

I. Introduction

- A. Welcome to Neighborhood, and to part three of our series, Equipped to Tell.
 1. Part One: the Heart of Evangelism
 2. Part Two: the Life of Evangelism (Larry Moyer)
 3. Part three: The How of Evangelism (today)
- B. I am very thankful for the people who told me about Jesus. I'm a pretty rough guy with Jesus in my life, and I'd be pretty unbearable without him. I hate to think about it.
- C. Can you imagine the kind of person you would be without Jesus?
- D. Gives me the willies.
- E. So I am thankful for the awesome people who told me about Jesus Christ, crucified and risen again. They are part of an unbroken chain of witnesses that stretches around the world, and back thousands of years, to the saving gospel of the grace of God — testaments to a Savior whose power to save the lost has never flickered.
- F. There is an unbroken chain of witnesses. It hit me today, that the church in which I was saved was planted by a group of students in 1930s from Moody Bible Institute. Their first pastor was a man named Paul Ferris. He had been the youth pastor to a man named A. W. Tozer — a familiar name to many Christians. Tozer was on the south side of Chicago and Paul Ferris was his youth pastor until he started the little church where I would eventually attend.
- G. What just hit me is that A.W. Tozer's very famous pulpit is here, in Redding, given to A.W. Tozer Theological Seminary. And I have stood in that pulpit, and ministered from it... and what hit me was that eighty years ago Paul Ferris stood behind that pulpit too.
- H. Links in a very long chain.
- I. I long to be another link in that chain, and I love to see more people find the treasure I found when I found Christ.
- J. That is my prayer for you, too. That you will add your link to the great chain of witnesses.
- K. That is the reason for this mini-series, called Equipped to Tell.
- L. Here's a principle of life: the better you understand something, the easier you can make it when you explain it.
- M. So I want to help you better understand the moment of faith — that golden moment when the sunshine of the gospel lightens a person's face, and they step across the threshold into the family of God.

II. Evangelism

- A. When a person speaks of Jesus and his gospel in order to help someone else be saved, there is a word for that: evangelism.
- B. My job as a pastor is to equip you for evangelism. It is Priority One.
- C. So, in part one, we talked about the Heart of Evangelism, what it is, and what is the gospel of grace that we communicate.
- D. In Part two, Larry Moyer came last weekend and shared the Lifestyle of Evangelism, to pray properly, live properly, and speak properly — so that your lifestyle makes the gospels you preach look good. (for more, visit EvanTell.org)
 1. Then, on Sunday night, a few hundred of you came back to get some incredible training on how to share your faith... especially about rising above your fears, and then how to talk to your relatives about spiritual things.
- E. Today, in part three, I want to continue with that. I want to talk about the How of Evangelism. Larry gave you a simple script last Sunday Night. I am going to give you another script today. This is our year of evangelism, and I want us all to be equipped.
- F. So let me set this up with Scripture, and get right into it.

III. Scripture

- A. *They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:7-9)*
- B. *And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." (Matthew 21:10, 11) ...*
- C. *But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?" (Matthew 21:15, 16)*

IV. Palm Sunday

- A. This weekend is Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday commemorates particular event in the life of Jesus — the event known as the Triumphal Entry.
- B. So on Palm Sunday, we remember the Triumphal Entry of Jesus, okay? On this day, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. It's a big deal for a lot of reasons. But there's one main one: Jesus is riding into town to be crucified. He is riding into town to be nailed to a cross and killed.
- C. But nobody knows it yet, except for him.
 1. When he comes into town, he rides in humbly, sitting on a donkey.
 2. The crowds cheer for him, and acclaim him as king.
 3. They cut down palm fronds, and lay a carpet before him — where we get the name Palm Sunday.
 4. They start shouting out a quote from the Old Testament Scriptures. They say Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 - a) They are quoting Psalm 118:25:
 - (1) *Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! (Psalm 118:25, 26)*
 - (2) If you say the first four words in Hebrew, it sounds like Hosanna. Lord, please save us right now! Please don't wait!
- D. The Triumphal entry is one of the most ironic, crazy stories in the Bible.

1. He is the king of the universe, yet he is riding on a donkey.
 2. He is Destined for a horrific cross, yet his way is carpeted with palm fronds.
 3. His way of saving is through death and resurrection, yet the people want to make him king.
 4. His message is the gospel of grace, yet the religious leaders — the people who should have known it best, completely miss the point.
- E. The whole thing is a giant exercise in missing the point.
- F. But there are some people who get it: Jesus has friends in low places: the crowds and the children.
- G. Jesus Christ was proclaimed as king. The proclamation was made by children and the common people — not by the politicians, and not by the religious leaders.
- H. It doesn't matter who proclaims Jesus, because the power is not on the voice that speaks of Jesus, but in the truth of the gospel that the voice is speaking.
- I. And this is the first thing I want you to understand about evangelism and you:
1. Even if you feel weak, stupid, messed up, or inadequate, the Power is in the gospel, not in you.
 - a) *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes... (Romans 1:16)*
 - b) If God uses a truck driver instead of a preacher, so be it. If he uses humble homemaker instead of Billy Graham, that's great. If he uses a third-grader instead of a seasoned veteran of the faith, it makes no difference.
 - c) You might feel guilty, dirty, biblically illiterate, or afraid. It makes no difference.
 - (1) The power of evangelism is not in the one who speaks; the power is in the gospel that is spoken.
 - (a) That's the first thing... here's the second.
 2. Even if Christ is rejected, God's purpose has still been achieved.
 - a) Wherever Jesus is proclaimed — Christ crucified and risen again, that part of his story — people will react.
 - (1) Some react with faith.
 - (2) Some react with indifference. "I don't care," they say, and go on their merry way.
 - (3) Some react with searching and questions.
 - (4) Some react with violence... like the religious leaders who hated Christ.
 - (5) Some react with anger.
 - (a) *For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life... (2 Corinthians 2:15, 16)*
 - b) Some people will like your "scent" and some will hate it. So what! The outcome is not your job. It's God's job. Just because you share your faith and the person isn't willing to be saved, that is NOT a failure.
 - c) Jesus came riding into town, and the common people and kids proclaimed him. The reactions were all over the map: faith, indifference, questions, violence, and anger.
 - d) If you have spoken one sentence in the most messed up attempt to witness to Christ, and even if people laughed you out of the room, that's a victory of cosmic proportion! You have achieved God's purpose.
 - (1) Because it is God who does the saving, not you.
 - (2) And it is the other person's choice, not yours.
 - e) If people refuse salvation, God's glory is increased by the fact that they could have believed, but didn't.
 - f) Whether or not the person you witness to gets saved or not, you have been faithful, and your reward in heaven is great.
 - g) Plus, Larry told us last week that studies are showing something about how people get saved today: a person today needs to hear the gospel 15 times before they get saved. So you might be number 7 or 10 or 14... let God do his work in his own timing.
 - (1) I remember, one Easter Sunday, I preached the gospel, and invited people to be saved, and to look up at me. And there were a couple thousand people in front of me, and I couldn't see a single person that was saved... it was the worst feeling ever.
 - (2) But I had to tell myself...
 - (a) The power is in the gospel, not in me.
 - (b) The results are also in God's hands, not mine.
 - (c) And maybe I was the guy who nudged them past number 13 or 14 to prep them for you... exposure to the gospel number 15.
 - (3) So how exactly do we speak this gospel?

V. The Gospel

- A. A quick review.
 1. The GOSPEL is the good news of everything Jesus did to bring us back to God.
 - a) There are two sides to this coin.
 2. The CORE of the gospel is that Jesus died for our sins and rose again. We talked about this in part one.
 3. The RESPONSE to the gospel is faith alone in Christ alone.
- B. Your job in presenting the gospel is to spend as much time on the CORE of the gospel as it takes to help them get to one simple place: the place where they admit they need God, want God, and can't get to him on their own.
- C. Then the Response. That's what I want to show you now. To keep it simple, you've heard me a million times follow an ABC pattern... When you came in, you got this ABC card. It's the same card we give people who pray to receive Jesus.
- D. I'd like you to put it in your Bible or pocket and carry it with you. That way you can always be ready to share your faith when it's time to lead a person to Christ.

VI. ABCs of the Gospel

- A. ADMIT: I'm a helpless sinner in need of Christ. Everyone sins.
 1. None of us can come to God until we admit our need of a Savior.
 2. The author of the book of Hebrews paints a powerful picture of the gospel:
 - a) We have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. (Hebrews 6:18)
 3. In order to flee for refuge, you must first recognize that you have a need, you are needy, you need some sort of help and protection, you need refuge from a storm. And that is exactly the case in our relationship with the Lord. Every human is needy before God.
 4. And this is exactly what NOBODY on that original Palm Sunday realized. To them, Jesus was a political Savior, and political King, to lead an uprising and throw off the invaders of Rome.
 5. So many are like that today. They make Jesus into just a moral example, or just an amazing teacher, or some kind of guru — and so they miss the point altogether.
 - a) You've got to feel thirsty before you'll drink the living waters.
 - b) You've got to feel hungry before you'll partake of the bread of life.
 - c) You've got to feel sick before you'll visit the Great Physician.
 - d) You've got to feel endangered before you'll flee for refuge to the Hope set before you.
 6. God wants to bring us to a point of giving up, so that we flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us... which is Jesus, crucified and risen again.
 7. The good news is that all your masks can come off before God.
 8. You don't have to play holy with him. Come just as you are.
 9. A stands for ADMIT.
- B. BELIEVE: that what Jesus did on the Cross he did for me.
 1. What does it mean to believe?
 - a) It means to trust.
 - b) Faith means trust.
 - c) Faith means trusting a crucified and risen Savior as your only hope to reconcile you to God, now and forever.
 - (1) Faith is the opposite of works.
 - (2) Faith is an unwork.
 - (3) When you work, you accomplish something. In salvation, Jesus accomplished something — the forgiveness of your sins — and you put your faith in him. In his work.
 - (4) It's like trusting in a chair... you rest and the chair works. In salvation you rest, because Christ has worked.
 - (5) His work was complete. His work was perfect. His work was finished. Once for all forever done. You don't add to it. You don't help.
 - (a) The people shouted Hosanna, but they simply didn't believe.
 - d) Faith means exclusive trust.
 - (1) Salvation is not faith-plus, it's faith alone.
 - (2) It excludes all other objects of faith. Just Jesus.
 - (a) Do good works save a person? No. Just faith alone in Christ alone.
 - (b) Do religious rituals save a person? No. Just faith alone in Christ alone.
 - (c) Does obedience save a person? No. Just faith alone in Christ alone.
 - (d) Does moral improvement, personal success, anything else save a person? No. Just faith alone in Christ alone.
 - (e) Do you give God, pay God, perform for God in any way at all? No. Just faith alone in Christ alone.
 - (3) It's an exclusive faith.
 - e) To believe in Jesus requires unbelieving in everything else.
 2. When I was a youth pastor, I had a Bible study near the biggest high school in Illinois — every week, kids crowded in. All I did was open the Bible and speak.
 3. Dozens of kids got saved. One of them was captain of the football team. His name was Ed, and he went on to go to Moody Bible Institute and to serve as a missionary.
 4. On Ed's very first week at Bible study, he told me that I said something that pinned him to his seat.
 5. I quoted John 3:16:
 - a) *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)*
 6. But when I quoted it, I filled in the word "believes in him" with different words:
 - a) Whoever is baptized? Whoever is a good person? Whoever goes to church? Whoever is religious enough?
 7. And on and on.
 8. Until I finally brought it home. Whoever believes in him.
 9. None of the things. Whoever believes in him. Anyone with a brain can believe. Ed said that he felt pinned to his seat by those words.
 - a) [[Later, his story was featured in a magazine called Moody Monthly. <http://www.campuschristians.info/reading-library/free-from-the-devil-and-self-testimony/>]]
 10. Grace.
 - a) All throughout the gospel is this concept called grace. Grace is the wonderful truth that God does all the work to save us. God himself bears the burden for you to be forgiven, justified, and given eternal life.

- b) No explanation of the gospel is correct that leaves the burden on your shoulders. The burden is God's. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot improve ourselves to a point at which God will accept us. We cannot reach up to God, or climb up to him, or by some ritual or work deserve his love.
- C. CHOOSE: Right now you can choose to rely upon Jesus Christ as your only hope for salvation.
 - 1. A and B happen in a person's mind.
 - 2. C happens in a person's will, their volition.
 - a) In that Triumphal Entry, the people were carpeting the way of Jesus with palm fronds, but not one of them was choosing to trust Jesus as their Savior from the biggest problem of all.
 - 3. Choosing is an act of the will.
 - a) A person can choose, no matter how they feel.
 - b) A person can choose, no matter how many doubts they have.
 - c) A person can choose, no matter how weak.
 - d) A person can choose, no matter how ready or not ready.
 - e) A person can choose, no matter sinful.
 - (1) *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17, KJV)*
 - 4. They have admitted their need.
 - 5. They have confessed that they believe in Jesus.
 - 6. All that's left is to make it official. Make the choice. State the choice. Believe the gospel.
 - 7. Ask this question:
 - a) Are you willing right now to choose Jesus as your Savior and only hope?
 - 8. If they say yes, then tie the knot, make it official, lead them to Christ.
 - a) One very simple way of doing that is a prayer. And even that is optional! But it helps a person really cement the decision in their minds.

VII. Prayer

- A. Admit: God I admit I'm a sinner. I've disobeyed you. I admit that I can never solve my sin problem on my own. I need you.
- B. Believe: God, I believe that Jesus died on the cross for me and rose again. I believe he died for my sins and rose again. My sins are paid in full by Jesus Christ. God, I believe that no amount of religion, good works, or living clean could ever pay for my sins — just Jesus. I don't get how it all works, but right now, I'm believing in Jesus.
- C. CHOOSE: God, right now I choose to trust in Jesus as my only hope. I choose him as my Savior. I receive him. And I'm asking you as best as I can, right now, please save me, please forgive me, and please make me your child forever. Thank you, God, in Jesus' name, Amen.

VIII. What next?

- A. What comes next?
- B. In that moment, a person becomes a child of God, and everything changes. Heaven throws a party. A mansion is begun. And that person gains a new life, with a new identity, and new powers they never had before.
- C. The next thing is spiritual growth, and the first part of that is really simple: help them learn their riches in Christ. Help them learn their new labels and their new privileges as a child in of the joyful, radiant, blessed family of God.
 - 1. God saves you.
 - 2. God blesses you.
 - 3. God grows you.
 - 4. God uses you.
- D. Can you imagine thousands of ambassadors for Jesus, ready and equipped to share the gospel, all spread out throughout our town? In every business. In every subdivision. In every store and classroom and government office!
- E. PRAY for direction and opportunity. Let's see what God does.
- F. This is how to heal our city. This is how to heal our land.
- G. It is my prayer that God would use you in amazing ways to help your friends and family find and follow God.