

12 Motivations for Evangelism

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Every Sunday afternoon, after the morning service at the church, the Pastor and his eleven-year-old son would go out into their town and hand out Gospel Tracts. This particular Sunday afternoon, as it came time for the Pastor and his son to go to the streets with their tracts, it was very cold outside, as well as pouring rain. The boy bundled up in his warmest and driest clothes and said, 'OK, dad, I'm ready.' His Pastor dad asked, 'Ready for what?' 'Dad, it's time we gather our tracts together and go out.' Dad responds, 'Son, it's very cold outside and it's pouring rain.' The boy gives his dad a surprised look, asking, "But Dad, aren't people still going to Hell, even though it's raining?" Dad answers, 'Son, I am not going out in this weather.' Despondently, the boy asks, 'Dad, can I go? Please?' His father hesitated for a moment then said, 'Son, you can go. Here are the tracts, be careful son.' 'Thanks Dad!' And with that, he was off and out into the rain. This eleven-year-old boy walked the streets of the town going door to door and handing everybody he met in the street a Gospel Tract.

After two hours of walking in the rain, he was soaking, bone-chilled wet and down to his VERY LAST TRACT. He stopped on a corner and looked for someone to hand a tract to, but the streets were totally deserted. Then he turned toward the first home he saw and started up the sidewalk to the front door and rang the door bell. He rang the bell, but nobody answered. He rang it again and again, but still no one answered. He waited but still no answer. Finally, this eleven-year-old trooper turned to leave, but something stopped him.

Again, he turned to the door and rang the bell and knocked loudly on the door with his fist. He waited, something holding him there on the front porch! He rang again and this time the door slowly opened. Standing in the doorway was a very sad-looking elderly lady. She softly asked, 'What can I do for you, son?' With radiant eyes and a smile that lit up her world, this little boy said, 'Ma'am, I'm sorry if I disturbed you, but I just want to tell you that * JESUS REALLY DOES LOVE YOU * and I came to give you my very last Gospel Tract which will tell you all about JESUS and His great LOVE.'

With that, he handed her his last tract and turned to leave. She called to him as he departed. 'Thank you, son! And God Bless You!' Well, the following Sunday morning in church Pastor Dad was in the pulpit. As the service began, he asked, 'Does anybody have testimony or want to say anything?' Slowly, in the back row of the church, an elderly lady stood to her feet. As she began to speak, a look of glorious radiance came from her face, 'No one in this church knows me. I've never been here before. You see, before last Sunday I was not a Christian. My husband passed on some time ago, leaving me totally alone in this world. Last Sunday, being a particularly cold and rainy day, it was even more so in my heart that I came to the end of the line where I no longer had any hope or will to live.

So I took a rope and a chair and ascended the stairway into the attic of my home. I fastened the rope securely to a rafter in the roof, then stood on the chair and fastened the other end of the rope around my neck. Standing on that chair, so lonely and broken-hearted I was about to leap off, when suddenly the loud ringing of my doorbell downstairs startled me. I thought, 'I'll wait a minute, and whoever it is will go away.'

I waited and waited, but the ringing doorbell seemed to get louder and more insistent, and then the person ringing also started knocking loudly... I thought to myself again, 'Who on earth could this be? Nobody ever rings my bell or comes to see me. I loosened the rope from my neck and started for the front door, all the while the bell rang louder and louder. When I opened the door and looked I could hardly believe my eyes, for there on my front porch was the most radiant and angelic little boy I had ever seen in my life. His SMILE, oh, I could never describe it to you! The words that came from his mouth caused my heart that had long been dead, TO LEAP TO LIFE as he exclaimed with a cherub-like voice, 'Ma'am, I just came to tell you that JESUS REALLY DOES LOVE YOU. Then he gave me this Gospel Tract that I now hold in my hand.

As the little angel disappeared back out into the cold and rain, I closed my door and read slowly every word of this Gospel Tract. Then I went up to my attic to get my rope and chair. I wouldn't be needing them anymore. You see-- -I am now a Happy Child of the KING. Since the address of your church was on the back of this Gospel Tract, I have come here to personally say THANK YOU to God's little angel who came just in the nick of time and by so doing, spared my soul from an eternity in hell..'

There was not a dry eye in the church. And as shouts of praise and honour to THE KING resounded off the very rafters of the building, Pastor Dad descended from the pulpit to the front pew where the little angel was seated....He took his son in his arms and sobbed uncontrollably. Probably no church has had a more glorious moment, and probably this universe has never seen a Papa that was more filled with love & honour for his son.

Friends, God loves everyone and wants to see them saved from hell. We too can reach people for Christ if we will be motivated to evangelize the lost. We've got to get busy and stop sitting around and watching people die without Christ. Are we motivated to reach the lost? Do we need a heart transplant for reaching the unsaved? People are dying all around us and we are to be used of God to reach the unsaved before it's everlastingly too late.

There are twelve motivations given for evangelism.

1. God loves all sinners

John 3:16 – If John 3:16 does not mean what it says, we might as well all pack up and go home! “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The fact that God loves all lost sinners provides me with great incentive to go out and reach them!

God's love is presented in four ways.

1. The extent of God's love (“God so loved the world”)

The term “world” (kosmos) is not used in any limited sense in this verse and context. Although Calvinism restricts this term to the elect (the world of the elect) they are not dealing honestly with the Bible at this point. There is nothing in the context that God is speaking of only the elect. In fact, God loves all people and wants to make them part of His elect body which He has called to be saved.

In John 3:17-18 he uses the term world in a universal sense. All Calvinists will agree that the entire world (not just the elect) is condemned (“to condemn the world” – vs. 17). They would never say that only the elect are condemned. This is absurd!

It is unmistakably clear by the context that the term for “world” (vs. 16) means the whole fallen race of humanity for it is the same world that is under condemnation (vs. 17). John consistently uses the term “world” (kosmos) in a universal sense when speaking about people (John 1:10; 29; 3:15-16; 4:42; 6:51; 8:12; 16:8; 12:31, 36, 46-47; 17:21).

Sir Robert Anderson, in the preface of his book *Forgotten Truths*, has written the following: “In the early years of my Christian life I was greatly perplexed and distressed by the supposition that the plain and simple words of such Scriptures as John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; 1 Timothy 2:6 were not true, save in a cryptic sense understood only by the initiated.” Anderson is referring to those Calvinists who teach that God only died for the elect, or those individuals He chose to salvation, and did not die for the rest of people. They are understood in a cryptic way to mean the world of the elect. This simply cannot wash with the Bible says and actually teaches.

Let me tell you what motivates me to evangelize. I can go to anyone that I meet, as this little boy did, and say, “God loves you and wants to save you from hell.” That is motivation! I’m motivated to evangelize because of the extent of God’s love. He loves everyone in the world. God does not hate the souls of people – He loves people. What a wonderful message this is!

2. The expression of God’s love (“that he gave his only begotten son”)

There is no greater love! This is what John W. Peterson wrote in one of His cantatas! God the Father gave God the Son to die as a substitute in the sinner’s place! That is amazing love.

3. The offer of God’s love (“that whosoever believeth in him”)

Again, there is no limitation to God’s offer of salvation. How can you limit the term “whosoever” to the elect? The words “all” and “whosoever” and “world” are always used in a universal sense in the salvation passages of Scripture. Even Charles Spurgeon, a Calvinist, believed that whosoever meant everyone. Spurgeon is also on record as saying: “If you say that you cannot come in under ‘whosoever,’ I ask you how you dare narrow a word which is in itself so broad, so infinite. ‘Whosoever’ – that must mean every man that ever lived, or ever shall live, while yet he is here and wills to come.”

4. The promise of God's love ("should not perish but have everlasting life")

God promises that those who place faith in Christ will never "perish" or experience personal ruin in hell. They will be spiritually delivered from the judgment and wrath of God forever! This is the promise centered upon God's love as seen in the death of Christ!

I'm motivated to evangelize the lost, hand out Gospel tracts, and talk to people about their need for Christ, since I know the Bible says that God loves everyone and wants everyone to be saved. If this does not motivate you, then I don't know what will motivate you! Some of the greatest evangelist preaching and soul winners, like D.L. Moody shared this message of God's love for everyone and tens of thousands have come to Christ through this glorious truth! Why? It's because God loves the world!

I am motivated to witness knowing that God loves the entire world and wants them to be saved. God's love for everyone provides me with great incentive to get out and share the Gospel message with any person. I can look them straight in the eyes and say with absolute confidence, "God loves you."

2. God sent His Son to die for all sinners

1 Timothy 2:6

"Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

The Bible declares that Christ paid the necessary ransom price "for all" of mankind in order to deliver them from hell and God's eternal wrath. The ransom price was needed since we were under the power and authority of Satan and headed toward a devil's hell. Again, you can't limit these terms to only His elect. Romans 3:23 says that "all have sinned" (certainly Paul is not referring to just the elect sinners). Therefore "all" means "all" in every salvation texts and that's "all" I'm going to say about it.

I'm motivated to evangelize the unsaved because I know that Jesus Christ paid the necessary purchasing price (to deliver all sinners from hell) forever. Jesus even died for false teachers! Yes, Jesus even died for those whose damnation is sure because of their total rejection of Christ.

2 Peter 2:1 declares:

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

We need to remember that Christ died for everyone; this includes those who engage in false teaching or religion and who are involved in the world of the cults. Christ also died for these people and although we hate their error, we must love their souls! I recall a time when I spent some extended time with the Jehovah Witnesses. God burdened my heart for them and I wanted to reach out to them, trusting that God would reveal to them the error of their ways. Yes, Jesus died for those who are involved in false religions and the cults. We need to remember this and evangelize these people as well.

Hebrews 2:9

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

Every man! You can't wiggle out of what the Bible actually says. Christ died on the cross for every poor lost soul. None were excluded. I don't care if that does not fit your theology; it's God's theology. Christ's death is not limited to any class of people. He died for all! Since this is true, all can be saved and enter God's program of salvation.

Do you need any more motivation than this to evangelize? Think of it; we can come to any person that we meet and say to them, “Christ loves and died for you.” This is a wonderful motivation and message for evangelism. There is no limited atonement or limited redemption (particular redemption) in these verses. Somebody asks, “But what do you do with those verses that state Christ died for His church and sheep?”

Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

John 10:11

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

John 10:15

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

Some attempt to restrict Christ’s death based upon what these verses are saying. Calvinism concludes that Christ only died for the Church and the sheep which they assume means those people that God intends to save over others. Therefore, they also assume that Christ only died for the elect and the “whosoever” verses must out of necessity speak of only the elect, which God intends to save over others. Of course, this is circular reasoning instead of Biblical reasoning.

One of the principles of Bible interpretation is the important hermeneutical principle known as "the analogy (similarity) of Scripture" – comparing Scripture with Scripture. This principle states that no passage, when correctly interpreted, will teach something contradictory to the rest of Scripture.

These sheep and church verses certainly can’t mean that Christ’s death was limited in its scope, or that Christ died to only save the elect (the sheep or Church), since this would contradict the clear statements of Scripture! So what do these verses teach which speak of Christ dying for the Church or His sheep? First, they teach that Christ’s death reaches across dispensational lines. Christ died for a new group of people (a new group of sheep) which would be included in the purpose and plan of God, a group that is composed primarily of Gentiles. Christ was saying that His program was changing from the Jewish people to the Church (the new sheep). The mention of Christ’s death for His Church and sheep was primarily a dispensational point since Christ was moving from the Jews to Gentiles in His salvation outreach (John 10:10, 16 - “other sheep” - John 10:10; Acts 15:14). Many today make a mountain out of a molehill when dealing with these verses.

Second, when reflecting on Christ’s death for His “church” and “sheep” we must remember that they are also a corporate or collective body of people. Therefore, we can conclude that Christ died for a collective group of people who would, throughout history, enter His elective and redemptive program. The group was specific in that it was called the “sheep” or “Church” but in another sense the group was collective (universal) in that it would include

all those who enter God's new church and sheep program of election, through faith in the Son of God.

Of course, the drawing of individual people to salvation (John 6:44) results in God's greater purpose coming to pass, which is to form the corporate body that He has chosen to save (the Church). Christ's death is not limited in its *extent* or scope (He died for all); it's only limited in its *application* to those who believe, or those who become part of the growing, elect body of people, called His Church or sheep. This is what these verses are teaching.

Revelation 22:17

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

We must remove our Calvinistic bifocals at this point and let God's Word speak. It's interesting that the invitation given by the Church ("the bride") is a universal invitation ("whosoever") for all people to "come," which means that all people can take part in the corporate elect body (the Church), which Christ has chosen to save, and become part of the Bride of Christ. This is not the church inviting elect sinners to salvation but all sinners to salvation so they might become part of the elect body, which all can enter, according to His purpose and grace (Eph. 1:6).

D. L. Moody used to say:

"The whosoever wills are the elect and the whosoever wants are the non-elect."

God makes a man's election possible, man makes it actual. I say, "Amen!" to the truth that Christ died for the Church and His sheep, which is a special called-out group of people that God wants to save. But this calling is based on His universal death for everyone and those who respond to the invitation become part of this corporate body because of His universal death for everyone.

Ladies, you know that if you start baking a cake but forget the butter or sugar that something is not going to turn out right. If you start at the wrong point, you won't get to the right end! This is what many do with the doctrine of election. Calvinists want to start with elect and end with the elect. But this is not the Biblical order. One must start with everyone in order to get to

the elect. Since Christ died for all mankind (Heb. 2:9) all people can become part of God's new body of elect believers (the sheep and Church) in the present dispensational age. However, in order to get to the elect body, Christ had to die for all mankind, since all can become part of the universal body He has called to save (Rev. 22:17). In actuality, the church and sheep verses are not teaching a limit to Christ's death, but the securing effect and application of Christ's death, to those who believe in Him for salvation, within the growing and corporate body of the Church – God's sheep.

2 Corinthians 5:19-20

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

This verse clearly teaches that Christ's death provided a satisfying, substitutionary sacrifice for all mankind. When Christ died on the cross He "reconciled the world" (not just the Church or sheep). This means He provided a sacrificial provision for all humanity to be reconciled to God. Without Christ's sacrifice no person could ever be saved.

J. Vernon McGee remarks:

"Now that Christ has died, the position of the world has been changed. Today God has His arms outstretched to a lost world. He says to a lost world, 'You can come to Me.' The worst sinner in the world can come to Him. Today it doesn't make any difference who you are, you can come to Him. Because Christ died, a holy God no longer deals with us in judgment, but now He reaches down to save all those who will come to Him. Jesus Christ bore all that judgment on Himself so that now the world is reconciled to God. You don't have to do anything to win God over. God is not waiting around the corner to hit you over the head with a bill club. God is not angry with you. God does not hate you. God *loves* you. Christ did not come to charge man's sins against him but to pay man's debt."

This motivates me! It gets me excited to evangelize the unsaved. I can come to every poor lost sinner and tell them that Jesus Christ died for them (paying the penalty for their own sin) so they can be saved.

At the entrance of one of the great manufacturing plants in America is a sign that reads, "If you are like a wheelbarrow--going no further than you are pushed--you need not apply for work here!" In all of our spiritual endeavors, which include witnessing, we must manifest personal initiative and zeal and be willing to go the second mile to see people saved. Have you been going the second mile?

My wife and I started to do some running one again on the Junior High athletic tract. We would walk two laps and then run two, walk one, and then run two, and finish walking one. We wanted to do an extra mile! Are we willing to go the extra mile in witnessing to people? We need spiritual drive to witness to the lost and spread the good news through verbal witness, tract witness, and friendly visits. How far have you been going in reaching out to people? The motivation of Christ's death for every man provides us with great incentive to witness to the lost.

1 John 2:2

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

The word "propitiation" (*hilasmos*) speaks of a "satisfying sacrifice" that was made to God the Father in order to satisfy His justice and appease His wrath and judgment against sinners. Jesus' death (the shedding of His blood on the cross) was the site where God placated (appeased) His wrath against sin. That's why we must explain to sinners how Christ's paid the necessary fine that God required to release them from God's judgment and bring them acceptance before the Father.

Here is a Calvinistic interpretation of 1 John 2:2:

"And he is the propitiation for our sins (the sins of the elect): and not for ours only (the elect sins only), but also for *the sins of* the whole world (the sins of the elect)."

Of course, this interpretation does not make sense! The reason it does not make sense is because this is not what the text is teaching. Again, the words "all" and "world" are used in a universal sense in the salvation passages of Scripture. If one views them as referring to a limited group of people (the elect), or some special group of people, they destroy the obvious sense of Scripture and words, and are inconsistent with what the Bible actually says.

Paul says that Christ not only was the satisfying sacrifice for “our sins” (those already saved and part of the family of God) but “the sins of the whole world” every person’s sins (anyone and everyone who has every lived).

Charles Spurgeon wrote:

“I would sooner a hundred times over appear to be inconsistent with myself than be inconsistent with the word of God.”

1 John 4:14 adds this:

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”

Christ is the “Saviour of the world” in the sense that He died for everyone in the world of mankind, paying the necessary fine, satisfying God’s wrath, and providing the sacrifice that was needed to save everyone from hell forever. I get motivated and excited when I understand from Scripture that God sent His Son to die for all sinners! What a glorious truth and message we have to share with the lost! This truth motivates me to evangelize the lost. Calvinism does not get me excited to witness but Christ’s death for everyone does! We should be motivated to evangelize the lost. This study is not about Calvinism, but as we deal with various Biblical texts, we must defend the truth against extreme views on the sovereignty of God. Election begins with God and ends with God, but let God be sovereign in the way He has chosen and allow Him to implement His plan in His way – not the way of Augustine and others.

A man recently drove into my fence with his car. He was ready for me to give it to him with both barrels. Instead, I calmly said, “It looks like you did not make the turn very well.” We began talking and I eventually gave him a tract. He later said to me, “I knew you were a Christian, or preacher, or something like that by the way you reacted to me. You did not chew my head off!” This reminds us that when evangelizing we must maintain spiritual poise and grace (Col. 4:6). How wonderful that I could share with this man, who ran down my fence with his car, that Jesus died for him. Christ died for fence-wreckers! Christ died for everyone!

I am motivated to witness knowing that Christ died for the entire world and wants all people to be saved. I can look any person straight in the eyes and say, "Jesus died for you and wants you to be saved." Now that is motivation to evangelize!

3. God wants to save all sinners

2 Peter 3:9

"The Lord is not slack (slow or delayed in His response) concerning his promise, as some men count slackness (delay or tardiness); but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

God's promise has to do with judging ungodly mankind (vs. 7); however, God is merciful and delays the time of His judgment. Why? It's because God's desire is to see people saved instead of perish in hell. This verse, among others, allows us to understand that God did not create and prepare Pharaoh, or any person for that matter, to be predestined to hell. Romans 9 does not teach double predestination. In actuality, Pharaoh made the choice to reject God and His ways.

The term "usward" (speaks of those in the human race who were once unsaved). It's not a reference to only the elect. The Bible does not teach this. Don't presume upon the Bible! Peter is simply remembering that God was longsuffering toward every person in the world who is now a believer in Christ. He was waiting for them to be saved and longing for them to be saved. This verse magnifies the heart and compassion of God for everyone in the human race. It's never the desire of God to damn people to hell for all eternity! If you say that it is, then you have slighted the character of God!

Of course, universal salvation is not taught in the Bible and this verse surely is not conveying this false teaching. Here is the truth. It's the desire of God's heart to see all people saved, even though not everyone will be saved. Is this the desire of your heart today? How often do we think about the unsaved during the day? Do we have a soft heart toward those who are going to perish in hell?

Christ has died to save all people and God's heart longs for them to be saved. Is this our longing? Do we have a commitment and undying passion for the lost? When I contemplate God's heart for the lost and seek to

emulate His heart, I will have all the motivation that I need to be a better witness for Christ.

Matthew 9:36

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”

Our motivation stems from seeing the great need all around us and possessing an undying compassion for the masses! Do you see the need and are you willing to be part of the answer? In what ways can you reach out to the lost?

“Let us walk with a heart of compassion
Care not just with words but with deeds
Like the One we love so
Let us live to go, wherever He leads.”

Where will God lead you this week? Nobody knows but that is what makes this week exciting! Lord, give us a burden for souls!

I am motivated to witness knowing that God has a deep, loving, compassion for all people to be saved and that I can express this same message to everyone and possess this same compassion in my own heart.

4. God is seeking sinners

Luke 19:10

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

“He was seeking for me
Jesus was seeking for me,
Though I knew Him not,
Still He loved me.
Though I sought Him not,
Still He sought me,
He was seeking for me.”

This is the key verse for Luke’s Gospel. It reminds us that Jesus Christ came to seek out sinners within the lost human race, so they might be

saved from an eternal hell. Sinners must be sought in order to be saved since “there is none that seeketh God” (Rom. 3:11). In the plan of salvation, God searches for lost people, who have no hope of ever being saved without His loving compassion and driving conviction that He sends upon their hearts. In this verse we see that Jesus Christ is a soul winner. In fact, He is the true soul winner! If anyone is ever going to be saved, it will happen because God sought them and saved them. Let us never forget this. We cannot manipulate people into salvation with our little tricks, cards, and quick prayers. It takes Jesus Christ to open their hearts and saved them since He is the true Soul Winner.

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.”

The earlier parables Jesus gave in John 15 illustrate Christ’s purpose of seeking out sinners. A lost sheep was found (Luke 15:1-5), a lost coin was found (Luke 15:8-9), a lost son was found (Luke 15:23-24, 32). Yes, Jesus sought us when we were on the broad road that leads to hell (Matt. 7:13-14) and He saved us.

“In tenderness He sought me,
Weary and sick with sin;
And on His shoulders brought me
Back to His fold again.
While angels in His presence sang
Until the courts of Heaven rang.”

Jesus seeks out sinners and saves them. This is His desire and work. This provides me with great motivation to evangelize. I should not become stagnant in my outreach and witnessing since I know that Jesus Christ is seeking out sinners and saving their souls.

John 12:32

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

This is a *saving* statement – not a *selective* statement. It is a factual statement that Christ will draw all people to Himself through the magnetism of the cross and the conviction that He brings upon their hearts.

By this statement Jesus did not mean that everybody will be saved for He made it clear that some would be lost (John 5:28-29). Jesus means He will draw people without discrimination from all over the earth, both Jews and Gentiles from every tribe, language, people, and nation (John 10:16; 11:52). The drawing refers to His work of conviction and driving the message of the cross home to the hearts of the lost in seeking out their souls.

The fact that God is seeking the lost should stir my heart and motivate me to become a better witness. In one sense, we too can be a soul winner. Of course, it's God who works in the heart and brings people to the place of saving faith. He is the inner witness. But we can be the vessel that God uses to point people to His Son Jesus Christ. We can be the outer witness. God has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15). The Great Commission pertains to that of witnessing and seeing souls saved.

We are called to be "fishers of men" (Mark 1:16-17) by seeking out people and pointing them to the Gospel message so the true Soul Winner, Jesus Christ, might do a work of grace in their hearts. Have you been seeking to win people to Christ? Have you gone fishing lately? Since Jesus Christ is seeking out sinners, I am motivated to share the Gospel with the lost, so I can point them to the only One who can save them.

There is a rhyme that gives four tips on how to catch fish.

"Be sure your face is toward the light;
Study the fish's curious ways;
Then keep yourself well out of sight,
And cherish patience all your days."

This little poem can be applied, line by line, to a Christian fishing for men. "Be sure your face is toward the light." The skillful angler will always be careful to see that the sun shines upon his face and that his shadow falls behind him. The only person who can catch souls is one who has a radiant face that is free from the darkness!

"Study the fish's curious ways." Let no man think that he can become a successful angler by learning all about lines and hooks and rods and reels! He must study fish. He must know the things that please them or the things

that repel them. He who would catch men must understand men! “Then keep yourself well out of sight.” No man ever yet secured large catches, either of fish or of men, who was fond of thrusting himself into a place of prominence.

“And cherish patience all your days.” There will be times when you will have to wait for long, long periods without so much as a nibble; and you will be tempted to give it all up! But he who is patient will enjoy the unspeakable rapture of the fisherman's triumph at the last! Mend your nets with faith, cast them in hope, and draw them with love.

I am motivated to witness knowing that there are fish everywhere in the sea of humanity waiting to be caught in the Gospel net! We cast out the net and God puts people on the hook for us!

I remember years ago, during Bible school, when I was fishing. I was a child and I was fishing. However, the fish that we were catching were not real fish. A man on the other end, behind the blanket, was putting candy and other little prizes on the end of the fishing line. Then, I would pull up the line and get the prize. As I look back upon that childhood experience, I'm reminded that it is God who puts people on the end of the Gospel line. We simply cast out the fishing pole and invite sinners to be saved. God is the One who works in the heart and we are the recipients of His work.

5. God is calling sinners

God is calling sinners to be saved. He is offering them something that world does not offer. God's call to sinners provides added motivation in my heart to be an avid witness for Christ. If God is calling people to the place of salvation, then I can reap the benefits of this call, when witnessing to the unsaved. I can reap the benefits of God calling sinners to salvation.

There is a threefold call that is presented to the hearts of sinners.

- a. A call to repent

Luke 5:32

“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

During the earthly ministry of Jesus He called sinners to repentance. Of course, it's our job to emulate this evangelistic call to sinners today. God will perform the inner work of grace in the hearts of the unsaved through preaching repentance to the lost (Acts 11:18). The call of Jesus Christ includes the repentance of sinners. Jesus Christ is still calling sinners to repentance (metanoia), which means that He is calling sinners, through His inner conviction, to change their mind or heart about their sins, to come to a place of brokenness over sin, where a sinner wants release from their sins. Without this, no person will be saved. No person can be saved who is in rebellion against God!

Of course, after a person repents their life will begin to change. The root of repentance occurs at conversion (the sinner is convicted and ready to turn away from sin) but the fruit of repentance (the sinner changing his ungodly lifestyle) occurs after they are saved.

Charles Spurgeon wrote:

"If the man does not live differently from what he did before, both at home and abroad, his repentance needs to repented of, and his conversion is a fiction."

Many people today are the products of pragmatism (church guru gimmicks) but they are not saved, repentant sinners. This is evident because their lifestyle never changes. Repentance is part of evangelism.

Luke 24:47

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

No person can be saved if they are not truly convicted about their sins and willing to repent of their sins. Jonathan Edwards, a preacher in colonial New England, helped spark a revival known as "The Great Awakening." From a human standpoint it is hard to account for such far-reaching results from a single discourse. The speaker was not dynamic, nor did he use many gestures; yet he spoke with deep sincerity.

Few knew the spiritual preparation involved in that sermon. John Chapman gives us the story: "For 3 days Edwards had not eaten a mouthful of food; for 3 nights he had not closed his eyes in sleep. Over and over again he was heard to pray, 'O Lord, give me New England! Give me New England!'"

When he arose from his knees and made his way into the pulpit that Sunday, he looked as if he had been gazing straight into the face of God. Even before he began to speak, tremendous conviction and repentance fell upon his audience."

b. A call to rest

Matthew 11:28

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The call of Jesus Christ to sinners also includes rest! There is not only a call to repentance but also rest. This is referring to the spiritual rest that comes from having the burden of your sins lifted and finding complete forgiveness through Jesus Christ. I remember hearing a man tell me how a great weight fell off of him after he found forgiveness through Jesus Christ. He said that "it was like a giant load that lifted off of his shoulders." That is the kind of rest that Christ gives to us. The spiritual rest that comes from forgiveness cannot be explained, it can only be experienced! The call of Jesus during His earthly ministry has not changed. He is calling sinners to repentance and rest. Both are important when evangelizing the lost and declaring these messages. We are the outward witness but the Lord is the inner witness to these saving realities.

c. A call to receive

Revelation 22:17

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Some have suggested that this is the invitation for Christ to return in the Rapture which is given by the Holy Spirit, Church (corporately), and every individual ("let him that heareth") who has already heard. The claim is made that this must be the case since this chapter is filled with references about Christ's return. However, the flow of the entire verses and the "come" sequences seem to be an open invitation for the unsaved to come to faith in Christ. In view of Christ's Rapture, an invitation goes out to the unsaved to come to faith in Christ. It's the purpose of God through the Spirit (the inner witness) and the Church (the outward witness) to engage in a battle

for lost souls until the Rapture of the Church, which occurs prior to the Tribulation Period. This is why an invitation is given at the end of the Book. The Spirit convicts the world to bring mankind to salvation (John 16:8) and the Church (as a corporate entity) carries the Gospel message to the world of mankind (Mark 16:15). Thus, the invitation is an open and standing invitation for sinners to “come” to faith in Christ before the Rapture occurs.

There is a third party mentioned here (“let him that heareth say come”). This is a reference to individual believers who have heard the Gospel and are now saved. It is the responsibility of individual believers to witness. Those who have heard and responded to the Gospel invitation must now evangelizing others and invite them to come to faith in Christ. I take this to mean that others who hear and respond in faith to the Gospel message will invite others to come and be saved. They share the message of glad tidings and good news and invite others to “Come!” This reminds us that we are to personally inviting others to faith in Christ.

A person must “come” or make a volitional (free-will) choice regarding their eternal destiny. John gives the overall purpose and desire of the Holy Spirit and Church during this present Age of Grace before he officially closes and ends the Book of Revelation. It is the message of the Holy Spirit (the internal witness) and the Church (external witness) to invite sinners to “come” and receive the free gift of eternal life through Christ.

“Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into Thy freedom, gladness, and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee;
Out of my sickness, into Thy health,
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.”

This is an open invitation to sinners everywhere to express faith in Christ. The word “come” (Rev. 21:17) is actually a metaphor that explains what “faith” in Christ means. Faith is not a passive, or dead faith, it is an active faith. It’s a faith that responds to Christ’s free offer of salvation. It’s a faith that steps out and relies on Christ to be one’s Savior. **A person must “come” to Christ (direct their faith to Christ) in order to receive salvation from hell and the gift of eternal life. Coming involves choice and decision. It

involves committing one's faith to Christ. If you don't come, you can't receive what Christ offers – eternal life.

Alva McClain used to say:

Faith is the hand of the heart reaching out to Christ.”

And so it is! This is universal invitation that is given to anyone and everyone who hears the Gospel and wants to come to Christ or express faith in Christ for salvation. Many Calvinists claim that we should never invite sinners to salvation since this is the Holy Spirit's work. This is rather absurd. I can tell a person about salvation but can't invite them to come to salvation. The Bible says we should seek a personal response from people. We are to give them an invitation as well.

Acts 8:37

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

We must ask the sinner to “come” to Christ and express faith in Him for their salvation. They are to come and receive the free gift of salvation. The Scriptures make something crystal clear; salvation and the gift of eternal life, which is here called the water of life (Rev. 22:1; John 7:37-39) is absolutely free. It's compared to a refreshing drink of water that a person can apply to his life. The drink is free! Salvation is free! It is not earned, merited, or bought. Salvation has been paid for by the death of Christ on the cross and is extended to all who are willing to receive it in simple faith.

When was the last time you asked someone to come to Christ? When was the last time you told someone they can come? God has called us to evangelize. If we don't evangelize, we will fossilize! Whosoever will may come! This motivates me to get evangelizing!

Al Smith wrote:

I own the cattle on a thousand hills
I write the music for the whippoorwills
Control the planets with their rocks and rills
But give you freedom to use your own will.

And if you want me to I'll make you whole
I'll only do it tho if you say so

I'll never force you for I love you so
I give you freedom is it yes or no."

I am motivated to witness knowing that God is calling sinners to repentance, rest, and to receive His free offer of salvation and eternal life. I can share the message with the lost knowing that God is working in the hearts of the unsaved. I am motivated to witness knowing that I can reap the benefits of God's saving call upon the hearts and lives of the lost.

Are we motivated to share the Gospel message? We should be since God is ready to do a work in the hearts of the lost. In olden days, circuit rider preachers were so relentless in their ministry that on stormy days there was a proverbial saying: "There is nothing out today but crows and Methodist preachers." Let's get busy!

6. God is a friend of sinners.

Luke 7:34

"The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

The religious enemies of our Lord ("Pharisees and lawyers" – vs. 30) were always trying to destroy His character and reputation. Here is another attempt on their part to cast a dark spot on our blessed Lord. Jesus was unveiling their true hearts. The Pharisees and teachers of the law refused to submit to John's baptism (Luke 7:30) and in doing so rejected the spiritual preparation that was needed to receive the Messiah. They were to repent of their sins and be baptized in obedience so they would be ready to receive their Messiah.

Jesus taught that it was impossible to please the generation of which they were the leaders. Jesus likened them to children in the marketplace but who decided to no longer play any games (Luke 7:32). They didn't want to play either wedding or funeral. They were perverse, wayward, unpredictable, and unresponsive to the things of God. No matter what ministry God used among them, they took exception to it. The people said that John the Baptist was demon-possessed (Luke 7:33).

They also said that Jesus was sinner identifying him with a glutton and drunkard ("a gluttonous man, and a winebibber") The Son of Man (Jesus

Christ) ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners, which means that He identified Himself with sinners and wanted to see them saved (Luke 7:34). The enemies of Jesus had part of their critical analysis correct; Jesus was a friend of sinners! Thank God that He was and still is today!

Have you been a friend of sinners? Have you reached out to them in their desperate need? Many people are seeking alcoholic beverage as a way to escape reality and life, they are addicted and chained to the things of this world. They have no hope. They need our attention. They need our love. They need the message that we possess! How can you become a friend of some particular sinner this week? How can you reach out to them? What steps have we been taking to connect with them and communicate the Gospel message to them?

We won't win sinners by becoming like them or communicating the same music and message which they are used to hearing. We can only win them with the life-liberating message of the Gospel, which promises to release them from all of their sins and give them a new way of life.

Hebrews 7:26

“For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”

If we want to be like Jesus, we will befriend sinners but remain separate from them. We won't imbibe their actions and allegiances but demonstrate holiness before them and the life-changing message of the Gospel.

So, the critics of Jesus did have one thing. Jesus was a friend of sinners!

This is repeated in Matthew 11:19

“The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.”

“Jesus! what a Friend for sinners!
Jesus! Lover of my soul;
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,
He, my Savior, makes me whole.”

Notice that Jesus said, “ye say” (Luke 7:34) that He was a “gluttonous man, and wine a winebibber” (a tippler, one given to wine). Or course, this was not the case at all. Just because Jesus loved sinners and spent time with them does not mean that he was a glutton and drinking with them socially at the Roman parties. Jesus was not a tippler but a sustainer from wine and strong drink knowing the dangers and sin that comes from imbibing it. We should emulate His example today. If you tip the bottle and pour alcohol down through your throat, you are not being like Jesus! I am hard on drinking alcoholic beverage because of the warnings that are against it in Scripture. According to the previous verses, neither John or Jesus; in fact, no one with a true and spiritual message, not even the prophets, pleased the people of that day - the unsaved crowd.

J. C. Ryle admonishes:

“We must give up the idea of trying to please everyone. The thing is impossible, and the attempt is mere waste of time. We must be content to walk in Christ’s steps, and let the world say what it likes. Do what we will, we shall never satisfy it, or silence its ill-natured remarks. It first found fault with John the Baptist and then with his blessed Master. And it will go on cavilling and finding fault with that Master’s disciples so long as one of them is left upon earth.”

No, should not please sinners but we should penetrate the darkness with the life-changing and liberating message of the Gospel. If we want to be like Jesus, we will find ways to communicate with sinners who are in need of the life-changing message of the Gospel. What will we do this week to reach the lost? Poor lost souls! They need a friend. They need us. They are sheep without a shepherd. They are bound to sin and only Jesus can release them from their sins and give them new life.

Romans 5:8

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

God not only loves sinners; he is a friend of sinners. This motivates me to witness to the unsaved and see them delivered from the powers of darkness and sin. It provides me with the incentive I need to get out into the world and rub shoulders with the lost and dying. It reminds me that I too must be a friend of sinners.

7. God is convicting sinners

The fact that the Bible states God is bringing conviction upon the hearts of sinners also provides me with incentive to witness to the unsaved masses.

Jesus said in John 16:8:

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

The Holy Spirit’s ministry that is taking place in the hearts of lost humanity also provides me with incentive and drive to witness to the unsaved. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit brings conviction upon lost people (“reprove the world”). The Holy Spirit, without distinction, convicts all of lost humanity. This was the promise given to His disciples. They were just promised the Holy Spirit’s permanent presence in this Age of Grace (John 16:7); therefore, as they would launch out into the deep and share the Gospel, the Holy Spirit would work in the hearts of all lost humanity, without distinction, as the Gospel is shared among the lost.

The Holy Spirit does not work in a vacuum. He works through people who are witnessing and sharing the Gospel. This is what Jesus is teaching. This means that the Spirit creates an inward awareness of these things in the life of the individual sinner. God’s Spirit working upon the human heart and effects man’s decisions in relationship to *spiritual things* and his eternal destiny (John 16:8).

Robert Gromacki said:

“He (God) has graciously worked in and through the human will to gain the assent of that will without violating human responsibility.”

The point is this; God does not overtake the human will, but aids the will and decision of man, so he can express faith in Jesus Christ. God’s work upon the human heart does not rule out the personal choice and responsibility of mankind regarding his acts of sin (John 3:19) and eternal destiny (John 5:40). That the human will is *bound* to sin and separation from God cannot be denied from Scripture (Eph. 2:1-3). For this reason a person chooses to sin and live in unbelief, since the dictates of the sin nature continually influence and affect his volitional choices, in an evil or adverse way.

However, it's equally true that the human will still remains *autonomous*, which means that it's given the freedom to choose its own destiny, as the Holy Spirit works upon the human will, promising deliverance and eternal life to the sinner. In other words, God chooses to keep man autonomous (independent and free) in the matter of his choices, even if he needs assistance in relationship to his choice, regarding the salvation of his soul. The Spirit's ministry is to bring conviction upon the sinner's heart and draw him to Christ.

The Holy Spirit brings a threefold conviction upon the unsaved.

A. The conviction of sin.

- I. The reason for sin's conviction: ("because they believe not on me"). Since sinners do not believe on Christ as their Savior; therefore, there is a need for them to be convicted of their sin, convinced of the truth about Christ, so they will respond in faith to His salvation.

- II. The result of the Spirit's conviction

- a. People are convicted about general sin.

First, the Spirit convicts the unsaved about "sin" in general (John 16:8). The word "reprove" means conviction. In convicting a person, the Holy Spirit presents or expose the facts to the sinner's mind and heart, and seeks to convince the sinner of the truth.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world in the way a judge or a prosecuting attorney presents evidence to bring a conviction. The Spirit of God wants to present evidence in your heart and in my heart to bring us to a place of conviction and to a place of decision. There must be a conviction before a decision can take place. That is why we don't force sinners to make decisions before there is conviction in their heart. By the way, we can't bring conviction upon the heart of the sinner, only God can do this.

The fallacy of "easy prayerism" involves a soul winner getting the unsaved to pray an easy or quick prayer before conviction, repentance, and heart preparation has occurred by the Holy Spirit. This trick of "easy prayerism" has damned many souls to hell by giving them false hopes of acceptance before God and entrance into Heaven. The Holy Spirit must open the heart

of the sinner. It's God who gives the increase! The miracle of conviction and the salvation of the soul is something that is dear to our hearts. We would not be here had it not been for the Spirit's work in our hearts.

“It took a miracle to put the stars in place,
It took a miracle to hang the world in space;
But when He saved my soul,
Cleansed and made me whole,
It took a miracle of love and grace!”

Here is the truth; a lost person cannot be saved unless he realizes, by the Spirit's conviction upon his heart, that he is a dirty, rotten, no-good, putrefying sinner in God's presence. The Holy Spirit cuts through humanism, self-righteousness, self-esteem, and self-love. Only the conviction of the Holy Spirit condemning sinners of their sins will bring them to salvation.

The modern church today needs to stop candy-coating appeals to sinners. They need to stop trying to make deals with sinners and pleasing sinners. The unsaved sinner is foul in God's presence and cannot be saved without realizing the dreadfully horrible nature of his sins before God.

If you try to hide the dreadful nature of a person's sins behind worldly music, gimmicks, hip dressing and preaching, coffee centers, then you are responsible for leading sinners astray and even leading some of them to hell. Sinners must know the hideous nature of their sins before God and when you try and cover up sin, to get sinners to church, you are participating in heresy of the worst sort. Heresy of method is as bad as heresy of message. Do you know why? It's because the means you use to win sinners is sending a message to the sinner. Worldly appeals confuse sinners and lead to many decisions that lack repentance.

Matthew 1:21

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

It takes the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of sinners! Most people will admit to failures or vices or even crimes. However, the Holy Spirit must convict people about their dreadful sin that is against a holy and righteous God! This is what stabs them in the heart and that which brings them to faith in

Christ, when the sinner knows He has offended God, only then is he ready to be saved.

Dr. J. Gresham Machen so aptly put it:

"Without the consciousness of sin, the whole of the gospel will seem to be an idle tale."

So the Holy Spirit will convict the world "of sin." There are many different sins that the Holy Spirit will bring to the attention of the lost when He is convicting them. This verse can be understood in several ways. This may reference a general Holy Spirit conviction of the unsaved regarding sin since they are still unbelievers in need of Christ. Unbelievers need to be convicted of their sin which they know has offended a holy God. I remember witnessing to a man one day and speaking to him about the fact how everyone has sinned. He suddenly bowed down his head and was silent for about a minute. The Holy Spirit had convicted him about one specific sin of selling cars that should not have been sold. They were lemons! People are convicted about sin in general as it applies to their personal lives.

b. People are convicted about a specific sin.

John 16:9 gives some additional commentary on the matter of sin. There may also be a narrower and more restrictive meaning to the word "sin." The mention of "sin" with a failure to believe ("because they believe not on me") have led some to conclude that there is a specific sin that is brought out in verse nine – the sin of unbelief. The Spirit convicts the world of the sin of failing to believe on Christ. This is also definitely true.

Unbelief is the doorway that leads to hell. When a sinner tells you that he asks God to forgive him when he sins, or before he dies, that is not good enough to get him to Heaven. In fact, it means nothing to God! A sinner must believe on Jesus Christ to be saved from hell. Only faith in Christ matters to God – not some kind of prayer of forgiveness, mourning, asceticism, or reformation. These things lead to hell. A sinner must believe on Christ in order to be saved. A sinner's failure to believe on Christ is one sin that every sinner will have to face sooner or later, if he is going to be saved!

Jesus taught in John 3:18:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Failure to believe on Jesus is the great damning sin of every unbeliever today.

Tenney (one of the older writers) said:

“A court can convict a man of murder, but only the Spirit can convict him of unbelief.”

What is the greatest sin in all the world? Some will say that it is murder. No. Who are the greatest sinners in this world? We’ve had some rascals. We might point out Hitler, or Stalin, or Karl Marx, or the Mafia. Who is the greatest sinner today? Friend, let me say that you could be the greatest sinner living today. Do you know why? It’s because you failed to believe on Jesus Christ to be your Savior. Unbelief is a state and there is no remedy for unbelief if you refuse to trust Christ. The only thing you must do is believe on Him to escape judgment for your sins.

B. The conviction of righteousness.

- I. The reason for a righteous conviction (“because I go to my Father and ye see me no more.”)

Since Jesus was going to ascend back to the Father and no longer be visibly seen in the world or on earth, there would be a need for the Spirit to come and convict lost sinners everywhere of the righteousness of Jesus Christ (that He was perfectly righteous in Himself, that He made the righteous sacrifice on the cross to the Father, and that His righteousness alone gives a person acceptance before God).

- II. The result of the Spirit’s conviction

John 16:8 and 10 explain the matter of the Spirit’s conviction regarding righteousness. The Holy Spirit convicts the unsaved world of “righteousness” (John 16:10). The Holy Spirit will in a general way convict the sinner of his need to be made right before God through Jesus Christ! The major emphasis in John is about the righteousness of Jesus Christ that

He displayed on earth, prior to His return to the Father, which resulted in the righteous payment that He made for sin on the cross, before returning to the Father, and as a result, how He gives to the believing sinner His own righteousness, so one can be accepted before the Father. A person needs to come to grips with this reality if He is ever going to have Jesus give Him perfect righteousness and acceptance before the Father. *Only Jesus can make a person right before God!

In crucifying Jesus, the Jewish people showed that they thought He was unrighteous, believing that only a wicked person would be hanged on a tree and thus be under God's curse (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). However, the Resurrection and the Ascension vindicated Jesus as God's righteous Servant (Acts 3:14-15; Isa. 53:11).

So, the Holy Spirit convicts lost people of their faulty views of Jesus when the resurrection of Gospel Resurrection is proclaimed (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The resurrection declares that Jesus Christ is absolutely righteous, that He made the righteous payment that the Father accepted, and that He is the only Righteous One who can give them a righteous acceptance before God. Yes, Jesus Christ returned to the Father to provide the believing sinner with salvation from hell (Rom. 4:25).

When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, God not only subtracts our sin, but He adds His Son's perfect righteousness to our account. If we are going to have any standing before God, we must be in Christ and He is our righteousness. A sinner must believe in the righteous person of Jesus Christ, who made the righteous payment necessary to release them from their sin, and who alone can give him saving righteousness before God the Father.

I was emailing with a man last week who said Jesus would not approve of someone who was intolerant of other views. I said, I think you are wrong about Jesus, since Jesus said in Matthew 23:33, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Unless a sinner is convicted about His faulty views of Jesus Christ, He cannot be saved. Many today believe that Jesus Christ was only an example of a good person who lived in the past but one who did have faults. The hell-bound critics of Hollywood and some of the Gnostic books being written today (the alleged lost books of the Bible) are trying to convey that Jesus

had an affair with Mary Magdalene and that He was not condemning to homosexuality and many other sins.

Just the other day, I was watching Fox News and they apparently discovered a very small 4th century fragment papyrus in which it seems Jesus was allegedly speaking to His wife and how she would become His disciple or follower. Apparently some brainy (brainless) professor is suggesting that Jesus now had a wife and that Christianity and its message about Jesus Christ is not what historic Christianity that the Bible originally presented. These types of conclusions by hell-bent sinners are ludicrous and soul damming. If you believe this junk, you will go straight to hell when you die. You must believe the truthful record; Jesus Christ was perfectly righteous, paid the necessary righteous payment to the Father when dying on the cross, and He alone can make you righteous before God by giving you His very own righteousness.

When the Holy Spirit convicts you about righteousness, it's only then that you can be saved. The sinner must come to believe that Jesus Christ is perfectly righteous and is the only way for the sinner to be accepted before the Father.

John 14:6

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

The Spirit convicts the world of the inadequacy of its righteousness and moves the unsaved sinner to seek the true righteousness that only Jesus Christ provides.

The mighty working of the Holy Spirit is necessary to convince and convict people of their desperate plight!

C. The conviction of judgment.

I. The reason for a judgment conviction (“because the prince of the world is judged”)

The “prince of this world” is Satan. This is rather obvious today since we see sin exploding everywhere. However, Satan received a deathblow when

Jesus died on the cross. His actual execution is coming when he tossed into the Lake of Fire.

Revelation 20:10

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Since God judged the devil at the cross and he will ultimately meet his fate, unsaved people, who are in rebellion against God, should take note of Satan’s defeat and fear the Lord who holds the power to judge them also. It’s a fact; Satan was judged on the cross and will meet his doom. However, another fact is also true; sinners will also meet their judgment someday! God is a God of judgment!

II. The result of the Spirit’s conviction

John 16:8 and 11 explain how the Holy Spirit convicts the lost in relationship to future judgment. The Holy Spirit drives inner conviction into the heart of a sinner, showing to him that he is going to face future judgment for his sin, both his sinful lifestyle and the sin of failing to believe on Christ. Failure to have your sins forgiven will result in the wrath and judgment of God falling upon your soul. Imagine falling into hell forever! Dear friend, your doom awaits you, if you reject God’s Son to be your Savior and fail to have your sins forgiven through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in John 3:36:

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

The sinner, who is convicted of his sin, knows that God’s wrath is hanging over his head. Let’s stop watering it down and face the reality of hell and God’s wrath. God’s righteous wrath will be meted out upon you, as a sinner, if you reject His loving grace and embrace, by refusing to repent of your sins and place faith in His Son, who died in your place. You will not escape the judgment bar of God if you fail to believe on Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Revelation 20:12-15 reveals the climatic end-time judgment:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

For many today, the word “hell” is only used as a curse word. People speak lightly about hell and only think that the Hitler’s and Stalin’s, and child molesters will end up in hell. We have seen in our study that everyone who fails to believe in Jesus Christ will eventually end up in hell fire and brimstone. How terrible is hell? It’s bad. Really bad! And every person who is responsible for their sins before God, who can understand what sin is and who can reject the offer of Christ (those who have reached the age of accountability before God), will someday end up in hell.

You can’t put any sugar on it. Hell is a terrible and horrible place. It’s a place of unending doom for sinners who have refused to repent over their sin and believe on Christ. But you will fall into hell when bypassing the cross and Jesus Christ.

Here are Four Reasons Why You Don’t Have to Go to Hell:

- Because God loves you (John 3:16).
- Because God wants you to repent (2 Peter 3:9).
- Because hell is a terrible place (Rev. 20:11-15).
- Because Jesus wants to give you eternal life (John 6:47).

The late Bishop J.C. Ryle, who died in 1900, said:

“If you would promote faith, defeat the devil and save souls, preach Hell!”

I am stirred and motivated to evangelize the lost, since I know that the Holy Spirit is convicting the unsaved of their lost estate, their unbelief, their sin which offends God, about Jesus Christ and the way to be made right before God. I can share Christ with the lost knowing that the Holy Spirit will do a work in the hearts of sinners and bring them to simple faith in Christ, even in the midst of much confusion and error that is in the world today.

When Dr. R. A. Torrey was a young man, he had no faith in God or the Bible. His mother, however, was a devout Christian who constantly prayed for his conversion and often witnessed to him. One day he said to her, "I don't want to hear about my sins and your prayers; I'm going to leave and not bother you any more." With tear-filled eyes the woman followed him to the gate and pleaded with him to change his mind. But he would not be detained. Frantically she cried, "Son, you are going the wrong way, but when you come to the end of your rope and everything seems hopeless, call upon your mother's God with all your heart and He will surely help you!"

After Torrey left home, he went deeper into the ways of sin. One night in a hotel room he was unable to sleep. Weary from the problems pressing in on every hand, he decided to take the gun he kept in his dresser and end his life. Just as he reached for the weapon, he remembered his mother's last words. Convicted by the Holy Spirit, he fell on his knees and cried out, "O God of my mother, if there is such a Being, I need Your help. If You will help me now, I'll follow You!" In a moment his darkened heart was illumined, and peace filled his soul. Later R. A. Torrey became an outstanding evangelist who led thousands to Christ!

8. God's power can save sinners

After preaching a sermon on the believer's duty to be a personal witness for Christ, C. H. Spurgeon went into a side room of the church. A member of the congregation who had heard the sermon followed him. The man seemed to be greatly moved by the message, and he asked Spurgeon's advice on how to apply it. He wondered if he'd be allowed to join with others in the church who went out to win people to Christ. "What is your occupation?" asked the preacher. "I'm a steam locomotive engineer," was the reply. "Is the fireman on your train converted?" "No, I don't think so," said the man, "but what does that have to do with it?" "Why, my dear fellow," exclaimed Spurgeon, "that is your place of work!"

God has called us to serve others wherever we are in life by speaking to them of the life-transforming nature of the Gospel. Why? So they might respond to the glorious, liberating, and life-changing message of the Gospel and be saved from hell. When evangelizing the lost, we must always remember that it's God's power which saves the lost. It's God who works in the hearts of lost humanity and brings people to the place of salvation. It's God who supplies people with the glorious life of the new

birth. When witnessing to others, we must remember that it is God who gives the increase.

1 Corinthians 3:7

“So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”

It is God who makes the seed grow. Man has nothing to do with the seed springing forth life. Yes, God uses others to reach people for Christ (“ministers by whom ye believed” - 1 Cor. 3:5). But the heralders of the Gospel message are viewed as only the agents that God uses to bring the message to a lost world. The One who works in the hearts of people and changes lives is God. Let us remember this as we work throughout the harvest. It is God who gives the increase – not man and his evangelistic techniques and efforts.

Some people feel that if they have just the right formula that many more souls will be saved and reached for Christ. In fact, some suggest that using secular rock sounds and trying to entertain sinners in the same type of music and similar lifestyle that they are used to will bring many to Christ. This simply is a bogus argument. It’s God who saves souls and not the pragmatic methods of men. It’s God who convicts and stimulates the heart – not the rock sounds of a perverted culture.

John 1:13 speaks of the new birth of the sinner:

“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

The fact that salvation is “of God” (John 1:13) means that God is the sovereign planner, provider, and pursuer of a person’s salvation (Rom. 3:11), but it does not mean that man is excluded from making a valid choice regarding his eternal destiny. The Calvinist believes that salvation can no longer be “of God” (John 1:13) if a person can choose to believe on the Son of God or go against God’s saving purpose for his life. But this is not the case at all. God is always sovereign or in control of the destiny, calling, and events associated with a person’s salvation since He has created the entire plan of salvation which includes man having opportunity to choose his eternal destiny. Let God be sovereign in His own way.

The fact that God sometimes chooses to limit the direct intervention and display of His sovereign power does not make Him less sovereign.

Matthew 26:53-54

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”

“He could have called ten thousand angels
To destroy the world and set Him free.
He could have called ten thousand angels,
But He died alone, for you and me.”

God can limit the expression of His power in relationship to human decisions or choices. To say that He does not is not Scriptural. God uses human choices to fulfill His saving, serving, and other sovereign purposes within the world. Since this text says that being born again does not come about “by the will of man” (John 1:13) many conclude that man cannot believe and receive the free message of the Gospel. Calvinism says that it’s all “of God” in the sense that God chooses who will be saved and places elective faith in their hearts, and only the elect can and will believe due to the work of God. However, the context itself destroys this interpretation. The previous verse clearly declares, “But as many as receive him” and “to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

The new birth is God’s work (John 1:13 – “but of God”) but the receiving of Christ is man’s responsibility (“as many as received him”). Blessed noonday truth!

“His grace has planned it all,
‘Tis mine but to believe,
And recognize His work of love
And Christ receive.
For me He died,
For me He lives,
And everlasting life and light
He freely gives.”

John 1:12 and receiving the Gospel message into one’s life teaches that an individual’s response to God’s offer of salvation results in God creating the new birth in their spirits, which is described as the “power to become the

sons of God” (John 1:12). Furthermore, the expressions in John 1:13 do not speak of determinism and the election of people by God. John is not talking about God’s arbitrary selection of sinners but His power in converting and bringing new life into the spirits of sinners.

This Bible verse is merely teaching the manner in which people are saved. It has nothing to do with God electing some to Heaven and others to hell. This verse is addressing the subject of God’s power in bringing about the new birth without human involvement or human achievement. God is the initiator and supplier of the new birth. This is the main teaching of this verse. Don’t read more into the verse. Just teach what it says.

In John 1:13 John is alluding to the practice of physical birth and concludes that spiritual birth is unlike physical birth. He is contrasting the two. So let’s contrast these physical expressions to the realm of the spiritual birth.

a. Human ancestry does not result in the new birth.

The words “not of blood” speak of *human descent* (the new birth does not come by physical ancestry). Our family history does not result in the new birth. In other words, we are not born again just because of our link to some religious ancestry or because mom or dad was born again.

Someone said:

“God has no grandchildren!”

People are not born again simply because they have parents or some other religious ancestry or history (see John 8:33). The point is this; spiritual birth does not happen in the same way as physical birth. We are not born again and made right before God based upon our religious heritage or past religious connections.

b. Human effort does not result in the new birth.

The words “nor of the will of the flesh” speaks of *human determination*. In other words, spiritual birth does not take place in the same manner as physical birth, where parents make an effort to bear children through physical relations. Personal determination or human effort does not bring forth a spiritual birth. The new birth does not come by the personal efforts or attainments of the flesh. God must trigger the need for new birth in the

heart of man. Our human works do not result in the new birth. Sheer human determination to do what is right has nothing to do with salvation (John 6:63). Man cannot obtain salvation and new life by his human efforts and good deeds (Titus 3:5).

c. Human decision does not result in the new birth.

The words “nor of the will of man” speaks of *human decision* (the new birth does not come about through mere human decision). A couple can decide to have a baby but the new birth is different. God must move in the heart and create the desire for new life. In short, when the Bible says the new birth is not connected with “the will of man” it means God is the *initiator* and *source* of a man’s faith or choice for salvation. Our independent human choice, without God’s aid or involvement, does not result in the new birth.

When the Bible says that the new birth is “not by the will of man,” it simply means that man has nothing to do with his spiritual birth, in the sense that he cannot *merit* salvation, *initiate* salvation, or *produce* salvation in his own spirit. In other words, God must get credit for the new birth – not man. God is the initiator and source of the new birth – not man. This is why the new birth is said to be a supernatural work “of God” (John 1:13) which initiates and brings new birth into a person’s spirit. However, John is not excluding man’s final choice regarding his destiny (John 1:12 – “But as many as received him”).

Let’s illustrate it this way. People say, “I think I will try Jesus today.” We read those bumper stickers that say, “Try Jesus.” People seem to suggest by these statements that they have the ability, in and of themselves, to be born again. They feel that they can just change their life and become a Christian in their own way of thinking and living. However, people cannot attempt to make themselves a Christian without the working of the Spirit of God moving in their hearts and lives. People also say, “I have found the Savior.” Actually, the Savior really found you! God is responsible for bringing you to the place of faith and salvation, through His divine assistance upon your soul.

Romans 1:16 echoes this glorious truth:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

It's wonderful to realize that it's the power of God that can break through the hardness of man's heart and bring a person to their knees in repentance and faith. Let us not doubt God's power in saving souls!

Luke 1:37

"For with God nothing shall be impossible."

Do we really believe in the power of God? Are we sharing the message of the Gospel knowing that God is all-powerful and that His power can save the vilest of sinners? Romans 1:16 is teaching that the Gospel message is the power that brings salvation and new birth into the lives of sinners. God uses the Gospel message to convict sinners which results in their salvation. The message itself is powerful since it cuts through the blindness and sinfulness of man's heart. We must never forget that it's God who saves souls by His supernatural, life-giving power.

This is why pragmatism does not work. The efforts of modern church gurus somehow think that they have figured something out that the apostles never figured out. They can use the wicked sound of a perverted culture to win perverts and sinners. This is ludicrous and ridiculous. We have seen that the human efforts and the marketing decisions of man do not result in the salvation of sinners. It is God who saves people through His Gospel. Nothing else affects the new birth of the sinner. Since this is true, we should not use worldly gimmicks to try and bring people into God's family. Baiting people with worldly programs, music, and smoke coming out of a stage will not save souls. These are imaginary allusions that do not result in the salvation of the soul.

I am stirred and motivated to evangelize the lost, since I know that the power of God can break through the hardness of a man's heart and bring new birth into his life. I can share Christ with the unsaved knowing that the power of God can save any person and that His power is greater than the blindness of Satan and the sinfulness of man.

9. God rewards those who evangelize sinners

1 Thessalonians 2:19

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

What is the reward that soul winners will have someday? It's seeing those in Heaven and at Christ's coming, who they have led to Christ through the Gospel message. Paul looked forward to the Rapture and the time when those he led to Christ would return with Christ. What a joyous occasion. We will meet together in the clouds above and be transported back to Heaven.

Meeting others that we have had the privilege to lead to Christ will provide us with great hope and joy which here is identified as a "crown of rejoicing." This is one of the crowns that we will experience if we have been a soul winner. The description given of the crown of rejoicing portrays how each saint, who receives this crown, will experience the joy of seeing souls in Heaven whom they had won to Christ. We must remember that the crowns or rewards are primarily experienced and not worn throughout eternity (Rev. 4:10).

Please note that Paul said *the saints themselves* would be his crown ("crown of rejoicing") when he would meet them in the air at Christ's coming. Yes, the people Paul had won to Christ were themselves his true crown (reward) Paul will receive throughout eternity. So the true crown is not the one that Paul would receive for his head but the joy that he would receive throughout eternity when seeing people in Heaven that he had led to Christ. *This crown emphasizes the wondrous joy that a person will have in Heaven when seeing people there who they have won to Christ.* The person who receives this crown will possess a special joy and blessing.

The joy of greeting believers at Christ's coming and in Heaven also brings with it a solemn warning. It's this. We will lose a certain amount of joy if we go to Heaven empty-handed.

"Must I go, and empty-handed,"
Thus my dear Redeemer meet?
Not one day of service give Him,
Lay no trophy at His feet?

"Must I go, and empty-handed?"
Must I meet my Savior so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him:
Must I empty-handed go?"

Someone has well stated:

“You cannot take money and material things to Heaven, but you can take souls there.”

I am motivated to witness to the unsaved knowing that I may see them in Heaven and at Christ’s coming. What greater reward could we ever have or experience throughout eternity!

10. God praises those who win sinners

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8

“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.”

In this verse, we find that God is giving praise to those who had sounded out the good news of the Gospel. The Thessalonians became model Christians. First of all, their example of joy in the midst of persecution (1 Thess. 1:6) was an example to believers in Macedonia and Achaia, that is, to all the Christians in Greece. But their testimony didn’t stop there. They became reproducing Christians. Second, they were model examples of soul winners (1 Thess. 1:8). They possessed a heart for the unsaved or lost.

Have you ever tossed a stone across the water and tried to make ripples through the water? As young boys, we used to do this when we went fishing. I often wondered why did not catch many fish. We would skip the flat rock across the water and see the rippling affect across the pond.

This is what was happening as a result of the witness of these believers. Like ripples in a pool, the word of the Lord spread out in ever-widening circles. The witness of these believers spread to places like Macedonia and Achaia and then in every place after this. Soon the news of the believer’s faith toward God became so widespread in their region that Paul didn’t have to speak about the Gospel. Why and how could this be? It’s because of their intense witnessing for Christ. The Gospel was already spread

everywhere because of their desire to see people saved from hell. They had a heart and Gospel outreach program that was amazing.

It was through the personal lives and testimonies of these transformed individuals that neighbors heard about their faith in God. As a result, the Gospel was heard everywhere, so no apostolic missionary campaign was not needed! This is truly a remarkable note of praise for the earnest desire and missionary outreach of these Christians. May this be true of our lives this week!

Proverbs 11:30

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”

God praises those who seek out lost souls in order to point them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The highest praise we could ever receive is that we are a soul winner. It’s not praise that we receive to inflate our ego but praise that we can send up to God for His unspeakable gift (2 Cor. 9:15).

I am motivated to share Christ with the lost because I know that God is pleased when I evangelize and praises those who reach out to the masses, so we can in return give Him all the glory for the great things He has done.

11. God’s commission is to reach sinners

Mark 16:15

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

For the sake of this study, we are focusing on the first part of the commission that Jesus gave which to evangelize. This is not the “Great Suggestion” but the “Great Commission.” God has called us to share the Gospel message with the masses. This is a command to obeyed, a course to be followed, a commission to keep.

One of the groups I sang with while attending the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music was a group called “The Heralders.” What an appropriate name for Christians. We are to be heralders of the Gospel message. This is what the world “preach” really means. It means to herald

forth or proclaim the Gospel message. Have you been heralding forth this wonderful message to poor lost sinners?

Acts 8:4 records this of the early Christians:

“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”

This is personal evangelism! This has always been God’s commission. God has not changed His program and plans. He wants to see a harvest of souls come to faith in His Son before the Rapture occurs. Are you ready and willing to be part of the answer to seeing souls saved? Will you hand out tracts, speak to people about Christ, and invite them to church? This command that God gave is the “Great Commission” but I’m afraid that in many Christian lives today it has become the “Great Omission.” Have you been trying to hide from your responsibility? Listen, the Lord is with us. We can do what He has called and commanded us to do. Let’s not be disobedient to God’s command and even worse, miss leading some poor lost soul to Christ that is on his way to hell.

I am motivated to share Christ with the masses because God has commanded me to do so. I want to be part of the Great Commission outreach that God has ordained for church ministry today. I wanted to be part of seeing people saved from hell through the Gospel message.

12. God empowers those who witness to sinners

Acts 1:8

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

God’s commands are His enablements. What He tells us to do; He also supplies us with the power and ability to do. We are not left powerless when reaching out to the unsaved world. God has promised the power of His Holy Spirit.

a. The promised power

Jesus promised that “ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” Of course, this was spoken in view of Pentecost and the

initial entrance of the Holy Spirit into the newly formed Church. We don't wait for the Holy Spirit's power today following our time of salvation. We receive His personal presence, permanent residency, and full power the moment we place our faith in Jesus Christ and become a Christian (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:9). We do not wait for the Holy Spirit to enter our lives, after we are saved, nor do we await some special power and spectacular experience after we are saved. We get all of it at once! Praise God that we have the promise of the Holy Spirit's power to give us the strength and ability to be an effective witness for Christ. We don't have to be a scaredy-cat.

Why are we so ineffective in our witnessing? Why do we lack drive, determination, and so often dismally fail in our speaking and outreach to the lost? It's because we are not relying on the power we have on the inside of us – the personal presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that we would possess the eternal, indwelling, and Gospel empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives. What more do we need? We don't need more programs, pragmatic approaches, or puppets. We need the power of the Holy Spirit being unleashed in our lives. The Holy Spirit is the greatest unused power in the universe.

b. The purposed end

Jesus taught, "and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." God's desired end is that we might be avid witnesses for Christ in this present age and until Jesus returns for His Church. Are we moving out with the Gospel? In what ways have you been trying to reach people in your own "Judaea" where you live? Have you been reaching out into other distant areas ("Samaria"). How about when you go on vacation? When we go on vacation we don't vacation from evangelism.

I am motivated to share Christ with the lost since I know that the power of the Holy Spirit is going with me. I can witness experiencing His help, supernatural power, and ministry in my heart. I can witness knowing that God is on my side. I can hand out tracts and speak to people because the Holy Spirit is working in connection with my heart and life.

We have looked at twelve motivations for evangelism. We can read many books on "how to do" evangelism but we need the motivation to do it.

These twelve Biblically-based reasons provide us with the much-needed incentive or drive and determination to win the lost. What the Bible teaches regarding God's character and His saving plan provides us with the necessary motivation and stimulus to be a greater witness for Christ.

Two portraits by the German artist Sternberg--his "Dancing Gypsy Girls" and the "Crucifixion" are linked to one another by an unusual set of circumstances. The pretty maiden who served as the model for the first portrait took an unusual interest in the unfinished painting of our Lord's final suffering. One day she commented, "He (referring to Jesus) must have been a very bad man to have died for all men. Did He die for you?" asked the puzzled girl. This question made a profound impression upon the artist. He did not know the Lord as his personal Savior, and didn't understand that salvation is received by faith alone. Sometime later, however, he attended a meeting of humble believers who led him to Christ.

Sternberg, his technical skill now coupled with a heart full of love and gratitude, completed his painting of the crucifixion and under it wrote the words: "This I did for thee; what hast thou done for Me?" It was placed in a famous gallery where a young aristocratic count named Zinzendorf saw it and was touched by the words written under it. He was a Christian but was convicted of his failure to serve the Lord. He later became the organizer of a missionary brotherhood known as the Moravians.

Friend, what have you been doing for Christ? Have you been faithfully witnessing by sharing the Gospel message with others? "This I did for thee; what hast thou done for Me?" This should be a soul-stirring and motivating question that penetrates our hearts today and keeps us serving the Lord through evangelism. May God use us as we remember what Christ has done for us!

Deuteronomy 15:15

"And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day."

Yes, a slave to sin and going to hell. That is what we were. But God has saved us and His command today is to evangelize the lost. "This I did for thee; what hast thou done for Me?"