

Take Care How You Listen (Part 2)

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[0:00] What we are going to do tonight is continue something that I started, well, some months ago.

! We are going to move our way through in what I call the Gospel on the Go.

And just to refresh your memory, our primary source, well, other than the Bible, that should go without saying, is this book, The Gospel and Personal Evangelism by Mark Dever.

Or, and, is that up there? I'm not up there, am I? Ah! I'm just waxing an elephant, and you don't even see anything up there. Primary source, there it is, the Gospel, well, there it is.

The Gospel and Personal Evangelism by Mark Dever. And we did give out copies of that, at least one per family. I hope you were able to get one. If you didn't, do we have any left? Do you know?

[1:24] Out there? Are they out there? Okay. Good. You can pick that up if you don't have one. And a short little book, something you can read in short order.

I'm kind of moving my way through it. I'm not just simply reading it or going step by step and sharing in my teachings, just verbatim, what he has there.

I'm adding a few things and so forth. So, that's what we've started. And the primary purpose is, number one, to encourage individual Christians, that's you, each of you, to make evangelism a priority, a priority in your life.

And I'm talking about personal evangelism. Not just organized evangelism, something that you might do as part of the ministry of the church. Some of you are committed to grow, and I thank you for that.

Most of that is primarily visitations and not necessarily, you know, one-on-one evangelism, though it can be that and sometimes should be. But I'm talking about personal evangelism.

[2:31] We can have a lot of programs and such that are designed to be evangelistic, and we should. But the biggest force of people that we have, not just in this church, but think about it, churches collectively around the world, the largest force of people, evangelists, are sitting right there in the pews.

And so, this is the primary purpose. And also, and this is something that Dever does, and we've already covered this ground, at least to some extent, to refute the excuses that we, me included, frequently use for non-evangelizing.

And so, we've covered that already. To identify some scriptural foundations for evangelizing. And we've covered some of that already, and we'll certainly be doing more of that as we go along.

And this is something we'll be doing a little bit tonight and doing more of later, to offer practical advice to help in evangelizing. That's what we need. What I think we all want is some help with that. Some tools that can be used. And maybe even some methods and scriptures that we should use in evangelizing.

[3:56] So, this has been our primary purpose. And we've already covered why, why don't we evangelize? We've already covered what, what is the gospel? And now, tonight, who?

Actually, we're going to cover a couple of things. First of the two would be this question. Who? Who should evangelize? Pretty important question.

Isn't that a question you want answered? Maybe you already know the answer. Hopefully, you do. Let me kind of help us in maybe framing in our minds the questions about that, or maybe some of our answers.

Should only the pastor or pastors, and we have a number of pastors in our church, is it those who are called and gifted to do so?

They're the ones who should evangelize. Is that right? No. Thank you. Waiting for that, Wes. I couldn't go any further until you answered that question.

[5:02] And Wes speaks for us all here tonight. Okay. I know he does. What about elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, other church leaders?

well yes they should but should only these no well what about the laity how about those of you who are introverts I should say those of us who are introverts I kind of number myself you know preachers by the way are typically introverted that may not seem that way you know because they're up in front of people talking but they're comfortable doing that but when you get into a small group one on one so forth preachers tend to be introverted they're not extroverted now some are the other way but many are introverted but how about the laity you know you just say pastor I'm just not one of those kind of people

I'm not outgoing I don't have the gift of gab I you know I don't know how to start a conversation things like that you know I'd just rather kind of I'm just a quiet person or and I don't mean anything you know disrespectful or ugly about this but how about those who are quote uneducated I've heard that excuse before you know pastor you know you just know all these scripture verses and you know and there are people in the church that just have a great knowledge of scripture but I just don't know enough and and it wasn't you know or you've been to seminary and you've been taught you took personal evangelism 101 and yes I did but how about those in the laity who are not you're not you know don't have this high degree of education what about them should they evangelize yes and I just kind of tag this on the end ordinary people just ordinary people well of course and so really it's pretty easy to answer the question who should evangelize but let me answer it maybe more definitively albeit broadly every believer who has had the Holy Spirit poured out into them you say well is that me yes the famous verse

Acts 1:8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you poured out into you now that happened on the day of Pentecost Acts 1:8 predates the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and indwelt believers prior to Pentecost the Holy Spirit came and went and would move upon believers anoint believers and gift them for certain services but it was at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to actually take up residence take up residence in the believer's heart and life and so this is the promise of something that's going to happen and now of course did happen on the day of Pentecost Acts chapter 2 and they he said that you will receive this power the Holy Spirit is poured upon upon you and you shall be witnesses to me alright so who is included then in every believer who has had the Holy Spirit poured out upon them every one of us the Bible even says if you have not the Spirit you don't belong to Christ every one of us here are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God and therefore every one of us are to evangelize that's the who we don't really have to spend a lot of time on that do we because we just know the answer it's every one of us now whether or not you know you're being obedient to that or whether or not you know you think you're very good at that putting aside all of the kind of excuses fears you know anxieties about all of that lack of knowledge or at least the perceived lack of knowledge about how to share the gospel putting all that aside to deal with those things putting that aside every one of us are called to evangelize how should we evangelize how should we do it and that's a big subject and but we're not going to spend a lot of time looking at all of the ins and outs of that question or the answer to that question includes a lot of things

I mean it really is kind of all conclusive how do we do it and so let's just consider a few things about how should we evangelize and some of these are in Devers book and some of these I've kind of added myself and all of them I've tweaked just a little bit here's number one how should we evangelize honestly well brother pastor you think we would lie we would lie when we share the gospel well I don't think we would lie but we might leave some things out we might be have a tendency to leave out the parts that are offensive leave out the parts of the gospel the gospel presentation that might evoke some criticism or anger or ridicule some of the more quote distasteful parts of the gospel what would that be can you think of one sinners that they're sinners sin

[11:40] I think every gospel presentation if it doesn't begin exactly there because sometimes I think it's good to present the gospel beginning with God and who God is and then move to sin and our offense against him but every gospel message must include the truth about sin sinfulness and what that means sometimes I think with some people especially in our generation in our culture we have to define what sin is it used to be that you could just use the word and everybody knew exactly what you were talking about I'm not sure that that was ever really the case but more so in the past than it is today we have to define what that is that's why many have and I think rightly so have chosen to relate it to God's law and the breaking of his laws you know actually going to the

very laws of God lying stealing having gods before him and so forth all of the ten commandments and saying have you broken any of these of course the answer is yes and then if it's not yes you say you have broken

God's laws before a person can come to I think to the place where they're even open to to receive the good news of Jesus Christ that person must be brought to a place where they acknowledge their utter sinfulness before him and that's not something very pleasant to talk about sin and not just simply that you have sinned but that you are a sinner I think every gospel presentation must include the reality of sin you can't just kind of soften that and take that out of there because it would be offensive there are some preachers today popular preachers who say that it is ridiculous I mean that it is it is an affront to the love of God that we would deal directly with anyone about sin you must present the gospel honestly not only sin but what else do you think hell the punishment punishment for sin this whole thing about eternal death that that we may use in the course of the gospel our gospel presentation all have sinned and come short of the glory of God the wages of sin is death Romans 6 23 death not physical death that's eternal death we know because juxtaposed to that in that same verse but the gift of God is eternal life not just life but eternal life and so the two sides eternal judgment eternal life eternal judgment is what God owes us what we deserve eternal life is what God gifts us by his grace through Christ so there's quite a contrast between those two but to have in your gospel message the reality that there's a to use R.G. Lee payday someday there's judgment there is the wrath of God for sin and it is a place now I'm not saying suggesting that in every gospel presentation you must elaborate on all of these details about sin and about the consequences of sin and God's righteous judgment and wrath you know you don't have to go into a long kind of dissertation on the reality of hell that hell is a place and what that's like you know where the worm does not die and you know so forth fire's not quenched but there isn't anything wrong with when you come to if you use

Romans 6 23 the wages of sin is death to elaborate very pointedly what that death is and even at that point being heartbroken as you share it that the consequence for sin is death it's hell it's God's judgment for eternity you're just being honest do you leave that out so that what you're presenting is more agreeable more more more agreeable I don't have to come up with another one do you do you do that so that maybe they'll accept it so what is it if they do believe what you have said and receive that gospel but it is a gospel void of the realities of sin and death and we haven't named this one repentance if you leave those things out then what is it that they are really believing in they're believing in your message but are they believing in the true gospel so we must present the gospel honestly better move on I could get stuck on that one how about clearly clearly he said well this is the big problem for me because I just you know

I'm just not very good at talking to people and not very good at remembering scriptures and not very good at you know kind of elaborating on verses of the bible and well you just need to train yourself now you know God is mighty to save and God can save a person even through one of the most feeble attempts at sharing the gospel you can stammer and stutter and you know and maybe you quote a verse but you don't get every word right and you quote a verse and maybe you say it's Romans this and it's really Romans that and you can make all kinds of mistakes and God is mighty to save and gracious he's the one who saves salvation is of the Lord that does not mean that we should not work at presenting the gospel clearly and also by that same token we ought to present the gospel in a way that is understandable to a person that does not know all of the gospel ease the you know church ease language you do have to explain some of the terminology like I said like sin what it means when we say salvation and some of the other terms that we might use make it clear make it simple and

[19 : 24] God God will bless those efforts those efforts in seed planting three urgently urgently there ought to be in our gospel presentation whether it's to one person or small group of people there ought to be a a a sense urgency you ought to express urgency in your gospel presentation this is very serious I had a preacher years ago I sat under him at an evangelism evangelism conference and he was he went so far as to suggest that you use your voice inflections and volume and even your posture when you come to certain elements of the gospel and really all the world you're not trying to manipulate all the world is you're doing is allowing your heart the seriousness of what you're speaking be expressed in more ways than just verbally and he said when you are sitting in the home of someone maybe it's with a friend or maybe it's at the office and he or she is in the desk next to you or cubicle next to you whatever and you're sitting there that when you get to

certain elements of the gospel like sin but even more so as you draw to the end and you're now getting very serious about asking if they would like to repent right now and be saved but you get on the edge of your seat and you soften your voice and you become serious there ought to be expressed an urgency again

I'm not saying manipulation or putting on some kind of outward expression or some visual thing that's not true not what you really feel maybe it would be good for us to go back over the gospel reexamine all of these elements of the gospel and say and pray and say God would you place freshly in my heart how serious this is and how powerful it is and then praying we're going to get to prayer here in a little!

and! in your praying ask God when you know you're going to visit with someone going to share the gospel with someone that you would pray in advance that God would make your heart passionate and you would once again experience the urgency of this and also a passion for the person to whom you're sharing the gospel do you see it's you share it urgently it's not some kind of cold recitation of something you've memorized you know be it the faith outline or the roman road or whatever thing that you might memorize your presentation you know that's one probably one downside to some of our evangelistic methods and programs that we've developed over the years where you memorize an outline and some scriptures and maybe even some illustrations that are strategically placed in that outline and we memorize that whole thing and then when we present it we're kind of like a monotone robot and we're just bah bah bah bah bah now God can save through that he really can but we ought to work at communicating not only clearly but allowing the urgency to be expressed in what we're saying for joyfully it's kind of the other side of that because there are times in the gospel sharing of the gospel where you are expressing your own personal joy about what

Christ has done for you the excitement about that I think a person whether they're just simply observing the way you live your life that in itself is a gospel expression though I don't think it should end there whether they're looking at your life or whether they are now considering what you're saying from your heart to them about your relationship with Christ there ought to be joy in that and excitement about that and so we ought to evangelize joyfully prayerfully and I these aren't in any particular order some of them that I borrowed from Dever are in the order he gave them I think but I've added a few prayerfully and really this ought to go without saying I guess that you know the effectiveness of our evangelist that evangelistic part of our life is directly related to how much we pray and how close we are to the

Lord in prayer and communion with him and not just simply our general prayer life but specifically our prayer life concerning the sharing of the gospel we're praying for specific individuals and we're praying for opportunities opportunities to share the gospel with that individual and we're praying that their hearts would be made receptive open to the gospel and that the seed of the gospel would take root we're praying for their salvation and all of these things praying that God would enhance and help our memory not going to impart the knowledge we've got to learn it ourselves but that he would just give us a fruitful mind so that we could remember the things that we need to say and speak and the scriptures we need to quote or turn to in the Bible and then we would also beyond that pray that God would give me utterance to be able to answer questions that they may have questions that I would not be expecting maybe they're questions that would catch me off guard that God would just help me at that point to recall what you have said in your words so that

[26:34] I could give an answer and we don't have to answer all of the questions because some of them as Chris shared about our Ukraine trip some of them are designed to divert away from the gospel you know and we need to know how to handle that and so we need to pray for those situations prayerfully very important in our evangelism scripturally there was a movement a number of years ago and I think probably it's still alive today that focuses almost exclusively on what is called lifestyle evangelism now it's it's a reasonable concept you know as far as it goes but you're not going to lead a person to Christ by just the example of your life there must be along the way

God's word faith cometh by hearing or literally the thing heard which is the word of God not just the instrument of hearing but it comes by the thing that is heard and that's the gospel the word of God faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God somewhere along the way the gospel the scriptures must be declared to that person maybe it didn't happen with you maybe it happened with someone before you and your lifestyle and even testimony of your life was the thing that suddenly allowed the gospel to break through that resistant heart and when I say that right off I think of Jerry

Doe he's not here tonight he gave a little bit of a testimony about what happened in Ukraine and I told him beforehand if you don't tell it I will he was reluctant but he didn't tell the whole story prior to our trip to Ukraine I was encouraging every one of the team members to write out their testimony not all of them did and they didn't have to but just good kind of collect your thoughts and write it out on paper and then I said to those who wanted to give it to me and I'll take a look at it and maybe there's some things that I might point out to you that would help communicate your testimony better and so several of them gave them to me Jerry gave me his testimony written out on paper this was several weeks before we left for Ukraine and so I read it it was a great testimony except it had some points of confusion not to me probably not to any of you but something that maybe an unsaved person would not understand and particularly an unsaved person in Ukraine and what it was in the first part of his testimony he mentioned that he joined the church at such time or place and whatever it was and then on into the body of the testimony he mentioned being baptized becoming becoming a Christian and so there were two things separated not only in the his written testimony but separated by time quite a bit of time actually now you and I understand that don't we I mean it happens a lot someone will come forward and you know fill out a little card and get baptized and not really be saved and that's what happened with Jerry early in his life and that was part of his testimony though he didn't elaborate on that and then later of course he was genuinely saved and was baptized first time he just got wet and the second time he was truly baptized so I just shared with Jerry that he might want to reword that a little bit and maybe explain about these two events and that one was not real and the other was real and so he said he would and then when we got to

Ukraine and I think it was either that day that he was going to give his testimony one of the gospel kind of gatherings or maybe it was the day before he again we talked about it and he said that he decided he would reword that and restate that and try to explain some of that and we both agreed that maybe it's possible that someone would be there that night that has had the same experience you know it just could be and so Jerry is telling his testimony giving his testimony and Lilia Shimshishin say that real quick Lilia Shimshishin was the translator this young lady sweet young lady she was standing there and I was sitting there and just watching and listening to Jerry Jerry and then of course she gave the translation and Jerry was talking about this and about how he had joined the church and was baptized and all the various things that he did even preaching a little bit and he was you know teaching a

[32:13] Sunday school class and taking part in soul winning ministries and so forth and all the time he said there was this emptiness this emptiness in my heart and life and while he was very passionate about it this is just his testimony very passionate about it and all the while her eyes are getting redder and redder and I'm wondering what I didn't know what was going on and her face was just getting kind of red and I was thinking that because Lillia was young and Jerry probably not the easiest to translate for because he was getting very emotional and some of his sentences were broken and you know and I was just thinking maybe she was struggling with the translation and getting embarrassed by that and then suddenly she excused herself just suddenly said excuse me and she walked out and one of our other translators stood right up and took up where she left off and Jerry went on with his testimony nobody really knew at the time what was going on just thinking maybe she's having some problem maybe she was sick well when it was all over or close to being over

Victor I guess what Victor 2 is that what we call him one of our drivers but Victor was a pastor pastor of a church in the Odessa area Victor came in and he said I need to say something to everybody and so through a translator because he didn't speak really good English he shared how Lillia had been saved that night and that he had been working with her and counseling her he knew we didn't know it but he had known for a number of months that she was not a believer true believer and that she was struggling with that and he was counseling her biblically and sharing the gospel with her planting the seed of the gospel and all those months or so prior to and but it was at that moment when Jerry gave that testimony that the gospel took root in her heart and she was saved now Jerry didn't use scripture in his testimony he wasn't presenting the gospel with scriptures didn't use the

Roman road or any other kind of method he was just sharing his own personal testimony and someone was saved at that moment was were they say because of the testimony alone no because the word of God the gospel had been planted and planted and planted in her heart months prior and

then God gloriously saved her right then now I share that with you because it's important for us to know that God uses many other things to bring what is all the gospel that has already been planted to bring it to fruitfulness you can use your life but when it comes to how to evangelize we must evangelize scripturally we must share the gospel I'm not opposed to the wordless book as long as you share the gospel with it the scriptures that go with it black for sin all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and you know what is it red you have the blood of Christ you share scriptures about the blood that is shed for us and saves us and white the purity of salvation and blue faith the first act of faith and obedience possibly baptism though I really prefer the blue just to speak to faith and then the green is the life that's growing and maturing and you share scriptures and the streets of gold you know heaven but the scriptures must be there you must share the gospel scripturally one of my favorite methods is the Roman road in fact I want to give you something here tonight help me out here

Coda could you help me I'm not going to talk about this tonight but what I'm going to give you is just simply a card that you can put inside your Bible you can take it and mark a New Testament if you want to and it's just simply the Roman road and you've heard of that before and it just takes that person you're sharing the gospel with through several verses of scripture through the book of Romans you've heard of this before and on that card there's just a short little snippet of an explanation about each one of those now when you look at it if you're used to using the Roman road you may have learned it somewhat differently maybe there are some other scriptures that you place in the road that's fine but this is just possibly a tool that you could use in sharing the gospel so I give that to you and you can take that and use that we're not going to cover it here tonight though before we're finished with this series we'll probably talk about some of that number seven personally and I kind of jumped the gun because I planned to share

Jerry's that incident with Jerry here so I don't need to share that again but mixed with the gospel with the gospel presentation and some of this depending upon who you're talking to and who they are to you and what the forum is and the time you have it's good to interject in your gospel message your own personal testimony your own personal life your own personal walk with Christ and what Christ means to you that's part of a good testimony there is the BC before Christ and there is now and then there is the conversion itself what happened where you were saved and now who you are now and what Christ means to you now and what it means to be a believer now in fact really the best proof of salvation is not that you can remember the birth but that you're alive now and you have testimony to spiritual life right now

[39:14] I've said this many times before I don't remember when I was born physically do you you were there I was there when I was born physically but I don't remember a thing about it not one single thing about it it's probably a good thing it was a traumatic experience I'm sure for me as a little infant being birthed but I don't remember anything does that mean I wasn't born no of course it doesn't mean that well how do you know you say well pastor you don't remember your birth so maybe you weren't born you ever heard anybody say that about a person who can't remember their spiritual birth you say I've even had some saved you can't remember anything about that time when you were saved then you're not saved because you'd never forget it well that's baloney and it's not the best proof anyway even if you can remember all the intimate details about your spiritual birth you know where it was what you were wearing the time of day and who it was that shared the gospel with you and what they said and you know and whether there were clouds in the sky or whether it was a clear day you might remember every minute detail and not be a believer true believer the proof of spiritual life or salvation is life spiritual life do you have it right now and so you share that in your testimony and God forbid that you would try to share the gospel with someone who knows your life and what they observe is anything but spiritual life hmm number eight conversationally and this is probably the hardest one for me that is not evangelizing at someone but evangelizing them in a conversation where you're willing to allow them to ask you questions or to start a conversation a meaningful conversation about particular aspects of the gospel about Jesus who Jesus is the word of God and what the word of God is and you know to have a conversation you know unbelievers do have questions about

Christianity about the Bible about elements of the gospel are you willing to leave a little kind of free space open there for them to ask you a question or for you to even engage them in that way and say does this make sense do you have a question about any of this then be ready be ready for one and hopefully you're ready to answer it and then one more invitationally now the hardcore Calvinists

would say invitation what I mean here well really a couple of things isn't anything wrong and everything right about sharing the gospel and then inviting a person to repent right then to trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and then the second thing really this is the primary thing that I'm talking about here is inviting people to your church inviting them to come to your Sunday school class I'm not saying that in lieu of sharing some elements of the gospel to share the gospel I'm not saying that that's that's really all you got to do just go out there and you've got a friend and that friend is lost and really just what you need to do is you know to muster up enough courage to invite them to come to your church well we should do that but also in our sharing of the gospel we would encourage them invite them and say you come this Sunday I'll be there I'll meet you at the door out here come to my Sunday school class meet some people there that are around your age and we have a great fellowship and we have a teacher who teaches the word of God and so forth come to my Sunday school class come to church so you share the gospel or evangelize in these nine ways I'm sure that if we thought about it long enough we could come up with some others but I think this is a pretty good list honestly clearly urgently joyfully prayerfully conversationally invitationly moment Thank you.