

Get in the Game-4
“Personal Evangelism”
Acts 2:47 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment and welcome all of our first time guests and those worshipping with us online!

We’re finishing up our “Get in the Game” series. What we’ve been learning is that following Jesus isn’t about sitting on the sidelines and being entertained...

It’s about getting in the game...Paul says the Christian life is like running in a race...

Series Verse

24 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!-1 Corinthians 9:24 (NLT)

In week one we talked about the importance of being part of a biblical community...The local church is the team, the pastors and leaders are the coaches and King Jesus is the Owner...

We saw in Acts chapter 2 how the first century church gathered together for the “home game” that’s Sunday for us...but they also gathered together during the week for their “away games” (that’s life groups, and bible studies, and fun fellowship times)

We said hey if you’re not committed to a local church, it’s time to get in the game, find your team!

In week two we talked about finding your position on the team...We learned that God has given us both natural and supernatural gifts that He expects us to use on game day...You were born with natural gifts and talents...You were born-again with supernatural gifts...

It's time to use them! Run to win! Get in the game with serving! That's why you see all of these tables around the room today...these are different areas where you can learn how to use your gifts!

Last week we talked about getting in the game with our generosity...Now if you missed last week, unfortunately we had a technical problem, so the video of the sermon isn't available...

However, we talked about how one of the indicators that you're growing in your faith is generosity...As the early church grew in the Lord they became more and more generous with their time, talents and treasure...A giving heart is a growing heart!

Now if you notice something about all of these messages...They're about us...

The church growing together, serving together, worshiping together, taking care of each other, fellowshiping together...

And these things are important, we need them, but here's the danger...A church can become inward focused...In other words, it's all about us...it's all about bible studies and bbq's...

We're saved, we're going to heaven, and so we just keep doing things that will benefit us, that will help us grow in the faith...We forget that there is a whole city around us that is going to hell without Jesus...

And when a church gets this "we only care about us four and no more" attitude...it actually becomes unbalanced.

And they forget that we've been given a mission to complete...

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, [b] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”-Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

So as we've been using the first church as an example of how we should be getting in the game, we want to remember that we need to be reaching inward...we need to be learning and growing together as a church...

But we need to be balanced...We need to stay on mission so we also need to be reaching outward how do we do this?

In Acts two there's a verse that actually balances everything out...

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.-Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

Without the words "And the Lord added to their numbers daily those who were being saved" the early church would have been inwardly focused and unbalanced...

They didn't only reach in...they also reached out...and that's what I want to talk to you about today...It's time for us to get in the game with personal evangelism!

So I want to close out this series giving you three facts about evangelism, and then give you three practical tips to help you get in the game!

High-five your neighbor and tell them we've got to tell somebody about Jesus!

Pray

Saved people can't **SAVE PEOPLE**

...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.-Acts 2:47b

In other words, we can't save anybody...God and only God can save...Evangelism is a divine work

The Psalmist wrote...

12 But God is my King from long ago; he brings salvation on the earth.-Psalm 72:12 (NIV)

Remember when Jesus was telling His disciples that He was going to go back to the Father after He rose from the dead? It's in John 16...and He's telling them that He's going to leave and they get really sad...

6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;

11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.-John 16:6-11 (NKJV)

It's not our job to convict the world...I think that sometimes we forget that...The Holy Spirit is the One who touches a person's heart and lets them know that they are lost in their sin...that their sin separates them from God...

Do you remember when you realized that you were a sinner? Maybe you were in a church service like this, and you were listening to the Word of God being preached, and suddenly you realized that you are guilty of breaking all of God's commandments...

You've lied, You've stolen, You worshiped idols...Other people, places and things were given priority over God...and so on and so on...

Suddenly Romans 3:23 made sense to you...

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, -Romans 3:23 (NIV)

It wasn't the preacher, it wasn't the worship team, or your friend that brought that conviction to your heart...It was the Holy Spirit!

44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.-John 6:44 (NIV)

The Holy Spirit chases after us...He pursues us...He's been called "The Hound of Heaven" because He relentlessly pursues us, wrestles us to the ground and opens our hearts to the truth...He's the One who helps us understand why we need a Savior in the first place!

So saved people can't save people...Only God can do that, but that doesn't mean that we aren't involved in the work...

Saved people **TELL PEOPLE**

You see the Lord saves people but He uses us to tell people about Jesus! Let me show you what I mean...

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

As Peter is preaching, He's telling them the bad news...Hey Jesus was the promised Messiah and Lord of all, and He came to set you free but you actually helped put Him to death...You crucified the Lord...but it was actually part of God's plan all along...What is Peter doing? He's witnessing to them about Who Jesus is...

Now watch how we work with the Holy Spirit...

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart (that's the Holy Spirit) and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

You see, when the Holy Spirit convicts our hearts...we realize that we are guilty...and if you were to stop right there...there's no hope...but the gospel means good news!

God meets you right where you are, but He doesn't want to leave you in the same condition that He found you in...He doesn't leave you hopeless...He offers us His grace...Jesus paid for our sins...We can be forgiven!

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.-Acts 2:14; 37-41(NIV)

What I'm trying to show you is that God does the work...but He uses His people to get the work done! God moves the hearts of people as we move our lips and tell people!

Now this isn't the only way that people get saved...I've heard testimonies of people reading their Bible and as the living Word of God is being read, the Holy Spirit convicts their hearts and they get saved...

But most lost people aren't reading their Bibles...And Jesus told us to go and preach the gospel...which means He wants us to bring the message to others...He's looking for people who will get in the game...

This wasn't just a NT thing...

Remember the Prophet Isaiah? He has a vision where He's standing in the throne room of God...

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

As Isaiah is in God's presence, He quickly realizes that he is a sinful man...He suddenly understands that He's condemned to die without God's forgiveness...But God doesn't want to leave us in the condition He found us...

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Okay, I don't have too much time to go into this, but what I want you to see is that this is a picture of what Jesus does for us...The burning coal symbolizes the finished work of Jesus...He died for us...His blood makes us clean...

Now why did I tell you all of this? Because He wants saved people to tell people...He's looking for people who will get in the game...

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" 9 He said, "Go and tell this people:-Isaiah 6:1-9 (NIV)

God's still looking for people to get in the game...the problem is most of us say "Here I am God...Send her!"

Believe it or not, that was me at one time! When Pastor Cyndie and I got saved...she was always telling people about Jesus, and I was just fine with keeping Jesus to myself!

In fact, she was witnessing so much about Jesus that she was told that if she didn't stop she would lose her job!

I would sit in wonder as she told me a new story just about every day how she prayed with this person and that person...

I started to wonder, what's wrong with me? Why am I so afraid to talk about Jesus? Maybe that's how you feel today...Well if that's you, can I tell you that you're not alone.

In fact, according to Evangelism Explosion, about 95% of church members have never personally led someone to Christ...

Now I'm not trying to make anyone feel guilty...in fact, I'm hoping that after today you'll begin to see that telling others about Jesus is actually a privilege. The idea that God would want to use me, with all of my flaws and failures...

He wants me to partner with Him to see the lost found? Wow! So no guilt...my prayer is that in a few minutes you will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to say...“Here I am God send me!” So hang in there!

So when it comes to evangelism...
Saved people can't save people...But
Saved people can tell people...

**Saved people have an opportunity to tell
people EVERYDAY**

***...And the Lord added to their number daily
those who were being saved.-***

Evangelism wasn't just something that the church did once a month on a Friday night...It wasn't just something that happened at the big church gathering, during the altar call...

It was something that the church included in their everyday life...They were so passionate about the gospel that they couldn't help but talk about Jesus!

You know that a church is well balanced when you have worship and witnessing going on!

When God is adding to their numbers those who are being saved...Some people actually get so inward focused that they don't want their church to grow...

Can I say something...That's not biblical! A healthy church is a growing church...
Prove it...Okay!

The Church started with 12 Disciples...minus 1 makes 11 plus 1 makes 12 again. By Acts 1 it grows to 120 people...praise God! By Acts 2 it grows from 120 to 3,120...

But it doesn't stop there, in Acts 4 the Bible tells us that 5,000 men (that doesn't include women and children) put their faith in Jesus...After that the Bible just starts saying multitudes and multitudes...were getting saved...the church just keeps growing!

You know what this tells me?

It tells me that numbers matter to God! They matter so much that there's a whole book in the Bible called numbers!

If numbers matter so much to God, don't you think that they should matter to us? Not only do numbers matter, but every single number has a name...and every name matters to God!

You know what this tells me? This tells me that God wants every church to be a growing church...a church where the numbers are going up...because if the numbers are going up that means that people are partnering with God in fulfilling the mission!

The church can never be full enough! You look and you say, hey we're pretty full today...no we're not!

We're not full enough! We've got room...The capacity for this room is like 300 people...what happens when we get like 200 people in here?

We add a service! What happens when that service gets full? We add a service! And another service, and another service...

We plant another church, and another one, and another one...my point is we don't stop...We keep going because that's the heart of God!

May we never get the attitude that we should stop growing...that we're "big enough"...as long as there's lost people in our community then we've got room to grow!

In Luke 14 Jesus tells the parable of the wedding feast and He says...

23 "... 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. -Luke 14:23 (NIV)

In other words, Heaven can never be too full...and we have a daily opportunity to tell others how to get to the House!

The famous preacher J.C. Ryle once said “*The highest form of selfishness is a man content to go to heaven alone*” Imagine having that attitude...Hey I’m good...I’m saved, that’s all that matters...

And they don’t care about what happens to their friends or loved ones? Sometimes people say well, you know, I don’t want to offend anyone so I’m not going to tell them that they need Jesus...

Well, use that same idea but a different scenario...If a person was sick but they didn’t realize they were sick...but you had the medicine to cure them, would you not at least try to tell them that they were sick?

Wouldn't you do all you could to convince them? That's what Peter did on the day of Pentecost...look at verse 40 again...He told them to repent of their sin...

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

It's been said that if you were to take all the unbelievers in the world and line them up, the line would go around the earth 30 times... And that line grows 20 miles every single day...

Evangelism is when we walk up to that line and we say hey...You don't have to be in this line, in fact, I can tell you how to get out of this line...I tell you how to break free from this line...

May we all get a burden to partner with God in telling people who are far away from God about Jesus!

May everyone who calls Newsong their home church get in the game with evangelism... Because life is short...hell is hot and eternity is a long time! We have the best news in the world! Jesus Christ stands ready to save you from your sin!

As we close today, allow me a few more minutes to give you some tips on how to share your faith...

Accept the personal RESPONSIBILITY

Ask the Holy Spirit to break your heart for lost people...Ask Him to give you a boldness to be a witness...Pray and ask God to give you divine appointments...to open up everyday conversations with people already in your life...

“Uncle Cha”

I asked him why he does it, he said “I don’t want to see people go to hell”/Boiler broke down/Couldn’t go witness was mad

Build a personal RELATIONSHIP

Remember that personal evangelism will happen naturally as you build a personal relationship with people. Be willing to have a conversation...

Allow others to start the conversation for you...You don't have to come in like "you need to listen to me because I've got all the answers"

No have you ever been asked "hey how's it going?" What if you came back with "Let me tell you...God has been so good to me today..." See where it leads...

So here's how it went for my Uncle Cha...
(Do you know where you're going when you die?)

Talk less and listen more...I know that you've got the answer...the answer is Jesus...

But hey they don't know that you know...so have a dialogue and listen more than talk...Let the Holy Spirit lead you...

Tell Your STORY

You have a personal testimony of how you came to Jesus...Learn how to share your story quickly and clearly!

I'm so excited that our youth group has been learning about sharing their story with others...

“Angie”

Okay so as we close today what's the Holy Spirit saying to you? How can you get in the game with personal evangelism?

Give a personal INVITATION

I have a couple of next steps for all of us...

We have a big outreach on the 16th...this is the first time we've been given permission to be in the mall!

I would like us all to be there! If we're all there we can do shifts and it will be so much fun!

Also...

We've got about 5 weeks until Easter Sunday...We're believing God for a big harvest of souls that day...

In order to get a big harvest of souls we've got to have a large number of lost people in the room!

We're believing that we will have a minimum of 150 people in this room alone...And that out of those 150 the majority will be people who don't know Jesus...Why? Because numbers matter to God! And the harvest is ready!

Here's where you come in...

You begin praying and asking God who you can invite to our Easter Sunday Service...Then you take one of these club cards that we've made and you personally invite them...

Statistics say that 82% of people say they would attend church if a friend invited them, but sadly only 2% of church members invite other people...

So we're breaking down those stats...We can start getting in the game by simply inviting our unsaved family and friends to church on the biggest church day of the year...

So this means that you're taking the personal responsibility to meet them before, sit with them...make them feel comfortable...but it starts with the invitation...

Let's get in the game...

Let's see God show up and show off this Easter Sunday!

What's the Holy Spirit Saying to You?