

The Spiritual Habits of Jesus Series

Jesus' Habit of Evangelism

By
Andy Davis

At A Glance:

- I. Introduction
- II. Command to Evangelize
- III. Jesus' Habit of Evangelism
- IV. How to Practice Evangelism
- V. Conclusion
- VI. Questions for Further Thought

These sermon study notes are designed to be a tool used after listening to the sermon. This resource is a guide to help deepen understanding regarding the Scriptures and ideas presented in the sermon. Those who use these study notes are encouraged to look up, read through, and think about Scripture references in this guide. There is more information in these notes than what is presented in the sermon. These study notes are designed to be used as an independent study tool to help the formation of Biblical convictions, character, and conduct.

Jesus' Habit of Evangelism

I. Introduction

A. Illustration: Evangelism Strategies

1. When was the last time you intentionally took a course of action for the purpose of moving someone closer to Jesus with someone who is not currently living for Jesus? How long ago did this take place? While one of the most foundational courses of action will always be having conversations, our evangelism doesn't have to be limited to only conversations. It is possible to communicate some aspect of the message of Jesus by writing letters, making videos or graphics, posting on social media, teaching a class, asking thoughtful questions, making a public presentation, preaching a sermon, or explaining why you are performing a loving act of service. Evangelism can happen in a lot of different ways. The only limitations on how to do evangelism is the creativity of disciples.
2. A regular opportunity that I use to communicate the message of Jesus to others in a way that fits my personality and giftedness has been to write Jesus-focused articles for the O-W Enterprise newspaper. Every few months, I have the platform from which to communicate something meaningful about Jesus and Christianity to our local community on a broad scale. This is why I've been taking the time to write these articles for the past six years. I hope to have a spiritual impact, even with people I've never personally met.
3. Unfortunately, a lot of Christians think evangelism means taking part in a church-organized group event or inviting someone to church. While these activities can be spiritually beneficial, evangelism is so much more than these. Perhaps what is driving this thinking about evangelism is the results of a 2022 survey. A survey by Lifeway Research titled "Evangelism Explosion: Study of American Christians"¹ found that 66% of Christians are not familiar with any "methods for telling others about Jesus." Perhaps the church's evangelistic efforts are lacking because the majority of those in the church don't know how to do evangelism.

B. Jesus constantly engaged in evangelism. As we pay attention to the way Jesus participated in the habit of telling others about Himself, we discover He did a lot more than talk about what He was going to do on the cross, although He did that too. There is a lot more to evangelism than people think. It is not just presenting some pre-planned gospel presentation. It is that. But it is more.

II. Command to Evangelize

A. While Jesus regularly encouraged and gave reasons to persuade people to trust Him and His message, Jesus also explained what the outcome of His life and message would be:

⁴⁶ and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be

¹ Two-thirds of Christians don't know how to share the Gospel | Church & Ministries News (christianpost.com), Lifeway Research

proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.” (Lk. 24:46-48)

- B. According to Jesus, both His life and His message were previously predicted in the Scriptures, “Thus it is written...that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations” (vv. 46-47).² Jesus may have been referring to passages such as 2 Samuel 23:5, Lamentations 4:20-22, Daniel 9:24, Psalm 22, 130, or Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 53:4-6, among others.³ On Jesus’ view, events “must” happen the way God’s Word, the Bible, describes them (Mt. 26:54). Therefore, “repentance for forgiveness of sins” must be “proclaimed...to all the nations” in Jesus’ name—even though this technically isn’t in the form of a command in this text.⁴ Evangelism in connection with Jesus is a requirement of both the Scriptures and Jesus.⁵ Not only was the life and message of Jesus predicted, but so was the communicating of the message to the whole world.⁶ The beginning of this being fulfilled happens in Acts 2:38 by those who are motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- C. What is “evangelism”? The Bible uses these Greek words: *evangelion*—“gospel”—to describe what is said (Mk. 1:14-15); *evangelistes*—“evangelist”—to describe the person who is telling the gospel (Ac. 21:8; Eph. 4:11); and *evangelizo*—“to proclaim the gospel”—to describe the activity of telling the gospel (Rm. 10:15).⁷ Disciples are to tell of the story about Jesus.⁸ Evangelism is defined by its message, not its method.⁹ When the facts of Jesus are being communicated, evangelism is taking place.
- D. The content of the story about Jesus is identified in passages like 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 1:1-5. The central focus of the gospel is Jesus: who He is and what He’s done.¹⁰ Jesus is the basis by which people are restored to a condition of harmony and favor with God. Humanity will face the judgment of God, and only Jesus provides safe passage through that judgment by giving a legal pardon to those who trust Him and transform their lives accordingly (Ac. 17:30-31). A true attitude of trust toward Jesus will influence a person’s actions. Jesus is

² This is the same message Jesus preached during His ministry (Mk. 1:15).

³ See Romans 9:24-29, 10:12, 15:9-12 for more OT passages quoted on this topic as well as the preaching found in the book of Acts. I. Howard Marshall, [The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 906.

⁴ Repentance simply means to turn to God by changing the way a person thinks and acts. This change of life direction results in forgiveness from God.

⁵ The apostles clearly understood evangelism as a command from Jesus (Ac. 1:8, 4:19-20, 5:19-20, 10:42-43, 13:47).

⁶ Leon Morris, [Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 361, I. Howard Marshall, [The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 906.

⁷ Sam Chan, [Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus more Believable](#) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 14

⁸ An astonishing number of people, including Christians, think that trying to change a person’s spiritual beliefs is morally wrong. If this command is going to be understood as it really is—something morally good—we must confront our worldview and source of authority. Either the Bible and Jesus is correct or popular opinion is. Who knows best what is good, God or us? If truth applies to religion, then evangelism is good. If relativism is true, then evangelism is selfish unkind.

⁹ Sam Chan, [Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus more Believable](#) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 16

¹⁰ Sam Chan, [Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus more Believable](#) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 16

the divine Judge through whom God is going to judge humanity in righteousness. While this message is viewed negatively today, it is the message of the Bible, Jesus, and Christianity.

- E. It is fascinating and exciting to note the fact that Christianity is a worldwide religion today, which demonstrates the truthfulness and accuracy of both the Bible and Jesus! When Jesus spoke these words, He was the only person in the world who really understood them. From this moment, those Jesus invested in began to figure it out (Ac. 26:23). Jesus predicted a worldwide movement at a time when only one person understood it. It is remarkable to think about the situation in which Jesus made this statement. I don't know the percentages of success when it comes to creating a worldwide religion, but I imagine it is very small—smaller than becoming a Hollywood celebrity or a professional athlete.¹¹ Jesus, under excruciatingly small odds, called His shot and made it (Mk. 13:10). It is as if Jesus said He was going to make a hole in one just before doing so.¹² Christianity, being what it is today, demonstrates the credibility of Jesus.¹³
- F. Do you understand the content of what needs to be communicated to the world? How knowledgeable are you when it comes to the identity and accomplishments of Jesus? Have you ever explained the gospel to someone else? Over the course of this next year, we are going to be training you in two methods of communicating the message of Jesus. One of these methods is fully developed, while the other one is being finalized in a few of its remaining details. Learning these basics will equip you to be able to accurately explain the gospel to others when you have opportunity.
- G. Our hope in training you in the two gospel presentation methods that we are developing is to give you the confidence you need to open your mouth and tell others about Jesus. This is a point of emphasis for us as a church because the kingdom of God grows on earth through efforts such as these. We want every person who is currently connected to Community Alliance Church and everyone who will be associated with us in the future to be equipped and prepared to tell others about Jesus. We want everyone to be able to experience the joy and satisfaction of being used by God to produce something of eternal significance. Be on the lookout for opportunities to develop your evangelism knowledge and skills through these two gospel presentation methods.

III. Jesus' Habit of Evangelism

- A. Jesus did a lot of evangelism in a variety of settings, especially conversations with people who had diverse backgrounds, distinct understandings of God, and in widely different spiritual conditions. In the past, we've explained the Expose stage of spiritual development and the types of people who are in it.¹⁴ Some people are a long way away from being willing to openly learn about Jesus, while others are ready to commit their lives to Him. People can be found

¹¹ Even if the disciples made up some aspects of the story of Jesus, including this statement, they wouldn't have been able to predict their message would become a worldwide phenomenon that lasted for multiple centuries! This can't be the result of human effort. The accuracy of Jesus' statement is only explained by Jesus' divine identity.

¹² Another example of this comes when Jesus said the woman who anointed Him for His death would be spoken of throughout the world—Jesus predicted the specific content of the New Testament and was correct! (Mt. 26:13, Mk. 14:9).

¹³ Luke 19:32, 22:13, 22:37, 22:44

¹⁴ For more on this see Andy Davis' sermon series *Introduction to the Four E's* sermon 3 "Discipling in the Expose Stage", available on the church app, for more information.

anywhere along this scale of openness toward God, from being completely closed off and hostile toward God to being eager to respond to the message of Jesus. We are going to familiarize ourselves with two examples from the life of Jesus on opposite ends of this scale.

- B. The first example comes while Jesus is standing before the Sanhedrin (the highest Jewish authority) following His arrest. Despite everything Jesus had done in His ministry, most of this group seems to have no openness to listening to what Jesus has to say. Here is how Jesus did evangelism in the most difficult of circumstances:
- ⁶⁶ When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council *chamber*, saying, ⁶⁷ “If You are the Christ, tell us.” But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe; ⁶⁸ and if I ask a question, you will not answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD.” ⁷⁰ And they all said, “Are You the Son of God, then?” And He said to them, “Yes, I am.” ⁷¹ Then they said, “What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.” (Lk. 22:66-71)
- C. This brief conversation is focused on the identity of Jesus as the religious leaders inquire of Him, “If You are the Christ, tell us” (v. 66), and “Are You the Son of God, then?” (v. 70).¹⁵ These are two different titles Jesus used for Himself—three if you include the Son of Man in Jesus’ response. Each of these titles reveals a particular aspect of the identity of Jesus. These religious leaders are trying to find ground to send Jesus to the Romans in order to put Him to death. They think His claim to be the Messiah is a good option because He would be a rival ruler to the emperor, which can be a capital punishment.
- D. Jesus responds to this very hostile group, who was intent on killing Him, by pointing out there was nothing Jesus could say or do that would have any impact on them. If Jesus spoke directly and openly to them, they wouldn’t believe it (“If I tell you, you will not believe” v. 67). If Jesus attempted to help them understand by getting them to think about who He is, they also wouldn’t respond (“if I ask you a question, you will not answer” v. 68).¹⁶ These people were not interested in having a conversation about Jesus’ identity despite their questions. Someone asking a spiritual question is not always an indicator of spiritual interest or openness—it can be used as an attack. Jesus knows there is no strategy that will be effective in this evangelistic situation. This is a no-win scenario. These people had already made up their mind about Jesus, and there was no convincing them otherwise. They rejected Jesus and were immovable from that position.
- E. Therefore, Jesus seals His fate by openly proclaiming His identity, which also serves as a warning to those who are listening to Him and states the consequence of this groups’ response to Jesus (“But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God” v. 69). An affirmative answer is given by Jesus as He is alluding to Daniel 7:13-14 and Psalm 110:1. Jesus tells this group that He will be put in the position of ultimate power and authority—the right hand of God Himself.¹⁷ In this, Jesus claims to be the most significant human person who has ever lived. This outcome is going to be a direct result of this groups’

¹⁵ A similar conversation happened earlier at the Feast of Dedication (Jn. 10:22-26).

¹⁶ Luke 20:3-8, 20:41-44

¹⁷ In the Bible, the right hand is the highest place of honor, glory, power, and authority.

response to Jesus as He says, “But from now on” (v. 69). Jesus knows His life situation is going to soon change through His death.¹⁸

- F. Understanding Jesus’ meaning, the court asked a natural follow up question to clarify what He had just said: “Are You the Son of God, then?” (v. 70). Jesus wasn’t just claiming to be the Messiah according to the religious leaders’ conception of that term (a human King who will establish a free Jewish nation). Now, by His response, Jesus was claiming to be something much more. Jesus and the religious leaders are thinking about the Messiah and Jesus’ identity on different levels, like the situation with Pilate (Jn. 18:33-38).¹⁹ To claim to be at God’s right hand is nearly equivalent to the claim to be the unique Son of God in the minds of the religious leaders, which is why they ask the second question. Jesus is correcting the misunderstanding of who the Messiah is—the Messiah is a person of far greater significant than they realize.
- G. Even though Jesus doesn’t have much to work with as He is confronted by people who are spiritually immovable and uninterested in what is true, Jesus still speaks directly to them about His identity. Jesus confidently lets the chips fall where they may as He speaks the truth. At the same time, Jesus is still trying to clear up the misunderstandings that this group has about who the Messiah is and the true identity of Jesus.
- H. Jesus not only found Himself in the most difficult situations regarding evangelism, He also found Himself in the “easiest” ones as well. While the people in the previous example were uninterested and immovable, Zaccheus was both extremely interested and easily moved:
- ¹ He entered Jericho and was passing through. ² And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. ³ Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. ⁴ So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. ⁵ When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” ⁶ And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. ⁷ When they saw it, they all *began* to grumble, saying, “He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” ⁸ Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” ⁹ And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Lk. 19:1-10)
- I. Basically, Jesus just walked by and said “hello,” which led to Zaccheus committing himself to Jesus’ way of life. When Jesus arrived, Zaccheus was already showing interest (“Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was” v. 3). His spiritual interest in Jesus was so great that he expended significant energy to have contact with Jesus (“he was small in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him” vv. 3-4).

¹⁸ Leon Morris, [Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 336.

¹⁹ I. Howard Marshall, [The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 850.

- J. Jesus interacted with Zaccheus ever so briefly when He said, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” (v. 5). Notice how Jesus doesn’t say anything spiritual. He doesn’t share about His identity. Jesus doesn’t tell Zaccheus that He can forgive Zaccheus’ sins. He simply deals with practical logistics.
- K. How does Zaccheus respond? In repentance, which immediately impacts his lifestyle and actions (“half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much” v. 8). Zaccheus is instantly generous, has a desire to correct any wrongs he has committed, and changes his life priorities from greed to self-sacrifice. Jesus responds by giving a commentary on what just happened (“Today salvation has come to this house” v. 9). Clearly, Zaccheus was ready to trust Jesus and only needed the opportunity to respond. Apparently, the Father had been working in Zaccheus’ heart previously and he had learned enough about Jesus that he was willing to trust Him.²⁰ The heavy spiritual lifting had already been done. All Jesus had to do was walk by and the ripe spiritual fruit fell right into the basket on its own.
- L. After explaining what has happened spiritually, Jesus encourages others to do what they had just witnessed (“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” v. 10). Zaccheus’s response to Jesus in repentance fulfills one of the main purposes for Jesus’ life. Jesus provides a spiritual rescue to whomever is willing to change the way they are living to obey Jesus’ way of life, just as Zaccheus did. Essentially Jesus is saying, “I can do for you what I just did for Zaccheus.” This situation is on the opposite end of the openness scale to the religious leaders.
- M. If we make it our goal in evangelism to “lead someone to Christ” or to get them to say the “Sinner’s Pray”, we might make the mistake of thinking Jesus failed in the first situation but was successful in the second. If we think about evangelism only in terms of “saving them”, It is easy for us to get discouraged when we have spiritual conversations with others, but we rarely or never have the opportunity to bring someone across the “finish line”.
- N. The reality is that Jesus was successful in both situations. Jesus presented the truth of God to every person’s conscience while giving them the opportunity to respond to Him (2 Cor. 4:2). Jesus focused on being faithful, doing what He knew the Father wanted Him to do, and did it to the best of His abilities. Then, Jesus left the results up to the Father—at least in His human nature. While the outcomes of each situation were radically different, the result was caused by the spiritual condition of the people Jesus was speaking with, not the evangelistic skill of Jesus. In each case, Jesus said exactly what needed to be said. Even though Jesus did everything right, there were people who still rejected Him.
- O. As we gain knowledge, skill, and confidence in evangelism, this reality should be a source of encouragement and comfort to us. The results are ultimately up to God, not us. God is the One who must perform the miracle of salvation in another person’s heart (Mt. 19:25-26). Only He can take out a heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh so a person can respond to Jesus (Ezek. 11:19. 36:26)—called regeneration. This can take the pressure off us and motivate us to open

²⁰ John 6:44, 65

our mouths to tell others about Jesus. Even if we say the wrong thing, the Holy Spirit can work powerfully in a person so they respond to the message of Jesus. While the Holy Spirit uses us in evangelism, we don't ultimately produce the result. We have an ally who helps us in evangelism (Jn. 16:7-11).

IV. How to Practice Evangelism

- A. It is possible for disciples to develop knowledge and skills that can make them more effective in evangelism. Effectiveness comes from communicating the message of Jesus more accurately (2 Tim. 2:15), speaking it boldly (Eph. 6:20), being able to make it clear (Col. 4:4), and defending it with persuasiveness (Phil.1:16, 1:7, 1 Pet. 3:15, Ac. 18:4, 28:23, 2 Cor. 5:11).
- B. This can be done by learning from Jesus' example. We only looked at two examples from the life of Jesus above. There are many other examples that can be examined for the purpose of developing greater knowledge and skill in evangelism. Jesus is the best evangelist who has ever lived.
- C. Further, there are some highly recommended and used training resources that we use here at Community Alliance Church for equipping people for evangelism. The first is the book or video course by Gregory Koukl called *Tactics: A Gameplan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*. This question-based evangelism style is very effective in having spiritual conversations in non-offensive ways. While this first resources gives you the basic skills and direction in evangelistic conversations, Greg's second book and video course in this series applies those skills to specific current issues that frequently come up in spiritual conversations which is called *Street Smarts: Using Questions to Answer Christianity's Toughest Challenges*. A good addition to these very practical resources is Sam Chan's *Evangelism in A Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus More Believable*. While still quite practical, this resource also provides the theory and background knowledge concerning evangelism that can help disciples be more effective in their conversations. It provides a framework for how to explain the message of Jesus in a variety of ways according to the needs of the individual.
- D. Becoming knowledgeable and skilled in evangelism is a process that takes time and effort. More accurately, it is a never-ending learning process. However, this is an eternally significant investment that can help us be better positioned to be more persuasive in our spiritual conversations with others. Our investment here can impact the condition of other people's souls. While the Holy Spirit ultimately produces the results, we still have a responsibility before God to speak as we should, and we will be accountable for our part. If you use and master the provided resources, you will be well positioned to have effective spiritual conversations about Jesus.

V. Conclusion

- A. Jesus' message spreading throughout the world was predicted by the Bible and Jesus. Those who follow Jesus will take that responsibility seriously by actively looking for opportunities to share the message about Jesus with others and will be ready to make the most of those situations. Jesus had a regular habit of explaining His identity and importance to those He encountered.

- B. People will not enter the kingdom of God by trusting Jesus unless they hear the message of Jesus that we have been entrusted with: “¹⁴ How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?... ¹⁷ So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. (Rm. 10:14-17). There are people in our lives right now who need to hear about Jesus. Will you tell them?

VI. Questions for Further Thought

- A. Describe a time you have shared the message of Jesus with someone else. How did it go?
- B. What do you learn about evangelism from Jesus telling others about their spiritual need (Lk. 13:1-9)? How does the parable connect to the situation?
- C. How would you respond if someone said, “I can’t believe in a God that murdered His own Son?”
- D. What factors both motivate and discourage disciples from telling others about Jesus?
- E. What steps could you take personally to get more involved in sharing the message of Jesus?