

A Culture Of Evangelism

Text : **I Thessalonians 1: 1-10 ; Colossians 4: 2-6**

S#1.

S#2.

A. It is the goal of God, of the elders and my goal as well for this congregation to develop a culture of evangelism.

1. Congregations have evangelistic events, but a culture is not an event.
2. Culture defined :
 - a. “The sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.”
 - b. A system of values which informs the activities of a group or individual.
3. Culture of evangel : Where evangelism is simply a natural outflow of the gospel life.
 - a. “Evangelism : telling the gospel to someone with the aim of persuading them to believe in Christ Jesus, repent from sin and obey the gospel.”
 - b. “A culture of evangelism is the kind of environment where this activity is the air the congregation breathes.” (P.J. Tibayan)

B. Over the past few weeks our lessons have been building toward creating an evangelistic mindset.

S#3.

1. We observed 5 of the many reasons we should love God.

S#4.

- a. He created the world and all that live on it.
- b. He gives us life from Himself and an eternal soul.
- c. He sustains us with all that is good.
- d. He is the sovereign ruler, but He gives us free will.
- e. He loves us and wants for us to be with Him in eternity.

2. We then observed 7 of the reasons we love God’s Church.

- a. It is the eternal plan of God.
- b. It is being built by God using His servants on earth. (i.e., *Christians*)
- c. It is the most expensive purchase ever made.
- d. It is the most sacred place on earth. (*sanctified stones, dwelling place*)
- e. It is where God is glorified on the earth.
- f. It is our eternal dwelling place.
- g. It is so loved by Christ He died to establish it and lives to intercede for it.

3. We studied what it means to be a servant of God.

- a. If one is a Christian he is a bond-servant of Christ.
- b. Everyone is a servant; we can choose who we serve, but not IF we serve.

- c. We learned that bond-servants voluntarily do the work of their master.
- d. How are we to serve Christ ? We serve by doing what He did on the earth.
- e. Faithful service is always rewarded.
- 4. We discussed how **love for Christ constrains us. (*Limits, Controls, Motivates*)**
 - a. There are many ways to control, to manipulate, or to motivate people.
 - b. God uses many ways to influence people to do His will.
 - c. God prefers to have people serve Him because they love Him.
 - d. A changed life is the proof of love, not words or isolated acts.
- 5. We observed that **prayers from Hell** are always refused.
 - a. Hell is a real place in which some people will be confined in eternity.
 - b. No one likes to hear it, but we must teach about Hell.
 - c. Hell is the worst place one can possibly imagine.
 - d. There is no mercy and no possibility of anyone ever getting out of Hell.
 - e. No one needs to go to Hell, but many will.

C. Evangelism is an area in which ALL Christians feel the need to improve. S#5.

- 1. Faithfulness to God demands it.
- 2. The survival of the church depends upon it.

Because evangelism is a Heaven and Hell issue, this lesson and some to follow will seek to reinforce things we already know about evangelism. S#6.

I. The Christian's eternal destiny depends upon his willingness to evangelize. S#7.

A. We all understand that we are instructed to share the gospel with the lost. S#8.

- 1. Those who were first given the great commission were required to give it to others.
Matt. 28: 18-20 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority **S#9.** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- 2. Each generation is required to prepare the next to evangelize the world.
 - a. **II Tim. 2: 2** – The things which you have heard from me in the presence of **S#10.** many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
 - b. Every generation is a new world which must be taught the gospel.

3. Jesus will only own us as His servants / friends IF we tell people about Him.
 - a. **Matt. 10: 32-33** Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will **S#11.** also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. **33** But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

- b. **Tit. 1: 16** ... We can deny Jesus with our lives as well as by our words. **S#12.**

B. The Christian may not allow fear or intimidation to stop him from sharing.

1. The early disciples had to speak out in the face of persecution.

Acts 4:29 – And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your **S#13.** bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,
2. Persecution forced them to flee for their lives, they evangelized as they fled.
 - a. **Acts 8: 4** – Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.
 - b. Antioch ... Great church grew from the seeds they planted in flight.
3. You and I are commanded not to allow opposition to hinder our evangelism.
 - a. **I Pet. 3: 13-15** Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is **S#14.** good? **14** But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, **15** but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence
 - b. Jesus commanded us not to fear those who can only kill you, but boldly proclaim.

Matt. 10: 26-28– Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that **15** will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. **27** What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. **28** Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

C. Failure to share salvation with the lost is a sin. S#16.

1. Failure to share the gospel is a sin of insubordination, not doing what is good.

James 4: 17 – Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and **S#17.** does not do it, to him it is sin.
2. Knowingly deciding to walk outside God's will is to commit "willful" sin.
 - a. **Heb. 10: 26-27** For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, **27** but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.
 - b. *"I know I really should persuade my son to ... my sister to ... my friend to ...BUT"*

II. The church in Thessalonica had a culture of evangelism.**S#18.****A. The Apostle Paul and Silas established the church in Thessalonica.**

1. **Acts 17: 1-2** ... They started teaching in the synagogue.
2. **Acts 17: 3-9** ... They converted many people, including Greeks and women
 - a. The Jews became jealous and caused trouble for Jason and other members.
 - b. Eventually, they asked Paul to flee the city in order to save his life.
3. Evidently Paul was there a considerable length of time being supported by the Phil....
Phil. 4: 15-16 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; **16** for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.
4. **Acts 17: 11** ... Refers to the Jews in Thessalonica, **not** the brethren.

S#19.**B. In the face of opposition the church in Thessalonica was an active church.**

1. **I Thes. 1: 2-3** We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; **3** constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, **S#20.**
2. They evangelized because of the faith (“work of faith”) not trying to earn salvation.
3. They told others about salvation because of love for God. (“labor of love”)
4. They served consistently (“steadfastness”) not on-again off-again.

C. They were eager to share the gospel even beyond their own city.

1. **I Thes. 1:6-9** You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. **8** For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. **#21.**
2. They patterned their work after the great evangelists and were not deterred by threats.
3. They practiced what they preached so they were an example to others.
4. Because of them people in the surrounding areas knew the gospel message. (*counties*)

D. They told people how the gospel message had changed their lives.

1. **I Thes. 1: 9** – They themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, **S#22.**
2. The story of your conversion is a valid part of your gospel presentation.

3. The change in their life was a result of their conversion and gave credibility to their message about the gospel.
 - a. Just living a “good Christian life” does not evangelize.
 - b. The gospel is communicated by words that create faith in Christ. **Rom. 10**
 - c. Un-Christian living discredits the gospel message. **Tit. 1: 16, 2: 5, I Tim 6: 1**
- * When a Christian shares the gospel as instinctively as he breathes or says hello, he (they) have a culture of evangelism. S#23.**

III. Every contact with a lost person is an opportunity to share salvation. S#24.

- A. **Col. 4: 5-6** Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. **6** Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. **S#25.**
 1. Christians must be wise enough to cultivate prospects when with outsiders.
 2. Christians must be alert for opportunities to share the gospel. (*drop a seed*)
 3. Christians guard their words so as to create openings for spiritual conversations.
 4. Christians decide how to respond to people so as to create opportunities.
 - *5. When this thought process is automatic, we have a culture of evangelism.
- B. **Col 4:2-4** Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; **3** praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; **4** that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. (**I Cor. 11: 1 ... Be imitators of me, just as I ...**) **S#26.**
 1. Prayer must be a vital part of the Christian’s life. (*Hundreds of small prayers daily*)
 2. Our prayers must include requests for opportunities to share salvation.
 - a. Also pray for open doors for others.
 - b. Pray for open doors for the church. (*Evangelism is not an event, it’s a lifestyle.*)
 - c. Be alert for doors that God opens. (*not always readily apparent, some cracked*)
 3. Remember, Paul is making this request while in prison for preaching the gospel.
 - a. **Phil. 1: 12-14** Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have **#27.** turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, **13** so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, **14** and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. (**Phil 4: 19 ... Converts in Caesar’s household**)
 - b. We must overcome fear and adverse conditions to share. **You can inspire others.**

C. Col. 4:3-4 so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have **S#28.**
also been imprisoned; **4** that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

1. Sometimes we beat so far around the bush we don't get any berries.
 - a. We must be kind and loving ... seasoned with salt to make it flavorful.
 - b. But we must explain the plain and simple message straight out.
2. Clarity comes from conviction and practice.
 - a. When you are deeply convinced that something is true, you can say it.
 - b. Every time you say something it gets easier to say it.

* *Remember the first time you told your spouse you loved him or her.*
3. "Be ready" infers practice and preparation.

- a. **I Pet. 3: 13-15** Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is **S#29.**
good? **14** But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness,
you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be
troubled, **15** but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being
ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an
account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence
- b. We are most often intimidated because we feel inadequate. **Study**
- c. Practice with someone you're comfortable with. (*Friend, loved one, etc.*)
- d. Quiz each other.
- e. Just hearing yourself say it makes it easier.

D. Never stop being grateful for what has been done for you. **S#30.**

1. **Col 4:2-4** Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of
thanksgiving;
 2. You were hopelessly lost and condemned to eternal torment, but Jesus died for you.
 3. Billions of people have never heard the gospel, but you know it well.
- Luke 12: 48b** – From everyone who has been given much, much will be required;**#31.**
and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

CONCLUSION :

- A. All of us need Jesus more than we need the air we breathe.** **S#32.**
1. Without the blood of Jesus men are eternally lost ... destined for eternal torment.
 2. You have been entrusted with the message that will save them
- B. Are we sharing that message ? Is our congregational culture one of evangelism ?** **S#33.**

INVITATION :

S#34. ... communion

Lesson Text :**I Thessalonians 1: 1-10**

1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; **3** constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, **4** knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; **5** for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. **6** You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. **8** For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. **9** For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, **10** and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

Colossians 4: 2-6

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; **3** praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; **4** that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. **6** Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.