

THE CHURCH PREACHES THE GOSPEL



+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

God has sent His people into the world to tell others about Christ.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGES:**

Matthew 9–10; Romans 10

+ **SETTING:**

In Matthew 9–10, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God and showed the kingdom's power through deeds of love and mercy. Jesus also set up and commissioned His disciples to follow the example He set for sharing the good news of the kingdom. Romans 10 reveals a glimpse of Paul's heart for evangelism. Paul was the foremost example of evangelism and church planting after Jesus's resurrection. His work spread the church through the known world of his day. Paul echoed Jesus's call for Christians to share the gospel to others.

DAY 1

READ:

Matthew 9:35-38

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 9:37

NOTES

The picture of a plentiful harvest is compelling. Imagine the farmer walking out into the fields and seeing the results of months of labor to plant and tend to the crop. The time from planting to harvest is filled with uncertainty, but then the morning comes and the harvest springs to life. What you can't likely imagine is the farmer walking out into the fields that are ready to harvest and just leaving the produce sitting in the field to rot. No one in their right mind would do all of the work to plant and tend to a crop and not harvest it.

Jesus used this image to represent humanity. The lost around us are ripe for harvest. God, through the work of His Spirit, brought the gift of salvation, and even among those we see every day are folks who could be ready to respond to the offer. The problem is the farmers are not picking the crop. There aren't enough laborers to get out in the field and pick the fruit of God's labor. What a tragedy and what a motive to pray that God would raise up more workers.

Where are you called to harvest?

DAY 2

READ:

Matthew 9:35-38

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 9:38

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“Personal working for souls is good. Giving money is good. But praying is best of all. By prayer we reach Him without whom work and money are alike in vain. We obtain the aid of the Holy Ghost. . . . The Holy Ghost alone can make ministers of the Gospel, and raise up lay workmen in the spiritual harvest, who need not be ashamed. Never, never, may we forget that if we would do good to the world, our first duty is to pray.”¹

—J. C. Ryle (1816–1900)

Jesus commanded His disciples to pray, but not simply to pray—they were to pray earnestly. Earnest prayer is both sincere and consistent. We think about what we are praying and ask the Lord to do what is best in the situation. In Matthew 9:38, Jesus told us what we should pray for. In the face of a world with overwhelming need, the best thing to pray for is for more workers to go into the field, share the gospel, and trust God to save.

Earnest prayer is also consistent. We do not merely call to mind the need for gospel workers from time to time, but it’s a consistent pattern of our life to implore God to raise up more who will go. Every time you see a crowd or witness the distressed and dejected state of others, you have an opportunity to pray. Consistency requires intentionality like making this type of prayer a steady part of your daily prayer.

Consider posting a card on the bathroom mirror or even setting an alarm each day that prompts you to pray for the harvest. Earnest prayer is the God-ordained means of raising up workers for the mission.

How can you be diligent in praying for God to send more workers into the harvest?

DAY 3

READ:

Matthew 10:1-15

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 10:1-4

NOTES

Isn't it amazing that Judas showed up on a list of men whom Jesus gave authority to cast out demons and heal every sickness (v. 4)? Matthew didn't want us to miss the fact that this is the same Judas who went on to betray Jesus. Jesus knew all things, so He surely knew who Judas would become. Judas's actions in the end were not a surprise to Jesus. Yet, Jesus included him among the disciples, gave him responsibility over the money, sent him out to preach about the kingdom of God, and even washed his feet. Had Jesus acted like us, most of us would have avoided Judas, kept him at a distance, and tried to make it as hard as possible for him to do us harm. But not Jesus. He brought Judas close. Though Judas would prove to be an enemy, Jesus offered him unusual kindness.

Praise God that Jesus is still doing this today. He isn't writing people off but giving them ample opportunity to come to Him in faith and repentance. Jesus's grace is also a challenge to Christians who may be tempted to write off people in the modern cancel culture. Let's be reminded to extend this same unusual kindness to all whom we encounter.

How has God shown you unusual kindness?

DAY 4

READ:

Romans 10:11-15

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Romans 10:14

NOTES



KEY DOCTRINE #87: EVANGELISM

It is the duty and privilege of every Christian and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all thus rests upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle.

Even with technology and proactive churches, there are still many people who have never heard the good news of Jesus. The ultimate fate of those who have never heard of Jesus should trouble us. Some of us may struggle with God's righteousness in judging those sinners who have never heard of the salvation Jesus offers. We must know that God is holy, good, and just, and His heart is for all to come to repentance. So perhaps the more important consideration is what are we doing about it? It's easier on many accounts to question God without taking a hard look at what we are doing to get the gospel to those who need it, fulfilling God's call upon our lives.

Our modern technology allows for several avenues of access to the gospel. This type of access would have made missionaries of previous generations envious. Many of them left their homes and families forever or faced an early death simply to establish a foothold for the gospel in one place. Today Christians can fly around the world with a few clicks. This isn't to minimize the cost of pioneering missions today, but it is to highlight the opportunity we have. Lord willing, many who have never heard of Jesus will soon hear, and by God's grace, we get to be a part of that great work.

How are you investing in getting the gospel to those who have never heard it?

DAY 5

READ:

Romans 10:11-15

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Romans 10:15

NOTES

All those who have trusted in Jesus are sent out as His representatives (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). There is no such thing as an unsent Christian. We are either faithful to the mission we've been entrusted or we are not. Of course, some of us are sent in unique ways to cross cultures in order to share the gospel. These missionaries are doing on a macro level what all Christians are called to do in the normal rhythms of their lives.

Paul established what those who are sent should be doing—they should preach. This doesn't mean that they need to prepare a sermon, stand behind a pulpit, and deliver it to a group. It means that all those who are sent declare a message about Jesus. This is what preaching is at its core. It's simply testifying to the truth about Jesus. We do this in formal ways like on Sundays when the church gathers and a pastor preaches, but we all can do this when we walk to our mailbox and talk to a neighbor. We can preach when we are at the gym and have a chance to share the hope we have in Jesus. We can preach when we walk around the neighborhood at night and someone asks us how we are doing. The opportunities to preach are endless for those looking to share good news.

How can you preach the good news of Jesus more?

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from THE CHURCH

"Jesus commands us to be his witnesses. It's going to be easier than we think and harder than we imagine. But Jesus does not send us out empty-handed. He gives us the divine means we need to obey his divine command."²

—Rebecca Manley Pippert

POINT 1: God's people are to pray for the world with compassion (Matthew 9:35-38).

Knowing Jesus had compassion on people should compel believers to have compassion and share the good news of Jesus.



From Day 2: **How can you be diligent in praying for God to send more workers into the harvest?**

KEY DOCTRINE #87: EVANGELISM

It is the duty and privilege of every Christian and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all thus rests upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle.



How can we see evangelism as a privilege?

POINT 2: God's people are to go into the world with assurance (Matthew 10:1-14).

Jesus entrusted to His disciples the responsibility to carry on His mission and empowered them to do the work.



As disciples, what are examples of things we can do to carry out the mission and work of God?

Jesus sent out His disciples with authority, but He wanted them to understand that both the power and the provision for the work came from God.

? How can we take steps toward trusting God in equipping us for evangelism?

POINT 3: God's people are to preach to the world with urgency (Matthew 10:15; Romans 10:14-15).

God rightly judges those who reject Him and the good news of Jesus.

? Why is it right for God to judge those who reject Him?

If we have hearts attuned to God's heart, we will want others to know Him, and yet, they can't know Him unless someone tells them of Jesus.

? How can we stress the importance of evangelism to ourselves and others in the church?

MY RESPONSE

Because we have come to know Jesus at least in part through the faithful evangelism of others, we embrace the duty and privilege of making Jesus known to the nations.

- **HEAD:** How does your salvation change the way you think about the work of evangelism?
- **HEART:** How do you need to grow in genuine compassion for the lost?
- **HANDS:** How can you grow in the work of evangelism?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

VOICES from THE CHURCH

"In light of God's coming judgment, Jesus knew the desperate condition of those to whom He ministered. These were people who were separated from God and who, if nothing changed, would one day stand before God in their sin and be cast into eternal darkness. This is why Jesus had such compassion on them. How much more so should this be true in our day?"³

—David Platt

THE MOST CRITICAL PART OF YOUR BIBLE STUDY. PERIOD.

by Lynn H. Pryor

This last summer was the 54th anniversary of the first moon landing. I still remember two things about that night all those years ago:

1. Stretched out on the floor watching our 19-inch black-and-white TV from Sears, I watched Neil Armstrong step onto the moon, and I thought: “Dang. This is a big deal.”
2. We skipped Sunday night church to watch the moon landing. (Yeah, I grew up in one of those houses. I don’t regret it, although I never saw *Bonanza* or Walt Disney’s *Wonderful World of Color*.)

The moon landing really was a big deal, and as I look back, it is even more remarkable that all the years of preparation and the journey itself were done using computers with less combined processing ability than what currently resides in my smartphone.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE PRE-DIGITAL AGE

We look back today and wonder: “How could they do so much with so little?” Yet . . .

- Moses led an entire nation out of Egypt with a stick (Exodus 14:16).
- Samson busted a few hundred Philistine heads with a donkey’s jawbone (Judges 15:14-16).
- David defeated a giant with a rock (1 Samuel 17:48-50).
- The early disciples had nothing but their feet and their verbal witness, and they changed the world (Matthew 10:5-13).

We have so much more than they had. We’ve got all this amazing technology and resources—social media, television, cars, planes—but are we really making a difference in people’s lives?

What would happen if we did what the early disciples did? What if we relied on the Holy Spirit?

POWER BEYOND TECHNOLOGY

More than relying on all these things, maybe we should rely on the same thing the early disciples did: the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote:

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, announcing the mystery of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not be based on human wisdom but on God's power. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5, CSB)

In the end, it's not my clever remarks or my well-crafted presentations (and they are really good, thank you very much) that make a difference. What makes a difference is when I let the Holy Spirit work through me and when people see Jesus in me.

I wonder what would happen if, instead of relying on our clever gadgets and Bible study tools, we did what the early disciples did. What if we relied on the Holy Spirit?

We don't need an app for that. Not even a 1969 NASA computer.

Lynn H. Pryor is the publishing team leader for Bible Studies for Life. A resident of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Lynn serves as the discipleship director in his church. He offers a weekly blog at lynnhpryor.com.

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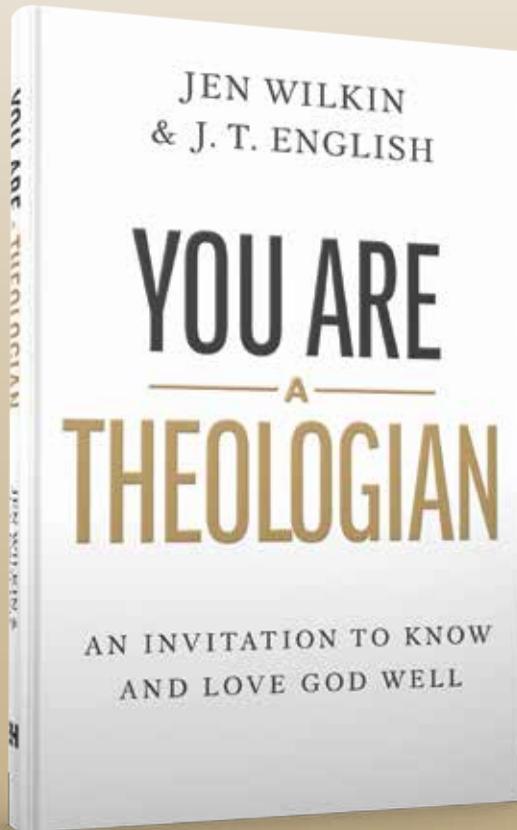
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FROM MANY PEOPLE TO ONE PEOPLE

God so loved the world that He sent His Son into the world to save the world, to die for our sins and rise again, just as He had foretold. And then the resurrected Savior sent His people into the world to share this good news. Yet He did not send them out alone. God the Son promised to be with them, so He sent them God the Spirit, who would give them words, power, and boldness to proclaim His gospel. In this way, the church was born and the church grew, just as it does today. God takes sinners saved by grace through faith and joins them with His one people to serve Jesus together, to love one another, and to share His good news with many more.

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