

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The heart of evangelism

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Today, we begin a concentrated effort to reach lost souls with the Gospel. Proclaiming the good news of salvation in Christ to all men is the work of evangelism. While today begins a special week of evangelism, soul saving is a continuous work and responsibility.

Work that never ends must be empowered with special motivation in order to be sustained continuously. Paul's example in his work of evangelism offers us this powerful motivation.

The *fear of the Lord* motivated Paul to persuade men with the Gospel. This healthy reverence for the Lord centers around the Judgment scene in the last day. “For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether is be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Paul realized that men in all walks of life will one day end up at Jesus' judgment-seat to be judged by the Lord. This sobering thought moved Paul to act: “Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11).

Our neighbors next door, across the street, and down the block are heading for the judgment-seat of Christ. Our classmates and fellow employees are heading for the Judgment. Individually, they will give an account for what they have done in the body. Can we let them come to this sobering day without the knowledge of Jesus? No! I must do what I can do to persuade them with the Gospel. Because I love their souls, I must give them an opportunity to know Jesus as Saviour, before they have to meet him as Judge.

Paul was also motivated in the work of preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ by considering *the love of Christ*. What held Paul firmly to his work through difficult times? “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that one died for all, therefore all died (2 Corinthians 5:14). Jesus expressed His love for all by dieing for all men. This fact should drive us to the same conclusion as Paul: all men must have died in their sins. While people give themselves to pleasure, they are dead spiritually as they live (I Timothy 5:8). While people are walking according to the course of this world, living lives in disobedi-

ence, they are dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1-2).

Can I look at the people around me, knowing Jesus died to make them alive, and let them remain dead in their sins? No! I must give them the opportunity to hear and obey the Gospel so God can make them alive in Christ. This is the object of God's grace: “but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:5-6).

As long as God gives us time and breath, the need of evangelism will continue. May this week and the days ahead see us in the rewarding work of evangelism. There is no greater work than to prepare men for eternity. When we meditate on *the fear of the Lord*, and *the love of Christ*, we will be sufficiently motivated to reach the lost with the Gospel. Now, let us go do some inviting and teaching.