

Ev221 Sharing Your Spiritual Journey

Lesson Ev221-11 Salvation: Ongoing Change through Discipleship

This is the last of six lessons on salvation. It explains that coming to Christ is more than a one-time encounter. Rather, it is an ongoing relationship with Jesus. Evangelism includes making disciples and making disciples includes teaching evangelism. Disciples make new disciples.

When a person discovers something extremely good and powerful in their life, they want to share it with their closest loved ones. When you came to Christ, what was your first thought? Surely you felt joy from being set free from your sin. No doubt you also sensed that you were forgiven and loved by your Savior. Did you feel a strong impulse to quickly tell others about this overwhelming love, so that they might experience it too?

In John's gospel, Chapter 1, the Bible tells the story of Andrew. He was a disciple of John the Baptist. One day when John the Baptist saw Jesus passing by, he said to Andrew and another of his followers, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus and spent that day with him.

The next day, the first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon Peter and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus (John 1:35-42).

In this example, Andrew recognizes the authority of Jesus as Lord of his life. He begins to follow Jesus, and then quickly goes to find others to bring them to Jesus. He wants them to follow him too. This is a pattern that we see throughout the New Testament.

Often people are very opposed to the gospel, like Saul in the previous lesson. But when they encounter Jesus and accept his authority in their life, they are completely changed and transformed. Out of obedience to his commands, they begin to tell others about him.

This is the fulfilment of God's call on our lives, as seen in another place in the Scriptures: "As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed him" (Mark 1:16-18). Jesus teaches us that evangelism is an important part of our following him. He will send us out to fish for people, to witness, and make disciples.

Jesus' last words to his disciples are known as the Great Commission: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16: 15). Matthew recalls it this way: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:18-19). What is obvious from these passages is that preaching the gospel, what we call evangelism, involves making disciples. The same is true about being a disciple, it involves "preaching the gospel" or evangelism. To say it differently, you can't really have one without the other. It's not either/or, but both/and.

In fact, one of the primary results expected of preaching the gospel is repentance. This word simply means ‘to turn around, to change one’s mind, or to be transformed.’ It is clearly not just a one-time experience, but includes an ongoing relationship of obedience to the Lord. Fish are not cleaned before they are caught. We must help new believers, or ‘fish,’ to learn about what it means to be a follower of Christ. And a major part of being a follower is to bring others into the same journey of obedience to Jesus. This is a lifelong process of change, on a daily and ongoing basis. One writer calls it ‘a long obedience in the same direction.’ Following Jesus involves a lifelong commitment to accept God’s forgiveness and respond in repentance. Faith in Christ changes people’s lives. And they are to teach that to others.

Thus, this last aspect of our salvation involves repentance or ongoing change in our lives. We turn away from the things of the devil and the world, and turn to the things of God. We are changed by God through repentance and asking for forgiveness of our sins. This will result in an intense desire to follow Jesus by being obedient to his commands. According to the Great Commission, this first involves recognizing Christ’s authority. He is Lord of our lives and yes, the whole universe. Second, as part of following Jesus, we should go and make disciples. That means he gives us authority to teach people how to be his followers as we are. This act of making disciples involves baptizing them and teaching them to obey whatsoever he has commanded.

So, obedience to Jesus’ commands is one of the most basic aspects of being a disciple. We know Jesus’ commands by studying the Word of God. Studying includes hearing the Scriptures over and over. We memorize them to hide them in our heart, and we apply them to our lives in practical obedience.

Then, if we are obedient to make disciples through soul winning, those disciples will also make more disciples by obeying Christ’s teachings. Then all of us will experience his promised presence with us even to the very end of the age. In other words, he will be with us forever. This is what Jesus promises when he says if we believe in him we will receive eternal life. This is not just a quantity of life—forever in eternity—but a quality of life. It means his presence is with us, even now in this life.

This is God’s ongoing multiplying process. Evangelism is about making disciples. And, becoming a disciple means teaching others how to repent and become a disciple too.

This story is **important** as it uses the story of Andrew to show us that humans who profess to be Christ-followers must also be Christ-proclaimers. It demonstrates that witnessing and discipleship, or life-long change, are two sides of the same coin of salvation.

The **central truth** of this lesson is that an ongoing change comes from recognizing the authority of Christ as Lord of our lives. It involves studying and being obedient to the Scriptures. It includes also teaching others these central truths, so that they too can become followers of Jesus.

Review Questions

1. What was the first thing Andrew did when he began to follow Jesus? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said, “He went and got his brother and told him that Jesus was the Messiah or the Christ,” you answered correctly.

2. What does the expression ‘fishers of people’ mean? [Pause]

A. If you said that it means they were to go out and tell others about Jesus and make disciples of them, you are correct.

3. How can disciples of Jesus be obedient to him according to his last words to the disciples in Matthew 28? [Pause]

A. If you answered, “By recognizing Jesus as Lord, going and making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey whatever he has commanded,” you are right.

Your **assignment** is to listen to this lesson as many times as you need to be able to tell the story in your own words. Imagine that you have just come to realize that Jesus is the Lord of the universe and he has called you personally to be a fisher of people. What would you say to others around you about who he is, what he did for you, and what he could do for them? Share this “good news” with someone you know, that does not know Jesus or is looking for a closer relationship with him. Reflect on the issues that surfaced in your sharing.

Memorize Jesus’ words in Matthew 28, verses 18 and 19: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”