

Biblical Reasons for Witnessing

Lesson 2

Romans 10:13-15 “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

1. God desires it. His very name declares His love for a desire to save sinners (Psalms 106:21; Isaiah 43:3; 45:15, 21; Luke 1:47; Titus 1:3; Ezekial 18:23, 32; 33:11; Hosea 13:4; 1 Timothy 2:3-4).
2. It shows God's love. Jesus did not come that God might love men but because He loved them (1 John 4:8-19; 3:16; Galatians 4:3-5; John 3:16-17; Romans 5:8).
3. It glorifies God (1 Corinthians 10:31).
4. Sinners are bound for hell (Psalms 9:17; Revelation 20:14-15; John 3:36). Can we neglect to offer them salvation?
5. It encourages Christians (1 Thessalonians 2:19).
6. It strengthens the church (Acts 2:47).
7. It manifests love for God (John 14:15; Acts 1:8).
8. It manifests love for man (2 Corinthians 2:14-17).
9. The lost require it (Romans 10:13-17).
10. The Lord commands it (Mark 5:19; 16:15; Luke 14:23).
11. It is our position (2 Corinthians 5:20; Luke 24:46-47).
12. It is our responsibility (Romans 1:14; Ezekial 33:8).
13. The field is ready (John 4:35; Matthew 9:37-38).
14. It is the will of the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11).
15. It shows our heart is right (Romans 1:16).
16. Those in hell desire it (Luke 16:27).
17. Those in heaven desire it (Luke 15:10).
18. Joy awaits those who do it (Psalms 126:5-6).
19. It shows wisdom (Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3).
20. Conscience demands it (1 Corinthians 15:34).
21. Time is passing (Romans 13:12).

The Benefits of Public Evangelism

We have in the scriptures the Holy Spirit's call to be good soldiers and to war a good warfare. But the Lord Jesus Christ has called upon all those who are saved to be His witnesses (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8). This witnessing is seen in the history given us by God in the book of Acts to be the verbal presentation of the truth of the gospel by those who have trusted Christ as Saviour to those who have not trusted Christ as Saviour.

There are three Biblically-sanctioned methods of witnessing:

1. Proclaiming the good news face to face, one person to another, in the ordinary circumstances of daily life.
2. The attempts to create face-to-face opportunities to speak the good news, one person to another, from going to house to house (Acts 20:20).
3. The broadcasting of the truth to all who can hear, whether or not they desire to do so, in public places (Acts 20:20).

Thank the good Lord many a good Christian and sound church congregations engage in the first two forms. We are ever so grateful that the Lord has moved such men and women of faith to do so!

But it is the third Biblical method of witnessing that is not only the least practiced by professing Christians but is almost universally scorned by church leaders, and thus, is ignored by or unknown to many church members.

If we were to read our bibles carefully, believing it contains the very words of God, we would be compelled to conclude the third method of witnessing is not only sanctioned by scripture but that it is undeniably the means most often employed by God's witnesses in every age. Since this is true, we can only conclude that almost all churches have embraced a view of public preaching/witnessing that is contrary to the teaching of the bible.

Biblical examples of public preaching/ministry

The following list expounds from God's word the truth of the prevalence of public preaching/ministry:

1. Public preaching began in the garden eastward in Eden, when the Word preached outdoors to man and a woman who did not want to hear it. In fact, they hid themselves to avoid the Preacher (Genesis 3:8). When man fell, the Lord did not build a building and invite the fallen to come inside and hear the truth. He found them where they were and proclaimed it to them in an outdoor setting.
2. Enoch preached publicly to ungodly people, and his message was 80% negative (Genesis 5; Jude 14-15). He did not invite people to come to his home or some designated building where only those who were interested would hear.
3. Noah preached in public for decades. His audience was described as only evil continually, and their lack of response did not deter him (Genesis 6:8; 2 Peter 2:5). He did not invite them into the ark to hear the truth; he preached the truth to them and welcomed those who believed to join him in the ark.
4. Moses preached in the courtyards of Egypt to a people who worshipped false gods and goddesses (Exodus 4-12). He did not wait for the Egyptians to come to his home and ask why he was smiling. He did not wait for God to move on the hearts of his captors. He boldly proclaimed the truth to those who had shown no interest in being enlightened.
5. For forty years, as the nation of Israel travelled to the land of Canaan, their worship services, sacrifices, and preaching were all done in public places for all to observe (Leviticus – Deuteronomy).
6. The children of Israel marched around the city of Jericho so that the unbelieving heathen within could behold their faith in the word of the Lord. Then they stood outside the city and shouted to the people, standing upon its walls (Joshua 6).

Enoch, Noah, Moses, and the Israelites at Jericho could of all told the Lord that such actions might be offensive to the lost; misunderstood by the public, criticized as not being the best way etc... Instead, they were obedient to their God and acted in accord with His instructions, not with the desires of His foes.

7. Joshua preached to a disobedient nation, which claimed to believe in God while clinging to its' idols, and he did so in a public setting (Joshua 24).
8. Gideon preached in publicly (Judges 6-7).
9. Samuel preached outside to a rebel crowd, and the result was the conversion of Saul.
10. David preached in public and led outdoor worship services (2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 13).
11. Solomon preached outdoors when there was a house of worship just a few yards away (2 Chronicles 6).
12. Elijah preached in public, telling the crowds that their ministers were corrupt, and their religion was false (1 Kings 18).
13. Elisha did the same (2 Kings 4).
14. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jehu, Aariah, Jehosophat, Zechariah, Ezra, Ezekial, Jonah, Habakkuk, et al. spoke the word of God to people who did not wish to hear it and who had not come to a designated location intending to hear the preaching of God's truth. Every prophet in the Old Testament preached the word of the Lord in public places to people, most of whom did not want to hear it (2 Chronicles – Malachi).
15. As we move to the New Testament, the honest reader will observe that we have no record of John the Baptist every preaching in a synagogue or house of worship. He is always seen preaching outdoors to people whose deeds call for repentance.

16. Jesus Christ preached the vast majority of His sermons outdoors. His audience was often hostile. If what He proclaimed was all lovey, softy fluff, why did the multitudes hate Him to the extent they demanded His crucifixion?
17. All the apostles and disciples of Jesus preached in public places, as far as the bible record states the facts of the matter. This was their pattern in Israel, Greece, Rome, throughout Asia, Europe, etc...

To say that public preaching is somehow not a Biblical or Christian practice is to display massive ignorance of the plain scriptural truth of the matter. If you now admit that you were not aware of these facts but see them to be true, that is the proper scriptural response. If you admit it is the biblical means of proclaiming truth to unbelievers from start to finish but that you just do not like it, that would be consistent with scriptural facts.

Atheists, idolaters, pagans, Satanists, adulterers, drunkards, murderers, child molesters, et al. do not like public preaching. Sinners have never enjoyed having a light shined upon their darkness (John 3:19-21), but that does not make the practice non-Christian. This is evident to the thoughtful individual.

18. A converted Jew (John 9), a converted Gentile (John 4), a converted devil worshipper (Mark 5), and a converted religious leader (Acts 9) all preached in public.
19. Peter, Stephen, James, John, Paul, Silas, Barnabus, Thomas – i.e. every apostle and disciple of Jesus mentioned in the church history book of Acts – preached the word outdoors to people who were going about their business. The record of how such men suffered for their preaching makes it obvious they were not holding outdoor bible classes for persons who agreed with them.

Contrary to the false reports circulated by the unlearned and bigoted in our day, to keep Christianity in the church and fail to make it known in the public forum is to take the non-scriptural position.

What follows is a partial list of Bible references where those faithful to God proclaimed the word of God in public places to others, regardless of whether or not the hearers desired or believed the truths being set forth. This list is in addition to the material set forth above.

Luke 2	Mark 5	Matthew 9
Luke 17	Mark 16	Matthew 13
Luke 19	Matthew 3	Matthew 15
Mark 4	Matthew 4-7	Matthew 24-25
Acts 2	2 Chronicles 18	Jeremiah 2-3
Acts 3	2 Chronicles 28-29	Jeremiah 5-11
Acts 5	Ezra 3	Jeremiah 19
Acts 7-9	Nehemiah 9	Jeremiah 22-26
Acts 13-14	Job 3-41	Jeremiah 38
Acts 16-19	Psalm 57	Jeremiah 50
Acts 21-22	Psalm 95	Ezekial 4-7
Acts 27-28	Psalm 96	Ezekial 21
1 Kings 8	Psalm 116	Ezekial 25
1 Kings 13	Proverbs 1	Ezekial 27
2 Chronicles 1-8	Proverbs 8	Ezekial 29
2 Chronicles 13	Isaiah 58	Ezekial 35-39
2 Chronicles 15	Isaiah 62	Jonah 3-4

Questions for the sceptical

If you even glanced at the above list of places where God's people preached in public (please look them up and read them), you must admit that public ministry is extremely common in scripture. Should you still hold some objection to street preaching or other forms of public evangelism, there are 2 questions you will need to answer on the basis of scripture (our foundation and authority):

1. Apart from Acts 20:20, can you cite any other verse stating that the way to evangelise to go from house to house? (please understand we are for house to house evangelism!).
2. Can you cite a single passage where street preaching or other forms of public evangelism are forbidden or spoken against in scripture?