

The Three Words of Evangelism

Acts 2:46-47

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

A recent study by the George Barna Group reports the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in America is rupturing and dying. Mainline Denominational Churches are losing more than 88% of their young people between the ages of 16 and 30. “The Southern Baptist Council on Family Life” said, “88% of children raised in evangelical homes leave church at the age of [about] 18, never to return.” **Also, it is well known that our churches win hardly any young people from the world.** Dr. James Dobson said, “80% of church growth results from transfers of memberships” Jen Hatmaker, an evangelical author, said, “Not only can we not draw new people (to church), we can’t keep the ones we have. Approximately half of all American churches did not add one new person through conversion growth last year...94% of churches either were not growing or were losing (people) in the communities they serve...The trend is clearly downward, and at this pace, (the ‘survival’ of Christianity is at stake).”

These figures give a dismal, depressing picture of the mainline denominational churches in America. We are losing our own members, and gaining hardly anyone from the lost world. Even the so called “newer upstart churches” are adding to their membership by transfers from established churches! We are seeing very few *converts* from the lost world.

Now compare our churches to the early church in the Book of Acts. I will read our text again, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all

the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

What an amazing contrast! They were filled with *joy!* They praised God continually, and verse 47 says, “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Studying through the Book of Acts, I have found there are several Greek words in the New Testament that show us a picture of the life of the churches in the first century. Therefore, I have titled today’s message “The Three Words of Evangelism.”

First, there is the Greek word “kurios.” This word means “**Lord**” in English. It is the word that the Apostle Peter used when he spoke of Jesus in Acts 10:36, “The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ - He is Lord of all.”

Ladies and gentlemen, the Early Believers did not have “self-help” sermons! They had one dominant message - *and that was the Lordship of Jesus Christ as the answer to man’s problems!* They simply believed that Jesus was the *promised Messiah.* They believed that through Him *the ancient promises had been fulfilled.* They proclaimed *man’s peace came through Christ and Christ alone!* They simply believed *that it was through Christ* that “we live and move and have our being,” They preached *Christ* was “the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.” They *believed* and *preached Christ* was “the King of kings and the Lord of lords.” They *believed* and *preached* that on the Cross - *Christ redeemed humanity from the bondages, sin, sickness and Satan,* “and by His stripes we are healed.” They *believed* and *preached* a *glorious resurrection of the dead in Christ and we will spend eternity in Heaven with Him.*

Child of God, we have some awesome ministries here at Mountain Grove, but there is nothing, absolutely nothing more important than exalting the Lord of Glory. He is my Lord, my Savior, my Redeemer, and I love Him more than any other thing on the face of

this earth! No wonder Paul could proclaim in Philippians 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Second, there is the Greek word “agape.” Jesus used this word in John 13:34-35 when He said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12, “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.”

Since the inception of the church of Jesus Christ, one of the litmus tests for genuine faith has been that of a community of believers loving one another. In other words, **one of the ways in which you can tangibly see whether or not a community of people are Christians has been that Christians love one another.** Now to be fair, there are other tests for whether or not faith is genuine. **What you believe about Jesus Christ, your commitment will prove that.** Also your **obedience to the Scriptures**, the commands of God, has also been a test. But one of the **primary tests since the inception of the church** is whether or not **a group of people or individuals are Christians has been that they love one another.**

And this of course is rooted in a statement that Jesus Christ made to His disciples on the night that He was betrayed. He washes His disciples feet, He says something to them that’s astounding, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” **That, my friend, is an astounding statement. Jesus Christ is creating this new**

humanity, this new community of people who are to be an alternate community from the world around them. And He says, “You’re going to be a city on a hill by being this community of people that everyone sees, and they’re going to see you good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” In other words, “One of the primary ways you’re going to shine brightly in this world, you’re going to be this alternate society that shows people the way things are going to be when I return, is the way that you love one another.” That’s amazing!

Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, “If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing. Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.”

It seems to me, we as Christians, we’re always looking for something to mark us, something to show the world and to show ourselves that we are Christians, something identifiable. Bumper stickers, T Shirts, stickers on our tablets, etc. And here you have Jesus Christ looking at His disciples and saying, “What’s going to mark you is the way that you love one another, namely that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you.” That’s astounding to me!!

Third, there is the word “koinonia.” It means “fellowship,” “companionship,” “good company,” and “friendship.” “Fellowship” is the extension of “agape love” to each other in the church. In Philippians 1:5 Paul refers to this “Koinonia” as “for your fellowship in the gospel.”

This kind of “fellowship” is not controlled or dependent on someone’s age, financial status or social standing. This “fellowship” which Paul enjoyed and we enjoy is a fellowship “in the Gospel” and controlled by the Spirit. In chapter 2:1 Paul mentions the “fellowship of the Spirit.”

We have this account of that great Pentecostal in Acts 2:1 that says, “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” Now, don’t let that fool you!! That doesn’t they all thought alike, believed alike, or even acted alike! It simply means they all had the same goal, the same objectives, and that was to exalt and serve the Lord Jesus Christ! That means they were willing to put their petty disagreements aside, for the cause of Christ!!

Do you know what must break the heart of holy God? There are members of this church who can go to work with people they can’t stand to be around! And yet they can work beside them, listen to their jokes, eat in the same area together, but they don’t want to come to Church with them! My friend, you are a two-faced hypocrite! And people like you are destroying the fellowship of believers!

Paul wrote to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

Please hear me well today - When the Holy Spirit is in control of the body, the “fellowship” among members of the body is unequalled on earth, for then there is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control.” (Galatians 5:22-23) This is the “fruit of the Spirit” that makes so wonderful the “fellowship of the Spirit.” This is not a forced, regimented “fellowship,” but a divinely controlled “fellowship.” It is a “fellowship” controlled by the Spirit of the living God!

Ladies and gentlemen, what is happening to the “Church” of the Living God in American can be blamed on many things, but the blunt of the blame falls on the “Church” itself! It is no wonder Romans 8:29 reminds us, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn

among many brethren.” Child of God, until we get our “act” together, the “church” will continue to suffer!!

If you have never been saved, why not today?

Please stand for prayer.

Father,

Your Word is true. Give me the courage to take a long look at my own life, and the determination to make some badly needed changes that the world might see Christ in me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.