



SESSION 6

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

*As disciples, we are sent by Jesus to
embody the good news of the gospel
with both our words and our lives.*



WORSHIP

READING PLAN

Read through the following Scripture passages this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses.

Day 1

Romans 10:14-17

Day 2

Matthew 5:13-16

Day 3

Isaiah 6:1-13

Day 4

Matthew 28:16-20

Day 5

Jeremiah 1:4-8

Day 6

Colossians 4:2-6

Day 7

1 Peter 3:13-22

THE GOSPEL ALWAYS POINTS TO JESUS

If you explored every New Testament account of the disciples of Jesus sharing the good news about Jesus to others, you'd quickly find there is no formulaic speech delivered. In fact, since no two evangelistic accounts are exactly the same, it's a great reminder that the gospel is far more personal than a program. However, every telling of the good news has one thing in common: it always points to Jesus.

Is it reassuring or frustrating to know that there is not a formula for sharing your faith with someone else? Why?

When Peter preached about the good news of Jesus in Acts 2:14-36, he was speaking to a Jewish audience and used language that would be very personal to their history as a nation. He quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures, specifically segments written by Joel and David that point to Jesus. He summarizes everything by saying, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!" (v. 36). As a result, three thousand people came to faith in Jesus and were baptized that day.

With results like that, it might be tempting to think that Peter's message is the formula for evangelism that we should adopt. Quote a little Joel and David, point to Jesus, and tell people to repent and be baptized, and bingo: easy, repeatable evangelism. The problem is this is the only instance where Joel and David are mentioned in all the New Testament accounts of evangelism. The next evangelistic moment in Acts 3:11-26 reveals that Peter, speaking again to the Jewish people, mentions Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the holy prophets, Moses, and Samuel as he described Jesus as the Holy and Righteous One. At this point it might be tempting to suggest that evangelism always involves mentioning characters from the Old Testament. However, the next evangelistic account in Acts 4:8-12 records Peter as not mentioning any Old Testament names but rather references a recently healed beggar before concluding, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people, and we must be saved by it."

On and on it goes throughout the New Testament. It's always about Jesus, but it's never the same exact words that lead people to Jesus. This required much prayer, which is constantly mentioned as occurring among the early disciples, and it required being led by the Holy Spirit at all times.

Briefly describe how coming to know Jesus was different for you than for others in your family or small group.

The early disciples were being faithful to Jesus' last command to be "witnesses to Jesus" before He ascended to the right hand of God (see John 5:31-47). Knowing they couldn't do this on their own strength or wisdom, Jesus empowered every believer with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:4) and sent them out in the same way that God the Father had sent the Son (see John 20:21). This involved the words they spoke and the lives they lived. Their lives were compelling, drawing thousands to follow Jesus, despite tremendous persecution.

As you continue to follow the history of the early church through the Book of Acts and even in the New Testament Letters from Paul and others, you find that evangelism is always and only about Jesus. Luke summarized the disciples' passion in Acts 5:42, "Every day in the temple complex, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah." At the same time, different words were used to point to Jesus.

- Stephen summarizes much of the Old Testament to point to Jesus (Acts 7:2-53).
- Philip, through the power of the Spirit, healed many paralyzed people to point to Jesus (Acts 8:4-8).
- Peter boldly confronted Simon the sorcerer to point him to Jesus (Acts 8:9-24).
- Philip listened to and had compassion for the Ethiopian eunuch to point him to Jesus (Acts 8:26-40).
- Peter stepped outside his comfort zone to associate with a Gentile to point him to Jesus (Acts 10:25-48).
- Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns in prison to point to Jesus (Acts 16:25-34).
- Paul reasoned with people in different ways to point to Jesus (Acts 17:1-34).

In summary, what would it look like for us today to point to Jesus everywhere we went? Because there is no formula to follow, it requires obedience by us continually putting into practice all that Jesus commanded. The more you cultivate in your own life a lifestyle of discipleship, the more equipped you'll be to point to Jesus in your conversations and in your actions.

What one thing can you do this week to share Christ through words or actions?

Think about a specific person in your life with whom God might be leading you to share the good news. What are some fears that have been stopping you? Pray and ask God to give you courage and opportunity to share. Remember it is our job to share the gospel, and it is the Holy Spirit's job to convict, compel, and change hearts.

ROMANS ROAD

One classic way to explain the gospel and God's plan of salvation is known as the Romans Road. It uses a series of verses from the Book of Romans to explain the path to salvation through Christ. The Bible is clear that it is only through faith in Jesus that we are forgiven and reconciled to God. There are five essential elements of this message. Each of these steps is necessary to understand the one that follows. As you read through these verses, consider how you might explain each of these concepts to someone who is not yet a believer.

Who needs salvation:

¹⁰ There is no one righteous, not even one.

¹¹ There is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.

¹² All have turned away;
all alike have become useless.
There is no one who does what is good,
not even one.

ROMANS 3:10-12

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

ROMANS 3:23

Why we need salvation:

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23

How God provides salvation:

God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners,
Christ died for us!

ROMANS 5:8

How we receive salvation:

⁹ If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.

ROMANS 10:9-10

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

ROMANS 10:13

The result of salvation:

Since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

ROMANS 5:1

No condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus.

ROMANS 8:1

³⁸ I am persuaded that not even death or life,
angels or rulers,
things present or things to come, hostile powers,
³⁹ height or depth, or any other created thing
will have the power to separate us
from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

ROMANS 8:38-39

Which step is the most difficult for you to describe? Explain your answer.

Which step would be the most challenging for your unbelieving friend to understand and accept? Explain your answer.

Where do you think most people in our culture get stuck and reject Jesus?