

XXIX. L.E.A.D in Biblical Perspective  
*Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship*  
“Foundations #2—Means of Grace and Growth”  
Acts 2:37–47; II Timothy 3:10–17  
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October 6, 2019 • Morning Sermon

We will be in two texts this morning but we’ll start in Acts 2. This is the Word of God. Acts 2:37–47 says [37] *Now when they heard this (Peter preaching the Gospel) they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” [38] And Peter said to them, “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] For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” [40] And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” [41] So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

*[42] And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I want to give you two questions but before I do I believe the blessed Catechism is one of the best discipleship tools ever developed and the shorter Catechism question one is, what is the chief end of man? Answer, the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. In this question and answer it tells us that God has done three significant acts. One He has created us. All who have put their trust in Him, He has saved and every day He sustains us for in Him you live, move and have your being. Why did God make you? He made you for His glory. Why did God save you? He saved you for His glory. Why does God sustain you every day by the strength of His might? He does it for His glory. The more you enjoy Him the more you glorify Him and the more you glorify Him the more you enjoy Him.

Now I’m ready to give you my two questions. To live an effective life that glorifies God and enjoys Him, **who** is absolutely essential? The second question is for you to live an effective life that glorifies God and enjoys Him forever, **what** is absolutely essential? Before I answer these two questions I want to set up why these questions are important by reminding you of a couple of things.

For the past two years we have been in a thematic study with expositional sermons throughout the Bible on a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship. As a Christian I want my life to be arranged around evangelism which is leading people to Christ and discipleship which is being discipled and discipling others. Parenting is a means to evangelism and discipleship. To have good fellowship is to be engaged in evangelism and discipleship. Jesus put both of these together when He said ‘come, follow Me.’ To be a disciple you have to renounce all –

everything, everyone and yourself. Salvation is free, discipleship costs everything. Then when you come to Christ He will reconnect you to everything and everyone in His way. He is not at the top of your list but He is your list and He makes your list. God does discipling through His church.

We have Christ's call to compelling evangelism, costly discipleship and to His church. Christ's call to His church is to do His mission and that is to go and make disciples of all the nations. If this is done right by staying on mission, on message and in ministry then Great Commandment Christians will be produced. They love the Lord with all their heart, soul and mind and they love their neighbor as themselves. To stay on mission you have to stay on message, preaching the whole counsel of God and in ministry.

There are four ministries in a Great Commission church. The first ministry is evangelism for these churches are going churches. This is our ministry, our outreach to the world. Secondly is our ministry to one another as we enfold people in the church. This is our ministry of inreach in loving one another. Thirdly, is our ministry of being an equipping church where we teach all that God has commanded us and He will be with us always even to the end of the age. This is our ministry of downreach to one another as we learn the whole counsel of God. Jesus was the Perfect Discipled and He did it for three years and when they saw Him they worshipped Him. This is our fourth ministry of exalting God as we commit ourselves to worshipping Him. This is when sinners are transformed to the praise of God.

In order to have these ministries the mission of the Church is narrow and focused. The Church is to make disciples and when the church stays on this the mission of a Christian is broad and comprehensive so that in all things that the Christian does Christ is to have preeminence. Christians can't do this broad and comprehensive mission if the church gets off mission. The church has to stay on mission, on message and in ministry. If the church does not stay committed to its mission, then Christians will not be about to do their mission.

The church doesn't exist to transform the culture. Now it's the evidence of the church's existence. The church exists to transform sinners with Gospel by evangelism and discipleship. When a sinner gets transformed by the Gospel they are different in all their relationships because they are being equipped with the whole counsel of God and they have this broad comprehensive life that impacts the world for Jesus says they become the salt of the earth and the light of the world. But for this to happen the church has to stay on its mission, on message and in ministry. The more the church is under fire in a post secular nation, the more the church will tend to change its mission and its message to be accepted by that culture.

In order for our church to do this we have come up with some basic discipleship tools and we're calling them foundations. There are five of them that we are going to go through in this study. In the last study we covered the first one which is Christianity 101 where everyone is a theologian. Eternal life is that you know God and His Son Jesus Christ and that's theology. The second foundation which we will cover in this study are the disciplines of grace and those are the ways we will know God and His Word as we grow in grace. The third foundation is stewardship where Christ is preeminent in all things and you are steward of all He entrusts to you – time, talents, finances, relationships. The fourth foundation is personal evangelism which is everyone evangelizing everybody everywhere every day. The fifth foundation is true worship who worship in spirit and in truth through lifestyle worship and gathered worship. That's the homerun.

In the last study we said in Christianity 101 that the objective of evangelism is eternal salvation. The objective of discipleship is life transformation by the Spirit of God, with the

Word of God, beginning with the Gospel of grace, which is the foundation, formation and motivation of the Christian life. You never go beyond the Gospel but it's not just the basic statement that Jesus died for your sins so come and receive Him, but you do go deeper, higher, wider and further with the Gospel as it penetrates every area of life as you are taught all that He has commanded you. It is how you live for Christ, not for salvation, who has done His work of redemption for your salvation.

We covered five basic elements in Christianity 101. One is the doctrine of Scripture – what is truth? Two is the doctrine of God – who is God? Three is the doctrine of Man – who is man, made in the image of God? Four is the doctrine of sin – what went wrong? Fifthly is the doctrine of the Gospel – how do you get it back right? So how do you get this? That is what we'll cover today through the disciplines of grace which is the means of grace and growth.

So now it's time for me to answer the two questions I asked you in the beginning of this study. The first one is to live an effective life that glorifies God and enjoys Him, **who** is absolutely essential? It is the Holy Spirit. You need to be filled with the Spirit, surrendered to the Spirit, walk in the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit. The second question is for you to live an effective life that glorifies God and enjoys Him forever, **what** is absolutely essential? It is the Word of God. II Timothy 2:15 says [15] *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, **rightly handling the word of truth.*** You don't know your God with proper adoration and affection or make Him known without the Word of God. You don't know God by intuition or philosophical speculation but by Divine revelation. God has revealed Himself in His Word. There are no shortcuts.

To find out about the Scriptures, God, man, sin and the Gospel you go to the Word of God. The Word of God can only be embraced savingly and effectively by the Spirit of God who is at work within your life. So what are these disciplines of grace? There are the public disciplines of grace and the private disciplines of grace. So first we'll look at the public ones and we'll use the text of Scripture from Acts 2 that is at the beginning of this study.

In the shorter Westminster Catechism questions 88, 89 and 90 are as follows;

Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the **Word, sacraments, and prayer**; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation [a].

[a]. Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42

Q. 89. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The **Spirit of God** makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation [a].

[a]. Neh. 8:8–9; Acts 20:32; Rom. 10:14–17; 2 Tim. 3:15–17

Q. 90. How is **the Word to be read and heard**, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer [a]; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives [b].

[a]. Deut. 6:6ff; Ps. 119:18; 1 Pet. 2:1–2

[b]. Ps. 119:11; 2 Thess. 2:10; Heb. 4:2; Jas. 1:22–25

God believed all of this that He gave the gift of preachers to the church and then He gave something as sacred as the tithe as He says 'now take the tithe and use it to support the preacher.'

I Timothy 5:17 says [17] *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.* I didn't say the preacher is important but it's the preaching and the preacher is to work hard at it. The people are directed by God to give them means of support so the hours needed can be spent on the need of the study for the preparation of that Word because it is of effected, ordained means to get what is essential to get into the hearts and lives of God's people.

My heart's desire as a pastor is not that you go away thinking 'wasn't that wonderful' or 'pastor what a good sermon' although it's okay if you say that but that is not my objective or God's objective. God's objective is that your life is changed, transformed. It is for the equipping and building up of God's people in holiness through faith and salvation. We must turn to the Word with diligence and prioritize it so that it may become effective unto salvation in our life, holding fast. He tells the church to hold forth the Word and He tells His people to hold fast to the Word.

We get to see this in action in Acts 2. Luke writes the Gospel of Luke and is one of those who gives us the Great Commission. The Great Commission is given five times in the Bible – in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts. Jesus tells them not to do the Great Commission until they go back to the Upper Room, getting on their knees in prayer and He will send the Holy Spirit so they can be His witnesses in power. In other words, you can't do the Great Commission without the Spirit of God and you can't do the Great Commission without the Word of God.

When the Holy Spirit came upon them through prayer they started preaching, teaching and reading the Word of God in the highways and byways all over Jerusalem. The 120 exponentially grow into 3,000 households in that one day. Then Luke does a freeze-frame here at the church at Jerusalem. A freeze-frame will be seen again in Antioch, Ephesus and Rome. This church in Jerusalem is on mission, on message and in ministry. They were worshipping, evangelizing as the Lord was adding to their number day by day, loving one another as they would sell their possessions and property to help one another and they were discipling and teaching.

Here is ground zero in the Acts 2 passage. Where does the worship, evangelism, love and discipling come from? Acts 2:42 says [42] *And they devoted (continually) themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of (the) bread and the prayers.* Here is a church committed to its mission and its message by engaging and providing by the means of grace ordained by God. The means of grace is not what we do to get to God, it's what God has ordained to get to us. Neither are these merits of grace where we earn God's love.

Think of it this way. Jesus is in the heavens and here I am a sinner saved by grace and I need that grace from Jesus. I need that grace from Jesus who is in heaven because I want from me to flow rivers of living water and so how do we get that grace from Him in us and through us and to the world? Jesus has this covered because He has two conduits from Him to us – the Spirit of God and the Word of God. The river of grace will flow from Him, the Fountain, to us and from us. God also has little fountains we can drink from, like through the preaching, reading, meditating, singing, and fellowshiping of, on, through and around His Word.

Philippians 3:3 says [3] *For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—* You can't profit from God's Spirit without God's Word and you can't profit from God's Word without God's Spirit. They work together. Now I cannot send the Spirit. I remember working in the tobacco fields in college and how hot it was. I could clap my hands all day but I couldn't get a breeze but here is

what I know. I can't clap my hands and send the wind of the Spirit but I can open up the Bible because that's where He always works.

There are four ways to drink on the Word and the Spirit. One is the Apostles teaching which is the Word of God proclaimed (preached). Two is the fellowship and that's the Word of God shared in the Spirit of God. Fellowship is our ability to speak and act with truth and love. We can't share in fellowship until we know the Word of God preached to us. The order here is crucial. Three is the Word displayed in baptism and the Lord's Supper. The fourth way is through prayers which is the Word returned. This is how we learn to pray according to God's will, which is through His revealed will in His Word.

Also notice that prayers is plural because there are set prayers, spontaneous prayers, formal prayers, informal prayers, praise prayers, petition prayers, public prayers, private prayers, etc. God's Word teaches us how to pray. It also teaches me to pray daily. Matthew 6:9–13 says [9] Pray then like this: "**Our** Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. [10] Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. [11] Give **us** this day our **daily** bread, [12] and forgive **us** our debts, as **we** also have forgiven our debtors. [13] And lead **us** not into temptation, but deliver **us** from evil." Notice the plural here for we're in this together and according to this He is expecting for us to be praying every day.

You need the hearing of God's Word. When you don't have the preaching of the Word then baptism and the Lord's Supper just become rituals. These are all public means of grace that are working but this needs to be continual. I love the way one commentator commented on Acts 2:42 when it says they were continually devoted. A church that makes disciples is a church that creates addicts for they are addicted to God's Word. This addiction helps us get rid of our sinful addictions that want to call the shots in our lives.

When people come to this church they are going to hear God's Word read, preached, sung, confessed, prayed and responded for they will be saturated with God's Word. We are going to call and ask God's Spirit to be in our midst for the Spirit of God and the Word of God exalt the Son of God to the praise of God the Father. So that God's Word is at work so that we can be on mission, on message and in ministry for the means of grace are here. It is not what puts people in the pew but it's what God has ordained to do something to the people that are in the pew. Then the people in the pew take it as the salt of the earth and the light of the world into this world.

A church addicted to God's Word will be absolutely meaningless unless you personally want to be addicted to God's Word. This is the reason Paul says this to Timothy which is the last thing he wrote in II Timothy 3:10–17 which says [10] You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14] But as for you, **continue** in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

We have to have the private means of grace for growth. Paul challenged Timothy to use the public means of grace but wanted him to be marinated in God's Word personally. Paul

wanted Timothy personally addicted to God's Word. Why? It is because that Word that is proclaimed, shared, displayed and returned in prayer is a saving Word which can make you wise unto salvation. It's a sanctifying Word, a nurturing Word that will grow you personally in grace so that you will be equipped and competent for every good work. Thirdly, it's a Divine Word, a God breathed Word where God Himself speaks to you through His Word. It's the sufficient Word of God.

Did Samuel believe God's Word? I Samuel 3:10 says [10] And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." What did the prophet say? He said 'what saith the Lord?' What did Paul say? I Thessalonians 2:13 says [13] *And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.* What did Jesus say in the wilderness? Matthew 4:4 says [4] *Jesus answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."*

The next time you read your Bible realize God is speaking for this is His Word. He has spoken it. Now you might come up to me and say 'Pastor do you remember what you said to me?' And I might respond 'No, I must have forgotten to tell you.' But realize there is nothing that God has forgotten to say to you for [16] *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped **for every good work.***

All that you need for godliness is found in this Word and so you need to be personally committed to and engaged in it with all of your heart. When some of the widows were overlooked in mercy and they were going to solve the problem the Apostles said 'we must not neglect the ministry of prayer and the Word to serve the tables' (Acts 6). They were not denigrating mercy ministry, they were saying that mercy ministry like every other ministry is downstream from the means of grace so stay in it – prayer and the Word. The reason they didn't do a good job was because they needed some more deacons to help them but to do a better job they would have to neglect prayer and the Word and they couldn't do that. They were the elders of the church and their whole schedule was around prayer and the Word.

For most of us, our whole schedule is around everything else and then we try to put in prayer and the Word. That's why if leaders do not build their life around prayer and the Word then you will not have addicted Christians in the pews. This is not something we accommodate periodically. It is something that has to be built into our lives. So here is the takeaway for our study.

The means of grace and growth is simple yet profoundly the desire to be an answer to the prayer of Jesus from the heart for Jesus. Means of grace by the Word and Spirit of God is the Word read, preached, sacraments and fellowship. Paul urges Timothy in II Timothy 3:14–15, [14] *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* Who did Timothy learn from besides Paul? He learned from Lois and Eunice who were his mother and grandmother (II Timothy 1:4–5).

As I studied this that really resonated with me because my granddaddy and grandmother had a big impact on me spiritually. My granddaddy was part of prayer team that brought revival to North Carolina where Billy Graham was saved and that group of men continued in a Bible study. When I was eight years old my granddaddy took me to this Bible study and they told the

sons and grandsons who were there that they needed to memorize John 1. I had to memorize it and say it in front of all of those men and it has been with me forever.

I thank God for my grandmother whose name was Lois. We used to sing Scripture songs. I can remember one we sang a lot. Which was titled *Isn't He Wonderful* which says;

*Isn't He Wonderful, Wonderful, Wonderful*

*Isn't Jesus my Lord Wonderful!*

*Eyes have seen, ears have heard*

*It's recorded in God's Word*

*Isn't Jesus my Lord Wonderful!*

I thank God for my mom and dad. I can't imagine getting up on a Sunday and asking 'are we going to church?' That was a given and the second given was they picked out a church which was Word saturated. My dad and mom went to the far country (walked away from the Lord) for 14 years and it started when they began to have other things in place of the means of grace. But when I was growing up it was there in place and then in my deepest, darkest days when I was an ungodly, blasphemous man addicted to profanity, immorality, gambling, alcohol with addiction after addiction after addiction, God by His grace broke in. Even before I was converted I remember hearing my grandmother's songs when I was in my deepest, darkest days plus John 1 and some of the sermons that had resonated in my heart that my dad and mom thought I was not hearing. The Holy Spirit started drawing me to Himself. When I was converted I got a new addiction for I just wanted God's Word and the other addictions began to leave by God's grace and some faster than others. I praise God for them.

Has anyone ever asked you if God answers prayer? What do you tell them? Absolutely. I want you, me and Briarwood to not only know that God answers prayer but I want us to be an answer to Jesus' prayer. He prayed seven requests for His people and the most obvious one was in John 17:17 which says [17] *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.* Jesus, sanctify us, disciple us by Your Spirit with the truth for Your Word is the truth. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. Perhaps you are reading this and the Word has just invited and called you to Jesus who came to save you from your sin and you want to pray with someone. Please call us at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 and we'd be happy to spend personal, confidential time in prayer with you. Just come to Him for He is ready to receive you. For those of you who know Jesus, simply today say 'God, make us an answer to the prayer of Jesus for we want to be a church where the Word of God is preached, fellowshiped, displayed and prayed, sung and confessed and we want to do it in the power of the Holy Spirit.' Fill us O Spirit I pray, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

### Power Point

Christ's Call to His Church

On Mission – On Message – In Ministry

*Great Commission – Great Commandment – Great Commitment*

- The Mission of the Church is narrow and focused.
- The Mission of a Christian is broad and comprehensive.
- If the church does not stay committed to its Mission (narrow) then Christians will not be able to do their Mission (comprehensive).

## Lifestyle of Evangelism And Discipleship (L.E.A.D.)

### Five Foundations

- I. Christianity 101—*Everybody is a Theologian*
- II. The Disciplines Of Grace—*Growing in Grace*
- III. Stewardship—*Christ Preeminent*
- IV. Personal Evangelism—*Everyone Evangelizing Everybody Everywhere Everyday*
- V. True Worship—*In Spirit and in Truth*

### Christianity 101 – Foundations #1

The Objective of Evangelism is Eternal salvation; the Objective of Discipleship is Life Transformation by the Spirit of God with the Word of God beginning and with the Gospel of Grace which is the Foundation, the Formation and the Motivation of the Christian Life.

*Scripture–God–Man–Sin–Gospel*

### Christianity 101 – Foundations #2

Time to answer the Two Questions

Two Key Texts

Acts 2:37–47                      II Timothy 3:10–17

- I. The Public Means of Grace and Growth
- II. The Private Means of Grace and Growth

### Life Takeaway

The Word of God and the Spirit of God

*Read – Preached – Sacraments – Fellowship*

*The Means of Grace and Growth is simply yet profoundly the desire to be an answer to the Prayer of Jesus from a heart for Jesus.*

*“Sanctify them in the Truth; Thy Word is Truth”*