Open your Bible to Romans 1. That's where we'll be starting today.

•We're taking a break from the book of Exodus.

•I'll be preaching topically for the next month or so on the subject of Evangelism.

Now, let me explain why I wanted to preach a series on Evangelism:

•Evangelism, proclaiming the message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, is the great call of the Church.

•Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. And He has entrusted His People with the message of what He has done to save.

•Sinners are saved only by faith in Christ. Or, to put it differently, it is by believing the Gospel, the Good News of what Christ has done, that sinners are made right with God.

•And God has commanded us to take that message to the world.

Every so often, the Church needs to be reminded that the proclamation of the Gospel is the great reason it exists.

•God doesn't save us and then take us straight to Heaven. And one of His reasons is that He desires us to preach the Gospel to the lost. It's easy for us to get focused on other things and lose sight of our Great Commission.

From time to time, we need called back to the work.

•And what's more is that this great task is often the one we're most reluctant to take part in.

•So I hope this next month reinvigorates us all to do the work. Especially if we've been neglecting it.

•Evangelism isn't easy. But it's necessary. And, more importantly, it's commanded by our Lord.

•So I hope to be useful to you and, with God's Word, inspire you to put your hand to the work.

Now we've all heard the quote that's often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the

Gospel. If necessary, use words."

•He never said that. And it's nonsense. It's like saying, "Breath. If necessary, use your lungs."

•The Gospel is a MESSAGE. The word literally means "GOOD NEWS."

•It's the true story of what God has done through Jesus Christ, His Son, to save sinners.

•And God's People are called to be HERALDS of that message. (Messengers. Proclaimers.)

•And it's our message that will bring sinners to salvation, if they repent and believe on Christ.

That seems crazy, doesn't it?

•People will be saved and come to know the Living God through simple words that we'll speak to them.

•But that's the point! It's so simple and crazy and unlikely so GOD GETS ALL THE GLORY when sinners are saved.

•We just speak. And God does the rest, as He sees fit.

•Through the weak words of weak men, God will save sinners.

And that means that we MUST KNOW OUR MESSAGE.

•We need to be well acquainted with what to say.

•We need to be CLEAR, and BOLD, and PLAIN in our declaration of God's truth.

•So the first sermon in this series is a refresher on WHAT WE PROCLAIM to the world.

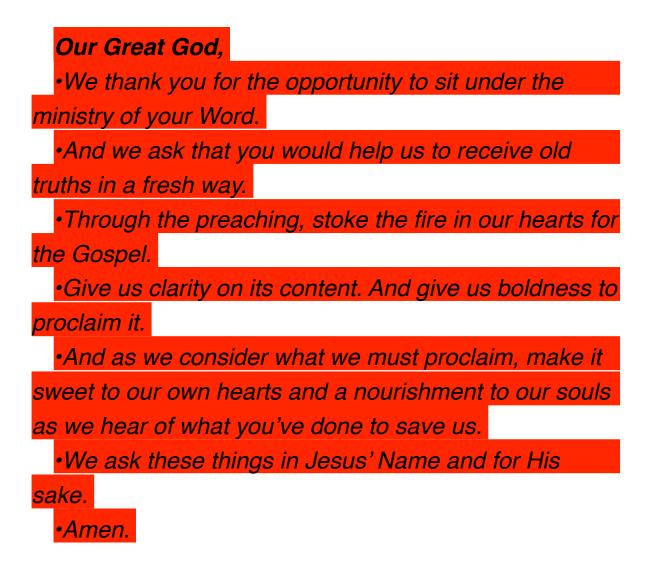
NOTE: This sermon is essentially my version of Greg Gilbert's wonderful little book "What is the Gospel?"

Today, I hope to remind you of what God calls you to tell the people He's placed in your life.

•So may God bless the preaching of His Word.

With that said, I'll pray. And then we'll get started.

(PRAY)



1.) Now, I'd like to make a clarification to begin:

•This sermon is NOT meant to be a script for you to follow when evangelizing.

•Every conversation and every person you'll speak to is going to be different.

•People you talk with will have different levels of

understanding about various aspects of the Gospel. So sometimes you'll have to highlight and labor one truth more than another.

•And conversations can go in many different directions very quickly.

•So this isn't a script. It's an outline of the basics that must be communicated if we're going to proclaim the biblical Gospel.

In this sermon, I'll outline the Gospel in four basic headings: GOD, MAN, CHRIST, RESPONSE.

•Much more can be said about each point than I can say in one sermon.

•My goal is simply to give a basic flyover of each point.

2.) Now, I just said that the Gospel can be outlined in four points: GOD, MAN, CHRIST, RESPONSE.

•So I think I should defend that assertion and show you that this is what the Apostles preached.

Romans 1-4 is the most thorough example of this.

•Paul's letter to the Romans is arguably the greatest book in the whole Bible.

•In it, the Apostle preaches the Gospel beautifully and systematically. Especially in the first four chapters.

•So I'm going to briefly walk through the major points

of those chapters.

Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."

•And then Paul goes on to declare that Gospel.

And He starts with GOD.

•vv18-23: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived in the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things."

The Apostle declares that God is the Creator and the One to whom all men must give an account.

•Man is not his own. We did not make ourselves.

•So it is our obligation, as God's creatures, to worship and serve Him.

But notice that, right in the middle, Paul pivots to talk about MAN.

•Since God is our Maker, we ought to worship Him, but have instead, as he says in v25, "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator…"

•And it's because of this exchange, this sin, this idolatry, God's wrath "is revealed from heaven."

That's mankind's great PROBLEM!

•We've sinned against God. And because of that, we're liable to His judgment and wrath.

Paul then spends the majority of chapters 1-3 indicting humanity for sin.

•Chapter 1 is focused mainly on the Gentiles.

•But Paul moves to accuse the Jews of sin as well in Chapter 2:

• "Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the VERY SAME THINGS." (2:1)

•Paul then prosecutes his case against the Jews through Chapters 2 and 3.

Then in 3:9-10 he says, "...all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one..."

•Jews and Gentiles, the whole human race, is guilty of sin against God.

•And v19 tells us that some day every mouth will be stopped and the whole world will be held accountable to God.

•God will judge the world for sin. And all will be found guilty and without excuse before Him.

The Apostle then turns to speak about CHRIST.

•He tells that the solution to man's problem of sin and God's wrath is the death and resurrection of Christ.

•v21: "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the Law..."

•There is a way for sinners to be declared righteous in God's sight instead of being condemned.

•And it's "apart from the Law." It has nothing to do with trying harder to be good or living a more righteous life.

How will that happen?

•vv24-25 tell us that sinners can be "justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood..."

•Because of Christ's sacrificial death, sinners may be

saved from the wrath that they deserve for their sin.

And then Paul turns to tell of what RESPONSE God requires of sinners in order for them to benefit from Christ's suffering and death.

•He gets into this at the end of Chapter 3 and throughout Chapter 4.

•He says that salvation has been provided "through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe." (3:22)

•"And to the one who does not work, but BELIEVES in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness..." (4:5)

•Christ and His work is given to anyone who will believe in Him. Sinners will be saved through faith in Christ.

So there it is: GOD, MAN, CHRIST, RESPONSE.

•Romans 1-4 is the most in-depth treatment of the Gospel.

•But other times we read short summaries of it.

•And in those summaries, often one or more points are assumed or implied.

•But whether it's in Romans, other letters, or the sermons of Acts, you'll find this same outline every time: GOD. MAN. CHRIST. RESPONSE.

•First, the Bad News: God is judge and you are a sinner.

•Then the Good News: Christ, by His life, death, and resurrection, will save any sinner who repents and believes in Him.

So now we turn to think more on each of those aspects of the Gospel.

3.) We start with GOD: The Creator, Lawgiver, and Righteous Judge.

•Brothers and sisters, we have to start with God because He's the One everything is about. The Bible starts with Him. Everything starts with Him. It's HIS GOSPEL.

•And HE is the One sinners need reconciled to.

Furthermore, we must start with Him because most people in our culture DON'T KNOW WHO GOD IS.

•Gone are the days when your average American knows anything about the God of Scripture.

•Almost everyone you meet has a view of God like this: An old man in the sky, who makes no demands, only requests. He takes what he can get from you, with regard to worship and obedience. He would never, for any reason, judge or damn you. He exists for you, but you don't exist for him. He's a cosmic bellhop, a genie, here to do your bidding, if you ask nicely. He may be disappointed with your choices, but he has no wrath. He's an all-powerful pushover.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHO GOD IS!

•So we've got to get that straight right off the bat.

We must make it clear that God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is the Creator.

•That everything exists by His will and for Him. For His glory and to make much of Him.

•That mankind was made to honor, worship, obey, glorify, and love Him above all other things.

•The unbeliever needs to know that God is the One to whom we owe everything.

•And that as our Creator, HE OWNS US. He has all rights over us.

•We are not buddies. We are not equals. But He is GOD and we are His creatures, obligated and bound to Him, to do whatever He is pleased to command of us.

And we have to tell them that this God is the Lawgiver.

•There is a way He expects us to live: HIS WAY.

•God has given us commandments.

•He's given us GOOD LAWS that reflect His righteous character. (Summarized in the Ten Commandments)

•And He's created us to reflect His character by living

according to those Laws.

•They need to know that God doesn't make requests. He issues commands. And we're obligated to obey whatever He's commanded.

•Again, GOD OWNS US! We are not our own. We owe Him obedience.

•And if we disobey His commands, if we refuse to love Him, if we misrepresent His perfect character, He will punish us.

So we also have to tell them that God is the Righteous and Holy Judge.

 Habakkuk 1:13 says that God is "of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong..."

Isaiah 6:3 says, God is "Holy, holy, holy..."

•God hates sin. He hates disobedience. It's the antithesis of His very nature.

•He has no fellowship with it. And He promises to judge all wickedness.

•As Exodus 34:7 says, God "will by no means clear the guilty..."

•Psalm 7:11 says, "God is a righteous judge..."

•And Psalm 35:5 says, "He loves righteousness and justice..."

He is holy. He hates sin.

•And He is the perfect Judge. He will not let any sin go

unpunished.

•He will not, and cannot, let sin go un-dealt with. Because to do so would violate His own righteous and holy nature.

•God is love, yes. But God is the holy Hater of sin. And He will never overlook, ignore, or tolerate it.

NOTE: We must not neglect that God is love.

•We must not downplay His compassion, mercy, and grace.

•But, at the same time, we must drive home the reality that man is obligated to obey his Maker. That God has given Law. That God is perfectly holy. And that He is the Judge of All Mankind.

•That's what needs driven home to our hearers today, because nobody knows it or wants to believe it.

•Why? Because if we're obligated to God and He is the holy Judge, that means that we're all liable to His judgment.

•And that brings us to our next point.

4.) MAN: The Sinner and Lawbreaker.

•People in our culture DON'T KNOW WHAT SIN IS. So we have to be clear about man's problem.

•Most people think of sin as a small thing.

•They think of sin as merely breaking a rule. Or as an instance of human frailty. A foible. A minor flaw. A little

shortcoming. A mistake.

•Sin isn't considered a big deal by very many people.

If they think about sin at all, they think to themselves,
"God understands. I'm only human. Nobody's perfect.
So it's nothing to get worked up about or really feel guilty for. After all, God is love, right?"

So we have to explain that sin is a huge deal. And because of sin, GOD is our great problem.

•To sin is to disobey God. Whether that's by doing the opposite of what He commands, or by refusing to positively do what He commands.

•It's much more than merely "breaking a rule."

 Scripture describes sin as "lawlessness" and "rebellion."

•It's to behave as if God is not God. As if He can be disobeyed with no problem. That He doesn't have to obeyed. That man is autonomous.

•It's to rebel against God. To reject His authority. To shake your fist at the heavens and declare that you'll go your own way.

RC Sproul said that "Sin is cosmic treason."

•God is the King. And sin is an attempt to dethrone Him.

•It's to act as if you're the king of your life. That you aren't obligated to God.

•To sin is to spit in the face of your Maker.

•It's an attempt to un-God, God. And set yourself in His rightful place.

And man's problem with sin began in the Garden of Eden.

•God told Adam, our first father, to not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

•If he obeyed, he'd live forever with God. If he disobeyed, he would "surely die." (Physically and spiritually.)

•He'd be cut off from God. He'd become liable to death, judgment, and eternity in Hell.

•And Adam represented not just himself, but all mankind that would descend from him by ordinary generation.

And Adam SINNED.

•When Adam ate the fruit, he was attempting to be "like God."

•He was attempting to throw off the reign of God over him. He was declaring independence from his Maker.

•He was consciously rejecting God as God and choosing to worship himself.

 In this act, Adam broke the perfect relationship he had with God.

•And his mind became dark, selfish, wicked. And his

soul became void of good and spiritual life.

•And since he represented all of us, our relationship to God is now broken from the moment we exist.

His guilt was imputed to all of us.

•And we're born sinners. With hearts estranged from God. Hostile to Him. Wanting to go our own way, as our first father did. Rejecting God's authority over us.

•We're born under the wrath of God, liable to judgment and Hell from the womb, because of Adam's guilt.

•And then, because we're born sinners, we grow up to commit actual sins ourselves.

•We don't become sinners when we sin. We sin because we're sinners.

•Sin isn't something we do. It's who we are. We ARE sinners.

This has to be driven home strongly!

•We're not "good people" who sometimes commit individual sins.

•We're sinners to the core. Rebels against God.

•We don't love God. By nature, we hate Him.

•And that hatred is evidenced in our DISOBEDIENCE TO HIM.

NOTE: It's at this point that most people will put up a fight.

•They'll object to being such a horrible sinner. Or they'll try to downplay it in some way.

•You'll hear, "I'm a pretty good person." Or, "I don't do a bunch of bad stuff. You're exaggerating."

•If that happens, walk them through the Ten Commandments. Take them to the Law, that they might be driven to Christ.

•Tell them how Jesus teaches that we can sin in thought, word, and deed. To desire to sin is just as sinful as committing it with your hands.

•Point out their sin.

•If you know them personally, get personal.

•Show their guilt before the holy God! Show that they are indeed sinners. Show that their lives declare that they're hostile to God.

We must make it clear that sin is the great problem because IT IS AGAINST THE HOLY GOD WHO JUDGES SINNERS.

•That they'll stand before God and be without excuse because they're guilty of rejecting Him and worshipping themselves/their will.

•Make it plain that God promises to judge and cast them into an eternal Hell for their sins.

•Tell them "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

•Tell them that all unrepentant sinners will be cast into the "lake of fire and sulfur." (Rev. 20:10) Into a place of "unquenchable fire...where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:43, 48)

•These things aren't pleasant to say. But they must be said!

NOTE: Friends, we can't soft-pedal the hard truths.

•We must tell people that they're sinners and that they'll be judged by God.

•We must warn them about Hell.

•If we don't tell these truths, then there's no point in telling the rest of the message.

•Why? Because Good News isn't good news if you don't know you need it.

•A message of salvation is worthless if you don't know that you need saving.

•We have to hammer these things home!

OUR MESSAGE IS NOT ABOUT MAKING BAD PEOPLE BETTER OR GETTING PEOPLE TO LIVE BETTER LIVES.

•Our message is about how sinners can be reconciled to the holy God they've sinned against.

•Therefore, to downplay sin, judgment, and Hell is to downplay the entire Gospel.

But this is where we often fail.

•We don't go hard here for fear of offending.

•OR we generalize these truths. We talk about "people" being sinners instead of "YOU are a sinner."

•We talk about God sending "people" to Hell instead of "YOU will go to Hell for YOUR sins."

•BUT WE HAVE TO TELL THEM!

•This is a hard thing. But we must say it! We must warn!

But once we've established the Bad News, we move on to the best part: The GOOD NEWS.

5.) CHRIST: The Savior of Sinners.

•Friends, most people know that we believe Jesus is important. But they DON'T KNOW WHY.

•They don't know why He came or why He died.

•They don't know HOW His death results in salvation for sinners.

•I heard an atheist comedian once say, "Jesus died for your sins' makes as much sense as 'I took a hammer to my foot for your mortgage."

•Most simply do not understand how the death of Jesus can have any effect on the sins we've committed.

•So we must proclaim Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners.

God Himself has come to fix our problem. That's our message.

•God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, took on human flesh, and became a man.

•"Truly God, He became truly man, two natures in one Person."

•Born of a virgin, that He might not inherit the guilt and sin nature of Adam, the sinless and perfect man came into the world. The Last Adam.

And Jesus Christ, the God-Man, came that He might represent His People before God, just as Adam represented the human race in the Garden.

 A new Representative for sinners has come, that He might be and do all that God requires for them to be saved.

•He came to do what Adam should've done. What we should've done: He came to obey God perfectly.

•And He came to pay for the sins of His People. To suffer divine justice on their behalf, that God might be just and the justifier of sinners.

Brothers and sisters, we must proclaim Christ the Representative and Substitute for sinners.

•And we must proclaim both aspects of His work: His perfect, substitutionary life. AND His wrath-satisfying, substitutionary death.

1. First, His perfect life in our place.

•They need to know that Jesus didn't come to earth and go straight to the Cross BECAUSE we need righteousness before God. So Jesus had to merit perfect righteousness as a man, for us.

•That our Lord lived a sinless life of perfect obedience to God. Obeying every commandment. Perfectly loving God and men. Never sinning.

•And that He did so, in order that sinners who have no righteousness, might receive His righteousness, that God might declare them righteous in His sight.

•We tell of Jesus, the worker of perfect righteousness for His People.

2. Second, we must declare the suffering and death of Christ in our place.

•That our Lord, after living a life of total righteousness, took upon Himself the sin and guilt of all who would ever believe on Him, and offered Himself to God as their Substitute.

•That, on the Cross, Christ didn't just die. He bore the very wrath of God against sin.

•That He was "put forward as a propitiation by His blood..." (Romans 3:25). That He satisfied the wrath of Almighty God in the place of His People. That He took the punishment that we deserve.

•And that He died. He gave His life as a ransom for His People. His death for our life. •The wages of sin is death. And, bearing our sin, He died in our place, bearing the curse for what we've done.

3. And third, we declare His glorious resurrection.

•That the Cross isn't the end of the story. That on the third day, our Lord rose from the grave.

•That His resurrection was His vindication. It was God's "amen" to Jesus' cry, "It is finished."

•The resurrection is proof that God accepts the work of Christ on behalf of His People.

•So we declare that our Lord is not dead, but is alive and reigning over all things.

•That He has been given all authority in Heaven and on earth. That Jesus is King!

 And "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead."

•He is LORD! He is KING! And His resurrection is the proof that He is the SAVIOR!

Brothers and sisters, THAT IS THE GOOD NEWS!

•God is the holy judge. Man is the wicked sinner. But Christ is the glorious Savior.

 In Christ, God, the One we've sinned against, in His great love, has graciously made a way for sinners to be reconciled to Him and saved from His wrath, because
 Jesus paid for the sins of His People and worked perfect righteousness for them.

•Because of Christ, sinners don't have to be condemned but can be declared righteous by God, having their sins forgiven.

•In Christ, sinners can have peace and eternal fellowship with the very God they've sinned against.

•There is no better news we could tell!

6.) But we're still not finished with our message.

•And that's because God commands a proper RESPONSE from sinners if they're to benefit from Christ's work: Faith and repentance.

Brothers and sisters, people DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE SAVED.

•They think becoming a Christian is following the moral example of Jesus, or trying to become a better person, or thinking good thoughts about Him.

•They think sinners are saved by "trying harder to obey God," or believing the right things about Jesus and then obeying God well enough to be saved.

•So we must come to them with God's command of simple faith and true repentance.

•If we don't tell them the God-commanded response, we're leaving them on the outside looking in on the work of Christ. And we mustn't do that.

So we call them to FAITH.

•Faith is simply trusting God's promise. Trusting that God is willing and able to do what He's said.

•Namely, that God has promised to save whoever will believe that Jesus has done enough to save them.

•Faith is trusting that CHRIST ALONE can and will save you from your sins.

And faith is PERSONAL.

•The believing sinner says, "Jesus did this FOR ME. God promises to SAVE ME. I'M trusting Jesus to save ME."

·lt's not a mere affirmation of intellectual truths.

•The believing sinner says, "I'm all in on Christ. I have no other hope. He must save me or I'll perish."

•The believing sinner forsakes every hope of righteousness apart from Christ. Forsakes their works. And clings only to God's promise to save FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

Friends, we must drive home that it is by FAITH ALONE that sinners are saved.

•Not a mix of faith and good works. But faith alone.

•That Christ's works are sufficient to save. That it's His blood and righteousness that saves and NOTHING IN THE SINNER.

•That we bring nothing to the table. Not at the

beginning, middle, or end. But it's CHRIST ALONE received by FAITH ALONE.

And with this call to faith comes the call to repent.

•It's the other side of the coin.

•God commands the sinner to, trusting in Christ, turn away from their sin and TOWARD HIM.

•He calls the sinner to, in their heart, forsake the sin they've loved their whole life. To hate it, desiring to leave it behind, and follow Christ.

•To give up their self-will. To give up their false claim to being king of their life and submit to Christ as Lord.

And this is all just an aspect of FAITH.

•You repent BECAUSE you believe. So God commands repentance and faith.

•You believe that you're a sinner, God hates sin, and Jesus saves sinners.

•So, overcome with gratitude and love for God because of His great mercy, you repent. You love God and no longer want to sin against Him.

•To truly believe is to repent. You're turning TO Christ and AWAY from sin.

•You're believing that JESUS IS LORD and you are not. So you embrace Him as the true King.

Brothers and sisters, we must call sinners to

repent and believe on Christ because there is no other way to receive Him as Savior.

•The way of salvation is exclusive. There is no other hope for sinners. No other Savior.

•It's Christ or Hell.

•So we tell the unbeliever, "You must choose. Either you repent and believe, or you face God for your sins."

•We declare, "to the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness." (Romans 4:5)

•That "the righteousness of God" is "through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe." (Romans 3:22)

•But we must also tell them that God will inflict "vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus." (2 Thess. 1:8)

God, in His wonderful mercy, says, "Repent and believe, and be saved."

•But if Christ is rejected, the wrath of God will one day consume them.

NOTE: This is the HARDEST PART, in my experience.

•Pushing people for a response. Telling them that they MUST leave their life of sin behind and come to Christ.

•And that they must do so IMMEDIATELY.

•That's the hard part. Because that's when people get the most offended. But we must do it.

Hear me: You have not evangelized if you leave the Gospel message up in the air as a set of facts to be pondered, or your religious opinion.

•Our Lord COMMANDED men to "repent and believe in the Gospel." (Mark 1:15)

•We must do the same.

•So we say, "Friend, YOU must repent and believe in Jesus, or YOU will suffer God's wrath for eternity in Hell. Will YOU repent? Will YOU trust in Christ? Don't delay! Do it now!"

This is where things will get awkward.

•It's where we might face the most hostility.

•But we must do it, accepting whatever comes.

•This is our calling. We must be bold for Christ and preach His Gospel.

7.) So there it is: GOD, MAN, CHRIST, RESPONSE.

•That's our message. And we must preach it clearly and boldly to anyone who will listen.

You know, I've done a fair amount of evangelism over the last thirteen years. And I constantly hear, "Nobody has ever told me that." •And I hear it even from people who were raised in church.

•My point is that most people you interact with HAVE NEVER HEARD THE BIBLICAL GOSPEL.

•To paraphrase Paul Washer, it's not so much that people are hardened against the Gospel. They're Gospel ignorant. Nobody has ever preached it to them.

•So TAKE THIS MESSAGE OUT THERE AND TELL THEM!

•They can't be saved unless they believe. And they can't believe unless they hear. And they can't hear unless someone tells them.

Christian, when you leave this room, you take the most powerful message in the world with you.

•"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16)

•May God help us to preach this glorious, powerful, saving Gospel.

•Amen.