

THE SAINTS PART IN DECLARING SALVATION (The Nature of Evangelism)

INTRODUCTION

Evangelism is the declaring of the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified to the world. Evangelism has taken place when men have heard the gospel and have been invited to receive Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. What God wants is faithful witnesses and he will take the message and win souls.

The Bible does tell the Christian about the nature of evangelism; that is how evangelism is to be conducted.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

(Matt. 28:18—20; Mark 16:15): What we are to do.

There is only one command in the original Greek (Matt. 28:18-20). The command is to make disciples or disciple all nations which is translated “teach all nations” (A.V.). In another part of the Great Commission the Christian is to proclaim the gospel to the whole world” (Mark 16:15). NOTE: The Great Commission means that the gospel is to be made known to all men and it is the Christian’s responsibility to carry it out. At this very hour approximately two billion people are without any knowledge of Christ. POINT: Christians are to evangelize the whole world with the end in view of making disciples. Men cannot trust until they first hear.

There are three basic ways to make disciples which is indicated by the three participles in the Greek: (1) by going to the lost; (2) by baptizing those who believe; and (3) by teaching. NOTE: New converts are to be taught and built up in the Faith or there is no true obedience to the great commission.

The Lord then gives an eternal promise to his disciples: “Lo, I am with you always.” The great commission is personal, and every disciple or believer is to know that through all hardships of witnessing that Christ will never leave him or forsake him.

THE SUPREME PURPOSE

(John 17:15; cf. 17:20): Why we are to do it.

Christ prays that God, the Father, would not take believers out of the world but that He should leave them in the world to do a specific task. Every believer is in the world but not of the world (John 17:15).

Our Lord said concerning his disciples, “As thou has sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” (John 17:18). The Son came to reveal the Father (John 1:18) and to redeem men (Luke 19: 10). NOTE: Christians are to declare the work of the Father and to pronounce the redemption from sin that is in Christ Jesus. This is the Christian’s primary responsibility to the unsaved world. NOTE: Remember, you cannot make people believe the gospel. You can only tell them what the gospel is.

THE WITNESSING PRINCIPLE

(Acts 1:8): How we are to do it.

Definition of a Witness: One who is a witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; 13:31; 22:15). A witness is one who bears testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. NOTE: A witness is one who tells what he knows about something, so a Christian witness tells others about the person of Christ.

Every Christian a Witness: All Christians are held responsible before God to be a faithful witness (Acts 1:8; 8:4; 11:19; 15:35) NOTE: Gibbon, in his book The Rise and Decline of the Roman Empire made this statement:

One of the chief reasons the early church progressed so rapidly is because each individual Christian felt it his duty to be a witness, thus showing his obedience to the Great Commission..

The Simplicity of Witnessing: The early church is still the pattern for modern day witnessing, and its method was so simple that we almost miss it completely in our complex, highly structured organized church in America.

1. They witnessed (Acts 1:8). Their one desire was to be obedient
2. They witnessed daily (Acts 5:42). Witnessing was a normal experience.
3. They went to witness. The early Christians did not entice the unsaved to come to church; they took the gospel to the sinner.

Witness Includes Words as Well as Actions (1 Thess. 1:6-8): The Thessalonians witnessed by life (“examples to all”) and by lips (“from you sounded forth the word of the Lord”).

THE FISHING PRINCIPLE

(Matt. 4:19): “Fishers of men.”

1. A Fisherman must have a license: A Christian must be licensed by the Lord; he must have experienced the “new birth” before he can tell someone else about it.
2. A Fisherman must have equipment: A Christian to be an effective witness must be grounded in scripture and know how to present the gospel.
3. A Fisherman must have bait: A Christian must be able to make Jesus Christ and His work at Calvary attractive to people without compromising the message.
4. A Fisherman must have patience and determination: A Christian must not get discouraged. An inexperienced fisherman always wants to move, change bait and gets discouraged easily. He always wants to try new things to lure the unsaved. A good fisherman sticks with it until he gets his limit; he does not give up.
5. A Fisherman must have fishing “know-how”: The experienced fisherman knows the good fishing holes; knows when to fish and when not to fish.
6. A Fisherman must enjoy the sport: A Christian must enjoy being a witness even when the fish (unsaved) are not biting.

CONCLUSION

Every Christian is held responsible to be obedient to the Great Commission. Every Christian is to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, not necessarily a soul winner.

The Christian who fails to be a witness, when given the opportunity, is disobedient to God's Word and is sinning.

God wants faithful witnesses and He will win the souls. The Christian will be rewarded as much for his faithfulness in witnessing as for the number of souls he can credit to his account (1 Cor. 4:1).

Some men will lead more people to Christ than others because they are gifted in this area by God.