

# EVANGELISM:

*how the whole church speaks of Jesus*

## *Week 11—Actually Evangelizing! (Pt. 1)*

We've made it! This is the class we've been waiting for. As we begin to talk about evangelizing, it's important for us envision ourselves acting as *ambassadors* for Christ:

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:20-21)

In this passage, we are reminded of the source of our power, our message, and our authority: Christ. We are not building our own kingdom, church attendance, or finances. We are not employing our own methods of manipulation or attractional entertainment. Our task of evangelism is bestowed on us as representatives of Christ. We act on his behalf, under his authority, for his purposes.

### *Talking like an ambassador.*

"We must get the message right. After all, ambassadors don't have the freedom to change the message; their job is to deliver it accurately. Likewise, we must not add to or subtract from Christ's message." (101)

*Question—What is the message we must deliver? What ways might we add or subtract from it?*

An ambassador does not exist for his own agenda. He serves at the behest of his governing authority. We serve at the pleasure of Jesus Christ. "We must deliver the message regardless of the discomfort produced, effort required, and shame endured." (101)

Ambassadors are sent to foreign nations. We, too, have been commissioned as ambassadors to foreign nations: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). What would happen to an ambassador who refused to go to the nations his king sends him? What if he refused to relay the king's message? What if he altered the king's message?

*A Class drawn from Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus by Mac Stiles (9Marks Building Healthy Churches Series), pp. 99-107*

## *Thinking through conversations.*

Here are some helpful tips as we think about sharing the message of the gospel with others (105):

- Give yourself grace when you share your faith. You may say the wrong words, feel awkward, or miss an opening, but even your mistakes can help you become a better ambassador.
- Meet people where they are.
- Look for open doors. In a culture of evangelism, church members might get ideas from one another about new ways to meet non-Christians and create opportunities to share.
- Be compassionate—remember you are a sinner no better than anyone else except for the grace of God.
- Remember that we have the answers to life's biggest questions.
- Focus on people's separation from God, not on being moral.
- Plan out what you will say.
- It's good (not required) to ask permission to pray or share the gospel with someone.
- **ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS! BE A GOOD LISTENER!**
- If you anticipate a certain issue, read about it beforehand so that you will be able to understand the person's perspective.

## *Ambassadors must be bold and clear.*

"It's my sense that boldness is the most needed element for evangelism for American Christians. This is a place where we can learn well from our brothers and sisters who live where there is no religious liberty...I have found that those who come from a background where many hate the cross tend to love it all the more." (106) Consider Paul's prayer requests—from prison—in Eph. 6:19-20 and Col. 4:3-4.

Farshid was arrested for sharing the gospel—his charge: "treason against the Islamic State of Iran." His sentence: 6 years in prison. "When he is able to slip a letter out of jail, Farshid asks his friends to pray that he would be bold and clear with the gospel" (107).