


A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM



A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots growing over stone ruins. The tree's trunk is massive and textured, with roots spreading out across the ground and over the stone structures. The background shows more stone ruins and lush green foliage. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment.

THE FRUIT OF
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A
TREE OF LIFE,
AND HE WHO IS WISE
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB

**PRINCIPLES
FOR
BIBLICAL
EVANGELISM
FOUND IN
JOHN 4, “THE
WOMAN AT
THE WELL.”**

TAKE

- TAKE THE INITIATIVE! JN. 4:6-9

OFFER

- OFFER GOD’S MERCY! JN. 4:10-14

IDENTIFY

- IDENTIFY SPIRITUAL NEEDS! JN. 4:9-10

CONFRONT

- CONFRONT SIN JN! 4:16-18

REJECT

- REJECT FALSE WORSHIP! JN. 4:19-24

REVEAL

- REVEAL CHRIST! JN. 4:25-26

CHRIST IN HIS PROPER PLACE

- **“JESUS IS THE ANSWER”** is a song that has bothered many for one glaring reason: *It never tells us what the question is*. In many ways, **ANDRAÉ CROUCH’S** well-worn anthem is emblematic of many modern evangelistic strategies—where the preacher skips over prerequisite details in his haste to get to the cross.
- At best, that approach is confusing—leaving the unbeliever to figure out on his own why Jesus **needed** to **live**, **die**, and **rise again**. At worst, it’s downright dangerous—especially when unbelievers see their primary problems as **unhappiness**, **hardship**, and **victimhood**. If sinners understand the cross as merely the **remedy** to those temporal problems, they don’t have the gospel at all.

1. A SUBSTITUTIONARY LIFE.
2. A SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH.
3. A GUARANTEED RESURRECTION.
4. PREACHING CHRIST.

• **ANDRAÉ CROUCH** was right when he said that Jesus is the answer. But the evangelist should first help the sinner to ask the right question before offering the solution. Christ should be preached when the sinner *sees God's wrath*, *seeks God's forgiveness*, and *searches for a Savior*. And when we do proclaim the person and work of Christ, we should include **ALL THREE FACETS OF HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY.**

REPENT AND BELIEVE

- Unbelievers should tremble at the immense holiness of God. The reality of their sin should frighten and sicken them. And the redemptive work of Christ should thrill them to the core.
- Together the truth of those biblical doctrines should provoke a desperate question in the sinner's heart. It's the same question that plagued those who heard **PETER'S** sermon on the Day of Pentecost: ***"Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, WHAT SHALL WE DO?""*** (Acts 2:37).
- ***The truth of the gospel demands a response from the sinner.*** Passive indifference isn't an option. Either unbelievers will ***reject the facts*** of the gospel, carrying on with their rebellious lives, or they will ***desperately cry out*** for the salvation found only in Christ.

- And just as vital as knowing the **FACTS OF THE GOSPEL**, God's people need to thoroughly understand **THE RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL** that His Word demands. Confusion on this detail—as much as any other point of gospel truth—is a significant hindrance to the church's evangelistic efforts today.
- Scripture makes no mention of **walking an aisle, praying a prayer, or signing a card**. In fact, God's Word never points back to an isolated event or an emotional decision for assurance of salvation. **THERE IS NO BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THAT KIND OF DECISIONAL REGENERATION**. Moreover, Jesus isn't knocking on the door of the sinner's heart, hoping he will let Him in. He doesn't need sinful man's acceptance—**WE ACTUALLY NEED HIS!**
- Instead, the gospel call to the sinner throughout Scripture is a simple, succinct **command**—**REPENT AND BELIEVE**. If we are to faithfully and accurately proclaim the gospel, our message must culminate in a call for the sinner to **put his faith in Christ and repent from his sin**.

FAITH

- True saving faith is the sinner recognizing his own hopeless condition and **trusting Christ as his righteous and sacrificial substitute**—the only possible means of escape from God’s just wrath.
- The **APOSTLE PAUL** referred to the gospel as **“the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”** (Rom. 1:16). In his commentary on that passage, John MacArthur writes,
- **SALVATION** is not merely **professing to be a Christian**, nor is it **baptism, moral reform, going to church, receiving sacraments**, or living a life of **self-discipline** and **sacrifice**.
- **SALVATION IS BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR**. Salvation comes through giving up on one’s own goodness, works, knowledge, and wisdom and **trusting in the finished, perfect work of Christ**.

- There's nothing sinners can **DO** to gain a right relationship with God—**PAUL** made that very point in (Eph. 2:8-9). ***“By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”***
- Not only does God ***provide the means*** of salvation, but He also ***bestows the very ability*** to lay hold of that salvation through faith in His Son.
- That call to believe in the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ rings out in the words of the evangelists in the New Testament. When **JESUS** spoke to Nicodemus, a high-ranking Jewish scholar, He pointed out ***“that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”*** (John 3:16).
- When the **PHILIPPIAN JAILER** cried out to **PAUL** and **SILAS**, ***“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*** they responded, ***“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved”*** (Acts 16:30-31).

- Paul wrote that God is both *“just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus”* (Rom. 3:26). John’s specific purpose for writing his gospel was *“that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name”* (John 20:31).
- God’s Word is clear: **SALVATION APART FROM FAITH IN CHRIST IS IMPOSSIBLE**. As **PETER** and **JOHN** declared under trial before the Sanhedrin, *“There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12).

REPENTANCE

- From an evangelistic perspective, it is critically important to distinguish **true saving faith** from mere **mental assent**. **FAITH** is not simply an acknowledgment of Christ; **it is an active dependence on Him, borne out in the life of the believer in the form of repentance.**
- Scripture often refers to **faith** and **repentance** in **tandem**, and the two correspond closely in the life of the believer. **TURNING AWAY FROM SIN** in repentance is the natural extension of **TURNING TO CHRIST IN FAITH.**
- At the same time, there is an important distinction between the two. **REPENTANCE** should never be dismissed as merely another word for **BELIEF:**



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- The Greek word for **“REPENTANCE”** is *metanoia* . . . Literally it means **“afterthought”** or **“change of mind,”** but biblically its meaning does not stop there. As *metanoia* is used in the New Testament, it always speaks of **A CHANGE OF PURPOSE**, and specifically a turning from sin. In the sense Jesus used it, repentance calls for a repudiation of the old life and a turning to God for salvation.
 - Such a change of purpose is what **PAUL** had in mind when he described the repentance of the *Thessalonians*: **“You turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God”** (1 Thess. 1:9).

- Throughout Scripture we see the call to repent from sin and turn to God. **CHRIST** warned His followers of the eternal consequences of sinful rebellion, saying ***“Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish”*** (Luke 13:5).
- **PAUL** concluded his sermon on Mars Hill with a command to repent in light of God’s judgment. ***“Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness”*** (Acts. 17:30–31).
- Some argue that calling sinners to repent is adding works to the gospel. But God’s Word is clear that true repentance cannot be mustered up from the unregenerate soul. Instead, like faith, **REPENTANCE IS A GIFT FROM GOD** (cf. Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25).

REPENTANT FAITH

- It is crucial for ***THE BIBLICAL EVANGELIST*** to understand and clearly communicate the vital relationship between ***faith*** and ***repentance***, particularly in the current theological landscape.
- Throughout church history, there have been those who preached a gospel of ***EASY-BELIEVISM*** and ***CHEAP GRACE***—one that required ***NO REPENTANCE*** on the part of the converts. That ***pseudo-gospel*** is thriving in churches today, giving ***false assurance of faith*** to people who have no interest in ***obedience***, ***holiness***, or ***sanctification***. This unbiblical notion of faith apart from repentance would be laughable if it weren't tragically ***LEADING DECEIVED MEN AND WOMEN TO HELL***.

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- Clearly, the biblical concept of **FAITH** must lead to **OBEDIENCE**. **“Believe”** is treated as if it were synonymous with **“obey”** in (John 3:36): ***“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life.”***
 - (Acts 6:7) shows how salvation was ***understood*** in the early church: ***“A great many . . . were becoming obedient to the faith.”*** **OBEDIENCE** is so closely related to saving faith that (Heb. 5:9) uses it as a ***synonym***: ***“Having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.”***

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- **OBEDIENCE** is the inevitable manifestation of true faith. Paul recognized this when he wrote to Titus about *“those who are defiled and unbelieving. . . . They profess to know God but by their deeds they deny Him”* (Titus 1:15–16).
 - To **PAUL**, their perpetual disobedience *proved their disbelief*. Their **actions** denied God more loudly than their words proclaimed him. This is characteristic of **UNBELIEF, NOT FAITH**, for **TRUE FAITH ALWAYS PRODUCES RIGHTEOUS WORKS**.
 - AS THE **REFORMERS** WERE FOND OF SAYING, **WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, BUT JUSTIFYING FAITH IS NEVER ALONE**.
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- The **BIBLICAL TESTIMONY** is clear. **THE GOSPEL CALL** is a call to **REPENT** and **BELIEVE**. You can't have one without the other, and you can't do either without God empowering those responses.
 - If we are to faithfully proclaim the message of salvation, we must establish the problem of **GOD'S HOLINESS** in contrast to **MAN'S DEPRAVITY**. We must present the solution to that humanly insurmountable problem by preaching the **LIFE, DEATH,** and **RESURRECTION** of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is at that point that we are to issue the exhortation to **repent** and **believe** and leave the miraculous work of conversion in God's sovereign hands.