his heart? There's no Jewish saint. There's no Gentile saint for Paul. There's no female saint for Paul. There's no male saint for Paul. There are only sons and daughters of God.

There's only Christ followers. Galatians 3 says this, Before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then the law was our guardian until Christ came in order that we might be justified by faith.

[ 25 : 08 ] But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith.

For as many of you as there are neither slave nor free, neither Jew nor Greek, nor male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus and if you are Christ then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

But who is he talking about here? How could he become a Jew? Well I'm going to call this group the first group that he's intending for us to identify as the proud.

How is it the proud? Because here's what Paul is saying by saying I need to become like the Jews even though I am a Jew but I'm not. Here's what he means. The Jews of this day were highly elitist and Paul calls them out many many times in the book of Acts and in his epistles for their elitism.

These are the same people who routinely rejected any sort of favor from God on non-Jews or Gentiles. These were people who assumed wrongly that just because they were descendants from

Abraham that they were guaranteed all the blessings and promises given to Abraham.

[ 26 : 27 ] and Paul as a Jew recognizes in the book of Romans in about four chapters in a row that the righteousness of God comes by faith and faith alone.

So here when he says to the Jews I became as a Jew that I might win what Paul is saying here is not that I am going to now be elitist like them but he's saying I'm going to step into their world I'm going to step into that frame of mind that prideful state of I have a pedigree that is so amazing that it's good enough for me to be with God.

I'm going to step into that and I'm going to evangelize those people by exposing that as false and he does it throughout all of his epistles. But then there's a second group of people look with me again at verse 20 the second piece here here's the second group to those under the law I became as one under the law and then he puts a clarifying statement on here which is very helpful though not myself being under the law that I might win those under the law.

Now what's the second group under the law? That sounds a whole lot like the Jews and in some regards it is. He's possibly referring to the same group here but he does make it a separate category so we have to deal with that.

Here's what I'm going to call the second group the legalist. If the first group's idol for Paul is that they are proud of their heritage and their pedigree the second group's idol is legalism.

[ 27 : 56 ] In other words achievement under the law. These are people again most likely religious people or even the Jews or even the Pharisees Sadducees priests scribes the leaders of Israel at this time he says about them that they are under the law and the reality is that adherence to law can never save a person.

Rule following does not lead to heart regeneration. In Luke 18 Jesus told a very quick parable he said this he told the parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous there's your group and treated others with contempt.

Two men went up to the temple to pray one a Pharisee and one a tax collector. The Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus God I thank you that I am not like the other men extortioners unjust adulterers or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week and I give tithes of all that I get. Prayer over. But the tax collector standing far off would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but beat his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and the one who humbles himself will be exalted. Second group they think that by achievement accolade by following the law they can receive God and all of his salvation and blessings.

[ 29 : 23 ] But then there's a third group that Paul identifies here. Here's the third group those outside the law look with me at verse 21 here's verse 21 it says this to those outside the law I became as one outside the law not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ that I might win those outside the law.

Okay third group for Paul in my evangelism as I go from town to town here's the third group that I deal with a lot these are ones who I'm going to call here the rebels. Now he's referring to a category of people most likely he's thinking of Gentiles or heathen nations and peoples that don't have God that don't follow his law but specifically outside the law is essentially those who are lawless.

Now when I hear the word lawless I don't know about you I think of old western rebel writers who rob stagecoaches hold up passerbys and shoot up towns. And here's the reality it's kind of similar Paul's saying there is no law for them.

They're not bound by anything they believe in no divine statute of what's right or what's wrong they just do and they justify what they do by statements like life is short or you only live once or let's live it up and enjoy what we have on this earth before it's gone.

Statements like that are typical of lawless people. They live by no code or rule they mock at the suggestion of an all powerful God these are the people who stand and look and say you don't exist so I can do what I like.

[ 31 : 02 ] That's the third category of people. I want to stop here real quickly to help us identify maybe how we could see these people even in ourselves. every time you buy something from a store like Ikea or a big piece of furniture or something that needs to be assembled what's something that is always in the box?

The instruction manual. Okay. Now I don't know about you guys but when I look at an instruction manual something comes out of me. Here's what I'm going to offer. There are people in the home two types of people there are people who are manual instruction readers and followers and there are those of us that are manual instruction chuckers.

Where are my chuckers at? Be honest. There we go. All men. That's great. Oh okay good. Manual chuckers. I pray that you would see outside the law and relate a little bit with the rebel.

I'm a manual chucker. I don't need that. I got this and let me tell you I did that just recently when we were gifted a Murphy bed which is a nightmare to set up. I looked at the manual and said I can do this.

It's pretty straightforward. There's only about 500 pieces and immediately I went I have no idea what I'm doing and took the manual back and began to read it. But here's what I want to encourage us with.

[ 32 : 28 ] Whether you are the manual chucker or the manual follower. You're under the law or you are outside the law. Here's the truth. We're all part of the woefully lost and hopeless club.

Knowing which club you're in helps you know though from what Jesus saved you. And this is where your testimony comes in developing your story of faith that readies you to be all things to all people. We'll talk about testimony here at the end but testimony helps us relate with sinners. And then there's a fourth category those who are weak. This is the final category for Paul. He says this in verse 22.

He says to the weak I became weak that I might win the weak. And this is an interesting word a lot of debate over what weak means but here's what is not debated. The word weak here literally means internally incapacitated or debilitated.

internally incapacitated. In other words I would describe weak here for Paul as what he's probably thinking is not the brothers and sisters in the Corinthian church who he did call there's weak people that can't do certain things in their conscience but we know that it can't be Christians he's referring to because he says I want to save them.

[ 33 : 42 ] So who are the lost in our communities and in our places that might be considered weak according to Paul? I think he's alluding to immaterial weakness Lord of the soul maybe of the conscious or maybe of self-esteem.

The people in our lives who are without Christ and yet have some sort of humble lowly spirit about them. Maybe they've gone through great loss. Maybe they feel inadequate in what they do.

Maybe they've been beaten down by life and they just need someone to encourage them. That's the weak for Paul. And I want us to notice there is no strong category.

Paul does not say to the strong I became strong. But to the weak I will become weak. And there's a sort of a chiasm here that is noteworthy.

I want us to notice that the Jew is proud in their position but in opposition to that he says there are the weak who are uncertain in their position. And there's one under the law who's legalistic and there's one outside the law that is rebellious.

[ 34 : 50 ] Here's what I want to encourage us with when we consider what it means to contextualize the gospel and to evangelize to every person that we may come across. Identifying with the loss does not mean that we become something that we are not.

That's not what Paul's saying. He's not saying I'm going to become a Jew. I'm going to become a rebel. I'm going to become a legalist. I'm going to become weak even though I know I'm not just so I can win someone over.

Becoming all things to all people is not a call to be fake. It's not a call to fabricate. It's not a call to pretend. Notice those bracketed parenthetical statements Paul makes in this passage. First he clarifies that in identifying with those under the law I'm going to become like the ones under the law. He says this but just note I am free from the law's demands through what Christ has done. He says that's his parenthetical statement but then he says this I'm also not putting myself back under the law through evangelism to those under the law.

Neither am I outside of the law is what he said but of Christ. Just because Christ saved me doesn't mean I don't have to follow the law anymore. I'm not a rebel now for Jesus. I'm still a rule follower but the rule that I follow is what?

[ 36 : 04 ] Love me and love others. So he's saying here don't be fake. We're not becoming like the lost but we are associating with them, identifying with them.

This shows that Paul holds a value of identifying with the lost while not forgetting his identity as a saint. So what does this passage have to do with evangelism? Why are we going over this? It's calling us to relate with sinners of whom we once were.

And evangelism is just that. Looking back upon your life and seeing, recognizing, remembering, and savoring how Jesus rescued you out of your sin.

That's where evangelism starts. Once we've done that hard work to say wow I was so sinful but Jesus rescued me then we're ready to share the gospel.

Some people need conviction. those who trust in their pedigree like the Jews. Today that might look at those who believe that they've been what they've been given will save them.

[ 37 : 21 ] Ethnicity cannot save a person. Lineage of faith cannot save a person. Good parenting cannot save a person. As helpful as it is. Good education cannot save a person.

What circumstances were you born into that could never save? A lot of people believe that because of the way they were born the family they were born into or the status they achieved through whatever means can save them.

But the reality is this that Jesus came to save us from the very circumstances we were born into.

Namely being born into sin. Some people need reason those under the law or those who work endlessly towards self-deliverance to those who have sought validation from accolade proving their worthiness through accomplishment to a holy God that looks upon their works with pity.

Those under the law who worship and rule following at the cost of any relationship with God. Some people need truth. Those outside the law or those who live for themselves exhausting every fleeting pursuit or pleasure.

Those who live by the conviction that there is no God no divine accountability and no purpose to life so let's party it up. Those who follow the devilish belief that life is all there is so get what you can and apologize to no one.

[ 38 : 45 ] You'd be surprised how much of a worldview that is today. Some people need grace the weak those who feel hopeless and broken those who've exhausted every worldview every intellectual pursuit every path of self-deliverance the weak in spirit and the weak in self-esteem.

They need a good word specifically the word about Jesus who is their esteem. But here's the reality all people need Jesus and all people need compassion.

The question in 1 Corinthians 9 for Paul is this how can I best lead people to the cross? The answer is person by person we get to know people we hear them we listen to them and we speak the truth of the gospel to them and in doing so you begin to become all things to all people.

Be a neighbor is essentially what Paul is saying. In order to become like these people groups in the way he means we have to be in these people groups. That's an assumption for Paul.

I will be in these communities I will talk to them I will hear them I will learn from them so that I can take the gospel to them. In Luke 10 Jesus gives a parable about Jesus or excuse me about the good Samaritan who did good and kindness to a man that he had no obligation to who was different than him and here's what Jesus said in giving this parable which of the three that passed by him do you think proved to be the neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers and the response is this the one who showed him mercy and Jesus said go and do likewise that's what it means to neighbor to care for the ones who are on the street who are in great need like we once were neighborly evangelism requires truth and love and if you have truth and no love you might as well be a street preacher with a megaphone and harshly worded signs they're all over Spokane I drive by them all the time if you have love but no truth conversely well you've got a social gospel that feeds a person cares for their needs all while withholding the very good news that could deliver them from death just yesterday we had the privilege as a church of serving at a food bank and one of the first runs out

[ 41 : 06 ] I'm right behind Mr. Witt over here and we're running out and we're talking to these people that are in need of food and we're grateful that Southside Food Pantry is willing to present the food and we're able to serve it to them and I was just reminded of this truth we can walk and give them food all day long but without the gospel their bellies are warm but their heart is not and as I was walking by the first person I hear Mr. Witt getting up to the truck and saying do you know Jesus and the guy said no I don't I don't know and Witt didn't take no for an answer it was like have you heard of him like I don't think so and I'm the word's starting to fade away at this point and I hear Witt go all right well let me tell you about it if you haven't heard about I love that feed somebody love them with compassion it's important that we love and we show kindness ministries like that are so

important but let's not be deceived the greatest need of the human broken soul is redemption and salvation forgiveness and that's what Jesus offers

Jesus Christ the one who engaged in both perfectly who cared for both the material and the spiritual needs of everyone as people see our good works and neighborly love toward them through acts of service and on they will be more receptive to the Messiah behind the deeds that we are displaying so get out there Jesus frequented public places all the time synagogues marketplaces houses of sinners where he would dine with them and the Pharisees would say how dare you see the difference there Paul did the same in the apostles going from city to city entering public places like the hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus an educational facility or the Eropagus in Athens a religious and philosophical space they would go into those places and preach and love people we pursue relationships not converts in evangelism let me say that again we pursue relationships not converts now converts are great but we're not pursuing converts we're pursuing people and people are won over by people and that's what we have to offer if you're fearful or anxious and you say evangelism is not my thing it's hard for me

I read these passages I see Paul I see that I know it's important but it's so hard for me I want to encourage you remember what Paul says I just want to win for you who is that one person just that one person that maybe is proud maybe is a rebel maybe is a law keeper maybe is weak pray to the Lord Lord how how can I give them the gospel lastly I want to share a quick few things that we can consider when we do evangelism first how do I evangelize others that might be the big question for the morning how do I evangelize others well first share the good news accurately this one's pretty much a given but let's talk about it we have to share the good news we need to talk about Jesus accurately so this church we use something called the gospel hand it's just one of many methods to share the gospel so for us that is the gospel is that

Jesus lived perfectly died sacrificially rose victoriously forgiving my sin if I repent and believe I'm not saying you have to pull that out and say do you know Jesus okay listen buddy right you don't have to do that but man I can personally tell you that when I've been sharing the gospel in the past like decade I've used that and maybe it's in the back of my head I'm sitting there and I'm freezing up I'm like man I know Jesus I don't know why I can't say anything it's just nice to have something memorized like that oh yeah let me talk about just how Jesus lived a perfect life who he was maybe there's another way to relate the good news maybe the way you do it is through story tell a story centered around relationship because that's what the gospel is creation rebellion reconciliation jubilation there's your story about relationship that God made us to be with him creation that we turned our back on him rebellion that he lovingly and comfortingly with his wonderful fatherly arms wrapped us in the love of the cross through reconciliation of Jesus what he did and then lastly jubilation we get to be with him forevermore that's relationship but it's the gospel maybe it's as simple as God man

Christ response this is one that pastor Josh talks about a lot God who is he he made us he loves us he's our God man we turned away from him in our sin Christ Jesus came to bring us back to God and to reconcile us response now we worship him forevermore these are all ways that you can talk about the gospel but here's what I want to encourage you with there's a lot of popular ways to share the gospel today that do not include sin I've seen them I've been taught them jump straight to Jesus but brothers and sisters how can we jump to Jesus without first understanding our need for him there's a problem we must proclaim that that problem sin leads to death not just physical death but eternal death and not shy away from the truths of the gospel that can save that we are all destined toward eternal wrath apart from God but that in his incredible love that he displayed on the cross through pouring that wrath out on his son Jesus we get to go free and to be forever in unity and harmony with our father that's the gospel contextualize it is the second one contextualize the good news specifically that's what this passage is really hitting on who are the people in your life that need the gospel take a moment to pray say Lord help me understand what this person is going through depending on the person we may have to lead with grace you might have to lead with truth you might need to lead with conviction you might need to lead with reason but here's the thing lead with them but notice all are necessary every sinner needs grace truth conviction reason to come to Christ but we have to do the work of saying where is this person at and how can I share the gospel with them in a winsome way number three relate the good news personally this is where I want to encourage us to harness our testimony what is the easiest simplest way if you're sitting hey I'm in that anxious camp

[ 47 : 47 ] I'm in that I don't think I can share my faith camp that's hard for me here's what I'll encourage you to do you have a testimony you may not be able to speak eloquently or even at times accurately I know sometimes I even mess up the gospel when I'm talking with people but here's what I do know you have a testimony how did Jesus save you man that's personal what's more powerful than a personal narrative if I were to ask you to share your testimony in three minutes right now what would you say what would you highlight in your past life of sin how did you hear the good news of the gospel who called you to repent of your sin and believe in Jesus how did God use that person in your life when were you baptized how are you living for Jesus every day these are all ways that we can harness the story of our own lives to bring someone to Christ and then finally number four embody the good news relationally evangelism if you do one two and three it's really good and important but number four drives everything home because it's about relationship we are not people that stand on the corner with a fearful sign and yell why because Jesus modeled relationship listening caring and loving for others and Jesus tells us in Matthew 5 that actually guys you know what one of the primary ways that we demonstrate the light of Christ and evangelize the world is through our love for one another you will know them by their fruits he said and he also said this you will know them by their love for one another when we love one another as the church and we do the things that Pastor

Josh encouraged us with with covenantal community when we serve one another love one another encourage one another pray for one another world sees that and Jesus tells us they will enter the house where the light is because they see our good works so love your brothers and sisters and guess what you're in the process of evangelism but then secondly embody the good news to the world all about loving or someone else loving us deeply and meeting our greatest need therefore if we're going to share the gospel with others let's do so in a similarly sacrificial way let's love others and care for them like Jesus did and maybe through our love they will come to know the greatest love the love of Jesus God can use many ways to call people to salvation powerful sermons altar calls summer camp experiences but here's what I want to share in closing most often what I've seen evangelism looks like it's a faithful brother or sister taking time out of their life to intentionally love care meet and befriend somebody who needs

Jesus to take the call when it's inconvenient to do an act of service or love for that person or that family that in the course of months years and even decades I've seen that person finally turns from their sin and trust in Jesus because they've been won over with radical love all of this to say here's what Paul's heart is for us as a church when we consider neighborly evangelism we become all things to all people in order that we might save some and as Paul says that they might share in the good news of the gospel let's pray Lord we thank you for your gospel we thank you that Lord as your ambassadors as your gospelers as we've seen Lord that we don't just have some message that's just written down and given to us and then we just spew it out like robots but Lord you have redeemed each one of us you have given us a personal testimony of what it means to be called out of sin out of darkness and into your glorious light through the work of your son Jesus

I pray that as those who formerly were once far off sinners but now have been brought near us sons and daughters that you would help us Lord to see the world with those very eyes to see the sin to see the brokenness to see the emptiness of the people in our lives who do not know you and see ourselves Lord that we would be moved to compassion to enslave ourselves to them that they might know the greatest Lord the greatest master the greatest savior help us Lord to be all things to all people in order that we might win some as a church in the name we pray amen