

**Evangelism &
the Sovereignty
of God**

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Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God

Introduction

*There is abroad today a widespread suspicion that a robust faith in the absolute sovereignty of God is bound to undermine any adequate sense of human responsibility. Such a faith is thought to be dangerous to spiritual health, because it breeds a habit of complacent inertia. In particular, it is thought to paralyse (sic) evangelism by robbing one both of the motive to evangelize and of the message to evangelize with. The supposition seems to be that you cannot evangelize effectively unless you are prepared to pretend while you are doing it that the doctrine of divine sovereignty is not true. I shall try to make it evident that this is non-sense. I shall try to show further that, so far from inhibiting evangelism, faith in the sovereignty of God's government and grace is the only thing that can give us the resilience that we need if we are to evangelize boldly and persistently, and not be daunted by temporary setbacks. So far from being weakened by this faith, therefore, evangelism will inevitably be weak and lack staying power without it. This, I hope, will become clear as we proceed. (J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, p. 10)*

I. What issues are raised in considering the relationship between "Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God?"

- A. If God is sovereign in salvation, why evangelize?
- B. If God is sovereign in salvation, what is our responsibility in evangelism?
- C. If God is sovereign in salvation, how can He punish those who reject the gospel?
- D. If God is sovereign in salvation, what does evangelism look like?
- E. If God is sovereign in salvation, what is the motivation for evangelism?

II. Why is the relationship between "Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God" important?

- A. It is important because it concerns the truth of God and our obedience to it
- B. It is important because it concerns what we believe and what we do
- C. It is important because it concerns our life together as a church
- D. It is important because we as a church have been misunderstood on this issue
- E. It is important because it helps explain our rejection of the "seeker-driven church growth movement"
- F. It is important because it helps explain why we do what we do as a church
- G. It is important because it helps answer the question, "What does evangelism look like for us as individuals and as a church?"

III. What are some recommended books to read along the way?

- A. *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer
- B. *Let the Nations Be Glad* by John Piper
- C. *A Vision for Missions* by Tom Wells

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Chapter 1: Evangelism & the Gospel

I. What is evangelism?

- A. From the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον = gospel, Latin = Evangelium (Rom. 1:16)
- B. We might say it different ways
 1. The proclamation and/or gossiping of the gospel of Jesus Christ
 2. The telling of the doing and dying of Jesus Christ (John Armstrong)
 3. Inviting people to come and delight themselves in God through His Son Jesus Christ (Piper, Ps. 37:4)
 4. Sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God (Campus Crusade for Christ)
- C. What's right and wrong with this statement from 1918 Archbishop's Committee of the Anglican Church?

To evangelise (sic) is to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their King in the Fellowship of His Church.

1. What's right?
 - a. Evangelism is the declaration of a specific message: Jesus Christ
 - b. Evangelism is the call for a specific application
 - "put their trust in God through Christ"
 - "accept Him as Savior and serve Him as their King"
2. What's wrong?
 - a. The use of the word "shall" instead of "in order that they may"
 - b. "Shall" puts the results in man's lap instead of in God's
 - c. Evangelism is man's work; the giving of faith is God's
 - d. Evangelism is defined in terms of the message, not its results

According to the New Testament, evangelism is just preaching the gospel, the evangel. It is the work of communication in which Christians make themselves mouthpieces for God's message of mercy to sinners. Anyone who faithfully delivers that message, under whatever circumstances, in a large meeting, in a small meeting, from a pulpit, or in a private conversation, is evangelizing. Since the divine message finds its climax in a plea from the Creator to a rebel world to turn and put faith in Christ, the delivering of it involves the summoning of one's hearers to conversion. If you are not, in this sense, seeking to bring about conversions, you are not evangelizing. . . . But the way to tell whether in fact you are evangelizing is not to ask whether conversions are known to have resulted from your witness. It is to ask whether you are faithfully making known the gospel message. (Packer, p. 41)

II. What is the gospel or "evangelium"?

- A. The gospel is a message about God (Acts 17:22-31)
 1. We must show who He is
 - a. Creator (v. 24)
 - b. Self-sufficient (v. 25)
 - c. Uncontainable (v. 24)
 - d. Sovereign (vv. 25-26)
 - e. Sustainer (v. 28)
 - f. Judge (v. 31)

2. We must show man's relationship to Him
 - a. Man is created by Him (vv. 24, 25)
 - b. Man is dependent on Him (v. 28)
 - c. Man is accountable to Him (v. 30)
 - d. Man is to be judged by Him (v. 31)

Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For all the nations will come and worship before Thee, For Thy righteous acts have been revealed. (Revelation 15:3-4)

The gospel starts by teaching us that we, as creatures, are absolutely dependent on God, and that He, as Creator, has an absolute claim on us. Only when we have learned this can we see what sin is, and only when we see what sin is can we understand the good news of salvation from sin. We must know what it means to call God Creator before we can grasp what it means to speak of Him as Redeemer. (Packer, p. 59)

- B. The gospel is a message about sin (Psalm 32:1-2, Ephesians 2:1-10, 4:17-19)
 1. We must explain what sin is (Psalm 32:1-2)
 - a. Transgression: Crossing of a boundary
 - b. Sin: falling short of the mark
 - c. Iniquity: turning out of the proper course
 2. We must explain that we are sinful by nature (Ephesians 2:1-10, 4:17-19)
 - a. In sin, we are spiritually dead (2:1)
 - b. In sin, we live in the realm of Satan (2:2)
 - c. In sin, we were sons of disobedience (2:2)
 - d. In sin, we were given over to our desire (2:3)
 - e. In sin, we were children of wrath (2:3)
 - f. In sin, our minds were futile and fallen (4:17)
 - g. In sin, our understanding was darkened (4:18)
 - h. In sin, we were alienated from the life of God (4:18)
 - i. In sin, we were ignorant, without knowledge (4:18)
 - j. In sin, we were hardened and calloused in heart (4:19)
 - k. In sin, we were given over to sensuality (4:19)
 - l. In sin, we practiced every kind of impurity with greediness (4:19)
 3. We must show that we cannot please God by ourselves (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - a. It is not of ourselves
 - b. Our works are insufficient to justify
 - c. Our righteousness is as filthy rags
 4. We must lead men to despair and to conviction of sin

It is not conviction of sin just to feel miserable about yourself and your failures and your inadequacy to meet life's demands. Nor would it be saving faith if a man in that condition called on the Lord Jesus Christ just to soothe him, and cheer him up, and make him feel confident again. Nor should we be preaching the gospel (though we might imagine we were) if all that we did was to present Christ in terms of man's felt sin. (Are you happy? Are you satisfied? Do you want peace of mind? Do you feel that you have failed? Are you fed up with yourself? Do you want a friend? Then come to Christ; He will meet your every need. . . - as if the Lord Jesus Christ were to be thought of as a fairy godmother, or as a super-psychiatrist.) No we have to go deeper than this. . . To be convicted of sin means not just to feel that one is an all around flop, but to realize that one has offended God, and flouted His authority, and defied Him, and gone against Him, and put oneself in the wrong with Him. (Packer, p. 61)

Aim at the heart. Probe the wound and touch the very quick of the soul. Spare not the sterner themes, for men must be wounded before they can be healed, and slain before they can be made alive. No man will ever put on the robe of Christ's righteousness until he is stripped of his fig leaves, nor will he wash in the fount of mercy till he perceives his filthiness. (Charles Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, p. 338)

- C. The gospel is a message about Jesus Christ (Acts 3:12-26)
 - 1. We must tell who He is and why He can save
 - a. Sent from God: God's servant (3:13)
 - b. God in the flesh: Holy and Righteous One (3:14), Prince of Life (3:15)
 - 2. We must tell how He saves
 - a. Atonement: Of His suffering for sin (3:18, 19, 26)
 - b. Resurrection: Of His being raised from the dead (3:15, 26)
 - c. Ascension: Of His ascension into heaven (3:21)
 - d. Heavenly Session: Of His work of intercession (3:20, 21)
 - e. Return: Of His second advent to judge (3:20-21)
 - 3. Christ's person and work go together and ought not be separated
 - a. Not just "believe that Jesus lives"
 - b. Not just "believe that Jesus died for your sins"

These doctrines, to mention no others, are essential to the gospel. Without them, there is no gospel, only a puzzle story about a man named Jesus. To oppose the teaching of doctrines about Christ to presenting of His Person is, therefore, to put asunder two things which God has joined. It is really very perverse indeed; for the whole purpose of teaching these doctrines in evangelism is to throw light on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to make clear to our hearers just who it is that we want them to meet. When, in ordinary social life, we want people to know who it is that we are introducing them to, we tell them something about him, and what he has done; and so it is here. The apostles themselves preached these doctrines in order to preach Christ, as the New Testament shows. In fact, without these doctrines you would have no gospel to preach at all. (Packer, p. 65)

I do not believe in that preaching which lies mainly in shouting "Believe! believe! believe!" In common justice you are bound to tell the poor people what they are to believe. . . . The best way to preach sinners to Christ is to preach Christ to sinners. (Spurgeon)

- D. The gospel is a message that calls for faith & repentance
 - 1. Faith: throwing oneself on the promises and the mercy of God in Christ
 - a. Faith is believing the truth about Christ and staking one's life on it
 - b. Faith is abandoning any self-righteousness and trusting Christ's righteousness
 - 2. Repentance: a change of mind and heart, going a new direction
 - a. Repentance is turning from sin to serve and follow Christ
 - b. Repentance is losing one's life for the sake of Jesus
 - 3. Faith and repentance are and must be components of the gospel

A sinner does not "decide" for Christ; the sinner "flies" to Christ in utter helplessness and despair saying -- Foul, I to the fountain fly, Wash me, Saviour, or I die. No man truly comes to Christ unless he flies to Him as his only refuge and hope, his only way of escape from the accusation of conscience and the condemnation of God's holy law. Nothing else is satisfactory. . . . The convicted sinner no more "decides" for Christ than the poor drowning man "decides" to take hold of that rope that is thrown to him and suddenly provides him with the only means of escape. The term is entirely inappropriate. (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Preaching and Preachers, p. 280)

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Chapter 2: Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God in Salvation

There is a long-standing controversy in the Church as to whether God is really Lord in relation to human conduct and saving faith or not. . . . What causes this odd state of affairs? The root cause is the same as in most cases of error in the Church -- the intruding of rationalistic speculations, the passion for systematic consistency, a reluctance to recognize the existence of mystery and to let God be wiser than men, and a consequent subjecting of Scripture of to the supposed demands of human logic. People see that the Bible teaches man's responsibility for his actions; they do not see (man, indeed cannot see) how this is consistent with the sovereign Lordship of God over those actions. They are not content to let the two truths live side by side, as they do in the Scriptures, but jump to the conclusion that, in order to uphold the biblical truth of human responsibility, they are bound to reject the equally biblical and equally true doctrine of divine sovereignty, and to explain away the great number of texts that teach it. The desire to over-simplify the Bible by cutting out the mysteries is natural to our perverse minds, and it is not surprising that even good men should fall victim to it. Hence this persistent and troublesome pursuit. (Packer, pp. 16-17)

I. What does the Bible teach about our role and God's role in the work of salvation?

- A. Does regeneration precede faith or does faith precede regeneration?
- B. Is justification monergistic (one working) or synergistic (more than one working)?
- C. What role do we play in our salvation?
- D. How do we who are spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) come to possess spiritual life?
- E. Is God's predestination independent of or dependent on His foreknowledge?
- F. How fallen is humankind? Is our will fallen? Is our mind fallen?
- G. Is man's will free to accept or reject God and the gospel? Or is it in bondage to sin?
- H. Does God choose me because I chose Him?
- I. Do I choose God because He chose me?
- J. Did I will myself into God's eternal family and kingdom?

II. Do you not pray like God is sovereign in salvation? (Packer pp 11-17)

- A. Do you not thank Him for your salvation?
- B. Do you not pray for the salvation of others?
- C. On our feet we may argue about these things, but on our knees we all agree that God is sovereign

You pray for the conversion of others. In what terms, now do you intercede for them? Do you limit yourself to asking that God will bring them to a point where they can save themselves, independently of Him? I do not think that you do. I think that what you do is to pray in categorical terms that God will, quite simply and decisively, save them: that He will open the eyes of their understanding, soften their hard hearts, renew their natures, and move their wills to receive the Saviour. You ask God to work in them everything necessary for their salvation. You would not dream of making it a point in your prayer that you are not asking God actually to bring them to faith, because you recognize that that is something He cannot do. Nothing of the sort! When you pray for unconverted people, you do so on the assumption that it is in God's power to bring them to faith. You entreat Him to do that very thing, and your confidence in asking rests on the fact that He is able to do what you ask. (Packer, p. 15)

III. Does not the sinful condition of man necessitate the sovereignty of God in salvation?

- A. There are three barriers to man's participation in the work of salvation.
 - 1. Man's spiritual deadness (Eph. 2:1, 1 Cor. 2:12-16)
 - 2. Man's natural and irresistible impulse to oppose God (Rom. 8:6-8, Col 1:21)
 - 3. Satan's blinding of the eyes of the unbeliever (Eph. 2:2, 2 Cor. 4:4)

- B. Salvation *includes* the removal of these barriers
 1. Regeneration: the new birth, the instilling of spiritual life (Eph. 2:5, Jn. 3, 1 Pt. 1:3)
 2. Illumination: opening eyes to see the glory of God in Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-6)

IV. Do not the doctrines of salvation teach the sovereignty of God?

- A. The golden chain of salvation (Romans 8:28-39)
 1. God foreknows (v. 29)
 2. God predestines (v. 29)
 3. God calls (v. 30)
 4. God justifies (v. 30)
 5. God glorifies (v. 30)
 - What part does man play in the list?
 - What is missing from the list? Where should it go? Why is it missing?
 - For whom does God do these? For all of humanity?

- B. The blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3-14)
 1. He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (v. 4)
 2. He predestined us to adoption as sons (v. 5) according to His purpose (v. 11)
 3. He redeemed us by the blood of Christ (v. 7)
 4. He made known to us the mystery of His will: Jesus Christ (v. 10)
 5. He sealed us in Christ with the Holy Spirit (v. 13)
 - What part does man play in this passage?
 - For what purpose does God bless us with every spiritual blessing?
 - How many times is Christ mentioned in this passage?

VI. Do not the rest of the Scriptures teach and affirm the sovereignty of God in salvation?

- A. A jaunt through John

1:12-13	Who believes? Those born of God
3:16-21	Who comes to the light? Those whose deeds are wrought in God
4:23	Who will worship God in Spirit & truth? Those whom He seeks
5:21	Which dead are raised by whom? The Father & Son give life to whom they wish
6:29	What is the work of God? When someone believes on the Son
6:37	Who comes to Jesus? All that the Father has given to Him
6:44-45	Who can come to Jesus? Those whom the Father draws, those taught of God
6:63	Who gives life? The Spirit, the flesh profits nothing
6:65	Who can come to Jesus? Those to whom the Father grants it
8:39-47	Who believes Jesus? Those who are of God
10:16	Who hears and responds to Jesus' voice? His sheep
10:25-26	Who does not believe? Those who are not His sheep
10:27	Who gets eternal life? Jesus' sheep, to whom He gives it
17:2	To whom does Jesus give eternal life? To the ones given to Him
17:6	To whom did Jesus show Himself? To those given to Him
17:9-12	Who are these? They are God's, kept by Christ
17:24	Whom does the Father love? Those given to Christ
18:37	Who hears Jesus' voice? Those who are of the truth

B. A smattering of other Scripture

For this is a word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son." And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order **that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls**, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then **it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy**. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. (Romans 9:9-18)

For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to **those who are the called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God. **But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus**, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:22-31)

But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. . . (Galatians 1:15-16)

Giving thanks to the Father, **who has qualified us** to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For **He delivered us** from the domain of darkness, and **transferred us** to the kingdom of His beloved Son, (Colossians 1:12-13)

And although **you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind**, engaged in evil deeds, **yet He has now reconciled you** in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach (Colossians 1:21-22)

That is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been **manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known** what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:26-27)

And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, (Colossians 2:13)

We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-5)

For this reason I endure all things **for the sake of those who are chosen**, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. (2 Timothy 2:10)

For this is contained in Scripture: "Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed." This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone,"

and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and **to this doom they were also appointed**. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:6-11)

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; **seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence**. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Peter 1:1-4)

V. Are not faith and repentance things that man brings to the equation?

A. Even faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9)

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, (Phil 1:29)

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thes. 2:13-14)

B. Even repentance is something God grants

And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (2 Tim 2:24-26)

He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31; see also Acts 11:18)

The sovereignty of God in grace gives us our only hope of success in evangelism. Some fear that belief in the sovereign grace of God leads to the conclusion that evangelism is pointless, since God will save His elect anyway, whether they hear the gospel or not. . . .the truth is just the opposite. So far from making evangelism pointless, the sovereignty of God in grace is the one thing that prevents evangelism from being pointless. For it creates the possibility -- indeed the certainty -- that evangelism will be fruitful. Apart from it, there is not even the possibility of evangelism being fruitful. Were it not for the sovereign grace of God, evangelism would be the most futile and useless enterprise that the world has ever seen, and there would be no more complete waste of time under the sun than to preach the Christian gospel. (Packer, p. 106)

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Chapter 3: Evangelism & Human Responsibility

I. What have we established up to this point?

- A. Session 1: What the gospel is
 - 1. A message about God
 - 2. A message about sin
 - 3. A message about Jesus Christ
 - 4. A message that calls for repentance and faith

- B. Session 2: The absolute sovereignty of God in salvation
 - 1. The way we pray implies it
 - 2. The doctrines of salvation teach it
 - 3. The rest of the Scriptures reinforce it
 - 4. Even repentance and faith are gifts of God

Note: The fact that God gives repentance and faith does not mean that they are not our own. They are our own in the sense that we actually repent and trust, and yet it is God who gives us the capability and capacity to repent and trust. These capacities are components of the new nature which comes through regeneration.

II. Tonight: What about human responsibility in evangelism?

- A. Issues we will deal with
 - 1. Does God hold man responsible to respond to the gospel?
 - 2. Does God hold Christians responsible to share the gospel?
 - 3. How do we deal with the truth of God's sovereignty in salvation and man's responsibility to respond to the gospel?

- B. Issues we will not deal with
 - 1. The free will of man
 - a. Man is not free, he's dead. (See sessions 1 & 2)
 - b. Suggested reading
 - *The Bondage of the Will* Martin Luther
 - *The Freedom of the Will* Jonathan Edwards
 - 2. The "how" these things can both be true (Mystery)
 - 3. The "why" God holds man responsible for something of which he is incapable (Mystery)

III. Man is responsible to God for believing and responding to the Gospel

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:18, see also John 5:24, John 12:48)

- A. Man is responsible to God for the choices he makes and the actions he does. God's judgment is sure (Matt. 25, Rom. 2:1-16, Rev. 22:11-13).

- B. Man is responsible to believe & obey the gospel

1. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10
 - a. To whom will God deal out retribution? Those who do not know God or obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 8)
 - b. What will be their penalty? Eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (v. 9)
 - c. In whom is He glorified and who marvels? Those who believe (v. 10)
2. 1 Peter 2:6-10
 - a. To whom is Christ a precious stone? To those who believe (v. 7)
 - b. To whom is Christ a stone of stumbling? To those who disbelieve (v. 7)
 - c. To what end are they headed? To doom (v. 8)
3. John 6:35-65
 - a. The universal invitation: come and believe (v. 35)
 - b. The sure promises:
 - The one who comes will not be cast out (v. 37)
 - The one who believes will receive eternal life (vv. 39, 47, 51)
 - c. The clear warning: he who does not take of Christ by faith, has no life (v. 53)

C. Man is responsible to repent (Matthew 11:20-30)

1. Woe = proclamation of judgment against whole cities of individuals (v. 21)
2. Condemned for lack of repentance in light of miracles (vv. 21, 23)
3. More tolerable for Tyre, Sidon & Sodom on the day of judgment (vv. 22, 24)
4. Father hides these things from wise & intelligent, reveals them to babes (v. 25)
5. Why? It is pleasing in His sight (v. 26)
6. To whom are these things revealed? To whom the Father & Son wills (v. 27)
7. Who is invited to come? All who are weary and heavy laden (vv. 28-30)

*What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there?
May it never be!*

*You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"
On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God?
(Romans 9:14, 19-20)*

God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are taught side by side in the same Bible; sometimes in the same text. Both are thus guaranteed to us by the same authority; both, therefore, are true. It follows that they must be held together and not played off against each other. Man is a responsible moral agent, though he is also divinely controlled; man is divinely controlled, though he is also a responsible moral agent. God's sovereignty is a reality too. . . . To our finite minds, of course the thing is inexplicable. It sounds like a contradiction, and our first reaction is to complain that it is absurd. (Packer, pp. 22-23)

IV. Christians are responsible to God for spreading and sharing of the gospel

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. (1 Cor. 9:16-17, see also Ezekiel 3:16-21)

A. Matthew 28:18-20

1. The command: Make disciples of all the nations (v. 19)
 - a. Going into all the world
 - b. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - c. Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you
2. The Co-mission

- a. The command is based on the authority of Jesus (v. 18)
- b. The command is given with the promise of the presence of Jesus (v. 20)
 - Do you know the EFCLH Vision Statement?
 - How do these verses relate to the EFCLH Vision Statement?
 - How are we doing in achieving our vision?

V. How can the truth of God's sovereignty and the truth of human responsibility both be true?

- A. An antinomy, not a paradox (Packer, pp. 18-22)
 1. Paradox: A memorable play on words that unites seemingly opposite ideas, where the contradiction is verbal and not real. A paradox is always resolvable and comprehensible with thought.
 - a. Example #1: *"Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. . .having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 11:10)*
 - b. Example #2: *"When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10)*
 2. Antinomy: An apparent incompatibility between two apparent truths. When two truths stand side by side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable. An antinomy is unresolvable and incomprehensible.
 - a. Example: Light as waves and light as particles
 - b. What should we do with an antinomy?
 - Accept it for what it is and learn to live with it
 - Refuse to regard the apparent inconsistency as real
 - Put down the semblance of contradiction to the deficiency of our own understanding
 - Think of the two principles as, not rival alternatives, but as complements
 - Do not make deductions from either that would cut across the other
 - Teach yourself to think of reality in a way that provides for their peaceful coexistence
 - Remember that reality itself has proved actually to contain both truths

Our part. . . is to acknowledge these facts, and to adore God's righteousness, both as King and as Judge; not to speculate as to how His just sovereignty can be consistent with His just judgement, and certainly not to call the justice of either in question because we find the problem of their relationship too hard for us! Our speculations are not the measure of our God. The creator has told us that He is both sovereign Lord and a righteous Judge, and that should be enough for us. Why do we hesitate to take His Word for it? Can we not trust what He says? We ought not in any case to be surprised when we find mysteries of this sort in God's Word. For the Creator is incomprehensible to His creatures. A God whom we could understand exhaustively, and whose revelation of Himself confronted us with no mysteries whatsoever, would be a God in man's image, and therefore an imaginary God, not the God of the Bible at all. (Packer, p. 24)

*Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.
 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
 And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him;
 And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.
 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.
 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.
 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
 And do not return there without watering the earth,
 And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
 So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty,
 Without accomplishing what I desire,
 And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:6-11)*

Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God

Chapter 4: Evangelism & the Church

I. What have we learned in our series thus far?

- A. God is absolutely sovereign in salvation
- B. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16)
- C. Humankind is responsible to respond to the invitation of the gospel (John 3:18)
- D. God is pleased to use us to proclaim the gospel
- E. Christians are responsible to take the gospel to the nations (Matt. 28:18-20)

Evangelism, we have learned, is a task appointed to God's people everywhere. It is the task of communicating a message from the Creator to rebel mankind. The message begins with information and ends with an invitation. The information concerns God's work of making His Son a perfect Saviour for sinners. The invitation is God's summons to mankind generally to come to the Saviour and find life. God commands all men everywhere to repent, and promises forgiveness and restoration to all who do. The Christian is sent into the world as God's herald and Christ's ambassador, to broadcast this message as widely as he can. This is both his duty (because God commands it, and love to our neighbor requires it) and his privilege (because it is a great thing to speak for God, and to take our neighbor the remedy -- the only remedy -- that can save him from the terrors of spiritual death). Our job, then, is to go to our fellow-men and tell them the gospel of Christ and try by every means to make it clear to them; to remove as best we can any difficulties they may find in it, to impress them with its seriousness, and urge them to respond to it. This is our abiding responsibility; it is a basic part of our Christian responsibility. (Packer, pp. 92-93)

II. What is the impact of these truths upon our approach to evangelism?

- A. These truths should make us prayerful
- B. These truths should make us bold
- C. These truths should make us patient
- D. These truths should continually remind us that the message is what matters, not the method

III. Why does the Church collectively neglect and struggle with the task of evangelism?

- A. Evangelism is a lot of work, we're busy and preoccupied people
- B. The tasks of the church are multiple and evangelism is first to fall by the wayside
- C. The emergence of para-church ministries and separation of evangelism from the church
- D. The advent of television and entertainment culture
- E. A shift from truth-driven ministry to entertainment-driven ministry
- F. The professionalization of pastoral ministry, the shift from calling to career
- G. The growth of relativism, pluralism and nagging doubts about absolute truth
- H. The democratization of American life and the church (pew-directed ministry)
- I. The rise of antiauthoritarianism
- J. The psychologizing of American life and the church (Therapeutic Culture)
- K. A growing chasm between theology (doctrine) and living (practice) in the church
- L. A wavering belief in the sufficiency, inspiration, inerrancy of the Bible
- M. Disillusionment and fear of failure in the face of diminishing returns and cultural shift
- N. A decline in the Biblical understanding of prayer and preaching
- O. A growing misunderstanding of and/or disdain for the biblical gospel

*Which of these apply to us as a church?
At risk is the mission of the church and our obedience to God!
How do we begin again to obey God in the task of evangelism in light of these realities?*

IV. How does God intend to use Christians as stewards of the gospel?

- A. Prayer: God delights to work in response to the prayers of His people
- B. Preaching: God delights to speak through appointed and called heralds
- C. Personal witness/testimony/evangelism: God delights to use us as His witnesses to the world
- D. World Missions

Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God

Chapter 5: Evangelism & the Power of Prayer

I. God delights to respond to the prayers of His people

- A. Jesus commissioned His apostles to pray, before He commissioned them to go (Matt. 9:35-10:7)
 - 1. We need to see God and His kingdom as Jesus saw them
 - 2. We need to see the lost as Jesus sees them
 - 3. We need to feel for the lost as Jesus feels for them
 - 4. We need to see the lost as God's plentiful harvest
 - 5. We need to pray for workers to be sent
 - 6. We need to be willing to work in the harvest ourselves
- B. The early Church devoted themselves to prayer and God added to their number
 - 1. *continually devoting themselves to prayer (Acts 1:14)*
 - 2. *continually devoting themselves to the Apostle's teaching, and fellowship and to the breaking of bread and to prayer. . . and the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 1:42, 47).*
 - 3. A Model Prayer (Acts 4:24)
 - a. They prayed acknowledging God's sovereignty
 - b. They prayed Scripture
 - c. They prayed for their own day and generation
 - d. They prayed for God use them
 - e. They prayed for confidence in speaking the word
 - f. They prayed for the demonstration of power by the Spirit
 - g. They prayed for the name of Jesus to be glorified
 - h. God answered their prayers

II. The Apostles saw a vital link between prayer and the work of evangelism

- A. Pray that God will give bold words

and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:19-20)

- B. Pray that God will open a door for the Word

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person. (Colossians 4:2-6)

- C. Pray that the Word will run!

Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. (2 Thes. 3:1-2, see also 1 Thes. 5:25)

D. Pray for the salvation of the lost

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. (1 Timothy 2:1-8)

Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God

Chapter 6: Evangelism & the Primacy of Preaching

I. God delights to speak through appointed and called heralds

Preaching is in the shadows, the world does not believe in it (W.E. Sangster, The Craft of the Sermon)

(T)he most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching; and as it is the greatest and the most urgent need in the Church, it is obviously the greatest need of the world also. (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Preaching and Preachers)

- A. Preaching was the primary task of Jesus (Mk. 1:38, Lk. 4:18-19, 43)
- B. Preaching is God's primary and ordained means of doing what He does both in the church and in the world
 - 1. Jesus promised to build His church upon the confession of Himself (Mt. 16:18-19)
 - 2. Jesus builds the early Church through the preaching of Himself (Acts)
 - 3. Jesus gives evangelists, pastors, teachers for the building up of the church (Eph. 4:7-16)
 - 4. God gifts men in the church to speak His oracles (1 Pt. 4:10-11)
 - 5. The Church fulfills its role as the pillar & support of the truth through preaching & teaching (1 Tim. 3:15; 4:13-16)
 - 6. Preaching is how Christ continues to function in the office of prophet to His people (Heb. 3:7, 15; Romans 10:17)
- C. Preaching of the gospel is God's primary and ordained means of drawing individuals to faith (Rom. 10:8-17, 1 Cor. 1-2, 2 Cor. 4-5)
 - 1. The power of the gospel is demonstrated through the mystery of preaching (Romans 10:8-17)
 - a. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16)
 - b. To be saved, persons must call upon the name of Jesus (10:13)
 - c. To call upon the name of Jesus, they must believe Him (10:14)
 - d. To believe Him they must hear Him (not "of Him") (10:14)
 - e. To hear Him, they need a preacher (10:14)
 - f. To preach, preachers must be sent (10:15)
 - g. Faith comes by hearing and the very word (voice) of Christ (10:17)
 - 2. God delights in using foolish means and message (1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5)
 - a. Preaching was Paul's primary and appointed task (1:17)
 - b. Preaching with cleverness of speech voids the gospel (1:18)
 - c. Preaching the word of the cross is God's means of powerfully saving (1:18)
 - d. Preaching manifests God's wisdom: Jesus Christ (1:19-20)
 - e. Preaching the foolish message is God's delight to save (1:21)
 - f. Preaching Christ is God's means of effectively calling His own (1:24)
 - g. Preaching Christ demonstrates the God's wisdom and man's foolishness (1:25)
 - h. Preaching is proclaiming the testimony of God (2:1)
 - i. Preaching is the demonstration of God's power through men (2:5)

- D. Preaching of God's Word was the primary task given to the church at the end of the Apostolic Age (2 Timothy 3:14-4:5)
1. The Scriptures are sufficient for salvation (3:14-15)
 2. The Scriptures are profitable for sanctification (3:16-17)
 3. The Scriptures are intended for proclamation (4:1-5)

II. Selected quotes on the primacy of preaching

On the mystery of preaching

He deigns to consecrate mouths and tongues of men to His service, making His own voice to be heard in them. Whenever God is pleased to bless their labor, He makes their doctrine efficacious by the power of His Spirit; and the voice, which is in itself mortal, is made an instrument to communicate eternal life. (John Calvin, quoted in Pulpit and People by Nigel Cameron and Sinclair Ferguson)

The passage itself is the voice, the speech of God; the preacher is the mouth and the lips, and the congregation. . . the ear in which the voice sounds. (Gustaf Wingren, The Living Word)

On the demands of preaching

We must be serious, earnest, and zealous in every part of our work. Our work requireth greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than any of us bring to it. It is no small matter to stand up in the face of the congregation, and to deliver a message of salvation and damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy matter to speak so plain, that the most ignorant may understand us; and so seriously that the deadest heart may feel us; and so convincingly, that the contradicting cavaliers may be silenced. (Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor)

On the message of preaching

The pew cannot control the pulpit. We cannot deliver 'demand led' preaching because no one demands the Gospel. (Dick Lucas, pastor of St. Helens Bishopsgate Church, quoted in Begg's Preaching for God's Glory)

On the great temptation of preaching

The disease of modern preaching is its search after popularity. (James Stewart)

On the decline of preaching

Much of what now emanates from contemporary pulpits would not have been recognized by either Alexander or Baxter or Sangster as being anywhere close to the kind of expository preaching that is Bible-based, Christ-focused, and life-changing -- the kind of preaching that is marked by doctrinal clarity, a sense of gravity, and convincing argument. We have instead become too familiar with preaching that pays scant attention to the Bible, is self-focused, and consequently is capable of only the most superficial impact on the lives of listeners. Worse still, large sections of the church are oblivious to the fact that they are being administered a placebo rather than the medicine they need. They are satisfied with a feeling that it has done them some good, a feeling that disguises the seriousness of the situation. In the absence of bread, the population grows accustomed to cake! Pulpits are for preachers. We build stages for performers. (Alistair Begg, Preaching for God's Glory)

On the place of preaching in history

*Is it not clear, as you take a bird's-eye view of Church history, that the decadent periods and eras in the history of the Church have always been those periods when preaching has declined? What is it that always heralds the dawn of a Reformation or of a Revival? It is renewed preaching. Not only a new interest in preaching but a new kind of preaching. A revival of true preaching has always heralded these great movements in the history of the Church. And of course when the Reformation and the Revival come they have always led to great and notable periods of the greatest preaching that the Church has ever known. As that was true in the beginning as described in the book of Acts, it was also after the Protestant Reformation. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Latimer, Ridley--all these men were great preachers. In the seventeenth century you had exactly the same thing--the great Puritan preachers and others. And in the eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards, Whitefield, the Wesleys, Rowlands and Harris were all great preachers. It was an era of great preaching. Whenever you get Reformation and Revival this is always and inevitably the result. (Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Preaching & Preachers*, pp. 11, 24)*

III. What are some of the implications for the Church as we consider primacy of preaching in Scripture?

- A. The gospel is something we feed upon through the preached Word, not something we move past to get on to other things
- B. Preaching, by definition, ought to be Christ-focused and therefore evangelistic
- C. Evangelism belongs in the church, and perhaps preaching belongs on the street
- D. Preaching and prayer function as hand-in-glove, the pastor preaches, the people listen and pray (Spurgeon's basement)
- E. We ought to preach to the church and preach to the world, expecting non-believers to be present and for God to work through the power of the gospel
- F. We should invite folks to come hear the preached Word, prepare them for what they will hear and discuss with them what they have heard
- G. We must learn to come hear the preached Word, expecting to hear the voice of God in the preaching of the text of Scripture. We come not to evaluate the oration or orator, but to hear from God. We ought to expect the Word to sing and to sting, to break the hard-hearted and heal the broken-hearted. We ought to be those who shout "Bring out the Book" (Neh. 8:1)
- H. Our church life together should reflect the primacy of the preached Word (centrality of the pulpit, the place of our worship, the ordering of our schedules and the stewardship of our resources)
- I. We ought to be praying for the proclamation of the Word in churches, and for God to raise up men who will faithfully preach God's Word, here and throughout the world
- J. We ought to be looking for young men whom God has gifted and doing everything we can to empower and protect and train them for pulpit ministry

Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God

Chapter 7: Evangelism & You

I. What have we learned in our series thus far?

- A. God is absolutely sovereign in salvation
- B. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation
- C. Humankind is responsible to respond to the invitation of the gospel (John 3:18)
- D. Christians are responsible to take the gospel to the nations (Matt. 28:18-20)
- E. God delights to use us in the task of evangelism -- How?
 - 1. Prayer: God delights to work in response to the prayers of His people
 - 2. Preaching: God delights to speak through appointed and called heralds
 - 3. Personal Evangelism: God delights to use us as His witnesses
 - 4. World Evangelization: God delights to work through the sacrifice and suffering of His people as they go

II. What is the impact of these truths upon our approach to evangelism?

- A. These truths should make us prayerful
- B. These truths should make us bold
- C. These truths should make us patient
- D. These truths should continually remind us that the message is what matters, not the method

III. Why do we as individuals neglect the task of evangelism?

- A. We don't know how to share the gospel
- B. We are afraid to share the gospel
- C. We are ashamed to share the gospel. We're not sure we believe it
- D. We are afraid of being asked a question we can't answer
- E. We are too busy to share the gospel
- F. We don't know anybody with whom to share the gospel
- G. We have relegated the task of evangelism to the church & parachurch organizations
- H. We are paralyzed by our past failure in sharing the gospel

Which of these apply to you?

IV. The Priority of Personal Evangelism: God is delighted to use us as His witnesses

- A. Personal evangelism is the supreme way we love our neighbor
(Luke 10:25-37, Lev. 19:18, Mt. 19:19, 22:39, Rom. 13:9, Gal. 5:14, James 2:8)
 - 1. The Law is summarized as love of God and neighbor
 - 2. No man is justified by the keeping of the Law, because no one can
 - 3. Which one was a neighbor to the man? The one who showed mercy to him
 - 4. Who is my neighbor? Anyone to whom I have occasion to show mercy
 - 5. Evangelism is the ultimate expression of mercy; it is showing God's mercy in the gospel

We are not all called to be preachers; we are not all given equal opportunities or comparable abilities for personal dealing with men and women who need Christ. But we all have some evangelistic responsibility which we cannot shirk without failing to love both God and our neighbor.

If we love our neighbor, we shall evangelize, and we shall be enterprising in our evangelism. We shall not ask with reluctance how much we have to do in this realm, as if evangelizing were a distasteful and burdensome task. We shall not enquire anxiously after the minimum outlay of effort in evangelism that will satisfy God. But we shall ask eagerly, and pray earnestly to be shown, just how much it is in our power to do to spread the knowledge of Christ among men; and once we see what the possibilities are, we shall give ourselves whole heartedly to the task. (Packer, pp. 78-79)

B. Personal evangelism is our responsibility as the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mt. 5:13-16, Col. 4:5-6)

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Mt. 5:13-16)

1. We are the salt of the earth. . . . here to flavor the earth
2. We are the light of the world. . . . here to illumine truth with love, good works, and the light of the gospel
3. The ultimate end is the glory of God in the salvation of men

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person. (Col. 4:5-6)

4. Those outside the church, which is the family of God, are considered outsiders
5. We are to conduct ourselves with wisdom toward outsiders (lit. walk)
6. We are to make the most of the opportunities (lit. redeem the time) that will surely come our way
7. Our speech is to be with grace, seasoned with salt (sting, flavor, preserve)
8. We need wisdom to respond uniquely to each person

C. Personal evangelism is our delight and privilege as disciples commissioned and commanded by Jesus Christ (Mt. 28:18-20) (see Chapter 3 notes)

D. Personal evangelism is the pleasure of those who possess hope in Christ (1 Pt. 3:13-16)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Pt. 2:9-12)

1. We have been chosen for a purpose: To proclaim God's excellencies
2. As God's chosen, our behavior is to be excellent in the midst of the world
3. The ultimate end: The glory of God in the salvation of men on the day of judgment

And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (1 Pt. 3:13-16)

4. God is for us, who is against us?
5. It is sanctifying Christ as Lord in our hearts that quenches our fear of men
6. People should ask, "what is the basis of your hope in life?"
7. We are to be ready to speak when asked
8. We are to answer with gentleness and reverence, keeping a good conscience
9. There is a real possibility we will be slandered and reviled because of Christ

V. How do we begin to give ourselves to the task of personal evangelism in light of these truths?

- A. We must pray for the lost and for our own heart & passion for the task
- B. We must recognize that personal evangelism involves two things
 1. A lifestyle of love and good works
 2. The verbal expression of the gospel
- C. We must recognize that personal evangelism is a lot of work, a skill that is developed over time
- D. We must know what we believe and why we believe it
- E. We must commit ourselves to the process of learning how to give voice to the gospel
- F. We must prepare ourselves to answer potential questions
- G. We must reorganize our lives so we have time and space for unbelievers
- H. We should see ourselves as earning the right to share the gospel
- I. We must sacrificially and radically love those whom God brings into our life "They won't care what you know, until they know that you care"

On the need for patience in personal evangelism

We are tempted to be in a great hurry with those whom we would win to Christ, and then, when we see no immediate response in them, to become impatient and downcast, and then to lose interest in them, and feel it is useless to spend more time on them; and so we abandon our efforts forthwith, and let them drop out of our ken. But this is utterly wrong. It is a failure both of love for man and of faith in God. (Packer, p. 119)

On the need for relationship in personal evangelism

The right to talk intimately to another person about the Lord Jesus Christ has to be earned, and you earn it by convincing him that you are his friend, and really care about him. And therefore the indiscriminate buttonholing, the intrusive barging in to the privacy of other people's souls, the thick-skinned insistence on expounding the things of God to reluctant strangers who are longing to get away -- these modes of behaviour, in which strong and loquacious personalities have sometimes indulged in the name of personal evangelism, should be written off as a travesty of personal evangelism. Impersonal evangelism would be a better name for them! In fact, rudeness of this sort dishonours God; moreover, it creates resentment, the prejudices people against the Christ whose professed followers act so objectionably. (Packer pp. 81-82)

On the cost of personal evangelism

The truth is that real personal evangelism is very costly, just because it demands of us a really personal relationship with the other man. We have to give ourselves in honest friendship to people, if ever our relationship with them is to reach the point at which we are justified in choosing to talk to them about Christ, and can speak to them about their own spiritual needs without being either discourteous or offensive. If you wish to do personal evangelism, then -- and I hope you do, you ought to -- pray for the gift of friendship. (Packer p. 82)

On the great hope of personal evangelism

So persevere in presenting Christ to unconverted people as you find opportunity. You are not on a fool's errand. You are not wasting either your time or theirs. You have no reason to be ashamed of your message, half-hearted and apologetic in delivering it. You have every reason to be bold, and free, and natural, and hopeful of success. For God can give His truth an effectiveness that you and I cannot give it. God can make His truth triumphant to the conversion of the most seemingly hardened unbeliever. You and I will never write off anyone as hopeless and beyond the reach of God if we believe in the sovereignty of His grace. (Packer pp. 118-119)

Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God

Chapter 8: Evangelism & Missions

I. Worship is the ultimate goal of God

A. God saves for His glory

*He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, **to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be **to the praise of His glory**. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, **to the praise of His glory**. (Eph. 1:5-14)*

B. God creates for His glory

*I will say to the north, "Give them up" And to the south, "Do not hold them back." Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And **whom I have created for My glory**, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made. (Is. 43:6-7)*

C. God chooses and acts on behalf of Israel for His glory

*And He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel, **In Whom I will show My glory**." (Is. 49:3)*

*"I made the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah cling to Me," declares the LORD, "**that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise, and for glory**; but they did not listen." (Jer. 13:11)*

*And what one nation on the earth is like Thy people Israel, **whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people and to make a name for Himself**, and to do a great thing for Thee and awesome things for Thy land, before Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed for Thyself from Egypt, from nations and their gods? (2 Sam. 7:23)*

D. God glorifies Himself in the death of His Son

*"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. **Father, glorify Thy name**." There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "**I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again**." (John 12:27-28)*

*Father, the hour has come; **glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee**. . . (John 17:1)*

E. God commands us to do everything we do in life for His glory

*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all **to the glory of God**. (1 Cor. 10:31)*

*Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that **in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ**, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pt. 4:11)*

F. God's plan is to fill the earth with His glory

For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea. (Hab. 2:14)

*For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. **To Him be the glory forever.** Amen. (Rom. 11:36)*

G. God ultimately will light heaven with the brilliance of His glory

*And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the **glory of God has illumined it**, and its lamp is the Lamb. (Rev. 21:23)*

II. Worship is the ultimate goal of evangelism & missions

- A. God reconciles worshipers through the death of Christ
- B. God draws worshipers by His Spirit through the gospel, working through prayer, preaching and personal evangelism
- C. God is gathering worshipers from every nation, tribe and language
 - 1. God blessed Abraham to bless all the families of the earth (Gen.11:1-9;12:1-3)
 - 2. God chose Israel to invite the nations to come and give Him glory

*Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; Declare **among the peoples** His deeds. (Is. 9:11)*

*And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds **among the peoples**; Make them remember that His name is exalted." Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known **throughout the earth**. Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (Is. 12:4-6)*

*Praise the LORD, **all nations**; Laud Him, **all peoples!** For His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD! (Ps. 117:1-2)*

*God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us — Selah. That Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation **among all nations**. (Ps. 67:1-2)*

- 3. God promises that the nations will be gathered to worship His glory

*So **the nations** will fear the name of the LORD, And all the kings of the earth Thy glory. (Ps. 102:15)*

***All nations** whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; And they shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great and doest wondrous deeds; Thou alone art God. (Ps. 86:9)*

*The LORD has bared His holy arm In the sight of **all the nations**, That all the ends of the earth may see The salvation of our God. (Is. 52:10)*

*He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You **a light of the nations** So that My salvation may reach to **the end of the earth**. (Is. 49:6)*

*For I know their works and their thoughts; the time is coming to **gather all nations and tongues**. And they shall come and see My glory. (Is. 66:18)*

- 4. Jesus Christ commissions us to make disciples of the all the nations (Mt. 28:18)

5. The Apostles saw their mission as a fulfillment of God's zeal for the worship of the nations (Rom. 15:8-12)
 - a. Why has Christ come? (v. 8)
 - To fulfill God's promises to the fathers (e.g. Gen. 12:1-3)
 - For the Gentiles (nations is better) to glorify (worship) God for His mercy
 - b. The coming of Christ is the expression of God's mercy and the means by which worshipers come to worship God (vv. 9-12) (quoting 2 Sam. 22:50, Deut. 32:43, Ps. 117:1, Is. 11:10.)

6. History ends with the gathering of the nations for worship at the throne of God

*And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from **every tribe and tongue and people and nation**. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (Rev. 5:9-10)*

*After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, **from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9-10)*

III. Selected Quotes

On the ultimate goal of the Church

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. (John Piper, Let the Nations Be Glad p. 11)

All of history is moving toward one great goal, the white-hot worship of God and His Son among all the peoples of the earth. Missions is not that goal. It is the means. And for that reason is the second greatest activity in the world. (Piper, p. 15)

On God's passion and ours

Missions flows from the fulness of God's passion for God and it aims at the participation of the nations in the very passion that God has for Himself. The power of the missionary enterprise is to be caught up into God's fuel and God's goal. And that means being caught up in worship. (Piper, p. 31)

On the relationship between God's glory and God's mercy

Mercy is the apex of God's glory the way the overflow of a fountain is the apex of the fountain's fulness. God is free to be merciful because He is full and utterly self-sufficient in Himself. He has no deficiencies or needs or defects. He relies totally on Himself for all that He is. . . . The glory of His all-sufficiency overflows in the freedom of His mercy to the nations. Therefore extending God's mercy and exalting God's glory are one. A heart for the glory of God and a heart of mercy for the nations make a Christ-like missionary. These must be kept together. If we have no zeal for the glory of God our mercy becomes superficial, man-centered human improvement with no eternal significance. And if our zeal for the glory of God is not a reveling in His mercy, then our so-called zeal, in spite of all its protests, is out of touch with God and hypocritical. (Piper, p. 30)

IV. How should these truths shape our missions efforts?

- A. Evangelism and missions are one and the same task
 - 1. All missions is evangelism
 - 2. All evangelism is missions
 - 3. There is no such thing as missions apart from evangelism
 - 4. While there maybe preliminary language work and social work along the way, these are means to the end of evangelism

- B. We have a responsibility as a church to take the gospel to our Jerusalem (Saddleback Valley), our Judea (California), our Samaria (North America), and to the uttermost parts of the earth. Think and act locally and globally.

- C. Since missions is cross-cultural evangelism, it is imperative that those we send know the gospel, and how God works.

- D. Prayer, preaching, and personal evangelism are God's means of working through the church and building the church, both here and throughout the world
 - 1. Our missions efforts should reflect these appointed means
 - 2. This implies an emphasis on church planting

- E. Since God is gathering worshippers from every nation, tribe and language family, our missions efforts should also reflect this scope and include identifying and mobilizing toward unreached people groups

- F. We should see our missionaries as partners in the gospel with us
 - 1. They are us, serving in other parts of the world
 - 2. Their task is our task
 - 3. Our task is their task.

- G. We should be praying for God to be raising up more men and women from our own church to take the gospel cross-culturally. When it is time to send them, we should do all we can to support them financially and prayerfully.

- H. While worship is the goal of missions and evangelism, it is also the fuel of missions
 - 1. We will be better motivated in the area of missions & evangelism as God becomes supreme in our own lives
 - 2. We need to pray for God to give us a larger and more biblical vision of Himself