

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How to Lead a Person to Jesus Christ

Acts 17:1-4

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SermonAudio Blurb: In the story of Paul in Thessalonica we have a beautiful example of how to lead a person to Jesus Christ. This is often a genuine struggle by people who know and love the gospel. In this sermon we consider several simple steps to keep in mind as we try to share the gospel.

I. Introduction.

- A. Read 17:1-4
- B. A different approach today in our passage.
 - 1. We have the next series of events recorded for us by Luke. Leaving Philippi and arriving in Thessalonica. From there we have Paul moving on to Berea and then Athens, Greece.
 - 2. Three quick vignettes that show Paul engaging people with the person of Jesus Christ..
 - 3. I believe there are simple reasons why this doesn't happen as often as perhaps it should:
 - a. Fear.
 - b. Lack of knowledge on simply how to do it.
 - 4. In this sermon, I want to look at Paul's approach to evangelism in vss 1-4 and see what he does in what is essentially a cold-call situation.
- C. Textual observations:
 - 1. They were intentional in their travels.
 - 2. They invested time and effort.
 - 3. Paul was focused upon the people themselves.
 - a. "Reasoned" is from a word from which we get (διαλέγομαι *dialegomai*) "dialogue".
 - b. Notice with me in vs 2 what the source of his conversation was—the scriptures.

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4. But Paul was not merely having conversations. It was very focused.
 - a. Vs 3 he was showing them that the Christ had to suffer and die and rise again. And that Jesus was the Christ. There is a lot in this passage to unpack but I will wait until next week to do that, Lord willing.
 - b. Note the term "demonstrating" as it carries the idea of "lay something before someone" (παρατίθημι *paratithami*).
5. The goal was not to win arguments or to just talk about doctrine or even Jesus. The goal was to convert.
 - a. Notice that "some of them" were persuaded.
 - b. The idea of "persuaded" is what happens when you are having conversations and studies over the gospel. And you have to keep this in your mind.
 - c. You understand they are opposed, or suspicious, or simply not understanding and therefore reluctant. And then you labor to help them overcome those things.
 - d. But it is all centered on the Word and the Gospel.

D. Nine things needed to effectively lead a person to Jesus Christ.

II. A Basic Guide on How to Lead a Person to Jesus Christ.

- A. You must know the gospel yourself.
 1. The actual gospel.
 2. If you are weak in your own understanding of what constitutes the gospel then you have no reason to expect that you can share the gospel or lead a person to Jesus Christ.
 3. So the first thing you want to do is make sure you know the gospel well.
 4. Ask yourself that right now. Can you give the gospel if asked? And if you can, are you also able to explain what each component means?
 - a. Paul knew the gospel and he knew, therefore, what he had to teach and explain and show from the bible.

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- b. You also do not get the sense that he is speaking in vague, broad terms that are devoid of meaning for the average person.
- 5. At the most basic level we can define the gospel from 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.
 - a. Christ — can you explain what that means?
 - b. Died for our sins — do you understand what “for” means here? How about why dying was necessary? This means you understand substitution.
 - c. Can you explain what sin is and how it affects the person and this age? Be able to explain the difference between the presence and power of sin over all vs the act of sin.
 - d. Why is “according to Scripture” important and can you point to an Old Testament passage about the Christ dying for our sin?
 - e. Why is the resurrection so important?
 - f. The fact that Jesus appeared to so many is important as well.
- .
- 6. So now we talking about Jesus Christ. What is next thing we need?
- B. The person must be willing to engage and listen.
 - 1. Notice again vs 2-3. Paul spent three weeks going to the synagogue to talk to the people. It is Paul sitting with one or a few people and talking.
 - 2. But that means that the persons were willing to do so.

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3. So, when you talk to a person, think about how you might start a conversation that would be helpful.

C. Show them the gospel in the bible.

1. This begins with the person of Jesus Christ.
 - a. There are many ways this is done but you must be clear that He is the One in whom we place our faith and hope.
 - b. Genesis 3 (especially) 15 is often a starting place for me as I talk about the storyline of the bible.
 - c. From there I will often talk about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel).
 - d. I keep the covenants God made in mind and allow them to control the flow of the Old Testament. Abrahamic leads to Mosaic, which leads to Davidic and the New Covenant.
 - e. Speak about the prophets, especially in Isaiah, and how they all looked forward to a day in which God would send His anointed One to save and make all things right.
 - (1) Isaiah 11—
 - (2) Isaiah 42:1—
 - (3) Isaiah 61:1—
 - f. You can show them the promise in Isaiah 40:1ff how God calls to Israel to have hope for God will send one to declare and prepare the way for the Messiah. And how this Messiah is called the “glory of YHWH” (5). This good news is to declare a great thing for the One who is coming, the Messiah, is God (9).

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2. This ends with the with the work of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Here you can speak of the whole sacrificial world of the Old Testament and how it all had to do with sin.
 - b. Show how it was insufficient to destroy sin and how in Isaiah 53 speaks of the One who is the Servant of YHWH and how sin was placed up Him.
- D. Explain the gospel.
 1. This means you are systematically taking them through the gospel step by step. You have done the heavy lifting already but now you have to explain how this works in a person's life.
 2. You have to explain the key issues of sin, death, and judgment. This is so important to be patient and kind here.
 3. Speaks as one who is as unworthy as all others.
 4. You can ask questions like why is there death? And if it is just supposed to be that way, why do people grieve? Why is there evil? Why is there a sense of right and wrong in us?
 5. Don't bother getting into side arguments.
 6. We have our three enemies that cannot be defeated by ourselves. This is where Jesus Christ comes in.
- E. Listen to them as they raise questions or show resistance.
- F. Answer objections and questions.
 1. But make sure you keep the focus on the gospel.
 2. Romans 1:18 says that the wrath of God is upon us because as sinners we suppress the truth.
 3. This means that ask you talk you should expect resistance or deflection.

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- G. Given them the opportunity to follow Jesus but do not be too quick to assume they understand. Ask more questions.
 - 1. Mark 8:24ff is always a good passage to go to.
 - 2. Burn in your mind John 14:6 and Ephesians 2:8-10. They will cover so much ground for you.
 - 3. Remember to point them to believe the good news that Jesus is the Christ and in Him alone is found life and forgiveness. And as you do, listen and look for indicators to saving faith (three aspects).
- H. Understand what your main job is while trying to show love and care for them.
 - 1. The gospel is what matters.
 - 2. Even if you mess up in showing kindness, make sure the gospel is what is the focus.
 - 3. Compromise will almost always occur when you put kindness before the truth.
- I. Leave the results to God.
 - 1. There comes a point where you need to just stop talking. You have said what you needed to say. This can be hard but you have to learn to do it.
 - 2. This includes your own children or spouse. No one ever was nagged into the Christian faith.

III. Conclusion.

- A. As we work through chapter 17 over the next few weeks I want you to pay attention to how Paul engages people with the gospel.
 - 1. Later we will see how he deals with full-blown pagans in Athens.

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2. But throughout this chapter what you see is a man under the conviction that what people must see is who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ did.
- B. This is our task as well and we must make certain that nothing else is allowed in our lives that eclipses that reality.

Benediction

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.