
THE URGENCY OF EVANGELISM:

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:19-20

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"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Introduction

Jesus' command in **Matthew 28:19-20**, known as the Great Commission, is a clear and direct mandate for all believers. Evangelism is not just an optional activity; it is a fundamental duty of every Christian. Neglecting this command can have profound consequences for both the church, Christians and the world. No parent who likes a disobedient child that keep disregarding his or her command.

Jesus' final instruction to His disciples was to go and make disciples of all nations. This

command is universal and timeless, applying to all believers. It encompasses evangelism, baptism, and teaching, reflecting the comprehensive nature of disciple-making.

Over the years, the Church of God has witnessed a decline in membership, which can be attributed to several factors, one of them being neglecting evangelism. The church leadership has devised various ways to encourage believers to engage in evangelism, fulfilling the God-given obligation, but the results have often been limited.

The Consequences of Neglecting Evangelism

Neglecting evangelism will bring about serious consequences for individual Christians, the church and the society. Jonah, a prophet of God, received a divine command from God to go to the

city of Nineveh and preach against its wickedness. However, Jonah decided to flee from his responsibility. He boarded a ship heading to Tarshish, attempting to escape God's presence. In response, God sent a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. The sailors, recognizing that the storm was supernatural, cast lots to find the cause and the lot fell on Jonah.

Realizing that the storm was his fault, Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard to calm the sea. Reluctantly, they did so, and the storm subsided. God then provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, where he spent three days and nights. Inside the fish, Jonah prayed to God, repenting for his disobedience. God commanded the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land.

Jonah's story highlights the importance of obeying God's commands. Christians are reminded that fleeing from God's command to go and evangelize can lead to dire consequences such as;

A. Lost Souls- Romans 10:14-15

"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the

feet of those who preach the good news!"

When we neglect evangelism, we fail to share the gospel with those who have never heard it. This results in countless lost souls who might have believed if only they had been told. The eternal destiny of many hinges on our obedience to evangelize.

B. Disobedience to Christ's Command-John 14:15

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." _

Neglecting evangelism is a direct disobedience to Christ's command. Our love for Jesus is demonstrated through our obedience. Failing to evangelize indicates a lack of commitment to His directives.

C. Missed Opportunities for Spiritual Growth - Philemon 1:6

"And I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ."

Sharing our faith not only benefits those who hear the gospel but also deepens our own understanding and strengthens our relationship with Christ. Neglecting evangelism means missing out on these opportunities for spiritual growth.

D. The Church's Decline - Acts 2:47

"Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

The early church grew rapidly because the apostles and believers were actively evangelizing. Neglecting evangelism leads to stagnation and decline in the church. Without new believers, the church becomes inward-focused and loses its vitality.

3. The Urgency of the Task - 2 Timothy 4:2

"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."

Paul's charge to Timothy emphasizes the urgency and constancy of preaching the word. We must always be ready to share the gospel, understanding that the opportunity to do so may come at any time.

4. The Rewards of Faithful Evangelism

A. Joy in Heaven - Luke 15:7
"Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." Every time we lead someone to Christ, there is great rejoicing in heaven. The joy of participating in God's redemptive work is immeasurable.

B. Eternal Impact - Daniel 12:3

"And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

Those who evangelize and turn many to righteousness will be honored eternally. Our efforts in evangelism have a lasting impact that transcends this life.

E. Strengthened Faith - Matthew 10:32

"So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven."

When we boldly share our faith, we are assured that Christ will acknowledge us before the Father. This strengthens our faith and affirms our commitment to Him.

2. Practical Steps for Effective Evangelism

A. Pray for Opportunities - Colossians 4:3

"At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison."

Begin by praying for God to open doors for evangelism. Prayer prepares our hearts and aligns us with God's will.

B. Equip Yourself with the Word - 1 Peter 3:15

"But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

Equip yourself with the knowledge of Scripture and be ready to share the reason for your hope. Study and understand the gospel message thoroughly.

**C. Live a Witnessing Life-
Matthew 5:16**

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Live a life that reflects Christ's love and righteousness. Your actions can open doors for conversations about faith.

Conclusion

Neglecting evangelism is not a trivial matter. It has serious consequences for the lost, for our obedience to Christ, and for the vitality of the church. Let us renew our commitment to the Great Commission, understanding the urgency and importance of sharing the gospel. By doing so, we fulfill our calling and participate in the joyful work of God's kingdom.

Let us be diligent in fulfilling the Great Commission, trusting that God is with us always, to the end of the age.