

How can we enthuse people? Are there things that hold us back in evangelism? Is it lethargy, apathy, fear, or something else?

Ronald Blythe, a nonagenarian who still contributes to the Church Times, wrote years ago: "As for the British Churchman, he goes to Church as he goes to the bathroom, with the minimum of fuss and no explanation if he can help it." Do you think he had a point or have things changed?

How can we help to equip people to be able to 'speak the word' to others? Are there particular things you think we should do as a church or in our house groups?

Prayer

Continue to pray that God would send out workers into the harvest (Mtt 9.38), for outreach and mission organisations you know, for ministry training colleges and for initiatives like 9:38 running conferences for people considering full-time gospel ministry.

Pray that God would give us a heart to win others for Christ, and that we would be prepared make the changes and sacrifices necessary to do so (1 Cor 9).

Pray that the Lord would give you opportunities over the coming few days to speak about Christ to people who don't know Him. Pray that when the opportunities come we would be ready, and that the Holy Spirit would give us the words to speak.

Pray for our work as a church in equipping and enthusing one another.

Pray that evangelism, telling people about Christ, would become infectious in our fellowship.

*David Phillips
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Vision

Study 2 : Always be ready



In the first study we focussed on God's work in bringing people to faith in Christ. But in what ways did we also see how Christians, in obeying Christ's command, were used by God to bring the message to others?

Evangelists

Read : Eph 4.11-13

In the Vision Document it is noted that *evangel* means good news or gospel whilst *evangelise* means to share the gospel. An *evangelist* is therefore someone who shares the gospel.

Do some people seem to have a particular gift and if so in what ways is it seen?

Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4.5) whilst we read of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21.8) possibly to distinguish him from Philip the Apostle.

When we prayed at the end of the last meeting that the Lord would send out workers into the harvest, what did you have in mind as to who, or what sort of people He might send?

Does the fact that some are said to have this gift make us think it is best left to the specialists? Are we tempted to say, I don't have that gift so I shouldn't do it?

Always be ready

Read 1 Peter 3.15-16

If someone asked you why you go to church what do you say?

Can you think of a recent occasion when a conversation led to an opportunity to talk about your faith?

What sort of things do we talk about on such occasions? What does Peter say we should do and what does it mean?

Do you find it easy to talk about such things? Why do you or others find it difficult?

We looked at this passage in our series last year on the Fruit of the Spirit because Peter talks about giving an answer with gentleness. There may be times when a more forceful approach is needed but what difference do you think it makes to do this gently?

Notice that the verses surrounding these are concerned with our conduct which is something we will consider in a later study in this series. But it is important that our lives should match our words.

Although Peter tells us we should be ready we will find times when we simply have to depend upon God - **read Matthew 10.19-20.**

Wherever they went

Before you read the passage and notes below try to think about how you understand words like 'preach', 'speak' and 'evangelise'.

Read Acts 1.8

What had Jesus told his disciples to do?

By the end of Acts chapter 7 what had the disciples done about fulfilling this instruction?

What was going to happen to get them moving?

Read Acts 8.1-5 and 11.19-21.

Who does Luke tell us were scattered, and who were not scattered?

Therefore, from amongst the many believers in Jerusalem, who were those who went to tell other people about Jesus? What does this mean for you?

Our English translations don't do justice to the words Luke uses in these two passages. Look at the words highlighted below and think

about what they might mean in practice and how they differ from one another.

- In Acts 8.4 he has the word '**evangelise**' (NIV preached) - to tell good news.
- In verse 5 he uses a different word which the NIV translates as '**proclaimed**', a more formal word often translated as preach but also describing what a herald does.
- In Acts 11.19 he uses the normal word for speaking, and in fact talks of '**speaking** the word' (NIV 'telling the message').
- He uses the same word for speaking in verse 20 and explains this as 'evangelising about the Lord Jesus' (NIV "tell the good news..")

Vision

Read 1 Corinthians 9.19-23

Our St James' vision statement begins, 'to win people for Christ'. How does this pick up on what Paul writes?

If the language of winning people wasn't in the Bible I am not sure I would feel it was the right way to describe evangelism, how about you? Do you think there is a particular reason Paul puts it in these terms here?

What does Paul say he is prepared to do in order to win people?

From what you know of Paul from Acts and from his letters can you think of examples of what he is talking about?

Were there clearly things Paul wasn't prepared to do and if so what were they?

What does Paul's principle mean for us today?

In our vision document we go on to say that:

Our aim is to be a Church **equipping** and **enthusing** one another to share our faith

Why do you think some people seem to be keener to share their faith than others?