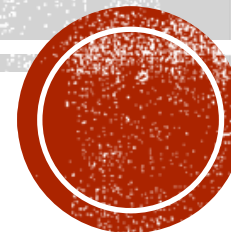


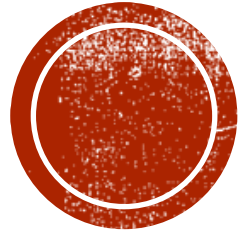
TESTIMONIES: LET'S HAVE MORE

First Presbyterian Church of Ipswich MA

Adult Sunday School Fall 2022

Led by Charles Wagner





INTRODUCTION

Class, Instructor Introduction

PURPOSE OF CLASS

- To strategize as a group how more believers can prepare and share their testimonies with a world that is starving for hope.



NOT-SO-HIDDEN AGENDA

- That two or more individuals from this class express their desire to prepare and share their testimony for the first time.



COURSE AGENDA

| Class | Date |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Know what you believe about testimonies | July 31, 2022 |
| 2. Yes, you have a testimony to share | September 11, 2022 |
| 3. Does the Bible tell us to share our testimonies? | September 18, 2022 |
| 4. Testimonies for evangelism: part 1 | September 25, 2022 |
| 5. Testimonies for evangelism: part 2 | October 2, 2022 |
| 6. Testimonies for discipleship | October 9, 2022 (Dave Burbridge) |
| 7. Testimony tips and insights | October 16, 2022 |
| 8. The structure of a useful testimony | October 23, 2022 |
| 9. A vision for a new testimony-friendly Christian culture | November 13, 2022 |



WEEK 4 OF 9: SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

TESTIMONIES FOR EVANGELISM – PART 1

| Item | Time |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Class, Introduction, Prayer | 5 minutes |
| What is Evangelism? | 4 minutes |
| The Four Requirements for Evangelism | 10 minutes |
| Preparing Our Hearts for Evangelism | 10 minutes |
| Methods of Evangelism - Part A | 10 minutes |
| Closing | 4 minutes |

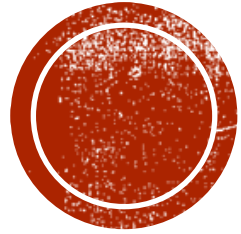


WEEK 5 OF 9: OCTOBER 2, 2022

TESTIMONIES FOR EVANGELISM – PART 2

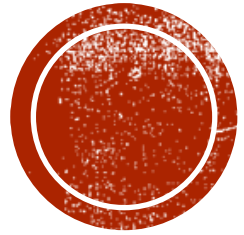
| Item | Time |
|---|-------------|
| Class, Introduction, Prayer | 5 minutes |
| Recap – Part 1 | 4 minutes |
| Methods of Evangelism – Part B | 10 minutes |
| Testimonies and Rejection of the Gospel | 10 minutes |
| Two Different Tones | 5 minutes |
| An Evangelistic Testimony | 10 minutes |
| Closing | 4 minutes |





PRAYER





WHAT IS EVANGELISM?



WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

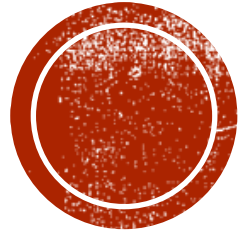
It is the sharing of the “good” news that there is hope for sinners who have received the “bad” news that they are destined to receive the eternal wrath of Almighty God for their sin.



EVANGELISM IS PERSONAL

Evangelism is not a process, a system, a church program, a ministry, or a methodology. It is the sharing by one person to another the good news that there is forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. It is a conversation.





THE FOUR REQUIREMENTS OF EVANGELISM

THE FOUR REQUIREMENTS OF EVANGELISM

| The Person Sharing | The Person Receiving |
|---|--|
| <p>Love. There must be love for the person who is destined to hell because they have not received Christ as their savior.</p> | <p>Humility. The person has been humbled by the circumstances of life. Their heart has been softened, ready to hear a message from God.</p> |
| <p>Courage. There must be courage to speak the truth in love even if the sharing person will receive persecution for doing so.</p> | <p>Trust. The person must trust that the person sharing the good news is genuine, authentic, and reliable.</p> |



WHY DOES EVANGELISM OFTEN FAIL?

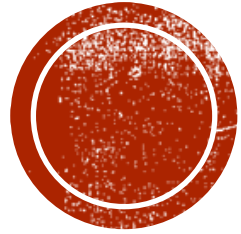
| The Person Sharing | The Person Receiving |
|---|--|
| <p>Love. Believers do not love the lost. Their heart is not broken that another person is destined to eternal suffering.</p> | <p>Humility. The person remains committed to their rebellion from God.</p> |
| <p>Courage. Believers are frightened of rejection and persecution for having shared the gospel with others.</p> | <p>Trust. The person does not believe the person sharing the good news is a person of good character.</p> |



THE SOLUTION FOR ALL 4 FAILINGS

| The Person Sharing | The Person Receiving |
|--|--|
| <p>Love. The believer can ask the Holy Spirit to give them a loving and broken heart for the lost. The believer can practice loving others.</p> | <p>Humility. The believer can pray that the Holy Spirit will humble the unbeliever, making them receptive to the gospel.</p> |
| <p>Courage. The believer can ask the Holy Spirit to give them courage to share the good news with others. The believer can step out in courage and share the good news with others.</p> | <p>Trust. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the believer can become more trustworthy. A person of good character who obeys the Word of God and bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit. A person who is a faithful friend to the lost.</p> |





PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR EVANGELISM



HOW TO LOVE THE LOST

1. **Love God.** It is *impossible* to love the lost if we don't first love God. When we love God, we love whom He loves, and He loves the lost.
2. **Be Thankful.** Are we truly thankful for the salvation that we have received? Do we understand what we were rescued from? Do we remember that we were lost but that Jesus Christ rescued us? Have we thought about what our eternal destiny would have been if someone hadn't shared the gospel with us?
3. **Surrender.** Have we surrendered our lives to the building of the Kingdom of God? Are we faithful and obedient to the Great Commission? If so, sharing the good news with the lost is the work we are called to do.



HOW TO LOVE THE LOST

4. Have Compassion for the Lost. It is expected of us!

*“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. **In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.** So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’” Luke 16:19-24. (NIV) **Why didn’t they share the gospel with me?***



HOW TO LOVE THE LOST

4. **Have Compassion for the Lost.** *It is expected of us!* (Continued)

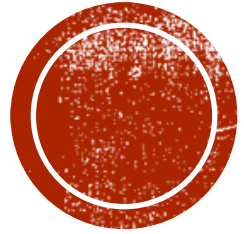
*When I say to a wicked person, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for their sin, and **I will hold you accountable for their blood.** But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself. Ezekiel 3:18-19 (NIV) **What answer will we have for Jesus when He asks if we shared the gospel with the lost?***



PRAY FOR THE LOST

- 1. Pray that God will soften their hearts.** Are their hearts hardened against God and the gospel of Jesus Christ? Pray that God will soften their hearts and open their eyes and ears to the gospel. This usually occurs when the individual realizes he is not in control of his life like he thought he was. Adversity. Hardship. Suffering. Are you willing to pray for God to humble your neighbor's heart? Will you be there to walk them through their difficult times, showing them the love of Jesus Christ?
- 2. Pray that God will plant seeds in their life.** A believer says something to them in March that makes them think about the gospel. Another believer does something kind to them in June. A third believer shares the gospel with them in October.
- 3. Pray that God will use you to share the gospel with them.** Pray for your own opportunities to minister to them in a powerful way by the leading of the Holy Spirit.





METHODS OF EVANGELISM



METHODS OF EVANGELISM

1. Inviting The Public. Churches across America invite their neighbors to come to special conferences, concerts, performances, services, etc.,. Let's be honest – relatively few non-believers will dare to walk into a strange church without knowing anyone. Most non-believers who come to a Christmas Eve service have been invited by believers they already have a relationship with. **Share testimonies during services.**

2. Approaching Strangers.

- **Traditional Methodology:** This includes distributing tracks, going door-to-door, street preaching, street performances, and street interviews. Most believers will avoid these methods like they would avoid the bubonic plague. I believe God calls and equips specific people for these methods. (Check out Ray Comfort and Living Waters Ministries). **Make a testimony the centerpiece of presentation.**



METHODS OF EVANGELISM

2. Approaching Strangers (Continued)

- **Acts of Compassion:** This includes volunteering to serve people in need. It also includes being the “first responder” when someone is in need. If you see someone fall on the side of the road, it is you who stops your car and goes to check on them. (pedestrian in Gloucester and truck driver in Connecticut). **“Why were you so kind to me?” “Because Jesus was so kind to me. Let me tell you my story.”**
- **How Can I Pray for You:** You will be surprised how this simple question, asked of a waitress, a cashier, or someone walking on the same path in the woods, can open doors for the gospel.

Waitress in CT. “My son is suicidal.” **“I was suicidal. Jesus rescued me.”**

Waitress in Gloucester. “My husband just filed for divorce.” **“My wife filed for divorce. Jesus helped me through it.”**



METHODS OF EVANGELISM

3. Via Relationships

a) How you know them?

- i. **People you already know.** Friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, customers, suppliers, etc.,.
- ii. **Meet people in community.** Join clubs, talk to local retailers, join the gym, join business associations, take classes, participate in 4th of July parades, etc.,.

b) Build trust.

- i. **In the beginning**, when you first meet someone, they don't trust you. You might be an axe murderer for all they know. You may be a liar, a manipulator, a cheat, a thief, or an abuser. **Is now the time to share your testimony? No.**



METHODS OF EVANGELISM

b) Build trust (continued)

ii. Establish friendship. Your goal is to turn the acquaintance into a friend. Your goal is to build their trust. How do you do that?

a. Spend time with them. This enables you to have conversations about any number of topics. Your goal is to learn two things about them:

i. Circumstances of Life. What has made the person who they are today? What has happened in their lives that has shaped them?

ii. Attitudes and Beliefs. What is their heart like? How do they think? What are their core emotions?

b. Make their well-being your priority.



METHODS OF EVANGELISM

b) Build trust (continued)

ii. Establish friendship. (continued)

- b. Make their well-being your priority.** If they need encouragement, you give to them. If they need inspiration, you inspire them. If they need comfort, you comfort them. If they need a helping hand, you roll up your sleeves and help them. If they need to vent, you listen to them. If they need something they don't have, you do what you can to get it for them. **They learn you genuinely care about them.**
- c. Model the heart they wish they had.** As they watch you deal with hard times in your own life, they see that you are loving, kind, generous, gentle, thoughtful, thankful, peaceful, joyful, patient, persevering, faithful, and self-controlled. **They learn that the Christian walk is not a fairy tale. It is real and obtainable.**



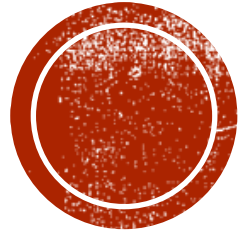
METHODS OF EVANGELISM

b) Build trust (continued)

ii. Establish friendship. (continued)

c. Why are you the way you are? **Because Jesus loved me and rescued me from my sin. Can I tell you my story?**





TESTIMONIES AND REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL

TESTIMONIES CAN OVERCOME REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL

1. **Their hearts are hardened.** They have no interest in having a relationship with God. They prefer to be their own gods, running their lives as they see fit. They are proud and have no intention of humbling themselves before an Almighty God. Life is good and they are enjoying wealth, power, fame, influence, and pleasure.

Relevant testimony: my heart was hardened against God at one time.

2. **They believe false doctrine.**

- a) **They are good enough to deserve heaven.** It's not like they are Adolf Hitler or someone like him. They do good deeds. They are good citizens. They are good neighbors. They give to the poor, and they go to church. They believe God is the great "grandpop" in heaven who is only nice to people.

Relevant testimony: I've learned I'm not the good person I thought I was.



TESTIMONIES CAN OVERCOME REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL

b) **They want to earn salvation.** They want to pay back their debt to God. Their salvation is in their hands and will be merited according to their actions.

Relevant testimony: I was exhausted trying to earn my salvation. It was futile for me.

3. **Wounded by Christianity.** Someone hurt them in the past who claimed to be a “Christian.” Therefore, they believe Christians are people who hurt others. “I don’t want anything to do with them.”

Relevant testimony: I was wounded by Christians too.

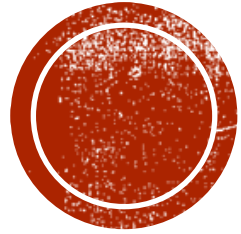


TESTIMONIES CAN OVERCOME REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL

4. **God doesn't love me.** I don't believe it. I am unlovable. The things I've done are unforgivable.

Relevant testimony: I too didn't think God loved me.





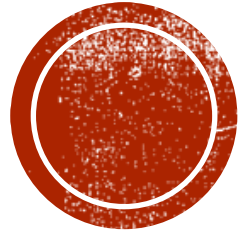
TWO DIFFERENT TONES



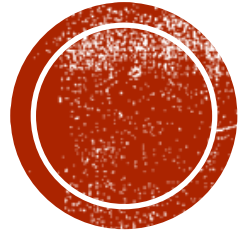
TWO DIFFERENT TONES

| Judgement | Testimony |
|---|---|
| <p>“You sinner!” “You are going to hell!” “God’s wrath is upon you!” “You better accept Jesus NOW or else.”</p> | <p>“I was a sinner.” “I deserved to go to hell.” “God’s wrath was upon me.” “However, I accepted Jesus and now my sins are forgiven.” “God’s mercy and grace has enveloped me.” “I now know peace and joy in my relationship with God.” “If I can experience it, so can you!”</p> |
| <p>Moral superiority, judgementalism, proud, harsh.</p> | <p>Empathy, shared experience, humility, gentle.</p> |
| <p>Incites rejection, rebuke, resentment.</p> | <p>Incites listening, favor, consideration.</p> |





AN EVANGELISTIC TESTIMONY



CLOSING PRAYER