

## Evangelism: Are You Listening?

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ACTS 16:4-12

### Core Competency:

**Giving Away My Faith-** I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

*Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should. (Ephesians 6:19-20)*

### Using This Study

#### ① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

#### ② DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

#### ③ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

### Introduction

A NATIVE American was walking down the street with a businessman one day. The Native American stopped.

"Listen!" he said.

"For what?" the business replied.

"Don't you hear it?"

"Hear what?"

"Crickets."

"Crickets? I do not hear any crickets."

The Native American continued to try to help the businessman hear what he heard: "Oh, they're loud. Just listen! Don't you hear them?"

Getting a little disgruntled, the businessman said, "I don't hear any crickets."

The Native American looked around, and right over on the side, there was a cricket. He went and picked it up.

The businessman looked shocked. "I can't believe that. We are here downtown with all these people. You and I are talking and you can hear a cricket. I don't know how you did that."

The Native American reached into his pocket and took out some change. He threw it on the ground. Twenty people stopped walking. Then he said, "You always hear what you are tuned in to. You are tuned into money; you are going to hear a penny when it's dropped. I am tuned in to nature, I hear a cricket."

A lot of Christians will miss the still small voice of God because they are not tuned in.

This principle is especially valid in evangelism. Many claim that they rarely if ever sense God's leading them to share the hope of Jesus Christ with a neighbor, a co-worker, classmate, or friend. Is it that God is not speaking, or is it that we are not actively listening for such guidance?

### This Week

In our passage this week, we see God use extraordinary means to direct attentive believers to those who need Jesus Christ. Paul and his companions in the first century church, did not experience a lack of opportunity to share their faith because they were asking God to lead them to those that needed to hear.

# 1 EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

## Acts 16: 4-40

4 As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for them to observe.

5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily.

6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in Asia.

7 When they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

8 So, bypassing Mysia, they came down to Troas.

9 During the night a vision appeared to Paul: A Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, "Cross over to Macedonia and help us!"

10 After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to evangelize them.

11 Then, setting sail from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, the next day to Neapolis,

12 and from there to Philippi, a Roman colony, which is a leading city of that district of Macedonia. We stayed in that city for a number of days.



## DISCOVER His Word

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What does God MEAN? Answer the following questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

1. Notice in vv. 4-8 that the apostles struck a balance between focusing their efforts on in-reach (building up believers in the faith) and outreach. Why is this balance important to the work of God?
  
2. In verse six, we read that the apostles were "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia", and in verse seven, "the spirit of Jesus did not permit them" to go into Bithynia. Does this prohibition surprise you? Why or why not?
  
3. Notice the nature of the obstacles that the apostles experienced in their evangelism efforts in vv. 6, 7.
  - a) Describe similar ways God has, or could, frustrate your personal evangelism efforts.
  
  - b) In what ways could God-orchestrated obstacles be an encouragement to you and your evangelism efforts?
  
4. Notice in v. 9 the extraordinary means God exerts to bring together both those who are ready to hear with those who are ready to share! The Book of Acts is primarily about the transition of the Gospel from a strictly Jewish context to the rest of the Gentile world. God used miracles to confirm both His personal involvement and will regarding this transition (C.f. Acts 1:8; 8:14-17, 26-39; 10:9-16).
  - a) Miraculous visions are not God's primary means of directing people today (or then), but what does His actions here in this passage (and Acts 8:14-17, 26-39; 10:9-16) tell you about His heart and priorities?
  
  - b) How will this reality affect your approach to personal evangelism? Share with the group specifically what you commit to doing.

## ③ LIVE His Word

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**How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP. Take some time as a group and read and discuss the following:**

There is a biblical difference between being a witness and evangelism. The biblical definition of evangelism centers primarily on two ideas: (1) the communication of the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ; and (2) the intent of inviting the listener to trust Christ. If these two things do not occur, then evangelism has not taken place.

Some mistake being a witness for evangelism. For example, some feel that living a good life in the eyes of unbelievers is the extent of evangelism for them. Others feel that evangelism occurs when they give their testimony about the power of God in their life. Again, this is not evangelism, this is being a witness.

“How we live serves as a foundation for our evangelism, not as a substitute.”

Doug Cecil, Dallas Theological Seminary

## Sermon Notes:

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# 30 CORE Competencies

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## 10 Core Beliefs

**Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Salvation by Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

**Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

**Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

**Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

**Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

**Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

**Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

**Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away God's Money** *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 Core Virtues

**Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

**Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

**Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

**Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

**Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

**Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

**Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

**Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ

## 10 Core Practices

**Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

**Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

**Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33* I focus on

God and His priorities for my life.