

Personal Evangelism Here and Now

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[0 : 00] All right, I'm just going to make sure I'm not. Sir, we're getting a little bit started, a little bit late. Apologies for that technical difficulty.

Can you hear me? No? Can everyone hear me? Okay. Good? All right. Can we just go ahead and pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we're so grateful that we can come before you together this morning as a church.

To hear, listen to your word, and just really think about how we can proceed in this assignment which you've given to us. And we ask, Lord, that you humble us this morning, that you instruct us, that you deliver us from every pride.

And Lord, give us clarity on how we can proceed in your work. We pray all this, Lord, in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Sweet. So, is it? Yeah, I did. I did. Okay.

So, I was told to come talk about personal evangelism here and now. And when I was told, I was just wondering, I was like, oh my goodness, of all the unqualified people, they would think about me.

[1 : 23] So, it's indeed a privilege to be before you here this morning just to talk about this topic of evangelism and what it means for us as a church.

So, I just want to, this is kind of like my outline. What is evangelism? Why bother about it? Why should we care? Just some biblical principles to think about as we move forward.

Some practical ways to approach personal evangelism. Personal evangelism, addressing the barriers to personal evangelism. I'm going to just spend some time praying, if that's okay. So, right away, let's just go ahead and define what evangelism really is.

I feel like we need to, first of all, know what we're talking about before we can move forward. I'm not going to pretend that I know Greek. I do not know Greek. So, I looked up this Greek word.

Apparently, it's from the Greek word whatever that is. I don't know what that is. But, that Greek word, which is the root of evangelism, means gospel or good news.

[2 : 21] And, in this context, personal evangelism means personally sharing with your friends or your neighbors the good news of Christ. So, I'm just going to just, we're just going to talk about, well, what does that look like?

Why should we do that? Personally engaging our friends and neighbors in this gospel issue. So, why bother? And, I came up with this reason.

No one can be neutral towards God. You're either for Him or against Him. Not us here as a church, but also everyone else in the world. Our friends at work, at school.

You're either for Him or opposed to Him. I'm going to look at John 3, 17 and 18. And, to save us time, I just kind of like put all the verses here so we can just read together.

God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned. But, whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

[3 : 28] So, we see two fates, two possibilities, not three. We see belief in Christ or we see the people who stand condemned.

So, either you believe and if you don't, you stand condemned. There's no one who's neutral. And, it's a tendency for me personally sometimes to think about, maybe my friends, you know, they're not Christians, but they're really good people.

And, they'll be okay. But, this passage tells us otherwise. That, if they're not in Christ, they will not be okay. They stand condemned. And, that's who we were before we came to know Jesus.

We stood condemned. So, as much as we want to be loving and thinking about our friends as people who are not necessarily Christians, but good, that's not the case.

Without Christ, they stand condemned. And, that's why it is a very important topic. It's a very important conversation to be had with them.

[4 : 32] Because, outside of Christ, again, they stand condemned. That's why we care. But, secondly, in addition to not being neutral, we have been commanded by our Lord to go about this.

I like this passage because, obviously, it's one that everyone knows about, you know, evangelism. But, it highlights a couple of things that I want to draw our attention to.

I'm going to read it. Matthew 28, 16 to 20. Now, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And, when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.

And, Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And, behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Something that really draws my attention is verse 17, actually.

[5 : 39] It says, When they saw him, this is just after, you know, Christ had been crucified, he resurrected and he appeared to them. And, some believed and so some worshipped. But, some others doubted him.

But, both to those who believed and worshipped and to those who doubted, he gave them this command. He didn't call the ones who worshipped aside. He said, You guys are strong believers.

Go tell people about Jesus. Those who doubted, those who worshipped, all together, he sent them. And, there's a tendency for us to think, I'm not as solid.

You know, I feel like I need to get more grounded as a believer before I can go tell people. I need to know things. But, to those who worshipped and to those who doubted, he sent them all together.

And, he gave them this command to go and make disciples. It was not, what we see here was not a suggestion. What we see here was not based on any conditions.

[6 : 36] The only condition, he told them, he was like, You know what? I'm with you. Go do this. I'm in charge of everything. I'm in charge of all of the world. I'm in charge of all of creation. Because I am in charge.

Go. In confidence. So, again, we see a clear command. Not a suggestion. Not an option. A clear command to everyone who calls him or herself a believer.

To those who are solid. To those who are doubting. To those who are shaky. To those who are not even really, really sure. He sent all of them together to go. And, because of this command he gave to every believer.

What we find is that this command is ingrained into our purpose here on earth. And, permit me to say that if we're not obeying or walking along in accordance with this command.

We're not only in disobedience. But, we're probably risking purposelessness on earth. I want to draw attention to 2 Corinthians 5, 14-15 and also to verse 20.

[7 : 45] For the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this. That one has died for all. And that's Jesus. Therefore, all have died. And he died for all. That those who live might no longer live for themselves.

But for who for their sake died and was raised. He died so that while we live, we wouldn't have to live for ourselves. So, by virtue of his death, our life on earth now has a new purpose.

Right? And it's now for the sake of the person who died. So, what is this purpose that is for the sake of the person who died? That we may be, in verse 20, ambassadors.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. And this is Paul saying, we implore you on behalf of Christ.

Be reconciled to God so you can really live out this command of being an ambassador. And this, brethren, is the purpose of the Christian life.

[8 : 50] This is why after we came to Christ, God didn't call us right back to himself right away. He left us on earth so that we can live this out. He left us on earth so that this work of redemption can continue.

He has done everything that needs to be done. He died on the cross. And that is our seal. Right? That is what we look at. And we're convinced that God is actively redeeming the world.

But how does he actually make this happen? He works through us in making this happen. And this is the purpose of Christian living. Living for his glory. Living to be an ambassador.

Living to exhibit his majesty in all of creation. And again, I'm going to repeat. It sounds a little bit too direct. But if we're not working with this in mind, we are risking purposelessness on earth.

And it might be a wasted life. That's why we bother about this issue of evangelism. Now I want to bring our attention to some biblical principles.

[9 : 55] Just to guide our thinking. And the first one is that unbelief is much deeper than it seems. There's a tendency for us to see, oh, they don't believe in Jesus.

Well, I can just talk to them and maybe they would. But I want to draw our attention to the gravity of unbelief. How deep it is. And it's this parable that actually, to me personally, it helps me see this very clearly.

And I'm hoping it will help you guys see it as well. Before I just get to verse 22, I'm just going to give a little summary of the parable before we get to that passage.

So there's this rich man who is very rich. And Lazarus, who is very, very, very poor. And the Bible tells us that every day Lazarus would be at his gates, you know, eating the crumbs and the dogs licking his wounds and his sores.

So these are two different people, the rich man and Lazarus at his gate. And eventually they both die. So the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side.

[10 : 58] The rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades. Being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And the rich man called out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and comb my tongue.

For I'm in anguish and in this flame. But Abraham said, Child, remember that in your lifetime you received good things. Your good things. And Lazarus in like manner received bad things.

But now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you, a great chasm has been fixed in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able and none may cross from here to us.

And he said, Then I beg you, Father, to send him to my father's house. This is the rich man saying, Abraham, please send Lazarus to my father's house. For I have five brothers so that he may want them lest they also come into this place of torment.

But Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear him. And he said, No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent. Perhaps if they see someone who rose from the dead, they might be convinced and they will repent.

[12 : 14] And Abraham said to him, If they did not hear Moses and the prophets, neither would they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead. I don't know if you saw what I saw in this passage about unbelief.

Abraham, the rich man is here saying, you know, maybe if you just send someone from the dead, give them all the evidence they need on earth, maybe, perhaps, they will repent. And Abraham tells him, No, not really.

They have the prophets. They have Moses. They have all they need. They don't repent in the face of all of that evidence. They probably won't repent if they see a dead man rise from the grave.

And what does that tell us? It tells us that it's not a matter of evidence. I don't know about your circles, but in my circles, I'm a scientist, and in my circles, it's all about the evidence.

Well, what's the evidence? And there's a tendency for me to feel like I have to produce all this evidence. And even when I can produce enough evidence, boom, they will come to know Jesus.

[13 : 18] And here Abraham says, No, really. Even if someone comes from the dead, they probably will not believe. What does that tell us about unbelief? That is deeper than evidence.

It's not about your ability to come up with a very, very convincing claim. If people are not believing, it's because of something deeper. And this passage draws us to what that thing is.

2 Corinthians 4 verse 4. I'm just walking us through passages so we can see what the Bible says about this issue. 2 Corinthians 4 verse, For the God of this world has blinded their eyes.

In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. So we see why just coming up with evidence is not enough.

We'll not cut it. Here's why the God of this world, the enemy, has blinded their eyes. It's a spiritual issue. It is more spiritual than we think it is a lot of times.

[14 : 19] It is much deeper than that. So what does this mean for us? We dare not proceed trusting in our own strength because it's so deep.

If a man is steeped in unbelief, it is so deep that we can't afford to move towards that in our own strength. It is, it's in fact, impossible.

Right? So we dare not trust in our own strength because unbelief is so deep. We can't go about this just saying, you know what, I'm just going to just say things. So that's the one, that's another principle.

The third principle I want to bring to our attention is when a person comes to believe in Jesus, it is a miracle. Because it's so deep, the spiritual blindness is not something physical.

when that veil is in fact taken off of the eyes of people, we rejoice. Right? That's why the angels rejoice because it's a big deal that that veil will be taken off and people will believe.

[15 : 22] So what? It's a miracle. Now the fourth principle is the fact that God doesn't need us to do this. Right? He has chosen, but He has chosen to use us.

Sorry about that typo. He has chosen to use us. And this in fact is a gift of God's grace. And I want to draw attention to Saul's conversion just to demonstrate this fact.

Again, Saul persecuted a lot of Christians and eventually on his way to Damascus to persecute more Christians, what happened? In Acts 9, a very bright light from heaven struck him and he went blind.

And God literally preached to Saul. What does this tell us? He doesn't need us. He could do what He wants to do with or without us.

So we need not feel like this thing is dependent on us. He will save people if we choose to disobey. He can do that and He did that in Acts 9.

[16 : 28] He saved Saul. And we see what Saul did for the kingdom. He did not need any man. Now some men were used eventually but that initial conviction was God literally meeting Saul on his way to Damascus.

So it's unbelief is deeper than it seems. We dare not proceed trusting our own strength because it's deep. And when a person believes in Jesus we rejoice because it's a miracle. And God doesn't need us but He has chosen to use us and it's ridiculous I think that He would choose to use me and you such weak and broken people to undertake such a profoundly spiritual task.

it is a gift of grace and we don't take it for granted we pursue it. Now practical ways to approach personal evangelism. It's easy to think about well okay now I know it's important why bother while it's important we need to like do this.

What are some ways to think about this? How can we do it? And I want to draw attention to just one task we have because there's so many things to think about and it's easy to get overwhelmed well like there's just a lot of pieces but only one thing is required of us in this issue of personal evangelism and it's that we share and what does that mean?

We open our mouths and talk that is the only thing required of us now what happens after then might not necessarily be our duties in terms of like how the word we share convicts them into righteousness or to truth our one job is to share and I think about that passage in scripture where it talks about the farmer the farmer goes out in the morning plants his seeds and he goes to bed right?

[18 : 25] He's not worried about we the scientists we think about well what happens when that seed is in the soil and like the different things that need to come together for that seed to germinate and like be a fruit but the farmer is not he's probably not educated he's like I'm just going to plant that thing and go to bed and that's the attitude we're called to have in this issue of evangelism we just talk and we go to bed literally we talk and we trust God to use our speech right?

God takes a seed and the next day some sort of fruit comes out the farmer has no idea how that happens and we have no idea how that is going to happen well he's got the farmer has to wake up though and plant that seed and that's what we're called to do that is the one job we have to share now there's just some points I just try to note and these are things that have helped me even thinking about this thing this idea of occupying all streets I know this is like an Occupy Wall Street but that's like not as fancy as this Occupy Wall Street well what does that mean?

each of us here we're all on different streets some are students some just have regular jobs some are some are stay at home moms some are professors we're all on different streets that God has like put us right now and it's important that we think about well what does that what does evangelism mean for me on my street right now?

I'm in medical school right now what does that look like for me in medical school interacting with my friends my classmates my professors what does that look like for me?

and we have to take that's such an important step that we take a step back and figure out well what does that mean for me? well I'm not a pastor yes and that is good because God's glory has to reach it has to seep into every facet of life right?

[20 : 34] God's glory has to literally seep into every facet of life and that's why we can't all be pastors right? some people in the engineering field have to hear the gospel some people I've heard one pastor actually say we are all pastors we all are we all minister exactly but when I say pastor I don't mean like in the sense of having a church that we pastor I'm sorry about that I needed to clarify yeah we're all pastors we're all missionaries right?

in a sense and that is our primary calling and what does being a missionary as an engineer look like? what does being a missionary as a medical doctor look like? and we all have to work that out secondly we need to establish relationships with people and this is such an important piece that I feel like it's often forgotten and it's just like very very cliché I hate saying this thing but I might have to say it because I feel like it passes a very important message the fact that people don't know how much you know people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care it's not biblical but it's kind of true bees and lived experience they don't want to really know how much they don't care how much you know until they know that you actually care and that's why this relationship aspect is very important and that's why before even proclaiming this gospel to them we have to demonstrate that we actually love them so we don't just have this assignment and we just go about saying this thing but the gospel is lived out right it's lived out and it's proclaimed so if you're proclaiming it and not living it out we have to think about that right so like how can we establish relationships with people right and engage them in this conversation right so relationships and the good news is that we all have people we're connected with in one way or the other right there's nobody who's hopefully not connected to anybody right we all have relationships and and that's what's cool about personal evangelism and that's why

I'm really glad that in this series of global missions we're starting with this because if you go to a different country you might have to learn the language right you have to like establish new and fresh relationships but right now you all have people who you work with you have neighbors who you talk with you have co-workers right and these are all existing relationships so now we think about how can we take advantage of this relationships that are already existing these people who already know that we care about them how can we go even deeper in these relationships so we establish relationships and thirdly this idea of active engagement and I've heard a lot of people say well you know I won't really bring it up until like it comes up it's going to come up naturally the conversation is going to come up and often times it won't you know why it's an awkward conversation to have so no one is going to bring it up and say well you tell me what you think I want to know sometimes now sometimes people bring it up and they ask you just randomly like Kelechi like tell me about the gospel that has happened like once or twice in my life and I'm 24 which is not that old but but yes that could happen and God is good and God is gracious and God might be working behind the scenes and cause them to ask you that question but sometimes a lot of times most times they won't right so what do we do we bring it up right we we we become active about it we we push it that sounds bad because

I know Americans don't like to push like we just like you know just do your thing I'm doing my thing and just we'll be cool but no no no because there's so much at stake we move we initiate so active engagement I like to think about it one conversation at a time I grew up in Nigeria and what is big in Nigeria is soccer football we call it football you guys call something else football I don't know what that is but we call soccer football and when we play football in Nigeria you have the goalie you have the defenders you have the midfielders you have the strikers right the job is for the defenders to take that ball to the net now that ball has to go through the defenders to the midfielders to the strikers and the strikers strike that's why they call it strikers they strike into the net of the other team but why the defender's role is so important is that they initiate that pass right that first pass they pass it and pass by pass pass by pass somehow after many minutes sometimes after 90 minutes right hopefully the ball gets there but sometimes it might take 90 minutes sometimes it might take 5 minutes sometimes it takes 2 minutes sometimes seconds but often times it takes longer and that's the same thing we're dealing with here one conversation at a time one conversation at a time and we pass it on right

I've had friends in school that I've been chatting with so engaging them on this topic and they're like yeah 3 years ago in college my roommate brought that up and we had a conversation about it and I'm like thank God for that roommate he's passed the ball to me now I have to be faithful I have to bring it up thank God I brought it up and who knows 5 years from now when he becomes a resident hopefully another resident will be faithful and bring it up and eventually hopefully maybe 10 years that ball will get to the net so what do we do we advance one conversation at a time what would it look like if every one of us here is faithful to that what would it look like if the however many Christians 1 billion I don't know what would it look like if that the millions of Christians who are on the earth are faithful to that are saying you know what I'm going to be faithful to this and bring it up wherever I go and every Christian all around the world is passing the ball right and your co-worker who starts work tomorrow with you you bring it up and hopefully his previous co-worker brought it up and as he moves through life different believers are bringing it up to him how amazing would that be one conversation at a time and I brought this up because sometimes it takes years sometimes you don't even see the fruit sometimes the defenders are out here being distracted and the strikers go and scar and they're like oh wow that's true that was the pass I made you know sometimes it might not happen in our lifetime and that's the patience required in personal evangelism so you might have to bring it up in conversations and one approach

[27 : 38] I found helpful is asking questions personally because you might wonder well how do I bring it up what do I even start I don't even know what what can I even say and I like asking questions sometimes out of the blue like hey man what you know how did you I mean what did you grow up did you like grow up going to church or not really and you probably say not really like oh why was that and you probably give some response and you ask why and you keep asking why and you keep talking I mean it sounds simplified but it works because when you ask why there's a genuine interest in like finding out why and when you ask these questions you listen again this is not the bible right this is just a personal approach that I've used and obviously it could work in different ways but this is one way that has really helped me in my journey just asking all these questions and listening to learn listening in a way just starting to see like you care about what your life look like and then what I found is that after talking for a while people get tired of talking about themselves a little bit sometimes and they want to hear you talk about yourself and so they ask you well what about you and then you like take your time and you smile are you sure you want to know and then you share well that's a little bit simplified but that just gives an idea of how just one approach asking a lot of questions with a genuine interest to know and learn about these people and then over time who knows perhaps because you've asked them so many questions and they've talked about themselves perhaps they would listen to you talk about yourself they'll listen to you talk about what gives you hope and fulfillment and these questions could come in different shapes and sizes and forms but thinking actively

I challenge you as you move to work tomorrow just thinking how can I just bring this up using work how can I like bring this up in what way everyday thinking about that like how can I do this and also praying about it like God can you just open let me see let me see a way in which I can bring this to the table this conversation and I found that God is faithful in answering that prayer especially about creating room for us to see how we can engage people or if you have a home you can invite people over maybe step out of your comfort zone maybe you're the kind of person who likes to have people in your space maybe maybe you could try that have people over at your home cook something for them and just talk to them and get to know them now addressing some barriers to personal evangelism I have to move because we have like five minutes to go but this is like the end now there are a couple of things that we think about that kind of hinder us like I don't want to be that person I don't want to be I don't want to be that weird like that's just weird man and people start avoiding you and stuff like that and I'm sorry you might have to be that weird person you probably will be that weird person and that's fine you know

I remember reading when I became a believer and it was like the scariest article I read and you know he was like the moment you become a Christian you give up your rights to be cool that was like the first sentence in that like in that article I was like oh my god what did I just get into and that is just truth because if we're really trying not to be weird I'm sorry we'll miss the point and we'll just waste our lives and we are following a lot of people who are weird Jesus was strange and he said some things and like hundreds of people just walked away like this dude is crazy eat my flesh and drink my blood and they walked away like this dude is weird and that is the person we're following right it is going to be weird what's one second I'm just going to round up and then we'll go have some questions you can see I'm still a struggling Christian and I brought up that passage right earlier about the people who doubted who were struggling and he still sends them so it doesn't matter you're struggling you're saying yeah we're all struggling in fact if you think you're not struggling then

I don't know we're all struggling and that's just truth I don't know what to say and this is like a very important one I give some suggestions right asking questions like what do you think you know hey what do you think about that hey what gives you hope in life hey what's what gives you purpose and as the answer you just go deeper press into that well why and ask many more why questions many more wondering questions like you know I'm just wondering I see you do this why do you do that why are you so scared why are you so anxious just asking why and that really unpacks what people think and sometimes we're just afraid of having these conversations because we don't know what they're going to say but people just answer and you keep asking and over time hopefully by them answering they've told you a lot about themselves they've let you into your lives and you can let them into yours as well now I want to bring still on this conversation

I don't know what to say I want us to consider Apostle Paul now Apostle Paul was something similar to an attorney in his day very eloquent but he brings this up now the Corinthians from what I read did a little bit of research on these people people would travel to Corinth these professional orators they would go and have all these speeches and people would pay to go listen to these orators so the Corinthians were I guess known to love this thing this eloquence and all that but here's what Paul says Paul says and I when I came to you brothers I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified and I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling this is Paul saying this right and my speech and my message were not implausible words of wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of man but in the power of God and Paul is here saying guys when I came

[33 : 51] I didn't have all the words I wish I did but I intentionally I just I didn't have it but I proclaimed one thing to you Jesus and him crucified and I didn't want to talk about anything I didn't want to talk about much else and here's why so that when you eventually believe it won't be that Paul's eloquence brought you to faith right so that your faith will be purely on Jesus and that's why worrying so much about well how can I put this in this eloquent way doesn't really help what do we do we just proclaim Jesus it's a simple message we're all broken we're all messed up God really loves us and he wants to fix this and how does he fix this he changes us one by one that is the gospel he died so that the consequences of our foolishness will come upon us and he took that upon himself so that we will live for him that's the gospel and Paul said when I came to you I didn't have to I didn't really need to come up with all this you know super logical and eloquent things

I just proclaimed Jesus and him crucified and that's what he calls us to do today again I don't know what to say consider what Paul said Jesus and him crucified start there and over time we'll work with you I don't want to be rejected again the person we're following was rejected in fact killed I don't think we're at that point where we're getting killed yet but this is who we're following because he was rejected there's a decent chance we will be and we need to embrace that and move forward and find hope and faith and the fact that he who matters most has accepted us right right so we cling and that's why it's important to cling to him so tightly so that when we're rejected we have something to latch into the love of Christ so action steps what do we do we pray we think about people in our lives we pray for them we spend time praying for them

I encourage you before you even have the conversation pray for them take two minutes take one minute pray for them pray that their hearts will be open to it pray that their hearts will be broken pray and then you know what just go literally literally just go and I want to end with this story it's my senior year in college and I it was spring I was going to graduate in May May 2015 so it was spring this was January 2015 it was a Friday I got a text from my friend I didn't see the text but the text came in on Friday night it was like yo Kelechi let's hang out tomorrow please tell me you're on campus let's hang out tomorrow that's the way your text was literally please tell me you're on campus let's hang out tomorrow I didn't see the text Friday but I saw it Saturday morning Saturday morning I saw it I'm like oh yeah sure let's hang out later tonight and so I came back at like 3pm that day and I got an email you know from the school's president you know and you know usually if someone passes away we get an email you know oh you know we regret to announce the death of this person and and so that name was my friend's name the person whom I just texted that morning right so apparently he was killed by a car at 4.30am

Saturday morning he sent a message at 8pm he was killed 4.30am and I sent a message at 9am and I responded not knowing what had happened and he was gone but the hope I had was that he came to know the Lord you know the summer before however I was just thinking this guy's here today and he texts me and he dies like 5 hours however many hours later and I'm thinking about wow we don't have as much time as we think we do and I began to think about a lot of my friends in college whom I'd never ever engaged with and I was wondering like can I really can I really say I love these people and the one thing I claim to believe they need I don't tell them about it it's either I don't really love them or I don't really believe they need this thing either I didn't I don't like literally there was no other explanation I could come up with either I don't love them or I don't think they need the gospel in other words they'll be fine without it and so that just really challenged me in college

I had a job in Boston and I just called them up I'm like yo I can't I can't come I have to just stay back in campus and hang out with my friends and so for a full year I worked as a campus missionary but that's not what we're called to do but the reason why I shared that story is for you to think about the fact that your co-worker or your classmate tomorrow might in fact be gone by Tuesday and I'm not saying this to scare anyone but I'm saying this to just proclaim reality but the life we live is very brief last night before I went to bed I looked up a message from my friend that a classmate of ours passed away on the first of November and I'm just thinking about I wonder I wonder if his friends shared this thing with him before he passed away he went to eat and he complained of stomach upset and he was gone by the next day he died and I'm not saying this is just cast a veil of hopelessness and fear and panic but just for us to understand that this is an urgent call we don't have time we really do not have time and we have to move about this with a sense of urgency so I want to just spend one minute because we need to go up and just pray what was your question it wasn't a question okay great job thank you my name is Rico and I've been traveling west to the industry where helping and able to see the cancer and the way I approach even people that I meet next to me like a starbucks whatever is I'll just ask them is there anything you need prayer for so at work the co-workers if someone's going through a hard time or anything or even sometimes just saying is there anything

[40 : 22] I pray for you and then pray for them there and well another thing that we want to think about is when we're ministering to someone or sharing the gospel to someone think about how do I want to be a religion and hear the gospel and even within that is like the greatest commandment ask God God will you teach me to love you with all my heart and soul and will you teach me to love my neighbor as I know because we're loving our neighbor in the way he calls us to and encourages us and one last verse within that is in Colossians 3:12 where it's a combination of asking the Holy Spirit to teach us this and it's also being mindful of and it really is the fruit of the spirit is therefore as God chosen people fully and dearly love both yourself with compassion kindness humility gentleness and patience and so as we're ministering as we're sharing the gospel and evangelizing just being that kind passion gentle and thinking about being in their shoes the way

I want to do but it makes a big difference in real life too as you were saying is God plants the seeds he uses us to plant the seed not for them to know Christ right at that moment we share that gentleness we share what the gospel is and even going back to Genesis 1:26 God created us in his image and one of my other favorite verses is Psalms 37:20 Psalm 37:4 the light in the Lord will give you the desires of your heart and that's God what Jesus did is to restore him thank you yeah and these are I mean that's absolutely correct it really does matter how we proclaim it and again it has to be done in love in gentleness in compassion because that's how Christ dealt with us that's really how he did it with us and think about a Samaritan woman as he engaged her in compassion she had multiple husbands and he didn't come yelling he knew all about that but there was a love there was a you know

I'm with you there was a sense of solidarity with this person and that's what we're called to do so let's just spend one minute I just want to encourage you just right now in this time just think about five people three people that you want to be praying for and you want to start working towards engaging with just think about them dear lord we thank you lord for the gift of evangelism we have this grace you've given to us you've decided to use us broken and weak people to work alongside you in this redemption plan and it's a beautiful thing and often times lord we're for different reasons we take it for granted and we choose not to obey and sometimes we just we might even just waste our lives just pursuing other things

I want to pray for these people whom we have thought about that first of all you will be working in your heart changing them saving them but also that you will give us the boldness to actively bring it up to be uncomfortable give us the willingness may we be willing to be that weird person we consider christ on the cross and whatever whatever shame comes with being that weird person help us to embrace that because christ embraced death on the cross for us and since we're crucified with him may we be willing to die to our pride in ourselves for the sake of others we thank you for this time we pray all this lord in christ's name amen thanks for trying to get a hold of ours and you and we to you you