

# Chapter 9

## Maintaining Evangelism

“ ... they ... went every where  
preaching the word.” – Acts 8:4

In Acts 8:1, the BIBLE says, *“And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time,”* that is following the murder of Stephen, *“there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they,”* that is the church which that was at Jerusalem, *“were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”* The apostles remained in Jerusalem. Acts 8:4 says, *“Therefore they that were scattered abroad,”* those we just read about in verse one, *“went every where preaching the word.”* These verses record a specific activity of the Jerusalem church during the time that would certainly be considered as unfavorable circumstances or hindering circumstances.

It was a time of fierce persecution and because of the persecution, these members of the Jerusalem church were driven from their homes, were in danger of losing their lives, and they were scattered abroad everywhere. We read that they faithfully declared the word of God everywhere they went. While the Jerusalem church was scattered abroad preaching the word of God, the apostles remained in Jerusalem, I believe doing the same thing that the others were doing, which was preaching the word of God. What we have here is an example, a pattern for church evangelism, which I believe is one of the essentials of being the church that people need. This message will be on the subject of a “Maintaining of Evangelism”. If a church is going to be the church people need there must be a maintaining of evangelism.

First of all, when I speak of the church I'm speaking of the Lord's church, the kind that He established during His earthly ministry. The church has what the world needs. Home Baptist Church has what the world needs. The government does not have what the world and society needs. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as the pillar and ground of truth, and as such, she has what the world needs. The world needs the truth and the church possesses the truth.

You and I all know the world is a mixed up place. It is a place filled with the vile, the wicked, people who have been duped, and are perusing after and clinging to that which will not work, which will bring them further into despair. They cling to and they pursue these things. The churches of the Lord Jesus Christ have the solution, the remedy for that which is futile, useless, hollow, empty, and hopeless. We have what the world so desperately needs.

Being in possession of what the world needs does not mean that we are being the church that people need. There's more to it than just having what the world needs. Yes, we have what the world needs, but in order to be the church that they need, we need to share what we have. We need to share the truth we have with them. We need to convey the message to them. We need to communicate and express what they need. I don't believe any church can be what people need unless they are sharing the message, unless they are conveying the message, unless they are communicating and expressing that message to the world. They can not be the church that people need. If we fail to share the message, if we fail to communicate the truth, if we neglect to do this, then we fail to be what people need.

The members of the Jerusalem church here in Acts 8:4, went everywhere preaching the word. The church has been placed in the world with a commission, with a responsibility. Before Christ left this earth, He very plainly charged His church concerning what they were to be doing. On that Passover night, prior to the crucifixion, Jesus said to His church that night, in John 15:26. Jesus is meeting with the apostles, God set the apostles first in the church, this was the church and God The Son, Jesus Christ, is speaking to the church. He says, "*But when the Comforter is come,*" speaking of the Holy Spirit, "*whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father; he shall,*" the spirit, "*testify of me.*" But then notice what it says in verse 27, "*And ye also shall bear witness,*" or ye also should testify, "*because ye have been*

*with me from the beginning.*” The spirit of God would testify to them Jesus Christ and they too were to testify or to bear witness of Jesus Christ. That means they were to show forth, to demonstrate Jesus Christ. This is what the church was supposed to do.

Following the crucifixion and the resurrection, you remember that Christ called for a meeting with His church. He told them that He would meet them on a particular mountain in Galilee. When He met them there, He again commissioned them. He said in Matthew 28:19, *“Go ye therefore, and teach, ...”* When you teach you show, you instruct, explain, and even more importantly, demonstrate. *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations ...”* Mark puts it this way in Mark 16:15, *“Go ye into all the world, ...”* There wasn't any place that was exempt. He said, *“Go ye into all the world, and preach,”* that is, proclaim and deliver, *“the gospel ...”* A particular message was given to the church to preach. They were not to preach politics or current events. They were to preach the gospel, because this is what the world needs. The world doesn't need to hear about politics from the Lord's church, because there's a far more important message. They need to hear the gospel.

He says, *“You go into all the world, you preach the gospel, and do so to every creature.”* There is no individual that is to be exempt from the message. Luke 24:47 is a little more specific concerning the message that was to be delivered. He said, *“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”* You have to begin somewhere and Jesus said I want you to begin where you're located, in Jerusalem. That's always the beginning. You don't begin in Australia, you begin where you are. Then in Acts 1:8, just prior to Christ's ascension, He said to His church, *“... ye shall be witnesses unto me ...”* A witness is someone who testifies on behalf of another. That's what the church is to do. A witness tells what they know. A witness tells what they've seen, what they've heard, what they've experienced. Jesus

said ye shall be my witnesses. That is, I want you to tell what you know, what you've seen, what you've heard, what you have experienced.

Continuing in Acts 1:8, He said, "... *both in Jerusalem, ...*" that would be the city that they were located in, "... *and in all Judaea, ...*" that would be the state, "... *and in Sumeria, ...*" would be the country, "... *and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*" There's an order. This is the mission, the assignment, the duty of the Lord's churches, to testify, to bear witness of Jesus Christ. Now knowing the mission, the assignment, the duty, we are now able to see the purpose and the function of the church. They are to testify, they are to bear witness. Can a church possibly be what people need if they do not fulfill their very purpose and function. We must fulfill our purpose, we must fulfill our function. It's not the purpose of the church to build a gymnasium. That's not the purpose. The purpose of the church is to bear witness. "Well, we've got to build the gymnasium so we can do that." No you don't. Don't be ridiculous. Our purpose is to bear witness, to testify what we know, what we've seen, what we've heard, what we have experienced.

From these passages that we've made reference to, regarding the mission of the Lord's church, it is a world wide mission in it's extent. Also, there is a proper order in which it is to be carried out. We're specifically told that in Mark 16:15. "... *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" We see that the mission of the church has no barriers, such as race. We're to bear witness. It doesn't matter what color they are, it doesn't matter what language they speak, we are to bear witness. Gender is no barrier. We are to bear witness to every creature, male and female. Language is no barrier. Culture is no barrier. You see it's not the mission of the church to go into a foreign country and change their lifestyle. That's not the mission of the church. It's not the mission of the church to Americanize the world. That's not our mission. Our mission is to testify and to

witness. Education is no barrier. We are to bear witness to the educated, the uneducated. It doesn't matter. Social status, social standing is no barrier.

We see also from these passages that the mission involves a particular message. It is not a vague or uncertain message. It is a very explicit, unmistakable, distinct message. It is the message of the gospel. It is the message of repentance and remission of sins. It is the message of the word of God. Notice again in Acts 8:4, “... *they ... went everywhere preaching the word.*” In verse 5, “*Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ ...*” Jesus Christ is who we are to bear witness of, to be testifying of. In verse 12, “... *when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, ...*” It is a message of the gospel, of the word, of Christ, of the kingdom of God. This is a very clear and unmistakable message. We must always keep the message clear because this is what the world needs. This is what people need.

This is a message that is indirect opposition, direct conflict with the thinking and lifestyle of the world. It is a message about the only way out of the pit of corruption. All around us people are in the pit of corruption. It is a message about the only way out of the enslavement, the binding, and holding power of sin. It is a message about the only way out of darkness, ignorance, and blindness that sin causes. This is what the world needs to hear. This is what your neighbor needs to hear. This is what the person working next to you needs to hear. This is what people need today. If we're going to be the church that people need, then we must be conveying that message.

It's a message about the only way out of the filth and the depths of sin. Every single one of us, almost every day, see people see in the filth and depths of sin. It can disgust and we abhor what we see. We must never lose sight that we have the message that they need to hear. It is a message about the only way out of the devastation and the condemnation of sin, out of a life of emptiness, endless

wandering, and a life built upon sand. It is a message that people need to hear. It is a message about liberty, light, pardon, and sins being cleansed. It is a message about how a person can be made nigh to God and find reconciliation with God. It's a message of joy and peace. It is a message concerning a fountain that can not be drawn dry, of a solid rock in the midst of shifting sand. It is a message about one that is greater than all. This is the message that we have. This is the message that people need.

We know! We know the way out for a person who is trapped in the filth and the depths of sin. We have a responsibility to convey that message. If we keep that message within the walls of this building, we are not being the church that people need. The message that the church is to carry to the world is not a message of philosophy or politics. It is a message of Christ and it is to be preached everywhere and to everyone.

We have here the example of this Jerusalem church going everywhere preaching the word. We, Home Baptist Church and all of the Lord's churches have a commission. This commission rests upon us collectively as well as individually. How is the mission, the assignment, the duty of evangelism, best carried out? When is a church truly evangelistic? I've heard preachers say, "Well, if you don't have door to door visitation, then you're not evangelistic." That is quite a statement. While that just goes through me, it does raise the question, "When is a church evangelistic?" Does sending money to foreign missionaries make us evangelistic? No That can be a part of it, but that in and of itself does not make a church missionary or evangelistic. "What if we did this? What if we preach the gospel from the pulpit." We ought to. But that's not going to reach very many people. You have maybe a few visitors every week and you can preach the gospel from the pulpit. The truth is, that limits you to a great extent. We're not saying there's anything wrong with preaching the gospel from the pulpit. That's not what we're saying at all. The truth is, door to door

visitation, supporting missionaries, preaching the gospel from the pulpit; nothing compares to the outreach of every individual member. Nothing compares and nothing is more far reaching than every individual member of Home Baptist Church, in their everyday circumstances, among their acquaintances, declaring the word of God. That's evangelism. I don't believe that a church is evangelistic unless its members are out there everyday telling the world about Jesus Christ. This is what that first church did. You think about our membership. We're all put in various places. You live somewhere I don't live. You have neighbors that I don't have. We're all put in various places. Why are we put there? Why don't we all just live in the same place? Because God has ordained it this way. He has put us in various places to do what? To testify. As a member of Home Baptist Church you have a responsibility to testify in the place that God has put you. I'm talking about the place you live. That covers a lot of places. We have a lot of places represented here tonight.

Also, God has placed us in various positions. He's placed us in various jobs, various schools, etc. We have a responsibility to testify to tell what we know. To tell what we've experienced. To testify of Jesus Christ. God has put us in different families. I can witness to members of my family that you'll never meet. You can witness to members of your family that I'll never meet. Don't you see, if every single member would go everywhere preaching the gospel; meaning the place they live, the position they find themselves in, whether it be job or school, and the different families we are placed in, we are there to bear witness; when we are all doing that, we are being the church that people need.

We are also placed among various people. We know different people. We are to bear witness to these. When you start breaking this down, Home Baptist Church has a wide influence. Just considering the various places we live, the various families we've been placed in, the various places you



go to school, and the various places you work, if everybody is witnessing, that's a wide spread influence. They went everywhere preaching the word of God.

God places us in various circumstances, I believe to testify. We see many examples in the word of God. In Mark 1:45, we read of a leper who had been healed by Christ. He went and simply told what he experienced. "Well, I don't know that much about the BIBLE, I don't feel qualified." First of all, shame on you. That's not an excuse. Secondly, you tell what you've experienced. You tell what you know. When the Lord first saved me, I did not know anything about the scriptures, but I knew what I'd just experienced. That I knew. I could tell people what I experienced. In Mark 5, we read of the demonic of Gadara. Jesus sent him home to his family and he bore witness to his family. In John 1, one of the first apostles came to a knowledge of Christ. They went and told another and so on and so on. John 4:28-29, we read of a woman at the well. I believe the Lord saved her soul and she went into the city and told of a man by the name of Jesus. John 5, we have a man that had been impotent for 38 years. Jesus Christ healed him and he went to the Pharisees and he said it was Jesus that "made me whole". We have example after example of individuals testifying of Jesus Christ.

God puts people in our paths. God will put people in my path that he will not put in yours and visa versa. I believe these people are put in our path for a reason. We are to bear witness, we are to testify what we know. You have someone that God has placed in your path, that no one else in this church has in their path. You have an opportunity. I've heard people say, "Well, you know I've been praying about a chance to witness to that man or that woman but just haven't had the chance." "How long have you known them?" "Oh I've known them all my life." Don't tell me that! I don't buy it. Don't tell me that you haven't had a chance to tell them about the Lord. Just be honest. We've had innumerable

chances, but haven't taken them. We've had our chances to speak what we know.

The Lord gives us in a variety of ways, innumerable opportunities to bear witness. In Philippians 1, Paul is talking about his imprisonment. The church at Philippi was very disturbed that Paul was in prison and very disturbed at the thought that Paul was suffering. He's writing the church to comfort them, and he says in verse 12, *"But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather,"* or have resulted in, *"unto the furtherance of the gospel;"* In other words, "Yes, the Lord has seen fit that I be imprisoned. But, I would have you to understand that that has given me an opportunity to preach to prison guards that I would have never otherwise had the opportunity to do so."

We need to look at everything as an opportunity. Verse 13, *"So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace ..."* He's saying he would have never had the opportunity to preach the gospel in the palace. But being in prison and preaching to the prison guards, word has also gotten to the palace. God has given me opportunity. The gospel has been furthered. Verse 14, *"And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."* Not only did he have opportunity to speak, but his circumstances had encouraged others and they also were speaking. This is evangelism.

We need to take the opportunities that God gives us. We need to view all the happenings of our life, whether they be things we would have chosen or whether they be things we would have never chosen, we need to view all the happenings of our life as opportunities to bear witness, to bear testimony of Jesus Christ. If you are in the hospital and you have a roommate, you have opportunity to bear witness to that person. You may be the only person at Home Baptist Church that ever sees that person. You have an opportunity. Every circumstance that God brings into our lives needs to be

viewed as an opportunity to manifest Jesus Christ. The people we meet, the people who cross our paths, need to be viewed as an opportunity for the furtherance of the gospel. We leave the results up to God.

We have a responsibility to testify because we have what they need. How many times God's people have listened to sad, sad, pitiful stories from people and don't say a word about Jesus Christ. What a shame. When the world is pouring out their problems, there's an opportunity to say, "I want to tell you something. I want to tell you what you need." "Well, they'll get mad." They might. "They'll never talk to me again." That may be so. But, you have what they need and we are responsible to share what they need.

We must be faithful to our mission, to our assignment, to our duty. I believe the most effective way of doing that is for each and every member to be a witness, to be a testimony of Jesus Christ. Tell people about the church. Tell people about what you've heard. Tell people about Jesus Christ. Don't be ashamed. When they start talking about their church, you've got an opportunity. Don't let that pass by. "Well, let me tell you about my church, the church I go to." This is how a church conveys the message that people need.

We can send money to foreign missionaries, but there's nothing that gets more done than just each member telling what they know to people they know. We can organize a door to door visitation program. I'm not criticizing that at all. But, I'm telling you nothing reaches more people than God's people every single day just telling what they know about Jesus Christ. You know people that no one else in the church knows, that are sick, that have deadly diseases, and you can say, "Can I pray with you? Can I show you something?" You say, "Well it's just not the time." What are you waiting for? They're dying. I've had people tell me, "Brother Dan, they're dying. Don't upset them." In other words, don't talk about Christ. WAKE UP!! They're dying and going to hell and you've got the audacity to say,

don't unset them? Don't tell them what they need to hear? This is our mission. It is best fulfilled when we're all actively telling what we know.

They went everywhere preaching the word. I believe their motivation was two fold. First, love to God. Our motivation is not to see how many people we can get saved. First of all, we can't save anybody. Our first motivation is, we love the Lord and we're doing this for His glory. Our second motivation is, we have a love and concern for the welfare of our fellow human beings. We have enough love for them and concern for them to tell them what they need. It's not enough to say, "Well, I'm praying for them." You have what they need. Tell them. Tell them what they need.

If we're going to be evangelistic, there must be a burden for the souls of men. There must be a care, there must be an interest, concerning their soul. Really, how can you and I talk to anybody and it does not cross our mind, "I wonder if they know the Lord." I mean if that thought doesn't cross our mind, something is terribly wrong with us. It always ought to be on our minds. "I wonder if they know the Lord." The best way to find out is to ask them. "Do you know the Lord? Can I tell you something about Christ?" Read Romans 9:1-2, Romans 10:1-3. You see the burden that Paul had for his countrymen, concerning their souls.

In Acts 17:15-16 we see Paul, *"And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. Now while Paul waited for them at Athens: ..."* I just picture Paul waiting, and he's watching. He's watching people. He's looking at the surroundings of Athens, and *"... his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."* His soul was stirred because of the sin that was going on, because he saw people that were ignorant, having no knowledge of Jesus Christ. Paul had what they needed. If we're going to be the church that people need, each and everyone of us need to be stirred about the souls of men, women, boys, and girls.

We're not talking about tricking people, we're not talking about playing games, we're talking about testifying. We're talking about bearing witness, telling what we know of Jesus Christ. How can we be the church that people need, when we have what they need, but we don't share it with them?

God has placed every single one of the members of Home Baptist Church in a particular place. God brings many people into our lives, brings many circumstances into our lives, and we have the opportunity to testify. That's being evangelistic. Not just one of two people, but the whole church, in their everyday life, in their everyday circumstances, bearing witness of Jesus Christ. God help us. We desire to be the church that people need. God help us not to keep that message that they so desperately need inside of us. God help us not to be silent.

You have to use some wisdom, there is a time to be silent. We're not to cast pearls before swine. That is, you don't give an opportunity, when someone is blaspheming, you just stop and go away. Use some wisdom. But don't be silent. We need to be telling what we know. Some people haven't even told their own families. What a shame. How sad. Don't even tell their own families. They expect the preacher to come and do that. No, you need to do that. You need to tell them. You need to tell them what they need to hear. "Well, I'm just trying to keep peace in the home." You need to quit being so selfish and tell them what they need to hear. They need Jesus Christ, and that's what you need to tell them about. I'm not saying you need to hammer, hammer, hammer, but, you do need to tell about Jesus Christ.

I can't tell you how many times I have tried to speak the message to my dad, through the years. He'll listen for a couple minutes and he'll say, "That's enough. I don't want to hear it any more." I'll stop, no need to go on. Take the opportunity. If the person is in a coma, you know they're lost, tell them about Christ. "Well, they can't hear me." You leave that to God. You tell them about the Lord. If anything else, it gives you good practice. You just tell them what they

need to hear. “Well, this isn't the time.” What are you waiting for? When is it the time? It is the time. You need to tell them. Tell their families, tell them about the Lord. We don't have to be ignorant about it, we don't have to be rude, but we are to tell them of the Lord.