

Biblical Evangelism

Matthew 28:18–21

Introduction

This morning, I want to speak to you about a subject that is very dear to me: **evangelism**.

It is something I have invested a great deal of time trying to study and understand. I may not be a prophet, but it is clear to me that the American church, in particular, is not only neglecting evangelism in the culture, but more importantly, missing the opportunity of a lifetime to participate in one of the most amazing, divinely appointed missions in the history of the world.

My prayer is that our time in the Word this morning will open our eyes to see the beauty of evangelism in a new light and inspire us to action. But not just action for action's sake. Rather, informed and intentional, Christ-honoring, God-glorifying action.

So let's begin with a simple but necessary question:

What is biblical evangelism?

1. What Is Biblical Evangelism?

Biblical Basis

The word comes from the Greek:

- εὐαγγέλιον (**euangelion**) – “good news” or “gospel”
- εὐαγγελίζω (**euangelizō**) – “to proclaim good news”

So from the very beginning, the word itself tells us that evangelism has to do with **good news** and the **proclamation** of that good news.

Key Elements of Evangelism

If we are going to define it clearly, several components are essential.

First, **a message**. Evangelism involves communicating the gospel, not merely sharing personal experiences or doing good works.

Second, **a proclamation**. The word itself implies announcing or declaring good news.

Third, **a response**. Evangelism calls people to repent and believe the gospel. **Mark 1:15** — “Repent and believe in the gospel.”

And fourth, **a person**. The message centers on Jesus Christ — His life, His death, His resurrection, and His lordship. **Romans 10:14–15** — “How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?”

It is important that we have a working definition that we all agree is a biblical definition.

Famous Definitions

Now, over the years many godly men have offered excellent definitions of evangelism.

J. I. Packer

“Evangelism is presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His church.”

— *J. I. Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*

John Stott

“To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord He now offers forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.”

— *John Stott*

Will Metzger

“Evangelism is communicating the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.”

— *Will Metzger, Tell the Truth*

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“Evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ with the purpose of persuading people to repent and believe in Him.”

Charles Spurgeon

“To preach the gospel is to proclaim Christ and Him crucified and to call sinners to repentance and faith.”

Now all of these definitions are great. Each has its own strengths. But one weakness that I believe they all share is that they assume the most important part.

And that is this: **What is the gospel?**

These definitions either assume the definition of the gospel is already known, or, like Spurgeon’s, they make some attempt to briefly define it. It is my opinion that the ambiguity of the word *gospel* has been detrimental to the church’s call to evangelize the lost. That ambiguity leaves too much room for misunderstanding or interpretation.

I am certainly not trying to criticize these godly men. I am sure their intent was to speak to Christians on the subject. However, I do not believe we can continue to assume that even Christians in the church completely understand what the word *gospel* entails. There are so many false gospels in our world today it is dangerous to assume that everyone in this room has an accurate biblical understanding.

So please allow me to offer this definition:

“Evangelism is the proclamation of the whole gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in Holy Scripture— who God is, who we are, what sin is, what sin has done, who Christ is and what he has accomplished, and the need to repent and

believe — so that sinners may, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be eternally reconciled to God through faith in Christ.”

I believe that is closer to the fullness of what the Bible means by evangelism.

Evangelism is not merely the proclamation of a summary statement. It is the proclamation of the story of reality that God has revealed in the Scriptures from creation to glory — a story that encompasses all of creation.

We often use **Romans 10:9–13** as a model of the apostle Paul’s evangelism. But we must not forget that Paul had already written ten and a half chapters before he ever got there and those 10 and a half chapters assume the Old Testament is known. That section was the culmination, the pinnacle of the presentation — not the entirety of it.

The gospel is the message that tells us:

- God created you, through Adam’s disobedience you were born a sinner, you are eternally separated from God because of your sin and there is nothing you can do to fix that problem. In love, God chose to do something about it for you. He sent his Son to live a perfect life and willingly die on a cross in your place. You deserved it, he didn’t. He was raised after three days in the grave and now sits at the right hand of the Father praying for you. If you believe that message, confess it and follow after him you will be saved.
- More on that in my class on April 22.

Now that raises another question:

2. Who Is Evangelism For?

Who is called to participate?

Matthew 28:18–21

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Mark 16:15–16

15 And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

Luke 24:46–48

46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

48 You are witnesses of these things.”

John 20:21

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

Jesus is giving this commission to the eleven disciples.

Now could we say that this was meant for them only?

You could say that. But you would be wrong.

Perhaps an extremely literal interpretation could make that argument, but sanctified common sense would say otherwise.

First, the scope would make that impossible. If Jesus only meant for these eleven men to fulfill this mission, they physically could not reach all nations or all creation. They could not geographically fulfill the mission.

Second, Jesus promises them that He would be with them on this mission **until the end of the age**.

It is clear that these eleven men were the sparks that started a fire that will burn until Jesus returns.

The only way this mission could be accomplished would be through person to person, culture to culture, nation to nation, generation to generation, and so on.

Evangelism is a global team effort that crosses ethnic, geographical, social, and cultural boundaries. It involves every person who hears the gospel and, in the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, comes to believe and trust Christ as Lord and Savior.

It is a cosmic relay race or game of tag.

And when we step back and see it from that perspective, we ought to see evangelism not merely as a duty we have to do, but as a divinely appointed privilege we get to do.

The only reason we do not see it that way is because of two major obstacles:

Satan and the Flesh.

3. Obstacles: Satan and the Flesh

A. Satan — the Anti-Evangelist

Today, we will call him **the anti-evangelist**.

Scripture speaks of Satan having a “kingdom” in this present world, but we must understand that carefully. The Bible does not teach that Satan rules independently or equally with God. Rather, it describes a real but limited sphere of influence over fallen humanity and the present world system. His kingdom exists only under God’s sovereign permission, and it will ultimately be destroyed by Christ.

Let me walk through the biblical ways this idea appears.

1. Satan Rules Over the Present World System

The Bible describes Satan as exercising influence over the fallen world order that opposes God.

John 12:31

“Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.”

John 14:30

“The ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me.”

1 John 5:19

“The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

Here, “world” does not mean creation itself, but the organized system of rebellion against God — its values, ideologies, and spiritual blindness.

2. Satan Rules Over the Unbelieving

Those outside Christ are described as living under Satan’s dominion.

Ephesians 2:1–2

“...following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.”

2 Timothy 2:25–26

“...that they (opponents of the gospel) may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

This does not mean unbelievers are consciously serving Satan, but they are spiritually captive in his deception and by their sin.

3. Satan Commands Demonic Powers

The language of a “kingdom” also refers to a structured demonic realm.

Jesus explicitly references this:

Matthew 12:26

“If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?”

This indicates an organized domain of demons under Satan’s authority.

Paul also refers to these spiritual powers:

Ephesians 6:12

“We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

4. Satan Exercises Temporary Authority in the Present Age

Satan’s influence is described as real but temporary.

In the temptation of Jesus:

Luke 4:5–6

“To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.”

This reflects the fallen condition of the world after the Fall, where humanity’s rebellion allowed Satan a degree of influence over earthly systems.

Why Satan Is the Anti-Evangelist

Because Christ is currently plundering Satan’s kingdom.

Jesus described His ministry as invading and overthrowing Satan’s rule.

Matthew 12:28–29

“If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Or how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?”

Through the cross, the resurrection, and the gospel, Christ is rescuing people from Satan’s dominion.

Colossians 1:13

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

This is one of the clearest statements in Scripture of two spiritual kingdoms.

And Satan’s kingdom will be completely destroyed.

Revelation 20:10

“The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire...”

Satan’s rule is temporary and doomed — and **he knows it**.

Historical Examples of Satanic Opposition

Then you consider church history and even the present world. Look at the Roman Empire. Look at Japan. Look at Communist China. Look at North Korea. Look at radical Islamic regions. Look at India in certain Hindu nationalist regions. Christians have been and are being imprisoned, tortured and murdered. Churches are burned. Unspeakable evils are happening as we sit and will continue until Christ returns.

Everywhere the gospel advances, opposition rises.

Jesus warned this would happen.

John 15:20

“If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”

Acts 14:22

“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

Persecution has historically accompanied the spread of the gospel, often strengthening the church rather than destroying it.

Tertullian famously observed:

“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

If we could go to the heavens and look down, we would see the earth covered in a cloud of deep darkness and evil where Satan reigns. But we would also see little holes with light shining through. Those holes are places like our country, where we are not currently facing those same kinds of persecutions and evils, where we still have the freedom to preach the gospel without fear of being burned alive, arrested, or having our homes and churches destroyed.

Brothers and sisters, do you not see the privilege? Do you not see the gift?

I would say that the American church's response demonstrates that we do not.

THE TIME IS NOW! Praise God that we are not facing this degree of opposition today. But we are not promised tomorrow. If anything, we are promised that tomorrow will likely hold hatred and resistance from the world.

Now let's talk about the second obstacle:

B. The Flesh

Here is some interesting information. I want you to notice the progression — or rather, the regression, which is very similar to that of Psalm 1:1. There we see people who walk in the council of the wicked. Eventually they begin to stand in the way of the sinners. Which ultimately leads to sitting in the seat of the scoffers.

- 1. Lifeway Research Poll (2019)

Study: "Evangelism and the Christian"

Lifeway surveyed churchgoing Protestant Christians about their evangelism habits.

Key Finding

Nearly half of churchgoers rarely or never share their faith.

Main Reasons Given

1. Fear of Offending Others (38%)

Many Christians worry that sharing the gospel will be perceived as judgmental or intrusive.

2. Lack of Opportunity (37%)

Some respondents said they don't know many non-Christians or don't encounter situations where evangelism seems natural.

3. Feeling Unprepared (23%)

Many believers say they don't know how to explain the gospel clearly.

4. Fear of Being Asked Questions They Can't Answer (19%)

Concerns about apologetics or difficult objections.

5. Personal Discomfort or Awkwardness (18%)

Evangelism feels socially uncomfortable.

- 2. Barna Group Study (2018)

Study: “Reviving Evangelism”

Barna found a significant shift in how Christians view evangelism.

Key Findings

Almost half of practicing Christians said it is wrong to share faith in hopes someone will convert.

This was especially high among younger Christians.

Reasons given included:

Evangelism is perceived as intolerant

Cultural pressure toward religious pluralism

Desire to avoid conflict

- 3. Lifeway Study on Evangelical Beliefs (2020)

Another Lifeway study found something striking:

Almost half of evangelicals said it is not their responsibility to share the gospel.

This reveals a theological misunderstanding about the Great Commission.

May I present to you another way of looking at these perceived fears

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Now let me offer another way of looking at those fears.

Those excuses have very little to do with other people. They have almost everything to do with **self**. This is pride.

We are not truly afraid that someone will be offended. We are afraid of what they will think of **us** if they are offended.

We are not really afraid of not being able to answer questions properly. We are afraid of looking **stupid**.

We need to be honest. The obstacle is not ultimately other people or cultural barriers. The obstacle is our own flesh.

Some people seem to be born with a gene that enables them not to care whether they play the fool or not. But if we are honest with ourselves, the vast majority of us do not have that gene.

4. Overcoming Obstacles

So in closing, let me offer some application for overcoming these obstacles.

Overcoming Satan

1. Emphasize Christ's Authority Over Satan

Evangelism flows from the authority of the risen Christ.

Matthew 28:18–19

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”

The command to evangelize is grounded in the fact that Christ already reigns.

We do not go into the world hoping Christ will win. We go because Christ already reigns over every power of darkness.

2. Remind Believers That Christ Has Already Defeated Satan

The cross was a decisive victory.

Colossians 2:15

“He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

Hebrews 2:14

“Through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Satan opposes evangelism, but he is a defeated enemy.

3. Teach That the Gospel Rescues People From Satan's Kingdom

Evangelism is actually a rescue mission from the domain of darkness.

Colossians 1:13

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

Acts 26:18

“To open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.”

4. Encourage Confidence in the Power of the Gospel

The power in evangelism is not in the messenger.

Romans 1:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation.”

1 Corinthians 2:4–5

“My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”

Our job is not to convert people. Our job is to proclaim the gospel faithfully.

5. Teach Christians to Resist Satan

James 4:7

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

1 Peter 5:8–9

“Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion... Resist him, firm in your faith.”

This resistance happens through faith, truth, obedience, and prayer.

6. Emphasize Prayer in Evangelism

Ephesians 6:18–20

“Praying at all times in the Spirit... that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.”

2 Thessalonians 3:1

“Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored.”

Prayer acknowledges that evangelism is spiritual warfare.

7. Remind Believers That God Is the One Who Saves

John 6:44

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”

1 Corinthians 3:6

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”

We are responsible for faithfulness, not results.

A strong pastoral summary would be this:

Satan certainly opposes the spread of the gospel, but the Christian does not evangelize in fear. Christ has all authority, the cross has defeated the powers of darkness, the Spirit empowers the message, and God Himself brings the increase.

Overcoming the Flesh

1. Expose the Root: Pride and Self Preservation

Proverbs 29:25

“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.”

When we fear sharing the gospel because of what others may think of us, we have elevated their approval above obedience to Christ.

2. Replace Fear of Man with Fear of God

Matthew 10:28

“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Evangelism requires a shift in our fear — from fearing the opinion of men to revering the authority of God.

3. Remember Whose Approval Matters

Galatians 1:10

“For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 2:4

“We speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.”

4. Look to the Example of the Apostles

Acts 4:19–20

“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

Their motivation was obedience to God, not protection of reputation.

5. Let Love for the Lost Overcome Love of Self**2 Corinthians 5:14–15**

“For the love of Christ controls us... that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

Evangelism becomes easier when the focus shifts from:

What will they think of me?

to

What will happen to them without Christ?

6. Remember That God Uses Weak Messengers**1 Corinthians 1:27–29**

“God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise... so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”

This removes pressure to protect our image.

7. Pray for Boldness**Acts 4:29**

“Lord... grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.”

Boldness is a gift God supplies, not merely a personality trait.

A clear way to say this would be:

The fear that keeps us from evangelizing is often not fear of people, but fear for ourselves — fear of embarrassment, rejection, or losing approval. But Scripture

reminds us that the opinion that ultimately matters is not theirs, but God's. When the fear of the Lord grows in our hearts, the fear of man begins to shrink.

Or even more concise:

Evangelism becomes possible when our love for Christ and compassion for sinners becomes greater than our concern for our own reputation.

Community Group Discussion Questions

Biblical Evangelism – Matthew 28:18–21

Opening Question

1. When you hear the word **evangelism**, what thoughts or emotions immediately come to mind? Why do you think that is?

Understanding Biblical Evangelism

2. In the sermon we defined evangelism as **the proclamation of the whole gospel**. Why is it important that evangelism involves more than simply sharing our testimony or doing good deeds?
3. Read **Romans 10:14–15**.
What does this passage teach us about the necessity of speaking the gospel?
4. The sermon emphasized that the gospel tells the full story of reality—from creation to redemption. Why is it dangerous to reduce the gospel to only a short slogan or summary?
5. What are the key elements of the gospel message that must be included when we evangelize?

The Mission of the Church

6. Read **Matthew 28:18–21**.
What does Jesus say about His authority, and why does that authority matter for evangelism?
7. Why is it important to understand that the Great Commission was not just for the eleven disciples but for the entire church throughout history?
8. The sermon described evangelism as a **global relay race or game of tag** from generation to generation. Who were the people God used to bring the gospel to you?

Obstacles to Evangelism

Satan

9. Read **Colossians 1:13**.
What does this verse teach us about what happens spiritually when someone believes the gospel?
10. Why does Satan oppose evangelism so fiercely?
11. How does remembering that **Christ has already defeated Satan** encourage us to share the gospel?

The Flesh

12. Read **Proverbs 29:25**.
How does the fear of man become a “snare” that keeps Christians from evangelizing?
13. The sermon suggested that our fear of evangelism is often rooted in **pride and self-preservation**. In what ways do you see this in your own heart?
14. What are some specific fears that make it difficult for you to share the gospel with others?

Overcoming the Obstacles

15. Read **Romans 1:16**.
How does believing that the gospel itself is the power of God change our perspective on evangelism?

16. Read **1 Corinthians 1:27–29**.
Why does God intentionally use weak and ordinary people to spread the gospel?
17. Read **Acts 4:29**.
What role does prayer play in evangelism?

Application

18. Who are **two or three specific people** in your life who need to hear the gospel?
19. What practical steps could you take this week to move toward sharing Christ with them?
20. Close your group by praying specifically for boldness and opportunities to share the gospel.

Daily Devotions for the Week

Day 1 – The Authority Behind Evangelism

Matthew 28:18–20

Jesus begins the Great Commission with a declaration:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Evangelism does not begin with our courage or ability. It begins with Christ’s authority.

Jesus is not asking His followers to attempt a mission that might fail. He is commanding them to participate in a mission already guaranteed to succeed because **He reigns over heaven and earth.**

When we remember that Christ has all authority, evangelism becomes less about our weakness and more about His power.

Reflection Questions

- How does Christ’s authority change the way you think about evangelism?
- Do you approach evangelism as an obligation or as participation in Christ’s victorious mission?

Prayer

Lord, help me remember that evangelism rests on Your authority, not my ability.

Day 2 – The Power of the Gospel

Romans 1:16

Paul boldly declares:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation.”

The power of evangelism does not come from the skill of the messenger. It comes from the message itself.

The gospel carries divine power because it proclaims what God has done through Christ.

When we share the gospel, we are not simply giving advice. We are announcing **God’s saving work in Christ.**

Reflection Questions

- Why is it easy to forget that the gospel itself is powerful?
- How would evangelism change if we truly believed that God works through His Word?

Prayer

God, help me trust in the power of the gospel rather than my own ability.

Day 3 – Rescued from Darkness

Colossians 1:13

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

Every time someone believes the gospel, a rescue takes place.

A person is transferred from Satan’s kingdom into Christ’s kingdom.

Evangelism is not merely conversation—it is **spiritual warfare and rescue.**

When we share the gospel, God uses that message to liberate people from darkness.

Reflection Questions

- How does this verse reshape your understanding of evangelism?

- Do you see evangelism as participation in God's rescue mission?

Prayer

Father, give me compassion for those still living in darkness.

Day 4 – The Fear of Man

Proverbs 29:25

“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.”

Many believers struggle with evangelism because of the fear of man.

We fear rejection.

We fear embarrassment.

We fear looking foolish.

But Scripture says that fear becomes a **snare**. It traps us and keeps us silent.

The solution is not greater confidence in ourselves, but deeper trust in God.

Reflection Questions

- What fears most often keep you from sharing the gospel?
- How might trusting God help you overcome those fears?

Prayer

Lord, free me from the fear of man and help me trust You.

Day 5 – Praying for Boldness

Acts 4:29

The early church prayed:

“Lord... grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.”

They did not pray for safety.

They prayed for boldness.

Evangelism is not sustained by personality or confidence. It is sustained by prayer.

When we ask God for boldness, He delights to answer.

Reflection Questions

- How often do you pray for opportunities and boldness to share the gospel?
- Who can you begin praying for this week that needs Christ?

Prayer

Lord, give me boldness to speak the gospel and compassion for the lost.