Grace Fellowship Church Fort Worth, TX Rick Griffith

26 Oct 1986 Message of 10

NIV 30 Minutes

**Do You Really Care?**

***1 Thessalonians 2:1-12***

**Topic:** Compassion

**Subject:** What constitutes effective evangelism?

**Complement:** *Share Christ in a bold, pure motivation with sincere caring.*

**Purpose:** The listeners will share the gospel with someone this week.

**Meditation:**

**Reading:**

**Song:**

# Introduction

### Interest: [We must show compassion on those in need.]

#### One Saturday afternoon last year I was headed home to our apartment on a newly constructed back road just a few blocks from our apartment complex in Dallas. As I made my way around the last bend in the road I spotted something unusual ahead -- a young man dusting himself off in the middle of the street with his motorcycle laying beside him.

#### Since he was standing up and appeared O.K. I was tempted not to stop, but I'm glad I did. Just seconds before he had taken a spill on the excess gravel and was suffering from shock, scraps all over his arms and a chunk of flesh out of his hip. (He had only been wearing a helmet, shoes and cutoffs.)

#### I offered to take him to our apartment to get him cleaned up, so he came. What a surprise to Susan (who was preparing dinner) to have this unexpected guest come through the door with me! But she quickly dropped her things and helped.

#### I helped Mark take a shower, gave him some clean clothes and water (he wasn't hungry), helped him call his best friend to pick him up and tried to get his mind off the accident.

#### All this time we had our radio on, tuned to KCBI, a Christian station. Finally I confessed, "Well, by that music I guess you can pretty well figure out we're Christians…"

#### "Oh, I can't fault you for that," Mark said. Then he went on to explain how he had been a Catholic for many years until he saw no meaning to it. As I explained that meaning can't be found in a church or liturgy or works, he calmed down and listened intently. I shared my testimony with him and gave him a Four Spiritual Laws booklet to read later since he still was shaken up so much. Soon Mark's friend came and picked him up, we put the motorcycle on his truck and they left for the hospital.

#### Only after they were gone did I notice that I had put his motorcycle helmet in my car trunk at the accident. This meant that I would be seeing him again! Sure enough, about a week later I went to visit him at home. We talked for about three hours and at the end he trusted Christ for his salvation.

### Need: Mark was very receptive to the gospel, primarily because someone had reached out and shown him a caring concern.

### Subject: This is the issue I want to address this morning: what constitutes effective evangelism, and in particular how does caring for people fit into the picture? What are some of the signs that our ministry to the lost is really honoring God and effective?

### Background: The past few weeks we've been making our way through Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian church. In this particular passage Paul uses the word for "gospel" four times in these twelve verses, indicating that he's addressing the kind of evangelistic lifestyle he showed when he delivered the gospel to the Thessalonian church.

### Preview: So today we will see three characteristics of effective evangelism.

### Text: I think we can find some answers to these questions in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

(What is the first of these three signs of effective evangelism?)

# I. Effective evangelism is bold (2:1-2).

**[Ministering to unbelievers is speaking the gospel with confidence.]**

## Paul and his companions shared the gospel with boldness (2:1-2).

### The Thessalonians themselves knew their message had power (2:1).

#### The word for "you" is emphatic here, so Paul is comparing what others said about him (1:9) with what the church already knew.

#### In particular, he's introducing chapter 2 where he wants to expand upon what he briefly addressed in 1:5-- how the gospel came with power and example, contrary to what the opponents at Thessalonica had claimed.

#### A more literal understanding of the term for "failure" is "emptiness."

##### Paul is saying that his establishment of the church was not void of power.

##### This power was in the gospel and it produced amazing results, even the end of idol worship among people in the church (1:9).

### Paul, Silas and Timothy came off a rough time and still shared Christ boldly with the Thessalonians (2:2).

#### Acts 16:19ff. records the difficulties Paul and Silas experienced in Philippi.

##### They had been arrested without proper warrant (v. 19).

##### They were dragged in front of the authorities (v. 19b-20).

##### They had been blamed for starting a riot (v. 20b).

##### They had been falsely accused of teaching antigovernment customs (v. 21).

##### They had been publicly beaten even though they both were Roman citizens (vv. 22-23).

##### They were thrown into a high security prison without trial, their feet being fastened into stocks (v. 24).

##### Finally, after all this public humiliation and torturous pain, they were allowed to flee the city and go to Thessalonica.

#### Now if you had this kind of treatment, what would you do? I think I'd probably retire as an apostle and only devote myself to a letter writing ministry. I'd do what some do when they no longer are fit for ministry- I'd write a book and tell others how to do it!

#### Paul did nothing of the sort. He went to a brand new city and once again boldly proclaimed the gospel in the synagogue, and when persecution broke out in Thessalonica the missionaries just kept on preaching until they were kicked out there also.

(I think it's really easy to relegate boldness in sharing the gospel to the first century because they experienced so much persecution back then, thinking that it's not necessary to be bold today. However….)

## We too need to speak with confidence as we share the gospel. We need boldness.

### Boldness doesn't mean tactlessness, but confident tactfulness!

#### But how do you recognize tact? Someone has said, "Tact is the ability to make people feel at home when you wish they were." We need to be tactful especially with those who don't just seem to be like us.

#### Our problem in evangelism is that many of us are so full of tact that we never make contact!

### Why is it that we often don't have the boldness to make contact? (EVANGELISM fear of -- two hunters: "You go that way and see where he went." "I'll go this way and see where he came from!"

#### We are too afraid that we'll offend people. (But Paul didn't worry about this- he probably had more enemies than he had friends.)

#### We're too afraid of what they'll think of us, so we don't share the gospel. (We forget that it's not what they think of us that will affect their eternal destiny- it's what they think of Christ!)

#### We really just don't care for people. We don't ponder the awful price we pay for rejecting Christ.

#### We haven't experienced a Christianity that really cost us something.

### Let me develop that last point a little more, about a faith that costs us something.

#### Tom Roxas served as a missionary to Sri Lanka… (EVANGELISM costly).

#### Roger was an ordinary high school football coach in California… (EVANGELISM God uses ordinary people).

(So we've observed in the first two verses of this chapter that effective evangelism is **bold** evangelism. But you can be bold in evangelism without having the proper motives, can't you? That's why in verses 3-6 Paul models how…)

# II. Effective evangelism has pure motives (2:3-6).

[**To really share Christ properly our motivation must be right**.]

## Paul and his companions shared the gospel with the right motives (2:3-6).

### He denied three accusations against him regarding his preaching (2:3):

#### His message was not from error, but truth.

#### His motive was not impure, but pure.

#### His method was not to trick, mislead, or deceive. It was straightforward.

### He affirmed that his motives in evangelism were right (2:4).

#### God wouldn't have blessed his work if his motives weren't right.

##### "Approved" is a word borrowed from the blacksmith shop…

##### The word for "tests" at the end of the verse is the same Greek word (NASB "examines" and KJV "tries"). Paul's saying that God brought him through the fire and his motives shined as pure as fine gold.

#### What was this pure motive?

##### Simply to be pleasing to **God** in all he did, even if **men** didn't approve.

##### Eph 5:10 "and find out what pleases the Lord" is a good memory verse.

### He reminded them he wasn't in it to flatter people for their money (2:5-6).

#### Based upon what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 he wasn't a super speaker: "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with the demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."

#### Here in 1 Thessalonians 2:5 we don't see the temptation to rely on men's wisdom (which the Corinthian church struggled with). Here we see Paul claiming he didn't have the eloquent, flowery speech which could reach deep into people's pocketbooks. Paul was not guilty of sharing Christ out of greed.

(No doubt Paul was tempted to share Christ out of the wrong reasons, but we can have the same problem. That's why…)

## We need to examine our motives for ministry too.

### One church once attempted to stimulate its evangelism program by sponsoring an interesting contest (EVANGELISM, METHODS [Motives, False]).

### Do we need gimmicks because our motivation isn't pure before God? I hope not.

(In our study of effective evangelism we've seen so far here that it's bold and it's done with the right intent, the good motive of pleasing God. There's a third and final characteristic of sharing Christ the right way that we can observe in this passage…)

# III. Effective evangelism comes from a lifestyle of caring (2:7-12).

[**Caring and sharing go hand in hand in proper witnessing**.]

## Paul and his companions shared the gospel with deep care (2:7-12).

### They cared for the Thessalonians like a nursing mother cherishes her baby (2:7).

#### The NIV translation, "mother," doesn't appear in the original, but the word for "nurse" does. Furthermore, the text says that this nurse cares for her own children, so what we have in view is that Paul cared for these people like a nursing mother (ILL: Susan's care for our new arrival in 11 weeks).

#### The word for "cares" here is the same word we find in Ephesians 5:29 in regard to Christ's love for the church. It has the meaning of "cherishing" and is also used in reference to the way a mother bird covers her young.

### They cared by imparting their lives and getting close to the people (2:8-9).

#### Paul knew his ministry didn't stop after he verbalized the gospel. The message needed flesh on it - and it wasn't just a "share the gospel by living the life concept." That's not sharing Christ!

#### One person followed this idea of only living an upright life without a verbal witness with his neighbor for ten years, then finally one day the neighbor came to Christ. Immediately this new Christian went over to share the gospel with the other man, only to find out that he had been a Christian throughout their ten year acquaintance! "Why didn't you ever share the message about Jesus with me?" the new believer asked, "For **years** I have wanted to know how to reach God, but every time I considered Christ I always looked over at you and said, 'Well, if he can live a decent life without God then so can I.'"

#### This type of care has recently become well-known as "friendship evangelism." It simply means that we communicate Christ in the realm of an honest, open, growing relationship with a non-Christian.

#### I must confess to you that this is a very difficult area for me, one in which I've failed too often. Susan and I have discussed this though, and we have a plan to be more effective at reaching our neighborhood for Christ when we move out here to Fort Worth in a few weeks.

#### How can we share Christ in the context of sharing like this? Let me put it this way, "Where is the best place to let people know who you are and allow them into your life?" That's right, it's right in your home, and specifically at your dinner table. I know of one couple who made it their priority to have at least one unsaved couple every week. Maybe we need a similar goal too.

#### Perhaps you're saying, "But I'm not very good at entertaining!" SEARCH MINISTRIES of Dallas puts out an interesting newsletter devoted to this issue of friendship evangelism. A recent issue addresses this topic of entertaining and contrasts it with hospitality…

(Paul and his friends didn't just get close to the Thessalonians, though. Even letting the people see their lives wasn't enough because others might not be impressed with what they saw! Paul and his companions men went beyond that…)

### They cared by modeling and encouraging a Godly lifestyle (2:10-12).

#### They modeled a Godly lifestyle (2:10). Christ did too, right there in the midst of the common people (EVANGELISM friendship [Christ's example of going to people]).

#### They encouraged the church to have a Godly lifestyle (2:11-12).

##### In verse 7 we saw how the apostles had the tender care of a mother.

##### Here in verses 11-12 we see them demonstrating the exhortation, comfort and encouragement of a father. That's balance in ministry - the same hand used for a gentle touch and for a disciplinary swat!

##### The goal of this encouragement was that the church would be fully pleasing to God. Paul is evidently going beyond just how he responded in his evangelistic efforts in these verses. This primarily addresses after the people came to know Christ.

(What Paul did should be our objective too.)

## We must really demonstrate caring concern for others to reach them for Christ.

### We need to open our mouths to verbalize why we are who we are.

### We need to open our homes to demonstrate how we are who we are.

(So what constitutes effective evangelism, and in particular how does caring for people fit into the picture?)

# Conclusion

### This morning we've observed how Paul modeled for us effective evangelism—*share Christ in a bold, pure motivation with sincere caring* (Main Idea).

### We need to ask ourselves a few pertinent questions:

#### Do we share Christ with confidence and boldness, or are we in any sense ashamed of the gospel?

#### When we **do** minister the gospel, do we minister out of proper motives? or just out of obligation?

#### Is our message from a deep, genuine concern for the real needs of those with whom we share this message? Do **you** really care? Whom specifically do you need to demonstrate this kind of loving, genuine care that Paul modeled for us?

### Hudson Taylor, the famous missionary to China, records in his journal a touching story to remind us to care… (Taylor, *In Retrospect*, 85-86).

### Prayer

### "Alleluia " Postlude

#### "Alleluia…"

#### "Lord we love You…"

#### "Lord we'll share You…"

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

# Questions

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### Text

# Possible Applications

### Text

**Title**

***Passage***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*:

# I.

# II.

# III.

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest:

### Need:

### Subject:

### Background:

### Preview:

### Text:

(Transition into MPI here.)

# I.

[Restate MP here.]

(Transition into MPII here.)

# II.

[Restate MP here.]

(Transition into MPIII here.)

# III.

[Restate MP here.]

(Transition into the MI here.)

# Conclusion

### (MI).

### Main Points

### Exhortation/Application



**Rick Griffith**

1986

Message 3 of 10

**Title**

***Passage***

# Introduction

Subject with a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ blank answer in hidden text

# I. MP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

## SP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

## SP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

## SP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

# II. MP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

## SP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

## SP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

## SP has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

# Conclusion

### Main Idea has a blank for the key word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ answer (verses).

### Application question

**Thought Questions**

1. Read the passage aloud. Contrast:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Contrast** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |

1. Text-based question

Text

Text

Text

Text

1. Application to your own Christian experience

Text

Text

Download this sermon PPT and notes for free at https://www.biblestudydownloads.org/resource/new-testament-preaching/