

Ev221 Sharing Your Spiritual Journey

Lesson Ev221–5 Jesus Teaches about Evangelism

What does the Bible teach us about doing evangelism? What can we expect when we reach out to strangers with the gospel message? What should the content of that message be? Jesus has an answer to each of these questions.

In the Gospels, Jesus frequently commands his disciples to reach others with the message about him. He modeled for them the kind of preaching, teaching, and healing they should do. In Luke, chapter nine, Jesus gave his 12 disciples “power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1-2).

So in obedience, they took no excess baggage and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere. He was sending them to total strangers to tell them about the good news of God’s kingdom. The Twelve were dependent on others for food and shelter.

A similar story is told in the next chapter. Perhaps the Twelve had helped to train dozens more—based on Jesus’ example and their experience. Christ appointed 72 other disciples. He sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:1-4). The Lord tells them they should be praying, for more workers and for protection from those who would harm them. The mission was urgent.

Then he shared his most specific teaching on evangelism. “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house” (Luke 10:5-7). It was a custom among the Jews of that day. They would take in strangers who were traveling through their community and provide for them.

Continuing, he taught, “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’ ... Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Luke 10:8-12, 16).

The 72 disciples returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

Jesus replied, “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10: 17, 19-20).

So, from this story we can gain several guiding ideas from Jesus about our own witnessing efforts. First, we don't go in our own strength, but in the authority and power of Jesus himself. We have this power through the Holy Spirit in our lives. We find Jesus' promise about the Spirit in the Book of Acts. In his last words to the disciples before he ascended, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the gift that the Father had promised: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Second, we see that soul winning involves proclaiming the coming of God's kingdom, which includes signs and wonders, such as healing. The disciples were obedient and they went from village to village, proclaiming the kingdom. Many people were indeed healed.

Thirdly, Jesus implied that all their physical needs would be met by those they were trying to reach. If they were received by a household, they were to remain in that place until they left that town. If the people rejected the message, then they were to wipe the dust off their feet as a testimony against them. This symbolic action was common in ancient times and it signified their separating themselves from all connection with those people. The disciples were not responsible for the guilt the people incurred for rejecting them. More seriously, the people were rejecting God himself. Christ encouraged them to locate a "person of peace" and then stay with that person. This implies that some will receive the message with gladness. Others, however, will reject it and we shouldn't be surprised by their rejection.

Fourth, evangelism was an intentional act of Spirit-empowered proclaiming of the kingdom—regardless of the persecution that might be encountered. Jesus sent them to visit neighborhoods and faithfully witness to complete strangers. There was a sense of urgency involved.

Fifth, they were to go two by two. It is wise not to do evangelism alone. Perhaps this is so we can have other believers with us to pray and to help explain the gospel if necessary.

Lastly, disciples rejoiced in seeing the power of God work through them in overcoming demons and diseases which bound people. Jesus told them not to rejoice in power over evil, but rejoice instead that their names were written in heaven. We must be thankful that Jesus sends us—not because of his power displayed through us—but because of our salvation. Christians must maintain humility and keep their priorities straight.

This story is **important** because Jesus shows us that evangelism involves purpose and intent on the part of the witness. It may result in persecution, but believers must witness anyway. The story of the first disciples also teaches us how we should go and what the content of our message should be. It also teaches what to expect when we go.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that followers of Christ need to be intentional about reaching the lost—even if witnessing involves rejection and persecution.

Let's **review** the main points of the lesson:

1. What did Jesus send the disciples out to do? [Pause 5 seconds.]
A. If you said, “To proclaim the coming of God’s kingdom and to heal the sick,” you are correct.
2. What two possible responses were likely when they went into the villages preaching about Jesus? [Pause]
A. If you answered, “They would either be accepted and should remain with those people, or they would be rejected, and should leave that village,” you are right.
3. Why did Jesus correct the 72 disciples when they returned from their mission? [Pause]
A. If you said, “He wanted them to rejoice that their names were written in heaven rather than rejoicing that spirits submitted to them,” you answered correctly.
4. What is the main truth you should understand from this lesson? [Pause]
A. If you said, “Believers must be consistent and intentional about their evangelism efforts, regardless of the outcome,” then you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to listen to the lesson until you can teach someone else the six principles of evangelism that Jesus taught:

1. We witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, not our own strength.
2. Evangelism involves both proclamation and praying for the sick.
3. Some who hear will accept the message; some will reject it.
4. Christians must be faithful to witness, despite persecution.
5. It is good to evangelize in pairs.
6. Jesus taught that salvation is more to be valued than displays of power.

Memorize the following Scriptures from Luke:

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2).

“Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.” (Luke 10:16).