

Title: WHY EVANGELIZE?

Text: *Matthew 28:18*

H 16

Take your Bibles and turn to Matthew chapter 28. Our Topic: WHY EVANGELIZE? For those of you who are visiting, we are dealing with a series of messages on WHAT OUR CHURCH BELIEVES. And we are looking at our doctrinal statement. And one of the point at First Baptist, infact one of the points that makes First Batpist a little bit unique, if it is that, deals with our commitment to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you would read First Baptist Statement of Docritine you wourld read this: "We believe in Jes^l's's great commission, so we are endeavoring to win men, women, and youth to Christ, beginning in our local community and reaching forth to the ends of the earth. The globe is our mission field - our task is to evangelize the World."

If you will notice Matthew chapter 28 and verse 18, it reads: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." And right there becomes one of the most important reasons concerning why we as a church should evangelize.

I would think in asking the question , WHY EVEANGELIZE? that every christian would answer with great conviction that that is the task of the church.

But, in reading several books on this subject I was amazed at how many churches do not believe that evangelism is the purpose of the church.

Now, there is a reason for that. They believe that the church is designed to edify its members. And that the by-product of such discipleship would be evangelism. But, i have a serious question to ask: HOW IN THE WORLD COULD I MINISTER TO ANYBODY IF I DIDN'T HAVE ANYBODY TO MINISTER TO?

It seem to me that evangelism is the first prority of the church. Other wise we have no one to disciple. Italmost seems foolish to assume that we can have instant churches, Some where, at some point, someone has to evangelize.

And I believe the sickness that has taken over the church in our day is the same thing that ^{John} ~~Paul~~ mentioned ^{Concerning The Episcopal Church.} ~~in Ephesians chapter 2~~. When we leave our first love, though we be Orthodox, our love for the Lord wanes at the point when we are concerned or not concerned about those outside of the church.

It seems to me that when the church is no longer concerned about its community and the people around it, that so badly needs Christ, at that moment that church begins to die. If you want to kill a church real fast, then just keep it from being concerned about a world that is lost and going to Hell.

I believe that comes down to every individual Christian. There are many churches and denominations that believe that only certain people, according to the Bible, are to evangelize.

First Baptist Church believes that every believer has the responsibility to be an evangelist in the sense that we share and teach and preach the good news of Christ to people who need the Lord.

WHY EVANGELIZE? Let's start with the first reason.

(1) And that is because of the Command of Jesus Christ. I think that should settle it. If Jesus said to do it, then we ought to do it. Lordship demands obedience. It isn't an option. It isn't a creative alternative for just a few Christians who seem gifted in talking to people.

To evangelize is to fulfill the command of Jesus Christ. Now, we are looking at Matthew 28:19. Hopefully you are there in your Bibles.

And Notice please, in the English it appears that there is a command: GO!...and there is a command: MAKE DISCIPLES!..

And some even suggest a command: "baptize," an another command "teach." But, in truth there is only one command. And it is the phrase "MAKE DISCIPLES."

All the rest of them are what we call participles. And they are dependent upon the main verb. If I were to ask you what does the command of Jesus Christ to make disciples involve? The answer, if it is Biblical, would be: ..GOING... BAPTIZING...AND TEACHING....

Now, that should extend our concept of evangelism a little bit. First Baptist is interested in missions and reaching the world for Christ.

And rightly so. Because a part of what it is to make disciples is an assumption of the part of our Lord, that we go.

Evangelism is not "COME." Evangelism is "GO." We need to go where people are. Whether they are the most remote tribe on the face of the earth, or they are the neighbor next door.

Evangelism assumes that we God. Evangelism is not waiting for people to come up to us and ask: "What must I do to be saved?"

Thank God for those rare moments when that happens. But in the plan of God he has ordained the means as well as the end. Truly we believe that God is bring people to Himself. But, God has also instructed us to evangelize. God ordains the means as well as the end.

Turn, please to the Gospel of Mark chapter 16. This great commission of our Lord is stated in several different ways. In fact most Bible teachers believe on several different occasions. That these are not the same occasion. Apparently it was given to different groups on different occasions. Remember our Lord for 40 days appeared to people after his resurrection before He ascended into heaven.

In Mark 16 we read in verse 15, that Jesus said to the 11 disciples, who were guilty of unbelief and hardness of heart, He said to them: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

The interesting thing to me, dear friends, is that God spoke that to 11 men. I hope you really heard what I just said.

Most of us believe that the gospel should go to the whole world. And we would see it as the corporate body of Christ throughout all of church history some how touching base with a world that needs Christ.

But, our Lord gave that instruction to 11 men. And told them to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to all creation.

When someone ask: what should the vision of our church be in terms of its evangelism and mission, I believe that any vision that is short of the world as its scope and its field is not Biblical based.

~~When we are really committed to our Lord's Great Commission, we will be done~~

If we are really committed to our Lord's great commission, through we are not arrogant in thinking that we alone are doing the job, yet, understanding what our Lord said to those 11 disciples, we also assume that the burden is upon us to reach the entire world and to preach the gospel to every creature.

It is when a local church does not believe that that it's vision diminishes and its outreach is cut short. It is to the entire world that we go. And so we get excited when we hear that one of our members wants to go to some remote, part of this world to take the gospel to some people that no one cares about. That ought to cause great excitement in our hearts And whether that is a member of this church or a member of some other church, we ought to rejoice. Because we are to go into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature. No, I do not believe that is remote from my commitment. It is part of my christian commitment. I want to be a world Christian. I don't want to narrow my vision to Alameda, or Oakland, or Berkeley. I want to see a world that is in need of Jesus christ. And I hope you feel the same.

That is built into the fabric of First Baptist Church. And it is what our mission commitment is all about. It is because Jesus Commanded that. That we say, "that settles it, Let's do it."

One more remainder. Turn to Acts chapter 1. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven He clarified even the method of this command. In Acts chapter 1 verse 8 we find our Lord giving this instruction just before He ascended into heaven.

He said in Vs 8. "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witness both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

And I simply want to point out to all of us here, as we look at the command of Jesus, and understand that that is the great motive for our evangelism, and outreach, and mission. I hope we understand that Jesus indicated that many times we will go to groups of people and places in this world in which the local church could not expressly have a part.

It must have been surprising to them to hear Jesus say to go to the Samaritans. for the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. There are some times cross cultural situations to which our people must go if we are to fulfill the command of Christ. But, our given local church can not do this because of our size, so we join with others, in denominational work,

We cannot go every where at once. But we can help to send others there. I am trying to make a point. Even though it seems very simple and elementary in terms of church mission. But it seems to me the point about our commitment to evangelism, is for the church to be what God says we should be must be a sending church. If we do not send people how in the world can we say that we are fulfilling the great commission. If the world truly is our mission, if we truly are responsible to preach the gospel to every creature starting with the next door neighbor, that idea must extend to the world.

Our compassion, hopefully, centers in the whole world. And so we see a method that requires us to train ourselves for cross cultural situations like Samaria. And to cross linguistics situations like the entire world. And that we consider to be our responsibility. We are thankful for every organization that helps us to achieve that goal. But, dear friends, that is the responsibility of every local church. And every believer. We must be world conscience. We must be concerned about every last man, woman, and child who needs the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

That is the first reason : THE COMMAND OF CHRIST.

(2) Reason number two: Turn, please, to Matthew chapter 9. The second reason why I believe we ought to evangelize is the condition of all people,

i do not believe they are in neutral gear. I believe that all people are lost and in need of a saviour. And I want to add at this point that next Sunday night I want to speak to the topic: DOES GOD PUNISH PEOPLE FOREVER? A most serious message dealing with the doctrine of HELL.

And I do not understand an evangelism that is not rooted in the condition of all people. The Bible has much to say about this. But just to refresh your memory about the compassion of our Lord. In Matthew 9:35 it says, "

(read Matthew 9:35-38)

It is interesting that the one's he ask to pray are the ones he sent. Vs 1 of Chapter 10 says "having summoned His twelve disciples, he gave them authority. Vs 5 says "these twelve Jesus sent out":

It is because of the condition of all people that we are moved to evangelize the world. Jesus saw the multitudes and was moved with compassion. He saw their condition: sheep with no shepherd.

Take your Bibles and turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 4. 2 Corinthians chapter 4. When I walk through the shopping centers of our East Bay, I see lots of people just like you do. And there is nothing more fun in all the world than people watching.....AMEN?

People really are weird. Have you noticed that? They do the funnest things. They act in the funnest ways. And aren't you glad you are not one of them. But as I look at all these people I wonder: am I seeing their true condition?

You don't work up evangelism by going to a salesmanship course and learning how to talk. Evangelism centers in the Biblical facts about the condition of people.

2 Corinthians 4 verse 3 says "And even if our gospel is veiled(hidden), it is veiled to those who are perishing."

It certainly isn't hidden to Christians. We have all ready got it. Vs 4.."in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Blinded! By the devil devil himself. The gospel is hid. They are perishing.

We sing the song in our hymn book: "Rescue the Perishing." I wonder.. do we believe that about our neighbor?

We can look into their eyes and see some what of a purpose and meaning, as they hurry around to various obligations: their place of buiness, their home or activities. But do we look at them like Jesus does? Do we see the condition of people without Jesus Christ?

(3) And closely related to this is our third reason why we should evangelize and that is because of the consequences of the gospel.

Turn back to Matthew chapter 7, please. Matthew chapter 7...

We do not take lightly the great commission of our Lord because we understand that the Bible teaches ^{that} because of the condition of all people that they are sinners, they are lost, they are blind, they are perishing. Because of this they are going to face serious consequences, if they continue to reject the gospel of Christ.

Matthew tells us in Chapter 7, the sermon on the mount, in Verse 13:

(READ Matthew 7:13-14)

Turn, please,, to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 7. it says:(Read Vs 7-10)

I read these words and I realize that people I know, who have not received Christ, if they continue in that state, they don't obey the gospel, they are facing eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord. That is what it say.

Turn to I Peter, please, chapter 4. I Peter chapter 4. Very interesting two verses appear in this chapter: verses 17 and 18, dealing with the consequences of the gospel. Vs 17 says...(Read Vs. 17-18)

Obviously the consequences are far more severe.

Turn, please, to Jude..verse 23...The little book of Jude. It has only one chapter. But it has two good verses on our subject. Vs 22 says.....

(Read Vs 22-23)

The indication is that there are two methods of approach in dealing with people who need Christ. With some, the compassion of Christ is the key issue, that draws them to the saviour. But, with others because of the sin and defilement of their life and their rejection and rebellion, you are saving literal with fear, Fear of what? Fear of the consequences pulling them out of the fire.

I suggest to you that one of the great weaknesses of evangelism and missions today is the failure to preach the doctrine of HELL. (more about that next week)

One more verse. Revelation 20 verse 15. This verse tells us, again, the consequence of the gospel. Revelation 20 verse 15 says:

I believe, today, if I could left the lid of hell for just 5 seconds, that First Baptist would not be the same in its evangelism. (more about that next week)

Revelation 20 verese 14 says "And death and hades"..which is the temporary abode of the wicked dead..."And death and hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death,the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.'

People are going to Hell. I guess we know that, don't we? And when we talk about evangelism and we lose sight of the consequences of the gospel, I say to you that something is wrong. It is not a game, dear friends, It is not a game.

It is my prayer, that everylast belilever here in this church, will make it the primary motive of our life to keep people out of Hell. And to take folks to heaven. Whether they be boys or girls or men or women. That our great longing for our family and neighbors who do not know Christ, would be that some how we would have the opportunity to tell them about our wonderful Saviour. That nothing would move then looking for that opportunity to tell people about the love of God in Christ Jesus.

May God help us to understand this.

(4) Reason number four as to why we should evanelize is because of the second coming of our Lord.

Take your Bibles and turn to I Corinthians chapter 15. The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is a motive for evangelism.

You ask: "Is that because he is going to come in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and they will not have a second chance?"

No, that is not really what I have in mind. Though that certainly maybe true. In I Corinthians 15 we have a different approach concerning the coming of Christ *that actually effects us. It effects the believer.*

I Corinthians 15 deals with the resurrection. And those wonderful words about what is going to happen to our physical bodies. And how encouraging they are. After talking about the resurrection, Paul says in Vs 58.. "Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

Now, I want you to center in on that phrase, "your work in the Lord." I want to challenge all of you to study what the work of the Lord is.

It is amazing how many people take the work of the Lord and broaden it to mean so many things, that maybe included in the general commendations of our Lord in serving Him, but the work of the Lord in which we are to stay steadfast, immovable, always abounding, the work that He came to do, was to seek and to save that which was lost. His work was that He would tell people about heaven and Hell. And he would plead with people to turn to the Lord.

Believe...repent...or, perish. ^{It was the} The work of our Lord.

What I am trying to say is: knowing that the second coming of Jesus is coming, knowing what is going to happen, I am steadfast, immovable, always abounding,. I know it is real. I know it is true. Therefore, I stay with it. I present the gospel to those who are lost. WHY? Because I know that my toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Let's take it one step further. Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. This is an interesting passage as it deal with our own evaluation before the Lord. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verese 9, dealing with the judgement seat of Christ. He just got though talking, again, about our resurrected body. It is much like the content of I Corinthians chapter 15.

Vs 9 says.....(Read Vs 9-11..(stop after "pesuade men"))

Again, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our accountability to Him, moves us to share the gospel with those who are lost.

One more, turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 2. I Thessalonians chapter 2. And look at verses 19 and 20. The second coming of Jesus and our looking into the eyes of our saviour as we appear befcore him. Our saviour whom we say we have come to know and love.

To see him. And to hear Him say, "Well done, they good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord". They will make it worth it all.

But, are we doing what He wants us to do?

I Thessalonians 2 verses 19 and 20..Paul says.."For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy."

My friends, the Bible teaches that when you see folks in heaven, that you have been instrumental in touching their lives for the Lord, they are going to receive you warmly. Jesus said in Luke 16:9 that even if we use our money to buy friends. You say, "you cannot buy friends."

You certainly can. Jesus said so. You can use your money to buy, to help, to encourage, to meet peoples needs. And even using your money, Jesus said, to do that, when your money fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellins."

Why? Because you helped them out, down here on the earth. Every cup of cold water given in his name will receive a reward.

The Bible says that the Lord will never forget our work and our labor of love that we have shown in ministering to people.

I think this is a very crucial issue. You are our crown. You are our joy. I look at somebody that maybe God in His wonderful wisdom allowed me to touch with the gospel, and what a joy when we get to heaven and realize the circumstances. WHAT JOY WILL FILL OUR HEARTS.

What joy will be in the hearts of parents who have had that wonderul privilage of leading their children to Jesus Christ. What joy will bei in our hearts knowing that we touched a life for Jesus Christ.

You are our crown of rejoicing. You are our joy. You are our hope. And dear friends, this puts everything into perspective for me. It isn't activities and programs and methods and materials that is bring ing the joy to our hearts. It is people that we have wone to Jesus Christ. People that we have seen trust Jesus as Saviour. What a joy we will have when we meet our missionaries in heaven. And discuss the many people who have come to Christ, simply because we have supported them and sent them out.

And we will know, then, about simple witnesses that we gave to people that, maybe, we thought did nothing. But God took the seed and brought it to maturity. Praise the Lord.

We don't know many things down here. But in heaven we will. But is our commitment to hear "well done thy good and faithful servant." To look into the eyes of people and to say, "You are my joy. You are my crown of rejoicing. You make it worth it all."

(5) Number five. Why evangelize? Because of the constraint of love.

Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5. The constraint of love. In Romans 10:1 Paul said that his heart's desire for Israel was that they might be saved.

In chapter 9 of Romans Paul explains his sorrow for those who do not know the lord. I wonder sometimes if God's love so drives us and compels us.

2 Corthinas 5 comments on this: Vs 12 in the context says :

(Read Vs 12-21)

This whole content about being the servant of the Lord and having the ministry committed to you to share with others, to be an ambassador for christ, God entreating through us. This sounds strange to some.

There are those who say that that sounds like button holing people.

I want to share an opinion with you. It is my opinion. But i want you to know why I have this opinion. I hear things critically about methods of evangelism. I hear lots of it. And there are lots of people making mistakes. Do you know what I mean? There are lots of people.

But I want to give you my opinion. I would rather have someone make lots of mistakes then someone who does nothing. I feel strong about that. And my heart has grieved sometime when i have watch what seemms to be a criticism of evangelism.

Folks, we don't always do things right. Man! when I think of the methods that I have used. I almost killed a guys dog trying to talk to him...

I feel real bad about that. I broke a screen door once. All I was trying to do was give the lady a tract. I didn't know the screen wasn't that strong.

We all make mistakes at times when we present the gospel. But, dear friends when your heart is right...that is really what counts. A heart desire to reach people for christ. And I would rather have some folks out there making mistakes who are trying to share their love, then those who just set back and do nothing.

This text is powerful. The love of Jesus Christs "controls" or Constraints" us. Does it motivate us? Does it compel us to talk to somebody about Jesus?

Let me ask you a question. Do you know that Jesus died on a cross for you? And payed for your sins? And you know that He arose from the dead so that you might live forever with him? And do you really love Him for that? And if you do, don't you think it would be good if you would just tell a few folks about it

I know that when a guy falls in love with a girl, Man, you can hardly turn him off. He is motor mouth. Do you know what I mean?

And if you really love Jesus, I think it will come out. You are going to start talking about Him. THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINTS US.

And if you follow this text, you soon realize that it is Christ love for me that constraints me. It is his love for me that motivates me to share with others. That is really good to know.

(6) Number six. I believe that we should evangelize because of the character of the gospel, You say, "What do you mean?"

I mean it is the only thing that works. Peter said that, did he not in Acts 4:12? "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

It is because of the character of the Gospel. It is the only thing that works. I mean lots of religions will add tones of thing to it. Things that cannot save. You know that. I know that. Only Jesus can save us.

Do you believe that? Turn to Romans chapter 1, and let's take a look it in the content of evangelism. Romans chapter 1. It is because of what the Gospel is, the character of it, the power of God, that which saved people, is the thing that motivates me to share the gospel with others. God's word will not return void. The power is not in my presentation. The power is in the

Gospel itself.

And that is why anyone of us, whether we use good methods or bad methods, can be used of God. Because the power is in the Gospel itself.

Romans 1 tells us in Vs 14....(read vs 14-16)

I am under obligation, I am ready, I am not ashamed. What an outline for evangelism. I am not ashamed of the gospel because it works. It is God's power because of what it is. And therefore I evangelize. With full confidence that God will do his wonderful work through his word. And the power of his marvelous Holy Spirit in our lives.

(7) But one more thing. When we talk about why we should evangelize it really comes down to this: because of the commitment of the message to us.

You know God could have done this another way. He could have had a big banner in the sky with flashing lights saying "BE SAVED."

Now, I do know that during the tribulation period he is going to us an angel. And this angel will proclaim the everlasting gospel to the whole world. That will be interesting.

But in this generation in this age, he has committed the message to his saints. To folks like you and me. To folks who become christians. They in turn are told to share it with others.

I got excited about this. And I got thinking that if each one of us who has come to Christ could see one other person come to Christ in this next year. And if that happened how long would it take for us to reach our world for Christ? And I discovered that it would take a little over 35 years and it would be done.

If we only reached one person per year. Just one person who would come to know Christ through our witness. If everyone of us took that as our pledge and our commitment. You see Jesus never gave us a challenge that we couldn't accomplish.

Now, to ask us to go out and reach a thousand. That seems beyond me. But to reach one? Just one person in one year. And you multiply that out. And it become incredible. The entire world including population growth in 35 years time.

The message was committed to us. The question is WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?
I want to show you ^{one passage -} ~~a couple of passages~~ here.

Turn to I Corinthians chapter 9. There are a lot of wonderful things in the Bible about evangelism that we could look at. But let me just share a couple with you. We are not going to talk about them. But, you know that whole subject of FISHERS OF MEN? It's that a great passage. Our Lord told his disciples that he would make them fishers of men. And boy! I could preach a whole series on that one. And if you have ever done any fishing, you sure can identify with that illustration. A simple little why to tell us about witnessing. You see, our Lord committed the message to us.

But I want you to look at a different kind of passage. In I Corinthians 9, beginning at verse 19.....(read vs 19-23)..

What does that mean to you? It means to me that I should be willing to use any means possible in order to present the gospel. I become all things to all people in order to win some. You see, Christ committed a message to us. And that message needs to be communicated to people where people are..in their homes, at their place of work....in their understanding.

Do we care about those who are lost? May God give us a burden for the person who lives next door. When was the last time we invited our neighbors to go out to dinner, or had them over to our home, or went on an outing with their family?

And this is hard. I know it is. But we do it because we love them. And we want to see them come to Christ.

Let's close with a word of prayer