

“Why Evangelism?”

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Matthew 28:19 makes discipleship imperative to the Christian mission. Discipleship of the nations presupposes that the nations are non-disciples. Evangelism and discipleship are the two sides of one coin. They are inseparably linked. No ministry is completely biblical that focuses on one in the absence of the other.

Evangelism calls people to believe the person and work of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15). Evangelism has an inherent goal of seeing sinners converted by a life changing encounter with the living Christ. Yet why is evangelism intrinsic to the Christian mission? There are two fundamental reasons as to why evangelism is inherent to the Christian faith.

First, for the proclaiming of His name among all nations. This is the general intent of evangelism. God wants and will have His name proclaimed among all the nations of the world. This is the consistent theme of the entire bible. The Psalmist notes this idea throughout.

Ps. 67:2 *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*

Ps. 72:11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: *all nations shall serve him.*

Ps. 72:17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: *all nations shall call him blessed.*

Ps. 82:8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for *thou shalt inherit all nations.*

Ps. 86:9 *All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.*

Such an idea is present in the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12.

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

The eternal purpose of God for the nations has always projected past His people. God's redemptive purpose is not singular. Even those who continue in their rebellion against Him are a part of His redemptive activity. For them His redemptive activity is a confirmation of their adamant rejection of His abundant grace. God is not guilty or responsible for their just condemnation. They are guilty and will face the full wrath of rejected grace. The inclusive nature of God's glory is noted in passages like Revelation 4 and 5.

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⁹ "And they *sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ¹⁰ "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." ¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." ¹³ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." ¹⁴ And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped" (Rev. 5:9-14).

God's name will have reached to the furthest recesses of His creation. No stone will have been left unturned. Every crevice and crack will have heard the glory of His name. This fundamental thought runs contrary to the idea that missions exists primarily for the conversion of the lost. Although this is a part of the mission, missions and evangelism can exist in the absence of conversions. The primary motive for missions is in the proclamation of His name among all nations. Yet there is a second reason as to why evangelism is an indispensable part of the mission.

Second, for the securing of His people from among all nations. This is the specific intent of evangelism. God wants and will have His people secured from among all nations. God has clearly given the outcome of His eternal purpose. Revelation 4 and 5 tell us that He will have gathered worshippers from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. This end is certain. The means to that end is a global proclamation of His name among all nations. We are a part of this eternal purpose. This is what drives us as a fellowship. Everything we do is for the fulfillment of this purpose.

God's eternal purpose for the redemption of His people will not fail. Every time we proclaim the name of Christ among the unbelieving we can be assured that His Word will not return to Him void (Isa. 55:11). His Word will always bear fruit. Belief and rejection although different responses are both the fruit of the preached Word. Some seed falls on hard soil and some on good soil; both are results of the Word being broadcasted (Mark 4:1-20). Our responsibility is to "preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). His responsibility is for the outcome of the Word preached. We are to move forward in prayerful dependency on the God who bends the will of people to conform to His eternal purpose. We are to prayerfully spread the Word of God. The means God has chosen to accomplish His end is through the instrumentation of His people. May this move us never to stop taking the Word of God outward toward the immediate context of our neighbors and the remotest regions of the world. May we never stop "Until every remotest part becomes a Jerusalem" (Acts 1:8).