

CHAPTER 13

Before Sharing the Gospel

Introduction:

1. What makes for Effective Evangelism?

“If there were such a thing as a typical convert in Quebec it would be a person who is 30 years old who, seeking meaning in his/her life, had first seen the gospel lived out by a friend or family member of his/her own generation, then *heard it presented six to ten times*. Once these conditions are met, then this person would be apt to make his/her *final decision for Christ in a church meeting or crusade or camp* (48%), again accompanied by his believing friend or family member.”¹⁰⁸⁹

2. The Heartbeat of Evangelism:

There are differing styles of evangelism. There are differing types of evangelism. Christians have differing personalities and spiritual gifts and non-Christians have differing spiritual needs. In fact, the Bible does not zero in on one style of evangelism, but rather encourages many.¹⁰⁹⁰ Yet with all these differences, *the heartbeat of evangelism remains the same*.

Paul’s heartbeat for evangelism is an encouragement. The Apostle Paul sought to reach people in any way he could. He wrote, “I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:22; cf. Col 1:28-29). Paul sought to be all things to all men. Everything he did had the goal of the salvation and growth of every person that he met. The Gospel was the central point of all his relationships. In fact, he saw himself as a fellow-worker with the Gospel (1 Cor 9:23).

However, a question arises from the text: does “that I may by all means save some” imply a multiplicity of means of salvation? or a multiplicity of means of conversion? or a multiplicity of means of proclamation? or a multiplicity of effort in seeking to reach the lost? Let’s look at the translation history of this text:

Translation of ἵνα πάντως τινὰς (“by all means”?) in 1 Corinthians 9:22b for a Multiplicity of Means

1990 Migne Clementine Vulgate	1530 Lefevre; [cf. 1550 Louvain*]	1899 Douay-Rheims*	1534 Olivetan	1605 French Geneva	1973 French Jerusalem Bible*	1995 Contemp English Version*	1560 English Geneva	1611 King James Version [cf. ASV; RSV; NAS; NKJ; CSB; ESV]	1984 New International Version	1992/1999 French Le Semeur
facерem omnibus omnia factus sum ut omnes facерem salvos	Jay este fait toutes chose a tous / affin q’ je les sauvasse tous	I became all things to all men, that I might save all	Jay este fait toutes choses a tous / affin que totalement ie en sauve aucuns	je me suis fait toutes choses à tous, afin qu’absolument j’en sauve quelques-uns.	Je me suis fait tout à tous, afin d’en sauver à tout prix quelques-uns	I do everything I can to win everyone I possibly can.	I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some	I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some	I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some	C’est ainsi que je me fais tout à tous, afin d’en conduire au moins quelques-uns au salut par tous les moyens
“all” is translated to save “all”			“all” is translated or implied to mean “all effort”			“all” is translated to mean “by all means”				
Two implications: theological universalism, all people can be saved; ecclesial, a church for all the people of a territory			Implications: “all” refers to effort expended in evangelism, a “total commitment” to this task; and yet, only a few will be reached			Implications: “all” refers to using all methods; only a few will be reached				

Greek τινὰς is masculine plural indefinite accusative of τις, meaning: someone, something, a certain one, a certain thing, anyone, anything.

¹⁰⁸⁹Wesley Peach, “Evangelism—Distinctively Quebec,” Arnell Motz, ed. *Reclaiming a Nation* (Richmond, B.C.; Church Leadership, 1990), 160. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁹⁰Merrill Tenney, *John, the Gospel of Belief* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948). Tenney points out that Jesus employed a multiplicity of methods in the twenty-one personal interviews he engaged in, as recorded by John (cited in Bill Hull, *Jesus Christ Disciple Maker* [Minneapolis: Free Church, 1984], 23).

The Apostle Paul expanded on this idea in 1 Cor 10:33. “Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” Any of His personal goals, dreams, desires and tastes are subordinated to the greater purpose of the salvation of souls. The use of the inclusive “all” in the above verses is powerful and overwhelming.

It would seem from the context, and from Acts 15:11 (see Chapter 1), that Paul is referring to a total commitment to in reaching the lost, as is emphasized in the French Geneva tradition.

Paul continues expounding on this thrust in his life as he writes in 2 Cor 12:15: “I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls.” Paul brings out the complete abandonment of himself in his ministry. No cost is too great—not even his own life!

One last quote from the Apostle Paul lets us understand his heartbeat:

“And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. And to this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me,” Col 1:28-29

The total commitment of the Apostle Paul is no secret. Why are these a model for the Christian? Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote, “Be imitators of me, even as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 4:16, 11:1)

Paul has communicated his surrender to the Gospel. This surrender is a reminder of the complete surrender of Jesus Christ. “I am the good shepherd and I lay down My life for the sheep.” (John 10:14-15) “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) In the apostle Paul, we find a beautiful example of a Christian becoming conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

3. The Importance of (a) the one means of salvation, and (b) the biblical means of salvation:
 - a. That **there is one means of salvation** (see chart on Acts 15:11 at the beginning of chapter 1) or of receiving grace!

That Wayne Grudem in his theology muddled the waters with a multiplicity of means is disconcerting to say the least! Perhaps the confusing phrase is the “within the fellowship of the church.” Here was what Grudem wrote:

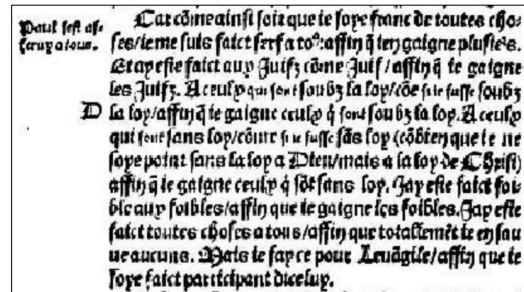
“We may define means of grace as follows: *The means of grace are activities within the fellowship of the church that God uses to give more grace to Christians.*”¹⁰⁹¹

Grudem then listed 11 “means of grace,” numbered in the following order:

- “1. Teaching the Word of God
- “2. Baptism
- “3. The Lord’s Supper
- “4. Prayer for one another
- “5. Worship
- “6. Church discipline
- “7. Giving
- “8. Spiritual gifts
- “9. Fellowship
- “10. Evangelism
- “11. Personal ministry to individuals”¹⁰⁹²

He continued saying that the Roman Catholic Church has seven means of grace (listing them), which differ in meaning with the Protestants:

“Catholics view these as “means of salvation” that make people more fit to receive justification from God. But on a Protestant view, the means of grace are simply a means of additional blessing within the Christian life, and do not add to our fitness to receive justification from God.”¹⁰⁹³



¹⁰⁹¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 950.

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.*, 951.

If this was truly the case, that he is speaking of “additional blessing” following justification, then why does Grudem include “evangelism” as number 10 of his 11 “means of grace”? Is it not through evangelism alone (or by the proclamation of the Word of God alone) that the “grace of salvation” is conferred on the lost? “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17)? They are not “within the fellowship of the church” until they have become disciples (Matt 28:19), then they can be taught everything that God has commanded.¹⁰⁹⁴

It would seem that Grudem is confused on the “Protestant” or Evangelical manner of grace at this point!

Note that the word “manner” is less slippery in English as is “means,” which is written in the plural form, even if it has a singular meaning

For example, see in Chapter 1 the chart explaining the translation of the word τρόπος in Acts 15:11

A similar problem is found with use of the English word “orders” in Acts 1:2.

- b. On the biblical means or method of salvation:
 - 1) The manner in which you received it, 1 Cor 15:1-2
 - 2) The impossibility of other manners of evangelizing, Gal 1:8-9
 - 3) The drifting away from a New Testament manner, Gal 3:1-5

4. Evangelism Diagnostic:

Whatever the style or method: Is it biblical? Are you abandoned to the cause of evangelism? Will you give yourself completely for lost souls? Abandon yourself for the lost souls around you. This is the only worthwhile and lasting call. Give of yourself in any way you can. There is no limit to what can be done for the Lord through a life fully abandoned to His call.

A. The Principle of Availability:

- 1. John 4:35;
- 2. Col 4:6, cf. Eph 4:29;
- 3. 1 Pet 3:15.

Interesting Opposites Related to Availability

Passage	One Side	Other Side	Synopsis	Application
2 Tim 4:2	In [good] season	Out of season	There is no time when the Gospel ought not be ready on our lips	We ought always be available to share the Gospel
Rom 1:14	Greek	Barbarian	There are no cultural boundaries in evangelism	We ought not limit God’s possibility of using us to reach people from any possible tribe or tongue
Rom 1:14	Wise	Foolish	There are no educational boundaries in evangelism	We ought not limit God’s using us to reach all socio-economic levels of people
1 Cor 9:17	Gladly	Grudgingly	Emotions ought not guide our activity in evangelizing	Our changing emotions and desires should not limit our commitment to actively evangelize

B. Spiritual Preparation:

- 1. Reasons for spiritual preparation:
 - a. “Always being ready to make a defense to anyone who asks you,” 1 Pet 3:15
 - b. “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.” Eph 4:29

¹⁰⁹³Ibid., 951-52.

¹⁰⁹⁴“The work of conversion, of repentance from dead works, and faith in Christ, must be taught first and in a frequent and thorough manner. The stewards of God’s household must give to each their portion in their season. We must never go beyond the capacities of our people, nor should we teach Christian maturity to those who have not yet learned the first lesson” (Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (1656; Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1982; based on William Orme’s edition of 1920), 15.

- c. "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned as it were, with salt, so that you may know how to respond to each person." Col 4:6
2. Aspects of spiritual preparation:
 - a. Realize your complete dependency on God, Psa 144:1; Prov 21:31
 - b. Consecrate yourself to God and to His will, Jos. 3:5; 1 Pet 3:15
 - c. Don't compromise the holiness of God in your daily life, Jos. 7
3. Be wise as a serpent:
 - a. Evangelizing is not for fools, but for the wise
 - b. Wise as a serpent is listed first, therefore be on the alert, as you are on your way to share the Gospel
 - 1) Watch out for traps
 - 2) There is no glory in forcing yourself to be arrested to be seen by men
 - c. Know the tricks of your enemy, the serpent of old, the Devil
 - 1) He will send distractions and temptations
4. Be gentle as a dove:
 - a. While you are being wise as a serpent, take the opportunities God gives you to share the Gospel
 - b. We must share the Gospel with patience and tenderness (2 Tim 2:2), and in love and humility (2 Tim 3:10)

C. Pray for an opportunity to share the Gospel:

1. Pray specifically for unsaved people whom God places on your heart, and be alert for opportunities to share with them, 1 Pet 3:15 (cf. Col 4:5-6).
2. Be open to God's answering a prayer that He wants to answer, John 14:13-14, 15:7-8, 1 John 5:13-15
3. Take the opportunity when He brings it your way (Eph 5:15-16; Col 4:6)!

D. Transparency in Testifying:

1. When not to speak, 1 Pet 3:1;
2. When to speak, Acts 4:19-20;
3. Why speak, Luke 12:4-5; Rom 10:14-15;
4. What to say, Eph 4:29 (cf. Col 4:5-6);

E. The Importance of Questions and Discussion:

1. The place of reasoning, Acts 17:17;¹⁰⁹⁵
2. Paul must have reasoned when he "confounded the Jews," Acts 9:22;
3. Stephen's adversaries "were unable to cope with his wisdom," Acts 6:10.

F. Dealing with Diversions:

1. The need for wisdom, Matt 10:16
2. Diversions may be honest openness on the part of the contact, be sensitive;
3. Jesus and the Woman at the Well, John 4;
4. Don't get into an argument, Prov 29:9 (win the battle, but lose the war);
5. Noting body language, e.g. Acts 24:25 (cf. John 16:8);
6. Redirecting the conversation to the Gospel, Rom 1:18-20

G. Be Positive!

1. Prov 15:2 (NKJV), "The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly."
2. Prov 10:32, "The lips of the wise bring forth what is acceptable."
3. Prov 15:4, "A soothing tongue is a tree of life."

H. Remember the Power of God's Word:

1. Eph 6:17
2. Heb 4:12
3. 1 Pet 1:23
4. Isaiah 55:11

Conclusion: Do not underestimate the power of God's Word. Use the Bible in your witness.

¹⁰⁹⁵Note the Engel Scale.

I. Go in the Joy of the Lord:

Often struggles and discouragements precede the sharing of the Gospel. This is because a spiritual battle is being waged. Usually rejoicing accompanies and almost always precedes the sharing of the Gospel. Isaiah 52:7-10 speaks of this joy.

Several chapters later, Isaiah 55:12 tells of the rejoicing that accompanies the preaching of the Gospel:

For you will go out with joy, And be led forth with peace;
The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you,
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

Many Psalms echo the same truth (Psa 9:1, 26:7, 40:16, 70:4, 75:1, 79:13, 105:1, 107:22)

Joy in the Lord is an essential part of a powerful witness. Rejoice in the Lord (Phil 4:4) and be prepared for a joyous time of sharing.

J. Act as an Ambassador for Jesus Christ:

Introduction:

- a. Be aware of how you come across, I Samuel 16:7
- b. Be aware of cultural norms:
 - 1) “Respect what is right in the sight of all men,” Rom 12:17
 - 2) Ministry with the others in mind, 1 Cor 9:19-23, 10:32-33 (“give no offense,” “seek to please all men in all things ... so that they may be saved”).
1. Personal Hygiene (cf. 1 Cor 9:19):
 - a. Bad breath
 - b. Body odor
2. Dress:

It is good to dress appropriately to the people whom you are trying to reach. John the Baptist might be an example of one who dressed in a contrast to the society around him (Mark 1:6). However, his society had a prophetic office associated with his dress, and his ministry was effective (Mark 1:5). However, our societies often define role by dress. Some thought in this area might be good.
3. Actions:

Your actions, the look in your eye, and where you look when you are talking with people are among the things that people see immediately when they meet someone else. Be considerate, look people in the eyes, and ask God for a genuine love for those you are going to—the same love that God had for man when He sent Jesus as a sacrifice for sins.

K. Go for It!

Introduction: Just do it!

1. “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might,” Eph 6:10
2. “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong,” 1 Cor 16:13
3. “No man will *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go,”
Joshua 1:5-9

Conclusion:

Spurgeon wrote:

“Timidity often prevents our being useful in this direction, but we must not give way to it, It must not be tolerated that Christ be unknown through our silence and sinners unwarned through our negligence. We must school and train ourselves to deal personally with the unconverted. We must not excuse ourselves, but force ourselves to the irksome task until it becomes easy.”¹⁰⁹⁶

¹⁰⁹⁶Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1995), 219.

Chapter 13 Appendixes

Thoughts on Requiring Relationship as a Preparation for the Gospel

Introduction:

The topic of the order of salvation is fresh on the minds of theologians and church historians. Questions were asked in various scholastic periods in the history of the churches: What is the proper order of salvation? What is included in the order of salvation? Is it the physical sacrament? Is it faith alone? Does regeneration precede repentance? Etc.

There is also a parallel discussion. This discussion is not necessarily by theologians and historians, but rather by practitioners. The discussion centers around what human efforts validate the Gospel prior to its being presented. In many cases, these human efforts are unconsciously added to the order of salvation as preparatory graces to the Gospel, much like the preaching of John the Baptist was a divine preparation for Jesus. These human efforts include relationship, apologetics, service, lifestyle, etc. Evangelism without these prior human efforts is sometimes mocked. In this appendix the topic of necessitating a prior relationship is addressed. The reader is encouraged to soak in the words of the Bible, as well as to ponder the response and rejection of Jesus' hometown people, who saw the perfect Son of God grow up in their midst.

- A. There are many examples of very significant conversations between strangers in the Bible, for example:
1. Abraham's servant asks a for the hand of a stranger to marry Isaac after prayer, Gen 24:10-27.
 2. Elijah speaks to widow from Zarephath, because God said, "I have prepared a widow there to provide for you," 1 Kings 17:9-14
 3. Two disciples were sent to get the colt for the triumphal entry from the city of Bethphage, and to answer anyone who asked them what they were doing, Luke 19:29-34
 4. Peter and John are told to enter the city [of Jerusalem] and follow a man carrying a pitcher of water and to speak to the owner of the house he enters, Luke 22:8-13
- Preliminary conclusion: It seems like God enjoys working in, with, and through conversations with strangers!
- B. There are numerous examples in the Bible of the Gospel being discussed one-on-one between total strangers (with the understanding that no one was a stranger to Jesus):
1. Jesus and Nicodemus, John 3:1-21
 2. Jesus and the Woman at the Well, John 4:7-26
 3. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8:26-40
 4. Paul and Lydia, Acts 16:14
 5. Paul and Silas and the Philippian Jailer, Acts 16:28-32
 6. Paul speaking to "those who happened to be present" at the market place in Athens, Acts 17:17
- Furthermore: Many of the healings in the Book of Acts were also of complete strangers, e.g. lame man from Lystra, Acts 14:8-10; girl with a spirit of divination, Acts 16:16-18
- C. There are also numerous examples of spiritual truth being proclaimed by a stranger to a group of people:
1. Jonah and the people of Nineveh, Jonah. 3
 2. John the Baptist's preaching
 3. Much of Jesus' public ministry:
 - a. Note those with whom Jesus had a long relationship did not believe:
 - 1) Jesus' hometown:
Matt 13:57, "Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief"
Mark 6:6, "And He marveled because of their unbelief"
 - 2) Jesus' brothers, John 7:5, "For even His brothers did not believe in Him":
 - a) Note their cynical comments to Him, vv 3-4
 - b) Note also the sharp response of Jesus (vv 6-8), which may have ultimately led to their salvation!

- b. Note that those who had known Jesus the longest sought to kill Him after He preached to them:
 - 1) Other than his home town who tried to kill Jesus, Luke 4:28-20
 - 2) Compare with John 10:31-33
 - c. Note the often repeated comment of Jesus:
 - Matt 13:57, "So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house'"
 - Mark 6:4, "But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house'"
 - Luke 4:24, "Then He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country'"
 - John 4:44, "For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country"
 - d. Consider that, against human common-sense, Jesus was passionate to move to the next town, Mark 1:36-39; Luke 4:42-44
4. Paul's sermons on his missionary journeys as recorded in the Acts are almost exclusively preached to complete strangers.
E.g. "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it," Acts 13:15
- D. The most lasting and deep friendship is based not on longevity, but in the bond of the Holy Spirit.
- E. Conclusion: Lukasse writes of the need for proclamation when building a friendship, "When we put it [proclamation] off too long, it may be difficult to broach the subject at all."¹⁰⁹⁷

¹⁰⁹⁷Lukasse, *Churches with Roots: Planting Churches in Post-Christian Europe* (Bromley: STL, 1990), 73-74.

INTRODUCING A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Personal Evangelism Composite Chart
[a chronological graphic guide to the next section of notes]

