



## Evangelism:

People often know evangelism to be the sharing of the gospel, but what is the gospel? The gospel is the good news, which is often referred to as the sharing of Jesus's teachings amongst people.

Often when living out a Christian lifestyle it can be commented by those who aren't believers about the light that can be evident in someones life, even in the midst of difficult circumstances. When we live in a way that reflects Jesus, it naturally provokes a conversation.

1 Peter 3:15 says –

***"In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."***

Its important that at whatever stage of the Christian journey that we are on, we are able to give a reason for the hope that Christians have. This doesn't need to be complicated or difficult to explain, rather it is an opportunity to share of the difference of knowing Jesus has had in your life. It is something deeply personal. Your story is an original and the best person to tell it is you.

When Jesus chose His 12 disciples the first formal teaching encounter that is recorded is written in Matthew 5:1-16. It is in this piece of writing where 'The Beatitudes' are taught and the sermon on the mount delivered.

In this moment Jesus is saying to those closest to Him, if you want to live like I do, here is how we do it. After Jesus describes 8 different ways of a kingdom that resembles a heavenly, counter cultural, upside down perspective, He challenges the disciples with a metaphor which is fondly spoken of in Christian circles – salt and light.

Matthew 5:13-16 –

***"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."***

It can be suggested that if we neglect our responsibility to discipleship and at the same time evangelism, then the salt largely loses its flavour and the light its radiance. As disciples and evangelists at one and the same time as one another we must be committed to our conduct, love, faith and purity.

In conduct – We are to be models of righteous living. A person // people who live out convictions based on biblical principles. What you choose to commit to in private, will determine how you live in public. Each of our lives convey a message which will either contradict or substantiate what it is you say.

In love – The Christian lifestyle will always require something from us. When we allow love to be the default by how we choose to live, the light of Christ will be seen by those around us.

In faith – faithfulness determines commitment and actions. Consistency to a life of faithfulness will determine ones effectiveness for the shared kingdom of God to be recognised.

In Purity – this refers to the matters of the heart. Who it is that we are comes from the overflow of our hearts intent. If your heart is set on the realities of heaven, not on the things of earth, then our intent will be aligned with the mission of God.

Evangelism and discipleship are inexcusably interlinked with one another. We are all disciples; therefore, we are all evangelists. As followers of Jesus Christ we share in the greatest manifesto of all time – The Great Commission. The word disciple means 'one who learns as they follow'. The first disciples learned to be disciples by living alongside Jesus and watching what He did and listening to what He said. They learned by His preaching and doing, but in the midst of all they learnt by His being.

We are all called to be evangelists and disciples, it isn't a supreme call for a few, yet an extended opportunity to all. It is not about being qualified, nor is it about being the most expected person, it is about allowing God to use your ordinary life, to share an extraordinary message – there is Hope through a higher power. God meets us in His mercy, to take us further than where we could go on our own, for a lasting impact for many.

There is a phrase coined – do as I say, not as I do, however, in our Christian response, as disciples, we are called to pay attention to both Jesus's words and His actions. We have a gospel to proclaim and live out.

How do we transform the environment around us? It takes everyone, everywhere, everyday to demonstrate who God is to those who don't yet know Him.

Evangelism isn't just important, it is imperative for the expanding kingdom of God.