

The Responsibilities of the Church: Evangelism, Part 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-150

As you know we have been talking about the anatomy of the church and we've been dealing with the muscles of the church, that is, what the church actually does. We started out talking about the skeleton the sort of non-negotiable doctrinal foundation. We talked then about the internal organs, which are the spiritual attitudes that carry and convey the life of the church. And now we're talking about the muscles of the church and that's what the church does in its function. We've talked about a number of things. There is, however, a very important one that we haven't directly addressed that I want to address this morning and again tonight and that is the function of evangelism, the function of evangelism. And then we'll wrap it all up at least as far as I can tell now next week with a discussion of prayer.

I want to draw your attention to Matthew Chapter 28 as a point of discussing this and when I went through the book of Matthew, of course, and came to this great commission passage, it was there that I defined for all of us kind of the centrality of evangelism. I want to go back to some of the things I said there and say some other things as well, but in Matthew 28:16, it says, "but the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated. And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

This is the great evangelistic commission that was given to the disciples and through them, of course, to all of us. This signals the primary function of the church in the world. All other functions are directed at accomplishing this one. I'm amazed how many people, how many people perhaps even here may not understand clearly the mission of the church. In fact, for many there's not even the least consideration of what the mission of the church might be. They just sort of show up and are carried along by whatever is happening in the program, whatever is convenient, whatever choose they choose to respond to, they respond to, and they take from the church whatever they want to take whenever they want it or whenever they think they need it without any thought of the mission of the church, which is, of course, their mission much less a whole hearted dedication to it.

People have all kinds of ideas about churches and about what makes churches and why churches should exist. If we were to survey people in churches and ask them, "What is the main purpose of the church, or why does the church exist?" sadly we might get wrong answers. People start churches for

all kinds of reasons that miss the biblical point.

Many would suggest, for example, that the purpose of the church is fellowship. It's a place to make friends, to provide activity for the family, to enjoy friendships, to enjoy spiritual activities together, recreation, cultivate relationships, to work together in families, and raising children, etc. And sort of hang out together until death or the rapture. And one step higher than those who think the mission of the church is to collect around some common fellowship would be those who think that the church is really focused in terms of its purpose on teaching and that the main reason that the church exists is to teach theology or practical Christianity living, or some model of spiritual life and spiritual building, some particular doctrinal emphasis, to train people for certain responsibilities, to teach them how to instruct children, or build their family or develop young people into godly young people or the objective of making people mature in the Lord.

And that's a nobler definition of the church than just a place to hang out until we die. A step higher than that however, a step higher than seeing the church as sort of a school or sort of a training place would be those who see the church's mission as praise and worship and the priority of worship and the priority of praise dominates their thinking. Obviously this is the central activity of heaven, it will be the central activity of heaven when we get there, and it will be our central activity when we arrive so they conclude it must then be the central activity of the church. When you get a glimpse of heaven, as we've noted in this series in Revelation 4 and 5, praise is going on.

Now those things are essential in the life of the church and we have marked those out in our discussion basically of the anatomy of the church. We emphasized the importance of fellowship, the mutual ministry to one another, we emphasized the centrality of teaching and preaching, because we know the church must have a doctrinal foundation, we have discussed at great length the role of praise and worship in the life of the church and how central it is to the church's life, all of those are elements of the church, but none of them is the mission of the church. None of them defines why we're on earth. It ought to be rather simple to understand that everyone of those things is perfectly accomplished in heaven.

If the purpose of the church, if it's single purpose was fellowship then it would be better for us to go to heaven and enjoy perfect fellowship. Why would the Lord leave us here, if fellowship was the goal, to have to deal with all the difficulties? Secondly, if the matter was learning truth and being given theology and understanding the word of God it would also be better to go to heaven because we will know as we are known, knowledge will be perfect, there won't be any classes or seminars or instruction because everyone will know everything that God as designed for us to know. And on the other hand if the church's purpose is worship we ought to go to heaven as well because that's where worship and praise goes on incessantly and perfectly.

But, there's one thing, as we've said, that cannot be accomplished in heaven and that is the ministry of evangelism. That is the one great mission of the church on earth and that is why we are here. In Russia the first message I gave to them focused on this, that they can never lose sight of the fact that no matter what's going on in their churches, no matter what they're trying to do to instruct and to train and to build up their people and to lead them to fellowship and worship, they must never lose sight of the mission of the church, which is to bring the lost to Christ. That's the only compelling reason to leave us here and the Lord will allow our fellowship to be imperfect and interrupted by our sin and our bickering, the Lord will allow our teaching to be imperfect limited by our frail minds and all of the hassles about viewpoints, the Lord will allow our praise to be limited and intruded upon by our own self will and preoccupation and wandering minds so that we can do the main thing, which is the ministry of evangelism.

Now the church has one motive and I want to talk about this, this morning. The church has one motive that drives it. Behind this mission, look at Ephesians Chapter 1 for just a moment. The one driving motive behind the church is indicated to us a number of times in this first chapter of Ephesians. It is in verse 6 where it says from verse 5 that, "He predestined us to adoption as sons." In other words he saved us why? Verse 6, "To the praise of the glory of his grace." God put out grace, placed it upon sinners, and saved them so that he would be praised when they saw the glory revealed in his gracious salvation. In other words, we were saved by God's grace so that he could put his glory on display.

Verse 12, again, "To the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory." And then verse 14, the end of the verse, again it says, "to the praise of His glory." Chapter 3 of Ephesians follows in verse 21, "To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." In a word the church's motive is to glorify God. The church's motive is to glorify God. That's what we do. That drives us. That is the internal and compelling motivation.

In Romans 11:36, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." The point is that we are called to glorify God. Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink we do it all to the glory of God. Now what is that mission, what is that enterprise that most fulfills that motive? That is the question. What is it that most glorifies God? And the answer is it is that display of grace when he saves a sinner.

If you look at redemptive history this begins to unfold. Man fell in sin, condemned the whole human race to death and hell. In spite of that God continually has taken the initiative to call man back and dispense to them grace that saves them from their sins and death and hell. From the time he sought Adam in the Garden when he said, "Adam, where are you," to the last invitation of Revelation where he says the spirit of the bride say come take the water of life, God has been from Genesis to Revelation seeking sinners. When God incarnate came into the world he said, "The Son of Man has

come to seek and save that which was lost."

And as we remember from II Corinthians 5:19 he is committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, he has given us the word of reconciliation, he has identified us as ambassadors through whom He reconciles the world to himself. God then is a seeking God. He sent his Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but for the sins of all humanity and that is the enterprise, which gives God greatest glory. "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance," Peter said. Paul writing to Timothy said, "God our Savior who will have all men to be saved." God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. That is the great redemptive enterprise that explains human history.

The person, then, who would glorify God, honor his desire, exalt his purposes, fulfill his objectives would be the person who loves the lost world and gives his life for the sake of bringing others to salvation. That is the great divine enterprise unfolding in human history. And God has made that possible through the work of Jesus Christ. In fact, God has put his glory on display in Christ. In II Corinthians 4:6 it says, "For God who said 'light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." So God's glory is in Christ, manifest in Christ, and then Christ comes to dwell in us and the glory shines out of the darkness by shining in our hearts. God's glory in Christ becomes Christ's glory in us and we then take that glorious gospel to someone else that they might, according to verse 4, "see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God." That is the great redemptive enterprise, the saving of lost sinners. That was what God purposed from before the foundation of the world when he predestined sinners to salvation.

In the gospel of John, which I have been going over all this week and finished up late last night, I was amazed in looking at the gospel from beginning to end repeatedly over three times to be reminded of how often in that gospel Jesus remarks that the Father, from the beginning, had chosen his own and then having chosen them the great plan unfolded to bring them to redemption. God being glorified then is the end result of sinners being saved. And we glorify God when the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ dwelling in us shines through us to others who can see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. We are at the heart of the redemptive process when we are sharing the gospel. You say well what about all the rest? Well all the rest is to strengthen us and to prepare us for this singular enterprise.

Jesus sent his disciples into the world to do just this and nothing, frankly has changed. The plan still is the same. In John 17:6, the great high priestly prayer of Jesus, he says, "I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word.

Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And what you have there in that prayer is Jesus passing the baton of evangelistic ministry or proclamation of the truth to his disciples. He says, "I manifested your name to them, and they have kept your word. The words you gave Me," verse 8, "I gave them." They carry on this great enterprise. Down in verse 14, "I've given them Thy word and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And then he goes on go down to verse 20, praying for the success of the disciples in carrying on the ministry of reconciliation bringing the glory of God to sinners that they may be saved.

In a word we are here for this evangelistic purpose. This is why the church exists. Fellowship, that's important, teaching, praising, all-important, but not the mission of the church. A fellowshiping, mature, praising church manifesting the love of Christ, carrying for each other, experiencing the joy of spiritual growth, and the thrill of praise will have an evangelistic impact.

I can remember years ago when a book was written about our church and they classified our church as a teaching church and it was a, I can understand why an outsider who had not been here would say that. The whole chapter dealing with us in this book said that it's sort of like a seminary class or a college class. There's just a lot of information dispensed and so forth and so on. Unfortunately that missed the whole point. The reason for teaching is to build the saints strong so they can do the word of the ministry. Remember Ephesians 4? You edify the saints to do the work of the ministry and what is it? To build the body of Christ and then to go speak the truth in love. We teach, yes, and we train, yes, and we are very definitive in our doctrine and in our theology, yes, and we're concerned about worship that is exalting and elevating and honors God, yes, but all of that is to equip you, not with some formula, not with some methodology but with a life that gives testimony to the transforming power of the grace of God, as well as knowing how to express that in sharing the gospel.

Fellowship and teaching and praising and discipling and all the things that we've talked about are only preparation for the mission. The mission is evangelism. And that is precisely why we come to this passage. You can turn back to Matthew 28, because when the Lord comes to the very end, you can see after this passage there's while space in your Bible, this is the end. And in fact, the great commission wraps up the synoptic gospels in each case, the case of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and even John in Chapter 21 ends with the disciples, in particularly, Peter being commissioned to go out and teach and preach and feed my sheep and do that against a hostile world that will take his life. But in the synoptics, which is Matthew, Mark and Luke they end with this great commission and this is how the baton is passed to the generations to follow.

Now the heart of this passage is found down in verse 19 with one statement make disciples. Make disciples make disciples. That is the mission of the church. That is God's unfolding purpose. Now as we look at this passage we want to understand what that means and precisely what is involved in that and we'll be able to do that as we work our way through this passage this morning and then again finishing it up tonight.

What is involved in making disciples? Well the Greek verb here is mathethusetat for those of you who would be interested in that. It means to make a learner. Mathethesor disciple is a learner, learner, somebody who submits himself or herself to instruction. And that is what we do. We make disciples. We make those who learn of Jesus. Do you remember what Jesus said? Learn of me. That is what discipleship really is. We go after those who need to learn about Christ. That is the reason we exist.

Now in Acts Chapter 1, you might think that a formidable task and indeed it is. It is a supernatural task and that's why in Acts 1:8 Jesus said this and though Acts is a different book it's telling the same story just continuing the narrative after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the final event in Matthew, you pick up the story in Acts 1 and verse 8, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth." The commission comes in Matthew 28; the empowering comes in the book of Acts. Jesus promises it in Chapter 1, verse 8, and it comes in the coming of the Holy Spirit. In Chapter 2 is the Spirit of God descends, the church is empowered. Immediately they begin to witness, they speak in foreign languages, as you know, to call the attention of the crowd, the crowd comes together, Peter stands up preaches the gospel, 3,000 people are saved and within a matter of a few weeks there must be 20,000 people in the church and the church explodes under the witness of the disciples who are following the great commission in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I have to remind people all the time who say to me, we want to start a church, we really want to start a church. A young man will say to me, you know I'm really interested in starting a church and I always respond by saying, "Well look why do you want to start a church?" "Well, because you know we really we just don't agree with the church down the street, or we've got this different angle on this or that or the other thing and we really feel like we want to do our own church and that is not a reason to start a church, that's a reason not to start a church. There's only one reason to start a church in an area where there are churches and that singular reason is because they are people who are not reached with the gospel. That's the mission of the church. Church does not exist to make people feel comfortable about their personal quirks and beliefs. A church exists in order that it might reach the lost. If there is a collection of believers in a given area doing that join those believers if the doctrine is sound and get on with the enterprise. Any other reason to start a church is not fulfilling a biblical mission. You go where Christ is not named; you win people to Jesus Christ. That is the goal. The purpose is so clearly indicated. We are there to make disciples.

If a young person says to me, someone starting out in ministry, "I want to start a church," what they're really saying by the time I get through with the discussion is I want to go out and evangelize lost people, bring them together under the name of Jesus Christ and establish a congregation where there isn't currently one, or there isn't one faithful to the word of God and the gospel, that's the issue. The goal is to make disciples. It is to win lost people to Jesus Christ. That's the passion of the church.

And sadly, even though we have this great commission, and it couldn't be more clear, and even though we have the empowering of the Holy Spirit who indwells all of us from the moment of salvation, some of us have set this aside. There are all around us so many opportunities to reach the lost world and boy are we living in a city that is lost. Not the only one, there are many. I think of that when I go to Russia wandering down the street and looking into the faces of these millions of lost people who have very little hope of hearing the gospel, carrying some tracts in my pocket and passing them out in the Russian language in the hopes of the seed planted can bear fruit in their lives. We should be grateful for living in a city like this where the fields are so fertile for the gospel because of the massive number of disenfranchised sin-weary people all around us.

But many of us get bogged down, we get bogged down in mundane things and trivial things and hobbies and all that other kind of stuff, useless trivia while people far and near never hear the message. We need resources of money, we need resources of talent, we need people, but there's just so much indifference. We are so into being comfortable. People will spend thousands of dollars to travel half way around the world to shop and have some fun, but not give to reach those who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and never think of sacrificing the things that they enjoy to do that themselves.

Frankly, I don't know of any church that has a greater opportunity than this church to reach people around the world and I'll tell you why. Why? Because we're strong doctrinally, because you're well trained, because you know the truth and you know the gospel and because we have a reputation around the world as a church that is faithful. I am so thrilled when summer comes and we send missionary teams everywhere, and when we send our permanent missionaries around the world and when we send our radio ministry around the world, or books or tapes or whatever because this is God's goodness to us that we should be so privileged to have such a far influence. In fact, when I was in the middle of this pastor's conference I was preaching I don't even remember what the subject I was preaching on was, but I was preaching to these 900 pastors and it was exclusively a congregation of pastors and pastor in training and in the middle of it a man came forward and wanted to repent. He wanted to be saved. Can you imagine getting saved at a pastor's conference? So he came forward and everything stopped and the way they do that over there is the man came forward and they said to him to kneel down in front of the whole group of pastors packed into this place and he repented to them all and went down the list of his sins and we all rejoiced that the very reason why

we were all there being trained was to see the lost saved and in the middle of it all God gave a token of what was to come in the salvation of this repentant sinner. That's why we do what we do.

And as I say we have no greater opportunity as a church than that. You have no greater opportunities as an individual because of what you know to sow the seed. You're not always going to see the results you want, but you can always be faithful to present the gospel. As I told you some weeks ago I started telling people that what I do is tell people that God will forgive all their sins and I ask them if they're interested. And that has opened many conversations. That is the issue. We can be good at fellowship and good at teaching and good at discipling and good at everything else, but if we're not good at this then it's all a failure.

Now let's go back to our passage in Matthew. We only have a few minutes left, but at least I can give you one point and I'll give the rest tonight. It doesn't really matter how much in detail I go. We'll just cover what we can today, but in Matthew 28, let's go back, there are really several points that put you in the position of being effective in evangelism. And the first point that I would draw to your attention is availability, availability. This is the first of five keys to effective disciple making. If you're going to lead people to Christ, which is what a disciple maker does, as we will see, the first thing is availability.

Look at verse 16. It's one of these typical things that in the narrative text of the gospels that you might just pass over because you don't see the spiritual implications of it, but they're really profound. Verse 16, actually, well verse 16 for the moment. But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain, which Jesus had designated. Someone has said the greatest ability is availability and everything starts there and everything here started with these people. They would never have had the great commission, they would never have had the pledge that Jesus gave to them to be with them always, they wouldn't have had that marvelous experience and that great starting point if they hadn't been there. And verse 16 says, "The disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated." Simply saying this they were able to accomplish or begin to accomplish what God had called them to accomplish because they started out in the right place at the right time. A simple simple statement. We have no knowledge about when the instruction about the specific meeting was given. Jesus had told them, "Go to Galilee and I'll meet you there," and so in response to that statement of Jesus that's exactly what they did. He said, "I'll meet you in Galilee." In fact back in Chapter 26 in verse 32 he had said that, "After I've been raised I'll go before you to Galilee." He told them he was going to Galilee there. In Chapter 28, I think it's verse 7, "Go quickly tell his disciples he's risen from the dead. Behold he's going before you into Galilee." And down in verse 10, "Don't be afraid, go and take word to my brother and leave for Galilee and there they shall see me."

We don't have any knowledge when the specific instruction about the actual place and the actual time was given, but he had told them, "I'm going to Galilee and you're going to go to Galilee and we're going to meet." Obviously it had to be after the resurrection. It had to be after the post resurrection appearances of Christ in the area around Jerusalem, which are indicated in Luke 24. It had to be

after the meeting eight days later recorded in John 20:26. It had to be after the meeting with the seven disciples in Galilee recorded in John 21. You remember they had gone back to fishing instead of waiting for Jesus and Jesus confronted them while they were fishing on the shore and since Acts 1:3 says that he only remained on earth after his resurrection 40 days, we can be sure then that it was somewhere after the first eight days, after the travel time to go to Galilee, not travel time for Jesus, he just appeared there, but travel time for the disciples to go there, perhaps a week, time to set up their fishing business and go at it again, so probably this is 25 days plus after the resurrection. And it still allowed time in the 40 days for him to go back to Jerusalem for his final meeting with the disciples at the ascension from the Mount of Olives. He could transport himself around supernaturally, but his followers had to walk everywhere.

Now Matthew indicates that in verse 16 the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee. This, by the way, is a new designation. They've always been called the twelve up to now and now they're called the eleven since the apostasy and suicide of Judas who went to his own place. However, this is an important note to make, as you look at verse 16 you might assume that the only people who are gathered together are the eleven disciples. It says, "the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee the mountain which Jesus had designated." Now are the only ones who were there is the question. I don't think so. In Matthew 28:7, if you go back, he says to the women, "Go quickly, tell his disciples that he's risen from the dead. Behold he's going before you into Galilee. There you will see him." So, we can add the women who were there at the resurrection, we can add them to the group. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary's as you remember.

Now we can also add, and this is an important point, we can also add, and I think this is the historic view that makes the most sense, we can also add the text of I Corinthians 15:6-7, which says, "And after that he appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time," and that's after he was buried, after he was raised, after he appeared to Peter, after he appeared to the twelve, and so it would be after those eight days and then, of course, he went to Galilee. And after that he appeared to 500 brethren at one time most of whom remain until now, and so the writing of I Corinthians, but some of them had died. 500 plus at one time and it is very likely that the 500 were there at this very moment. No reason for summoning only the eleven. Why go to Galilee and summon the eleven? You just were with the eleven in Jerusalem on two successive Sabbaths. You were with seven of them yes with all of them there and then again seven following in Galilee, why summon the eleven, go all the way to Galilee for that? The command that he was going to give, I think, reached all his followers. And everybody was included, the large number, 500 plus.

You remember, of course, even after his death when the disciples gathered in Jerusalem in the _____ there were only 120 of them in the Upper Room. Why, because most of the converts to Christ were in the Galilee area. Most of the people who came to Christ were in Galilee. That's where the largest crowd was and that's where he would be able to speak to the largest group and that's why I believe he said, "I'll meet you in Galilee and he gathered all the believers of Galilee along with the

eleven, brought them together, made the 500 plus and to them gave the great commission. Jerusalem was not the place to have this. Galilee was the place where his ministry started, where the largest number of believers lived, and that's why he went there to meet with them all.

He may well have been on the same mountain where he was transfigured, the Mount of Glory, and may have been the mountain where he gave the Sermon on the Mount, or fed the crowd. We don't know, but it was very familiar area, and Galilee, by the way, is a very small area, certainly familiar to Jesus and perhaps they met at a familiar location.

Now this just identifies for us the initial point of availability. They showed up for the training. And I think that's where it all starts. I think that the fact that you're a part of the church, that you're part of a church that trains and prepares and teaches the word of God meets the first criteria for being effective. You're here, you're under the preaching of the truth, you're listening to the commission so that you understand the plan and you understand the mission. This is our gathering of our 500 plus only it's more like 6,000, but it's our gathering to hear the Lord say to us go. Your faithfulness puts you in the place of availability.

One quick second point and then we'll cover the rest tonight. Verse 17, "And when they saw him they worshipped him, but some were doubtful." Here's the second component in being effective in evangelism. First is availability, being in the right place to receive the right instruction, the right training, and the right opportunity. Secondly, an attitude of worship. When they saw him they worshipped him. Let me tell you something. Nobody is going to give his life away in evangelism who doesn't worship from the heart the Lord Jesus Christ. What does that mean? That he is more important than anyone else, that he is the exalted one that he is the one to be lifted up. It is very much like the disciples' prayer. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.

When the driving passion of your heart is to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ, to fulfill the plan of God, and that is a worshipping attitude then you have the motivation for evangelism. It starts with worship, homage, when Christ is most important you'll gladly sacrifice everything for the purposes of his kingdom. They fully understood that Jesus was God according to John 20. They fully understood that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, that he had come into the world to be the Savior, that he had died and risen again. They understood the gospel from front to back and they knew it was the single greatest enterprise in the universe and it was for the glory of God and because of their love for Christ and because of their adoration of him they engaged themselves with him in a worshipping attitude.

Now one little note there, some were doubtful. Why does he add this? It sort of sucks the goodness out of all of this. It sort of adds a negative component. Well first of all it speaks of the transparent honesties of the biblical writers. They're not caught up in some human effort to convince people of

the resurrection by contrived and sort of selective reporting. It was true some were doubtful so that's exactly what the Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to write. Some were doubtful.

Now what kind of doubt was this? How could they worship with doubt? Well I suppose all of us could do that and perhaps have at times. What kind of doubt was it? There is wicked doubt, wicked doubt, which chooses to reject all evidence and hate the truth. It wasn't that. There is foolish doubt, which is too weak and too worldly to see the truth and lives in a mental fog. It wasn't that. And there is what I call virtuous doubt that just needs more proof. You say well why did these people need more proof? Answer: some of those who were there among the 500 and who no doubt doubted had never seen the risen Christ. The disciples had seen him, the women had seen him, but they had never seen him. And there is reason to believe that they still had lingering doubts even the testimony of the disciples was so hard to believe because resurrection was hard to believe that they had lingering doubts. Those lingering doubts, no doubt, were put to rest upon the arrival of Jesus, because in verse 17 they worshipped him and some were doubtful and verse 18, "then Jesus came up and spoke to them." And I'm sure in a moment all doubt disappeared. So beautiful, so unfadingly beautiful was his appearance and yet so mild, so gentle, so gracious, so entirely brotherly, so almighty, so powerful, the conqueror of death and hell and yet entirely the Lamb of God with the marks of the slaughter on him that when they saw him all doubt must have vaporized by the shining Son of Truth. They worshipped him. And whoever was struggling with that wasn't after Jesus appeared.

Philippians 3:3 says, "We are those who worship God in the Spirit." And beloved one of the reasons that we, in this church, elevate worship is because it is worship that motivates us. What is it that drives someone to preach and teach and witness? It is the love of the Lord. It is the honor of God. It is the glory of Christ. There's no human agenda. People sacrifice everything, sacrifice their lives on the mission fields of the world, sacrifice their pride and their comfort in personal evangelism because there is something greater than that and that is their adoration of the great King and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We worship God in the Spirit, put no confidence in the flesh; we rejoice in Christ Jesus to the degree that we are willing having set our hearts on him and being consumed with his glory to witness to his gospel without hesitation.

If there is to be evangelism in the church first of all people must be available and they must be in the place to hear the commission and be trained and prepared as to what to do and secondly they must have worshipping hearts. And I would say to you and I'll close with this, that if you're struggling in being faithful to witness to people about Christ it is a worship problem, it is not a methodology problem. It isn't that you can't find an entrance; it isn't that you don't know what to say, you're here, you know what to say.

You have made yourself available to the commission and to its truths, it is a worship problem and you are probably worshipping yourself rather than him. If you are, in fact, lost in wonder, love and praise as the songwriter said then evangelism for the glory of Jesus Christ becomes that which most fulfills

you. If you understand that he is most glorified, according to II Corinthians 4:15 when someone believes then you will do that if you seek his glory. The true worshipper is the one who becomes the fulfiller of God's call to make disciples. That takes us right to the commission, which we will discuss tonight and you ought not to miss that.

Father, as we have shared this morning from your word these simple truths, I pray that your Spirit would convict our hearts that we might understand the call to faithfulness in regard to the purpose of the church, which is the proclamation of the saving message of Jesus Christ. Thank you Lord for these people who are available. Thank you for their worshipping hearts and may we not fool ourselves thinking that because we were emotionally involved in the singing of the hymns and responding to the beauty of the music presented to us that somehow that is the beginning and end of worship. May we know that if our hearts truly worship then it is the glory of Christ that consumes us and his glory is most manifest when he is acknowledged as Savior and therefore we are driven to share that glorious message. May we be faithful to that end to fulfill the purpose for which you've left us here. For your glory we pray. Amen.

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