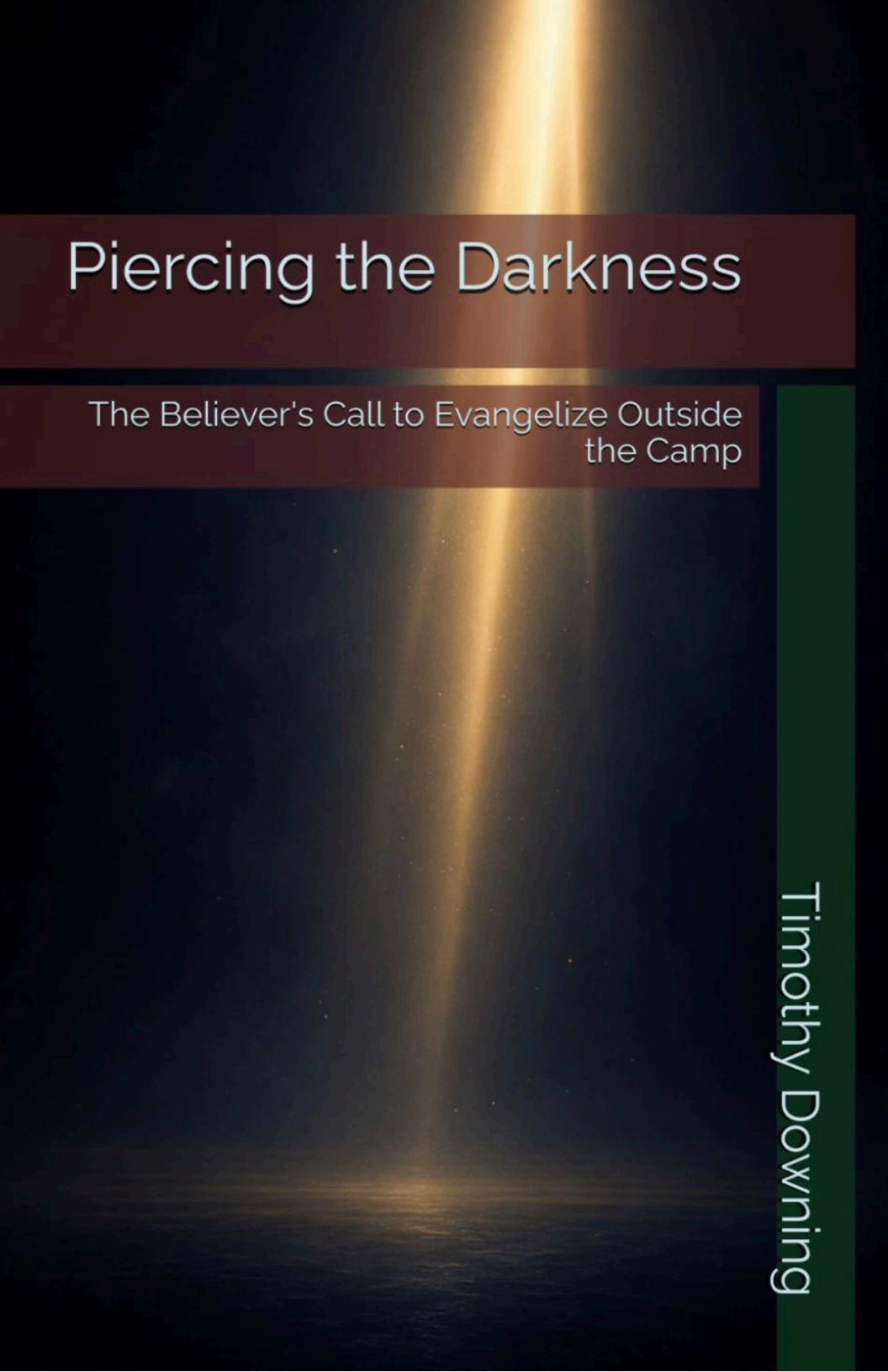

Piercing the Darkness
The Believer's Call to Evangelize Outside the Camp
Timothy Downing

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What was freely received, freely give.
— Matthew 10:8

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To Brother Luis, thank you for asking me to write this book.

A Note on Scripture Use

All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted. Every passage cited in this book has been selected with care to avoid unnecessary repetition. Where a verse appears more than once, it is because the text itself demands it at that point in the argument. The goal throughout is to let the Word of God do its own heavy lifting.

Recovering What We Have Lost 6
Sent into the World 8
The Church is Holy Community 12
The World is the Field of Evangelism 17
The Universal Call to All Believers 22
Salt of the Earth 28
Light of the World 32
Keys of the Kingdom 36
Going Forth: The Kingdom Advances Outward 40
The Message We Proclaim 46
The Manner of Witness 51
Obstacles and Encouragements 57
Go: The Final Charge 63
Scripture Index of Key Passages 68
A Brief Index of Historical Christian Quotes on Evangelism 72
About the Author 77

Preface

Recovering What We Have Lost

There is a pattern in the New Testament that is impossible to miss once you begin looking for it. Jesus did not stay in the synagogue. The apostles did not confine their message to the upper room. Philip did not wait for the Ethiopian to find his way to a Sunday morning service. Everywhere you turn in the Gospels and in Acts, the gospel moves *outward*—into streets and markets, onto riverbanks and hilltops, across borders of culture and class and religious tradition. The movement is always the same: *go, tell, proclaim, witness*.

Somewhere along the way, many of us have quietly reversed that pattern. We have constructed our churches as comfortable receiving stations, designed our gatherings to be attractive to the unchurched, and then wondered why the world around us grows darker while we grow more comfortable. We have confused the assembly with the arena. We have taken the tools meant for the field and stored them safely in the barn.

This book exists for one purpose: to recover the New Testament pattern of evangelism as the *normal duty of every believer*, exercised not inside the gathered church but *outside it*—in the neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and streets where lost people actually live.

This is not a book about programs. It is not a manual of techniques or a collection of clever conversation starters. It is a call to obedience—warm, urgent, and grounded in the clear commands of

Jesus and the demonstrated practice of the early church. You will find here an honest examination of the biblical mandate, a tour through Jesus' own pictures of witness, a clear statement of the gospel message we carry, and practical encouragement for the road ahead.

The darkness is real. The light of Christ is greater. And you—yes, *you*, ordinary believer—have been given both the message and the commission to go and pierce that darkness.

Let us begin.

Sent into the World

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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."
— Matthew 28:18–20

There is a moment at the close of each of the four Gospels and at the opening of Acts that deserves your full attention. It is the moment when the risen Christ addresses His disciples—men and women who have seen Him crucified and have now seen Him alive—and instead of telling them to settle in and wait for others to come to them, He sends them *out*.

"Go into all the world," He says in Mark 16:15, "and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." In Luke 24:47, He declares that "repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." In Acts 1:8, He maps the territory with breathtaking scope: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." And through the pen of the apostle Paul, the same commission is framed in the language of ambassadorship: "God... gave us the ministry of reconciliation... Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:18, 20).

Read those texts together and one thing becomes unmistakably clear: the primary direction of the gospel is *outward*. It flows from the community of the redeemed into the world of the unredeemed.

It moves from the gathered to the scattered, from the camp to the wilderness, from the light to the darkness.

Two God-Ordained Spheres

Now here is something important that we must establish from the very beginning, because misunderstanding this one point has caused enormous confusion in the modern church.

God has ordained *two distinct spheres* for His people, and each sphere has its own God-given purpose.

The first sphere is the holy community—the gathered church. This is the assembly of believers who come together to worship God, receive the teaching of His Word, encourage one another, practice church discipline, celebrate the sacraments, and build each other up in love. This community is sacred and essential. Without it, individual Christians wither. The gathered church is the greenhouse in which disciples grow strong.

The second sphere is the world—the lost, broken, darkened world that lies *outside* the assembly. This is the field of witness. This is the arena of evangelism. This is where the gospel is proclaimed, where lives are turned from darkness to light, where sinners are called to repentance and faith.

The critical error of our age is the confusion of these two spheres. When we design our Sunday gatherings primarily as evangelistic events for unbelievers, we have misunderstood both the nature of the church and the nature of evangelism. When we expect the pastor's sermon to do the work that every believer is called to do on Monday through Saturday, we have exchanged the New Testament pattern for something far more comfortable—and far less effective.

The work of the evangelist is never *primarily* inside the assembly. It is always *outside* it.

This book will show you why that is true, what it looks like in practice, and how you—with the Spirit of God living in you—can take your place in the great outward movement of the gospel into a world that desperately needs the light of Jesus Christ.

The commission is universal. The field is the world. The time is now.

Let us go.

PART ONE

The Biblical Mandate and Distinction

Chapter One

The Church is Holy Community

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."
— Acts 2:42

Before we talk about going out, we need to be honest about what we are going out *from*. The gathered church is not simply a launching pad for evangelism—it is a God-designed community with its own sacred purposes, and we diminish those purposes at great cost to ourselves and to the world we are trying to reach.

What the Church Is For

The apostle Paul describes the gathered community in terms of remarkable organic beauty. Writing to the Ephesians, he explains that Christ "gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11–13).

Notice the internal direction of this text. The gifts given to the church are given *for the saints*, to equip *the body*, to build it up toward maturity and unity. The church gathering exists, in significant part, to make disciples more capable of doing the work of the kingdom—including the work of witness—in the world

outside. The greenhouse exists to grow plants strong enough to bear fruit in the open field.

The early Jerusalem church understood this instinctively. Acts 2:42 gives us the simplest and most enduring picture of a healthy gathered community: devoted to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers. These four pillars—the Word, community, the Lord's Supper, and prayer—are the heartbeat of the gathered assembly. They are not designed to attract outsiders; they are designed to sustain and strengthen insiders for the mission to which they have been called.

Paul's instruction to the Corinthian church about the conduct of public worship reinforces this point. In 1 Corinthians 14, the entire discussion of spiritual gifts in the assembly revolves around one question: does this build up the church? "Let all things be done for building up," he concludes in verse 26. The gathered community is the place where believers are formed, corrected, encouraged, and strengthened—not primarily the place where the unconverted are won.

And the writer of Hebrews, who understood the dangers of drift and isolation, urges his readers to keep gathering together: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24–25). The motivation for gathering, even here, is *mutual*—stirring one another up, encouraging one another. It is a community turned inward in the best sense: caring for its own members so that each one remains strong, faithful, and fruitful.

Purity Is Not Optional

There is another dimension to the gathered community that directly affects its evangelistic witness: holiness. A church that tolerates unchecked sin in its membership, that glosses over doctrinal error for the sake of numerical growth, that confuses warmth with worldliness—that church, however large its crowds, sends a compromised witness into the world.

Paul understood this. His letters to Corinth, Galatia, and Colossae are full of urgent correction precisely because he knew that the church's internal life and its external witness are inseparable. A body riddled with disease cannot run well. A lamp with a cracked and dirty globe does not shine brightly. The holiness of the gathered community is not merely a matter of internal piety; it is the foundation of credible witness.

This does not mean the church must be perfect before it can evangelize. Thank God for that—none of us would qualify. But it does mean that the gathered body must be *pursuing* holiness, *practicing* discipline, *prioritizing* love and truth together. The world is watching. And what it sees in the community of the redeemed either confirms or contradicts the message that community proclaims outside its walls.

The Beautiful Distinction

Here is the beautiful distinction that sets us free: the church is not responsible for doing *everything*. It is not responsible for being the primary evangelistic event of the week. It is responsible for being what God designed it to be—a holy, loving, well-taught, mutually caring community of disciples who are equipped and sent into the world as His witnesses.

When the church is healthy on the inside, its members go out carrying something real. Their lives have been shaped by the Word. Their love for one another has been practiced and deepened. Their prayers have been fervent and faith-filled. And when they step out the doors on Monday morning, they carry all of that into the darkness—and the darkness has no answer for it.

A healthy church produces healthy witnesses. This is why the gathered community matters so much. It is not an end in itself; it is the engine that drives the mission outward.

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- When you gather with your church, are you coming primarily as a consumer or as a disciple being equipped? What would it look like to approach your next Sunday gathering with the specific intention of being strengthened *for* witness during the week?
- In what ways does the holiness (or lack of holiness) of your church community affect its witness in your community?

For action this week:
Write down three specific ways your church gathering equips or encourages you for the work of witness outside the walls. If you struggle to name three, consider speaking honestly with your pastor or a trusted mentor about what it would look like to be better equipped.

Prayer:
Lord, thank You for the gift of Your gathered people. Make our community holy, loving, and strong—not for our own comfort alone, but so that what we carry into the world is real and

credible. Equip us from the inside so that we may be faithful witnesses on the outside. Amen.

Chapter Two

The World is the Field of Evangelism

"Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."
— Mark 16:15

If the gathered church is the greenhouse, the world is the open field. And the field, dear friend, does not come to you. You must go to it.

The Pattern Is Always Outward

Open your New Testament anywhere and follow Jesus for a few pages, and you will quickly notice something: He is always moving. He is walking along the Sea of Galilee, calling fishermen as He goes. He is entering synagogues in Galilee, then moving on to the next town. He is climbing a mountain to teach, then descending into a crowd of suffering people. He is crossing the Sea of Galilee into Gentile territory, then crossing back. He is passing through Samaria when the proper route would have avoided it. He is pressing through the crowds of Jericho when He could have entered quietly.

Jesus is constantly, deliberately moving *toward* people who are lost, broken, sick, sinful, and far from God. His evangelistic ministry is not sedentary. It is not institutional. It is *kinetic*—driven by divine intention into places and among people that religious propriety might have avoided.

And the apostles, filled with His Spirit, followed the same pattern. Luke 24:47 records that the Lord Himself described the spread of the gospel as *proclamation going out*—from Jerusalem, in concentric circles of increasing reach, until it touches every nation. When we reach Acts, that is exactly what we see. Peter preaches in the streets of Jerusalem on Pentecost. Philip travels to Samaria and then to the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. Paul and Barnabas set out on mission journeys that take them through Asia Minor, across the Aegean, and into Europe. The trajectory is always the same: *outward, outward, outward*.

The Field Is Where the Lost Are

This seems almost too obvious to state, and yet it needs to be said plainly: lost people are not, by definition, in the gathered church. They are in the workplaces, the neighborhoods, the coffee shops, the university halls, the hospital waiting rooms, and the streets of your city. They are the colleague who asks you sharp questions about suffering. They are the neighbor whose marriage is unraveling. They are the stranger on the bus reading a book about meaning and finding no answers. They are people who will never walk through a church door on their own initiative—but they might, if someone who knew them and cared for them and carried the gospel with them were willing to *go* to where they already are.

This is why Jesus sends His disciples *out*. Not to hold the fort. Not to maintain a religious institution. But to go—actively, deliberately, personally—into the world where the lost and dying actually live.

The parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15 captures this with unforgettable clarity. The shepherd does not wait for the lost sheep to find its way home. He leaves the ninety-nine and goes *into the wilderness* to search for the one that is lost. He searches until he finds it. The initiative belongs to the one who goes. The love

belongs to the one who searches. And the joy—that beautiful, overflowing joy—belongs to the one who brings the lost one home.

You are that shepherd's apprentice. The wilderness is your field. The lost sheep are your neighbors.

Outside the Camp

The writer of Hebrews offers an image that gives this book its title and its heart. Speaking of Jesus, he writes: "So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him *outside the camp* and bear the reproach he endured" (Hebrews 13:12–13).

The phrase "outside the camp" carried enormous weight for Jewish readers. In the wilderness, the camp of Israel was the place of divine presence, ritual cleanliness, and communal identity. Outside the camp was the place of defilement, exclusion, and shame. Jesus was crucified *outside the camp*—outside the city gate, in the place of the rejected and the outcast.

And the writer of Hebrews calls us to follow Him there.

This is not merely a metaphor. It is a description of the geography of the gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ is carried to the margins, to the outcasts, to the people that polite religion would prefer to avoid. The evangelistic work of the church is done not in the comfortable center of religious life but in the uncomfortable, untidy, sometimes dangerous world outside the walls.

Jesus went there first. He calls us to follow.

Every Believer Is a Witness in the Field

It is worth pausing here to address a common misunderstanding. Some believers have quietly assumed that "going out" is the responsibility of professional missionaries and paid evangelists, while the rest of us fulfill our duty by attending church and giving to the missions fund. This is a serious misreading of the New Testament—and we will address it more fully in the next chapter.

But for now, notice simply this: the field belongs to every believer. The early church's explosive growth was not driven by professional clergy. It was driven by ordinary men and women who had been scattered from Jerusalem by persecution and who, as they went, "preached the word" (Acts 8:4). They did not have ministry degrees. They did not have platforms or programs. They had the gospel, the Spirit, and the courage to open their mouths wherever they found themselves.

The world is still the field. The harvest is still ripe. And the One who first sent out His disciples has not revoked the commission.

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- Who in your daily life—your workplace, your neighborhood, your family—is "outside the camp"? Can you name two or three specific people who are lost and with whom you regularly come into contact?
- What does it feel like to think of your Monday through Saturday life as *mission territory*? What would change if you approached it that way?

For action this week:
Choose one person in your life who does not know Christ. Begin praying for them by name every day this week. Ask God to open a door of opportunity for gospel conversation, and ask Him to make you ready when it opens (Colossians 4:3).

Prayer:
Father, forgive me for the times I have waited for the lost to come to me. Open my eyes to the field that surrounds me every day. Give me the heart of the shepherd who goes into the wilderness, and give me the feet that are willing to follow. Amen.

Chapter Three

The Universal Call to All Believers

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."
— 1 Peter 2:9

Let us settle this question once and for all, because it matters enormously: Is evangelism the exclusive calling of a gifted few, or is it the normal duty of every follower of Jesus?

The New Testament answers this question with remarkable consistency, and the answer is this: *every believer is called and commissioned as a witness*.

Not a Special Office Only

Yes, Paul lists "the evangelist" as a specific gift in Ephesians 4:11—and we should celebrate those whom God has specially gifted and called to that work. But the gift of the evangelist does not create a class of professionals who evangelize on behalf of everyone else, any more than the gift of giving creates a class of financial specialists who give on behalf of the rest of the body. Spiritual gifts describe the particular ways individuals serve within the broader calling that belongs to all.

The Great Commission of Matthew 28:19–20 was spoken to eleven ordinary disciples—fishermen, a tax collector, a former zealot—who represented the whole community of those who would follow Jesus. There is no asterisk, no exemption clause, no footnote that reads "unless you are shy" or "unless you feel more gifted in hospitality." The commission is universal: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

The apostle Peter addresses his letter not to a select group of evangelists but to all the "elect exiles of the Dispersion" (1 Peter 1:1)—ordinary believers scattered across Asia Minor. And to *all* of them he writes the words of our key verse: you are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and you exist *to proclaim* the excellencies of the One who called you. Proclamation is not incidental to the Christian identity Peter describes; it is the very *purpose* for which God formed this people for Himself.

Peter's instruction becomes even more personal in chapter three of his letter: "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" (1 Peter 3:15). "Anyone who asks *you*." This is not addressed to pastors or evangelists or conference speakers. It is addressed to every believer who, by the quality of their life and the reality of their hope, draws questions from the people around them.

Shining in a Crooked World

Paul's letter to the Philippians contains a passage that most believers know as encouragement but rarely read as a missionary mandate. Yet that is precisely what it is. Writing to ordinary Christians in a Roman colony, Paul says: "that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine

as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life" (Philippians 2:15–16).

The word translated "lights" here is the same word used in the Septuagint for the luminaries—the sun, moon, and stars—placed in the sky to give light to the earth. Paul is calling every believer in Philippi to be a luminous presence in their city, their marketplace, their household. They do this by being blameless in character and by holding out the word of life—the gospel—to those around them.

This is not extraordinary; this is ordinary discipleship. Every believer shining wherever God has placed them, holding out the word of life to those in their immediate orbit.

Ordinary Believers Who Changed the World

Perhaps the most encouraging and challenging evidence for the universal commission comes from Acts 8. When a great persecution broke out against the Jerusalem church, "they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1). Now read the very next verse carefully: "those who were scattered went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

The apostles stayed in Jerusalem. The ordinary believers scattered. And as those ordinary believers scattered, they preached. They did not set up committees. They did not wait for permission from the apostles. They did not take a course on evangelism methodology. They simply went—driven by persecution, sustained by faith—and everywhere they went, the word of the kingdom went with them.

These were not superstars of the faith. They were men and women who had believed, been baptized, and sat under the apostles'

teaching. They were people like you and me. And the gospel moved through them like fire through dry grass.

The same Spirit who empowered them lives in you. The same gospel that they carried is in your hands. The same commission that was given to eleven disciples on a Galilean hillside has been passed down through twenty centuries to reach you, sitting here, reading these words.

You are called. You are equipped. You are sent.

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- Have you ever quietly assigned the work of evangelism to "more gifted" believers or to paid ministers? What does the testimony of Acts 8:4 say to that assumption?
- What does it mean for *you personally* to be "a royal priesthood"? How does that identity shape the way you think about your daily interactions with people who don't know Christ?

For action this week:
Write 1 Peter 2:9 on a card and put it somewhere you will see it every morning this week—your bathroom mirror, your dashboard, your desk. Let it remind you each day of who you are and why you are here.

Prayer:
Lord, I confess that I have sometimes hidden behind the gifts of others and excused my own silence. Forgive me. I am Yours—purchased, called, and commissioned. Make me willing to go

where You send me and to open my mouth when You open the door. Amen.

PART TWO

Jesus' Kingdom Pictures of Witness

Chapter Four

Salt of the Earth

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet."
— Matthew 5:13

Jesus was the master of the illuminating image. He did not just tell His disciples what to do; He showed them, through pictures drawn from everyday life, who they were and what their presence in the world was meant to accomplish. The Sermon on the Mount opens with two of the most memorable and demanding of these images, and together they form a portrait of the believer's witness in the world. We begin with salt.

What Salt Does

In first-century Palestine, salt was not merely a seasoning. It was a preservative—perhaps the most critical one available in a world without refrigeration. Fish caught in the Sea of Galilee were salted for transport and trade. Meat was preserved with salt. Salt prevented the corruption that would otherwise spread quickly through the surrounding material.

Salt was also a covenant symbol. In Leviticus 2:13, the Lord commanded that every grain offering be seasoned with salt, "the salt of the covenant with your God." Salt signified permanence, faithfulness, and the incorruptible character of God's promises.

And of course, salt flavors. A meal without it is flat and forgettable. A meal seasoned well is alive with taste.

Now hear Jesus say to these ordinary Galilean disciples—fishermen, tax collectors, common people—"*You* are the salt of the earth." Not "you can be" or "you might become." *You are.* Present tense, declarative, unconditional. This is your identity by virtue of your belonging to Him.

Presence Is the Point

Here is the critical implication of the salt image that we must not miss: salt only does what salt is designed to do *by being present and in contact with what it is preserving or flavoring.* Salt in a sealed jar does nothing for the meat. Salt on the shelf does nothing for the soup. Salt must be *in contact* with the thing it is affecting.

A believer who withdraws from the world—who seals themselves into a holy huddle, who limits their relationships exclusively to other Christians, who never ventures into the difficult, unclean, uncomfortable spaces where lost people actually live—has taken themselves out of contact. They may be perfectly good salt, but they are doing precisely nothing with it.

This is not a call to worldliness. Jesus is not encouraging His disciples to adopt the values and habits of the surrounding culture. Quite the opposite. Notice the warning: if salt loses its *saltiness*, it is good for nothing. The usefulness of salt is entirely dependent on it *remaining salt*. A believer who has lost their distinctiveness, their holiness, their moral and spiritual integrity, can no longer function as a preserving or flavoring agent in the world. They have become indistinguishable from what surrounds them, and their witness is gone.

The twin demands of this image, held in careful tension, are these: **maintain your distinctiveness** and **remain in contact with the world**. Holiness without engagement is irrelevance. Engagement without holiness is compromise. Biblical witness requires both—the salt staying salty and the salt staying present where it is needed.

Losing Your Saltiness

Jesus' warning is sobering: "if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet." The word translated "lost its taste" in the Greek carries the sense of becoming foolish or insipid—there is even a wordplay in the original language between "foolishness" and "tastelessness." Salt that has lost its savor is not merely useless; it is an embarrassment.

There are many ways a believer can lose their saltiness. The slow erosion of compromise—adopting the world's values by degrees until nothing distinctively Christian remains. The retreat into a religious subculture that insulates from all genuine engagement with the lost. The smothering of the gospel's sharp edges in favor of inoffensive niceness that never challenges anyone to repentance or faith. All of these produce the same result: a believer who is present in the world but exercising no preserving, flavoring, gospel-carrying influence within it.

The question this image puts to you is direct: Are you still salty? Is there something genuinely different about you—your integrity, your compassion, your honesty, your hope—that makes the people around you pause and wonder?

And are you in contact? Are you actually present in the lives of people who do not know Christ, close enough that your presence makes a difference?

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- Think honestly about the non-Christian people in your regular life. Would they describe you as someone noticeably different—in a compelling, attractive way? Or have you blended in so thoroughly that your faith is invisible?
- Where might God be calling you to greater engagement—to bring yourself into contact with people or places where your "saltiness" is needed?

For action this week:
Identify one area of your life where you have been too withdrawn—too quick to avoid the uncomfortable, untidy reality of lost people's lives. Take one concrete step this week to be *present* there: attend that neighborhood gathering, have that colleague over for a meal, strike up that conversation you have been putting off.

Prayer:
Lord, keep me salty. Preserve in me everything that is distinctly Yours—my love for truth, my commitment to holiness, my hope in the gospel. And then, Lord, press me into contact with a world that needs those things. Don't let me sit unused on the shelf. Use me. Amen.

Chapter Five

Light of the World

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 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."
— Matthew 5:14–16

The second image Jesus uses in the Sermon on the Mount is light—and it carries both a declaration and an imperative that cut right to the heart of the believer's witness.

The Darkness Is Real

Before we can understand what it means to shine, we must be willing to acknowledge what we are shining *into*. The image of light is only meaningful against the backdrop of genuine darkness, and the darkness Jesus describes is not a mild inconvenience or a temporary dimness. It is the moral, spiritual, and eternal darkness of a world alienated from God.

John, writing under the Spirit's inspiration, frames this reality with magnificent clarity. Speaking of Jesus, he says: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:4–5). The light that entered the world in Jesus Christ encountered real, hostile darkness—and overcame it. Later in John's Gospel, Jesus declares: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). And again: "I

have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (John 12:46).

These are not gentle, comfortable images. They describe a world genuinely in darkness—lost, blind, stumbling—and a Christ who enters that darkness with the light of life. When Jesus now turns to His disciples and says, "You are the light of the world," He is making them participants in His own redemptive mission. As the Father sent Him into the darkness, so He sends us.

A City on a Hill

"A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." The image is instantly visual. Cities in the ancient Middle East were often built on elevated ground for defensive purposes, and at night, the lights of the city would be visible for miles across the dark landscape. You could not hide such a city. Its very position made it visible to everyone around.

Jesus is saying that a community of His disciples—a genuine, grace-shaped, truth-speaking, love-practicing community of people who belong to Christ—cannot be hidden any more than a city on a hill can be hidden. Their very character makes them visible. Their love for one another, their care for the marginalized, their commitment to honesty, their hope in the face of suffering—all of this shines in the surrounding darkness like a city of lights visible across a dark plain.

But notice: the city on a hill is not useful because it looks impressive from a distance. It is useful because its light *guides travelers, marks safe passage, and offers shelter*. The visible community of Christ is not meant to dazzle observers from afar; it is meant to draw the lost toward the life and safety found within its light.

No Baskets Allowed

"Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house." In the ancient world, an oil lamp was not lit and then covered. What would be the point? A lamp is lit for the purpose of giving light, and it gives light by being placed where its light can reach what needs to be illuminated.

The "basket" in this image represents anything that quenches or conceals the light of the gospel in a believer's life. Fear is a basket. Shame is a basket. The pursuit of social acceptance is a basket. The comfortable privatization of faith—"my faith is personal"—is a basket. Deliberate withdrawal from the world into an exclusively Christian social circle is a basket.

Jesus is not merely permitting you to shine. He is commanding it: "let your light shine before others." The imperative is active, intentional, visible. Shining is not accidental. It is chosen. It is the daily decision to live with your faith on the stand rather than under cover—to speak when speaking is costly, to live distinctly when conformity would be easier, to carry the hope of the gospel openly into the dark spaces where people are groping for something real.

Good Works and God's Glory

The purpose of the shining, Jesus makes clear, is not our own reputation: "so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." The light we carry is not meant to draw attention to ourselves. It is meant to illuminate the character and grace of God. When people see a Christian living with inexplicable joy in suffering, forgiving what seems unforgivable, giving with unreasonable generosity, speaking with consistent honesty, they are confronted with something that cannot be explained by natural means—and the explanation is God.

Your shining life is, in itself, a form of proclamation. It raises questions that only the gospel can answer. And when those questions come—"Why are you so at peace?" "Where does your hope come from?" "Why would you do that for someone who has treated you so badly?"—you will be ready to open your mouth and point to the Father in whose light you walk.

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- What "baskets" have you placed over your light? Name them honestly. Fear? Social acceptance? A desire to avoid conflict?
- In what specific relationships or settings do you have the opportunity to let your light shine this week? What would that look like in practical terms?

For action this week:
Think of one person in your life who has watched you navigate difficulty, loss, or suffering. Have you ever explicitly told them where your hope comes from? Consider initiating that conversation this week—not with a rehearsed speech, but with genuine, personal witness.

Prayer:
Father, I confess that I have too often hidden what You have placed in me. I have been afraid of what people might think, and I have let that fear silence the very light You lit in my heart. Remove every basket. Set my light on a stand. Let the way I live and the words I speak point everyone around me to You. Amen.

Chapter Six

Keys of the Kingdom

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
— Matthew 16:19

There is a moment in Matthew 16 that stands as a turning point in the entire Gospel narrative. Jesus has asked His disciples who people say He is, and the answers come back—John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets. Then He turns the question personal: "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter, prompted by the Father's own revelation, answers: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

What follows is one of the most extraordinary passages in all of Scripture—and one of the most misunderstood in terms of its evangelistic implications.

The Keys and Their Purpose

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven," Jesus says, "and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Later, in Matthew 18:18, He gives similar language to the gathered disciples in the context of church discipline.

The image of keys was well understood in the ancient world. Keys belonged to the steward of a great household—the person who, on behalf of the master, controlled access to the rooms, the resources,

and the treasury. To possess the keys was to possess the authority to open and to shut, to grant access and to deny it.

Jesus, the risen King, entrusts to His church the keys of His kingdom. What are these keys? At their core, they represent the authority to declare the terms of the kingdom—to proclaim the gospel of forgiveness to the repentant and to declare the consequence of rejection to the unrepentant. They are the authority of the gospel message itself.

Loosing and Binding Through Proclamation

When the church—when *you*—proclaims the gospel to someone who hears it with repentant faith, you are, in the most profound sense, loosing them from the bondage of sin and opening the door of the kingdom before them. You are serving as the steward who holds the key and turns it.

When the church declares to someone who refuses to repent that they remain under God's judgment, it is binding—confirming the closed door that their own unbelief has shut against them. This is not a power exercised arbitrarily or with human arrogance; it is the solemn responsibility of those who have been entrusted with the word of truth to declare it faithfully, with its full weight of grace and judgment.

Now here is the evangelistic implication that we must not miss: *the keys are used outside the assembly*. They are carried into the world where lost people live and used in the act of gospel proclamation. The key does no work hanging on the steward's belt inside the master's house. It does its work when it is carried to the locked door and turned.

Every time you open your mouth and faithfully declare the gospel to a person outside the covenant community, you are exercising the

authority that the King Himself has given you. You are carrying His keys to His doors. You are participating in the most consequential work that can be done in this world—the work of opening the kingdom to those who are standing outside it in darkness.

The Gravity of the Stewardship

This is both an enormous privilege and a grave responsibility. Paul felt the weight of it when he wrote: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16). The steward who locks the keys away and never uses them has failed his master. The believer who possesses the gospel but never opens their mouth to proclaim it has treated the greatest gift in human history as a private possession.

The keys of the kingdom were not given to you for safekeeping. They were given to you for *use*—out in the world, among the lost, at the threshold of hearts that are not yet open to the King.

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- Have you ever thought of yourself as a steward of the keys of the kingdom? How does that image change the way you think about your responsibility to share the gospel?
- Is there someone in your life who is standing, so to speak, at a locked door—someone who is searching, questioning, or open—to whom you could carry the gospel this week?

For action this week:
Memorize the simplest, clearest version of the gospel you can articulate in two minutes. Practice saying it aloud. The steward

must know how to use the key—fluently, faithfully, and without fumbling for words at the critical moment.

Prayer:
Lord, You have entrusted me with something of infinite worth—the word that opens the kingdom to those who believe. Keep me from burying this treasure. Make me a faithful steward. Give me opportunity and courage to turn the key, and trust You for what opens. Amen.

Chapter Seven

Going Forth: The Kingdom Advances Outward

"The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."
— Matthew 13:31–32

The parables of the kingdom are among Jesus' most creative and concentrated teaching. Taken together, they paint a vivid, consistent portrait of how the kingdom of God advances in the world—and the portrait is always one of *outward movement*, *deliberate scattering*, and *patient, fruitful growth in unexpected places*.

The Sower and the Seed

The parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1–23) is foundational for understanding the work of evangelism. A farmer goes out to sow his seed. He does not wait for the soil to come to the barn. He goes out to where the ground is, scatters the seed broadly—on the path, on rocky ground, among thorns, and on good soil—and trusts the harvest to the sovereign combination of seed and soil and time.

Four soils. One sower. And the sower goes out.

This is the evangelist's charter. The seed—the Word of God—is powerful and life-giving. But it must be *sown*. It must be scattered into the lives of real people in real places by someone willing to go out and do the sowing. Not every seed will produce a harvest—Jesus is honest about that. Some will be snatched away before it takes root. Some will spring up quickly and wither. Some will be choked by the competing growth of the world. But some—by the grace of God and the power of His Word—will fall on good soil and produce a harvest beyond what the sower could have imagined.

The sower's responsibility is faithfulness in sowing, not control of the outcome. Your part is to go out and scatter the seed of the gospel broadly and generously. God's part is to bring the harvest.

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

Two short parables side by side in Matthew 13:31–33, and together they make a single breathtaking point: the kingdom of God begins small and grows to extraordinary proportions.

The mustard seed begins as the smallest of all seeds, yet becomes a tree large enough to shelter birds. The leaven hidden in three measures of flour works through the entire batch until it is all leavened. In both cases, the emphasis is on the disproportionate power of the small beginning. What looks insignificant—one conversation, one act of kindness that opens a door, one faithful gospel witness shared with one searching soul—carries within it the explosive potential of the kingdom of God.

You are that mustard seed. Your witness—apparently small, seemingly insignificant in the face of a great dark world—carries within it the life of the kingdom. When you plant it in the life of another person by the faithful proclamation of the gospel, you

cannot predict or control what it will become. But you can trust the One who designed the seed and who causes it to grow.

The Net Cast into the Sea

"The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind" (Matthew 13:47). A net cast into the sea is not selective in advance; it gathers whatever it finds, and the sorting comes afterward, at the end of the age. This parable speaks powerfully against the temptation to pre-judge who is and who is not a likely candidate for the gospel.

The net goes *into* the sea. Not the sea into the net. We go out. We cast broadly. We do not decide who deserves to hear before we have even spoken. We carry the gospel to *every kind* of person—different backgrounds, different life situations, different levels of apparent spiritual openness—and trust God to work in the hearts that are ready.

Into the Highways and Hedges

Perhaps the most radical image of outward movement in all of Jesus' kingdom teaching is found in Luke 14:23. The master, whose invited guests have all refused to come to the feast, sends his servant with this command: "Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled."

The highways and hedges are the margins of society—the places where the respectable and the religious do not often go. Yet the master's servants are sent there with urgency and purpose: *compel them to come in*. Not politely suggest. Not leave a brochure. *Compel*—with the passionate, loving urgency of someone who knows what the feast contains and grieves that anyone would miss it.

This is the spirit in which the gospel is to be carried: not as a casual option offered apologetically, but as the invitation of a King who genuinely wants His house filled and who sends His servants into the most unlikely places to find the guests who will come.

The Good Samaritan: Love That Crosses Boundaries

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) is typically read as a lesson in neighborly compassion, and so it is. But read in the context of kingdom witness, it carries an additional message: love that crosses the boundaries of race, religion, social class, and personal inconvenience is itself a proclamation of the kingdom's values—and it creates the conditions under which the gospel can be heard.

The Samaritan did not wait for the wounded man to come to him. He crossed the road. He entered the mess. He invested his time and his resources in someone who had no claim on his kindness. He bore the cost that love demands when it encounters suffering across a boundary.

The kingdom advances when followers of Jesus cross those same boundaries. When you love the person that your culture tells you is outside your tribe—when you invest in the marginalized, serve the suffering, and maintain that service even when it costs you—you are not merely doing good works. You are making the gospel visible. You are drawing a picture of the King's own character and inviting those who see it to ask about the King.

The Movement Is Always Outward

Taken together, these parables present a unified vision: the kingdom of God is not a static institution guarding its territory but a dynamic, growing, outward-moving reality—sown in unlikely soil, hidden in ordinary people, cast broadly into the sea of

humanity, carried into the highways and hedges by servants who will not be deterred by respectability or comfort.

You are the sower. You are the servant. You are the one who crosses the road. Go out.

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- Which of these kingdom images speaks most powerfully to you right now—the sower, the mustard seed, the net, the servant in the highways, the Good Samaritan? What is it about that image that captures where you are?
- Are there "highways and hedges" near you—margins of your community, places of poverty or loneliness or social exclusion—where you have not yet gone with the love and message of the gospel? What would it take to go?

For action this week:
Scatter some seed. Have a genuine gospel conversation this week—not a lecture, not a debate, but an honest, caring, open-hearted sharing of what Jesus has done and what He offers. Sow it, trust God with the soil, and leave the harvest to Him.

Prayer:
Lord of the harvest, send me out. Make me a faithful, generous sower—willing to scatter the seed broadly without pre-judging the soil. Give me the love of the Good Samaritan, the urgency of the master's servant, and the faith of the one who plants a mustard seed and believes in what it will become. Amen.

PART THREE

The Practice of Biblical Evangelism

Chapter Eight

The Message We Proclaim

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."
— 1 Corinthians 15:3–4

We have established *who* is called to evangelize and *where* that evangelism happens. Now we come to the most important question of all: *What do we actually say?*

This matters profoundly. There is a version of "evangelism" that is so stripped of its essential content—so carefully edited to avoid offense, so eager to be relevant and winsome—that it no longer carries the power to save anyone. And there is a version of "evangelism" that is technically accurate but delivered without love or wisdom, that hardens more hearts than it opens. We need neither of these.

We need the biblical gospel—fully, faithfully, lovingly proclaimed.

The Foundation: God's Holiness

The gospel does not begin with human need, though human need is real. It begins with God—who He is and what He requires. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). He is perfectly, absolutely, uncompromisingly holy—and His holiness is not a negotiable attribute that can be set aside for the sake of our comfort.

Paul makes this foundational in his letter to the Romans, where the first three chapters lay out the human condition before a holy God with unflinching honesty. The wrath of God, he says, "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Romans 1:18). This is not a minor theme that can be edited out of the gospel message for the sake of palatability. The wrath of God against sin is the dark backdrop against which the grace of God in Christ shines with its full and dazzling glory. Remove the one, and the other becomes incomprehensible.

The Problem: Human Sin and Guilt

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This is the diagnosis that every human being must receive before the remedy can be understood or embraced. Sin is not merely social dysfunction or psychological damage or the legacy of difficult circumstances. It is moral guilt before a holy God—the conscious, willful, universal transgression of the law of the Creator by creatures who have chosen their own way over His.

This is not a comfortable thing to say to people. In a culture that has redefined almost every category of wrong as a form of victimhood or sickness, the declaration that every human being stands guilty before God will sound offensive—even cruel. But here is the pastoral reality: a doctor who withholds a cancer diagnosis to spare the patient momentary discomfort has not been kind. They have been cowardly. And the cancer will still kill.

The gospel begins with the truth that human beings are lost in sin, guilty before God, and facing a judgment they cannot escape by their own efforts. This is not bad news designed to crush people; it is the essential context within which the good news becomes genuinely good.

The Solution: Christ's Death and Resurrection

Here is where the gospel becomes, quite literally, the best news ever announced in human history. Paul's summary in 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 is the heartbeat of everything: "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures... he was buried... he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

Christ died *for our sins*. Not as a martyr. Not merely as a moral example. As a substitute—bearing in His own body the guilt and the curse and the wrath of God that our sin deserved, so that those who trust in Him might be declared forgiven and righteous before God. This is the substitutionary atonement, and it is not optional doctrine; it is the very mechanism by which the gospel saves.

And He was raised. The resurrection is not a spiritual metaphor or a story about the memory of Jesus living on in His followers. It is a historical, bodily, space-and-time event—the Father's own declaration that the sacrifice was accepted, the debt was paid, and death itself had been defeated. Paul puts it plainly in Romans 4:25: He "was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification." Without the resurrection, there is no gospel. With it, there is the most breathtaking promise in the universe: death is not the end for those who belong to the risen Christ.

The Response: Repent and Believe

The gospel is not merely information to be admired. It is a command to be obeyed and an offer to be received. Paul, standing before the intellectuals of Athens, declares: "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30–31).

Commands all people everywhere to repent. The gospel summons, not merely invites. It is the announcement of the King's terms, not a customer service offer that people may take or leave without consequence. Repentance means a genuine turning—away from sin and self-rule and toward God and His rightful lordship. It is not a feeling; it is a direction. And it is inseparable from faith, which is the wholehearted trust in Christ alone as the basis for one's standing before God.

Paul describes his own evangelistic ministry this way: "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Repentance and faith, together, as the response the gospel demands. Never one without the other.

No Dilution

This is the message. Not a trimmed-down version calculated to maximize initial acceptability. Not a positive-thinking self-help spirituality dressed in Christian language. Not a gospel that mentions Jesus' love but never His judgment, that speaks of grace but never of repentance, that offers a better life but never confronts the reality of sin.

Every element of the gospel—God's holiness, human sin, Christ's substitutionary death, the bodily resurrection, the call to repent and believe—belongs together. They form a single, coherent, glorious declaration of what God has done to rescue guilty sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son.

Proclaim it fully. Proclaim it clearly. Proclaim it with love and urgency. And trust the power of the message itself—"for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- Can you articulate the gospel clearly—including God's holiness, human sin, Christ's substitution, the resurrection, and the call to repent and believe—without stumbling or omitting key elements? Practice it now, as if speaking to a friend.
- Is there any part of the biblical gospel that you have been hesitant to include when you share it? Name that element honestly, and ask yourself why you hesitate.

For action this week:
Write out the gospel in your own words—not more than one page. Read it aloud to yourself. Share it with a fellow believer and ask for honest feedback. Is it complete? Is it clear? Is it recognizably the gospel of the New Testament?

Prayer:
Lord, guard me from diluting or distorting the gospel that has the power to save. Give me the clarity to know it well, the courage to proclaim it fully, and the love that makes every word of it an expression of genuine care for the person standing before me. Amen.

Chapter Nine

The Manner of Witness

"And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."
— Acts 4:29–30

The *what* of evangelism—the content of the gospel message—is fixed. It does not change. But the *how*—the manner in which that message is carried and communicated—is shaped by the Spirit's work in us and the wisdom God grants us for each unique encounter. Getting the manner right matters, not because we can save anyone through technique, but because a faithful messenger honors the message with the way they deliver it.

Boldness Without Arrogance

The prayer of Acts 4:29 comes from a community that has just been threatened by the most powerful religious authorities of their day. Peter and John have been arrested, interrogated, and released with warnings to keep quiet. And the church's immediate response is to gather and pray—not for protection, not for comfort, not even for the threats to go away—but for *boldness to keep speaking*.

That is the spirit of apostolic evangelism. Not reckless aggression, not insensitive bluntness, but genuine, Spirit-empowered boldness—the willingness to open your mouth and say what needs to be said, even when the atmosphere is hostile, the reception is uncertain, and the personal cost is real.

Paul's description of his own ministry among the Thessalonians gives us a closer look at what this boldness looked like in practice: "But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict" (1 Thessalonians 2:2). Boldness *in God*—not in personal charisma or public platform, but in the confidence that the One who sent him would sustain him in the going.

And Paul continues: "For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others... But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thessalonians 2:5–8).

Here is the portrait of a biblical witness: bold enough to declare the gospel under pressure, humble enough to reject flattery and self-promotion, gentle enough to share not only the message but his very life with the people he served. No manipulation. No performance. No hidden agenda. Just the gospel, carried by a person who genuinely loved the people he was speaking to.

The Three Forms of Witness

The New Testament describes the manner of witness in three complementary forms, and a healthy evangelistic life incorporates all three.

Personal conversation is the most intimate and perhaps most powerful form of witness. It is what happened when Jesus sat with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), when Philip "opened his mouth" beside the Ethiopian's chariot (Acts 8:35), when Paul

"reasoned" with people in synagogues and marketplaces (Acts 17:17). Person to person, face to face, the gospel is explained, discussed, and applied to the specific life, questions, and needs of the individual in front of you.

This is where most of us will do most of our evangelism—in conversations with people we know, in moments that arise naturally from the relationships we have built. It requires attentiveness, genuine interest in the person, willingness to listen as well as speak, and readiness to answer honest questions with honest answers.

Public proclamation is the bold, clear announcement of the gospel in settings where multiple hearers receive it at once—preaching, open-air proclamation, speaking at a community event, writing that reaches many readers. This was the mode of Pentecost (Acts 2), of Paul in the synagogues and the Areopagus (Acts 17), of Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:5). Not every believer is called to public preaching, but every community of believers should support and encourage those who are, and every believer should be prepared to speak publicly when the opportunity arises.

Consistent lifestyle is the ongoing witness of a life shaped by the gospel. This is what Paul has in mind when he instructs the Colossians to "walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time" (Colossians 4:5). It is what Peter describes when he speaks of "your honorable conduct among the Gentiles, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:12). A life of consistent integrity, unexplainable love, and supernatural peace creates the questions that the gospel answers—and it lends credibility to every word you speak.

None of these three forms works well in isolation. Lifestyle without words leaves people admiring your character without

knowing the source. Words without a corresponding life produce cynicism and close the door you were trying to open. And public proclamation that is not matched by the private reality of the speaker becomes mere performance.

Hold all three together. Let the life authenticate the words, and let the words explain the life.

Not Under the Spirit's Power Alone—With It

Paul's word to his young disciple Timothy is both a rebuke and an encouragement: "for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord" (2 Timothy 1:7–8). The antidote to the fear and shame that silence so many witnesses is not human willpower or personality adjustment. It is the recognition that God Himself has given us a spirit of *power*—His own Spirit, whose presence in us is the inexhaustible resource for the work He calls us to do.

You do not witness in your own strength. You witness in His. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11) lives in you and can speak through you. The same Spirit who gave Peter words before the Sanhedrin will give you words when you open your mouth in faith. This does not mean you will always feel confident or eloquent. It means that when you step out in obedience, you are not alone—and that changes everything.

What the Church Gathering Is Not

Before we close this chapter, we must return to one more thing: the church gathering is not the primary platform for the work of evangelism. Sunday worship is not a performance designed to attract the unconverted. The preaching of the Word to the gathered

assembly is for the edification of believers, not primarily for the conversion of unbelievers who happen to wander in.

This does not mean that unbelievers will never be present at church gatherings, or that God will never use such a gathering to open someone's heart. He can and sometimes does. But when we design our primary strategy for evangelism around the Sunday service—when we make the service the evangelistic event and the pew the evangelistic arena—we have misunderstood both the church and the commission.

The gathered church equips. The scattered church witnesses. Every believer sent out every day of the week is the church's primary evangelistic strategy. It always has been.

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- Which of the three forms of witness—personal conversation, public proclamation, or consistent lifestyle—do you find most natural? Which do you most need to develop?
- Are you relying on the Sunday service to do the work that God has called *you* to do in your daily world? What would it look like to take that responsibility personally?

For action this week:
Pray the prayer of Acts 4:29 for yourself this week—every morning, by name: "Lord, grant me boldness to speak Your word." Then watch for the door that opens, and walk through it.

Prayer:
Father, I am not sufficient for this work in myself. But You have not

asked me to be. You have promised Your Spirit, Your power, and Your presence. Today I choose boldness over silence. Open doors, give me words, and use this inadequate but willing servant for Your kingdom's sake. Amen.

Chapter Ten

Obstacles and Encouragements

"Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning." — Psalm 30:5b

No honest book about evangelism can pretend that the work is easy. It is not. Jesus never promised His witnesses that the world would receive them with open arms. He promised something else entirely: "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). If we go into the darkness with the light of the gospel, we should not be surprised when the darkness pushes back.

But this is not the last word. And the encouragements God provides for the faithful witness are so substantial, so rooted in His own character and promises, that they are more than sufficient for every obstacle we will encounter.

Let us name the obstacles honestly, and then let us hear what God says in response.

Obstacle One: Fear

Fear is probably the single most common reason believers do not open their mouths with the gospel. Fear of rejection. Fear of saying the wrong thing. Fear of damaging a relationship. Fear of being seen as strange, judgmental, or pushy. Fear of not being able to answer the hard questions.

These fears are real. They are also, in most cases, significantly exaggerated by our imagination. The moment we actually open our mouths, we usually find that the conversation goes better than we feared—people are more open, more searching, and more ready to discuss spiritual things than we assumed.

But the deeper answer to fear is not better preparation or improved self-confidence. It is the recognition of who is with you when you go. Jesus, in the closing words of the Great Commission, added a promise that must not be separated from the command: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). *Always.* Every conversation. Every difficult moment. Every encounter where you feel your own inadequacy most keenly. The One whose commission you carry goes with you. His presence does not depend on your eloquence or your courage; it rests on His faithfulness.

When fear rises—and it will—return to that promise. You are not going alone.

Obstacle Two: Rejection

Some people will not receive the gospel. Some will respond with indifference. Some with polite dismissal. Some with outright hostility. This is painful, especially when the person rejecting the message is someone you love.

But take heart: the rejection, Jesus says, is not ultimately of you. "Whoever receives you receives me," He told His disciples, "and whoever receives me receives him who sent me" (Matthew 10:40). The reverse is also true: when someone rejects the gospel, they are rejecting not your argument but the God who stands behind it. This does not make the sting disappear, but it does put it in its proper perspective—and it releases you from the crushing burden of feeling personally responsible for every outcome.

Your responsibility is to sow faithfully. The harvest belongs to God.

Obstacle Three: Cultural Pressure

The cultural pressure to keep your faith private, to respect everyone's worldview equally, to avoid the "arrogance" of claiming that one path is true and others are not—this pressure is intense and increasing. In many social contexts, the believer who openly shares the gospel risks being labeled intolerant, narrow-minded, or worse.

This is not new. First-century believers faced versions of this pressure in every city Paul entered. The message of a crucified and risen Jewish Messiah was "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:23). Paul was accused of being a babbler, a troublemaker, and a promoter of illegal religion. None of this stopped him, because he understood that "the word of God is not bound" (2 Timothy 2:9) regardless of what chains may be placed on those who carry it.

The answer to cultural pressure is not cultural combat. It is calm, loving, unwavering faithfulness. Speak the truth with grace. Engage respectfully with genuine questions. Do not be baited into angry debate or defensive withdrawal. Simply keep carrying the light into the dark places, and trust that the light will do what light always does—overcome the darkness.

Obstacle Four: Personal Inadequacy

Perhaps the most persistent whisper that silences believers is the sense of personal inadequacy: *Who am I to tell anyone about God? My own life is a mess. I don't know enough theology. I'm not the right kind of person for this.*

Moses said something similar when God called him: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11). And God's answer was not a list of Moses' qualifications. It was simply: "But I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12).

You do not need to have everything figured out. You need to know what God has done for you in Christ, and you need to be willing to say so. The woman at the well—whom Jesus met in John 4—ran back to her town immediately after their conversation and said, with magnificent simplicity: "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did" (John 4:29). Her theology was incomplete. Her life was complicated. But her witness was genuine, and "many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony" (John 4:39).

Your inadequacy is not an obstacle for God; it is actually the kind of soil in which His power grows most visibly. "When I am weak," Paul discovered, "then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

The Encouragements That Sustain

Against every obstacle, God has placed encouragements so solid, so specific, and so personal that they are sufficient for any situation you will face.

The power of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is not struggling to keep up with the darkness. He is the irresistible presence of the living God who accompanies every faithful witness. Jesus promised: "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). The power comes first. Then the witness. You do not manufacture the power by working harder; you receive it by staying close to the One who gives it.

The effectiveness of the Word. God's word does not return to Him empty. Isaiah's magnificent promise still holds: "so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). When you faithfully declare the gospel, you are releasing something that carries God's own authority and power. You cannot see everything it is doing. But it is doing something. Trust the word and keep sowing.

The joy of the harvest. The psalmist knew the rhythm of gospel labor and gospel harvest: "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5–6). The sowing is sometimes painful. The waiting is sometimes long. But the harvest comes, and the joy it brings is unlike any other joy this side of heaven.

Jesus Himself described it to His disciples in terms that should make every witness's heart leap: "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest... I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor" (John 4:35, 38). The harvest is already there. The fields are already white. You are not building something from nothing; you are joining a harvest that the King of kings has already set in motion.

Ordinary Believers, Extraordinary God

Return with me, one final time, to the scattered believers of Acts 8. They did not have impressive credentials. They were not trained evangelists or professional clergy. They were frightened, displaced, ordinary people who had been driven from their homes by persecution—and as they scattered, "those who were scattered went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

No programs. No strategies. No marketing. Just ordinary people with an extraordinary message, sustained by an all-powerful God, going out into their world and speaking of what they had seen and heard.

The same God who sustained them sustains you. The same Spirit who filled them fills you. The same gospel that turned their world upside down can turn yours.

The obstacles are real. The encouragements are greater. Go out.

Reflect and Apply

For personal reflection:

- Which obstacle resonates most deeply with your own experience—fear, rejection, cultural pressure, or personal inadequacy? Be honest before God about this.
- Which of the four encouragements—the Spirit's power, Christ's presence, the Word's effectiveness, or the joy of the harvest—do you most need to receive and believe today?

For action this week:
Write out Isaiah 55:11 and Matthew 28:20 and place them somewhere you will read them every day this week. When the obstacles rise, return to these anchors and let them hold you steady.

Prayer:
Lord, I know the obstacles are real. I am not pretending they are small. But I also know that You are greater than every one of them. Fill me with Your Spirit. Sustain me with Your presence. Let Your Word do what it always does—accomplish Your purpose. And let me one day come home with shouts of joy, bringing the sheaves You prepared for me to bring. Amen.

Conclusion

Go: The Final Charge

"Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you."
— 2 Thessalonians 3:1

We have walked a long road together through the pages of this book. We began in the upper room of the Great Commission and traveled through the parables of the kingdom, the portraits of salt and light and keys, the content of the gospel message, the manner of its delivery, and the obstacles and encouragements that attend the work. It is time, now, to bring it all together into one final, clear, urgent word.

The Two Spheres, Renewed

Let this truth be fixed in your mind before you close this book: God has given us two spheres, and each one matters enormously.

The **holy community of the gathered church** is the place where disciples are formed, strengthened, corrected, and sent. It is the greenhouse of the kingdom—where the Word is faithfully taught, where worship is offered with reverence and joy, where love is practiced in the thousand small and large ways that make community real, where the broken are tended and the straying are restored. Guard this community. Invest in it. Pursue holiness within it. Pray for it. Love it. The church is not an institution to be managed; it is the body of the living Christ, and it is beautiful.

But the church is not the destination. It is the sending center.

The **world outside** is the field of witness—vast, dark, broken, and desperately in need of the light of the gospel. It is the field where the seed must be sown, the net cast, the keys carried and used. It is the wilderness where the shepherd goes to find the lost sheep. It is the highway and the hedge where the King's servants go with the urgent invitation of the feast. It is the place "outside the camp" where Jesus Himself went and where He calls us to follow Him.

These two spheres are not competitors. They are partners. A healthy, holy, well-equipped church produces bold, faithful, effective witnesses who go into the world and carry the gospel to places and people that the church's walls can never reach. And the fruit of that witness—people redeemed, lives transformed, new disciples formed—returns to enrich and expand the gathered community for the glory of God.

When both spheres are functioning as God designed them, the kingdom advances with a momentum that no darkness can withstand.

The Work Is Outside

We must be honest about a temptation that is particularly strong in a comfortable, consumer-oriented church culture: the temptation to expect that the work of evangelism will happen *inside* the building, on Sunday, through the pastor's mouth, while the congregation watches.

This is not the New Testament pattern. It has never been the New Testament pattern. And wherever this expectation has taken hold, the evangelistic impact of the church has withered.

The work of witness is done by *you*—in your office, your neighborhood, your family gathering, your gym, your coffee shop, your social media conversations that matter, your friendships with

people who do not know Christ. It is done Monday through Saturday, in the ordinary rhythms of your ordinary life, by the extraordinary presence of the Spirit of God living in you and working through you.

The pastor can equip you for this work. The gathered community can encourage you, pray for you, and hold you accountable. But no one can do the work for you. The commission is personal: "Go *and* make disciples." Go. *You.* Go.

Every Believer Is Called

You may have read this book and thought at some point, *This is inspiring, but it's really for the more extroverted, gifted, theologically trained believers. I'm just ordinary.*

Then you are exactly the kind of person God has always used most effectively for this work.

The fishermen of Galilee were ordinary. The scattered believers of Acts 8 were ordinary. The woman at the well—who became the first missionary to her Samaritan village—was ordinary and, by most social measures, disqualified. The slave woman Rhoda who answered the door in Acts 12 was ordinary. The Philippian jailer who, after his own conversion, apparently spoke to his entire household with enough conviction that they were all baptized that same night—he was ordinary.

God has always been in the business of using ordinary people, filled with an extraordinary Spirit, carrying an eternal message, to do what no amount of human cleverness or institutional strategy could accomplish. He is still in that business. And you—yes, *you*, ordinary believer, with all your imperfections and inadequacies and fears—are exactly the kind of person He is looking for.

The Darkness Will Not Win

Here is the word with which we close, and it is a word not of uncertainty but of triumph: the darkness will not overcome the light.

John said it first, in the opening verses of his Gospel, and the history of twenty centuries has proven it true again and again: the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not—*has not, cannot, will not*—overcome it (John 1:5). Every attempt to silence the gospel has produced the opposite of its intended effect. Every persecution has scattered the seed more widely. Every closed door has sent the message through a window. Every enemy of the gospel has, in the end, served the purposes of the One who is Lord of all.

The darkness you face in your world is real. The opposition is genuine. The cost of faithful witness is not trivial. But you are not fighting on the losing side. You are carrying the light of the One who is the resurrection and the life—and that light has never yet been extinguished.

So go, dear friend. Go outside the camp and bear the reproach of Christ. Go into the highways and hedges with the urgency of a servant who knows the feast is real and the hour is late. Go to the people in your daily life who are groping in the dark and have never yet heard a clear, faithful, loving presentation of the gospel. Go as a sower who trusts the seed. Go as a shepherd who loves the lost. Go as an ambassador who carries the King's own message. Go as a witness who has seen what grace can do and cannot stay silent about it.

The fields are white. The harvest is ready. The Lord of the harvest is with you.

Go.

A Closing Prayer and Benediction

Father, we ask with the apostle Paul that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored—through our lips, our lives, and our love for those who do not yet know Your name.

Make us wise in the way we walk toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let our speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that we may know how to answer each person who asks us for a reason for the hope we carry.

Send us out well-equipped and Spirit-filled, into the field You have placed around us. And when we are weary, remind us that the One who commissioned us is the One who keeps His promises—to the very end of the age.

To Him be all glory, in the church and in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

(2 Thessalonians 3:1; Colossians 4:5–6; Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 3:21)

Scripture Index of Key Passages

The following index lists the primary passages discussed or referenced in this book, organized by biblical book. Page references are not included in this edition, but each passage is listed with a brief notation of its thematic use in the text.

Exodus

- **Exodus 3:11–12** — Moses' sense of inadequacy and God's answer: "I will be with you" *(Chapter 10)*

Psalms

- **Psalm 30:5** — The rhythm of weeping and joy in kingdom labor *(Chapter 10, opening)*
- **Psalm 126:5–6** — Those who sow in tears shall reap with joy *(Chapter 10)*

Isaiah

- **Isaiah 55:11** — The effectiveness of God's Word; it shall not return empty *(Chapter 10)*

Matthew

- **Matthew 5:13** — Salt of the earth; distinctiveness and engagement *(Chapter 4)*
- **Matthew 5:14–16** — Light of the world; city on a hill; no baskets *(Chapter 5)*
- **Matthew 10:40** — Receiving and rejecting the messenger as receiving and rejecting Christ *(Chapter 10)*
- **Matthew 13:1–23** — Parable of the sower and soils *(Chapter 7)*

- **Matthew 13:31–33** — Mustard seed and leaven; small beginnings, great growth *(Chapter 7)*
- **Matthew 13:47–50** — The net cast into the sea; broad proclamation *(Chapter 7)*
- **Matthew 16:19** — Keys of the kingdom given to the church *(Chapter 6)*
- **Matthew 18:18** — Binding and loosing in church discipline *(Chapter 6)*
- **Matthew 28:18–20** — The Great Commission; go and make disciples *(Introduction; Chapter 3)*
- **Matthew 28:20** — Christ's presence always with His witnesses *(Chapter 10)*

Mark

- **Mark 16:15** — Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel *(Introduction; Chapter 2)*

Luke

- **Luke 10:25–37** — The Good Samaritan; love that crosses boundaries *(Chapter 7)*
- **Luke 14:23** — Go into the highways and hedges and compel people to come *(Chapter 7)*
- **Luke 24:47** — Repentance and forgiveness proclaimed to all nations *(Introduction; Chapter 2)*

John

- **John 1:4–5** — Life and light in Christ; light shines and darkness does not overcome it *(Chapter 5; Conclusion)*
- **John 4:29, 35, 38–39** — The woman at the well as witness; fields white for harvest *(Chapters 7, 10)*
- **John 8:12** — Jesus as light of the world *(Chapter 5)*
- **John 12:46** — Christ came as light so believers need not remain in darkness *(Chapter 5)*

- **John 15:20** — If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you *(Chapter 10)*

Acts

- **Acts 1:8** — The Spirit, power, and worldwide witness *(Introduction; Chapter 10)*
- **Acts 2:42** — The early church devoted to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer *(Chapter 1)*
- **Acts 4:29–31** — Prayer for boldness; the church's response to threats *(Chapter 9)*
- **Acts 8:1, 4** — Scattered believers preach the word as they go *(Chapters 3, 10)*
- **Acts 17:17, 30–31** — Paul reasoning with people; God commanding all to repent *(Chapters 8, 9)*
- **Acts 20:21** — Paul testifying of repentance toward God and faith in Christ *(Chapter 8)*

Romans

- **Romans 1:16** — The gospel as the power of God for salvation *(Chapter 8)*
- **Romans 1:18** — The wrath of God revealed against ungodliness *(Chapter 8)*
- **Romans 3:23** — All have sinned and fall short of God's glory *(Chapter 8)*
- **Romans 4:25** — Raised for our justification *(Chapter 8)*

1 Corinthians

- **1 Corinthians 1:23** — Christ crucified: stumbling block and folly *(Chapter 10)*
- **1 Corinthians 9:16** — Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel *(Chapter 6)*
- **1 Corinthians 14:26** — Let all things be done for building up *(Chapter 1)*

- **1 Corinthians 15:3–4** — The gospel delivered: Christ died, was buried, was raised *(Chapter 8)*

2 Corinthians

- **2 Corinthians 5:18–20** — Ministry of reconciliation; ambassadors for Christ *(Introduction)*
- **2 Corinthians 12:10** — When I am weak, then I am strong *(Chapter 10)*

Ephesians

- **Ephesians 3:21** — Glory to God in the church and in Christ Jesus *(Closing prayer)*
- **Ephesians 4:11–13** — Gifts given to equip the saints for ministry and build up the body *(Chapter 1)*

Philippians

- **Philippians 2:15–16** — Shining as lights in a crooked generation, holding out the word of life *(Chapter 3)*

Colossians

- **Colossians 4:3** — Praying for open doors for the gospel *(Chapter 2, application)*
- **Colossians 4:5–6** — Walk in wisdom toward outsiders; speech seasoned with salt *(Chapter 9; Closing prayer)*

1 Thessalonians

- **1 Thessalonians 2:2, 5–8** — Paul's bold, gentle, loving manner of witness *(Chapter 9)*

2 Thessalonians

- **2 Thessalonians 3:1** — Prayer that the word of the Lord may speed ahead *(Conclusion; Closing prayer)*

2 Timothy

- **2 Timothy 1:7–8** — Spirit of power, love, and self-control; do not be ashamed *(Chapter 9)*
- **2 Timothy 2:9** — The word of God is not bound *(Chapter 10)*

Hebrews

- **Hebrews 10:24–25** — Stir up one another; do not neglect meeting together *(Chapter 1)*
- **Hebrews 13:12–13** — Jesus suffered outside the gate; let us go to Him outside the camp *(Chapter 2)*

1 Peter

- **1 Peter 1:1** — Elect exiles of the Dispersion *(Chapter 3)*
- **1 Peter 2:9** — Royal priesthood, holy nation, proclaiming God's excellencies *(Chapter 3)*
- **1 Peter 2:12** — Honorable conduct among Gentiles *(Chapter 9)*
- **1 Peter 3:15** — Always be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you *(Chapter 3)*

1 John

- **1 John 1:5** — God is light; in Him is no darkness at all *(Chapter 8)*

A Brief Index of Historical Christian Quotes on Evangelism

The following quotations have been gathered from across the centuries of the Christian tradition. They represent the settled

conviction of the church in every age that the gospel must be carried outward, by ordinary believers, with boldness and love, into the world where the lost are found.

Clement of Alexandria *(c. 150–215)*

"It is not only the contemplation of the good that is required, but the doing of it."

A reminder that the knowledge of the gospel creates an obligation of action. The early church understood that receiving the good news meant carrying it forward.

John Chrysostom *(c. 347–407)*

"The sheep does not need to go to the shepherd. The shepherd seeks the sheep. So must we go to the wandering ones."

The Archbishop of Constantinople, preaching to one of the wealthiest and most comfortable churches of his age, consistently called believers to leave comfort and go to those who were lost and suffering.

John Wycliffe *(c. 1320–1384)*

"Evangelism is the chief work of the church. It is not confined to the pulpit; it belongs to every member of the body."

Wycliffe sent out his "poor priests"—laypeople trained to carry the gospel into rural England—long before the Reformation formalized the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

Martin Luther *(1483–1546)*

"God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does."

Luther's understanding of the priesthood of all believers meant that every Christian was a minister of the gospel to those around them. The gospel flows horizontally through the lives of ordinary believers into the lives of their neighbors.

John Calvin *(1509–1564)*

"When the church is not engaged in mission, she is not being true to herself... As long as there is one soul that does not know Christ, we are in debt to that soul."

Calvin's Geneva sent out trained missionaries throughout Europe, and he understood the local church as inherently outward-facing in its calling.

Matthew Henry *(1662–1714)*

"Those whom God has blessed in receiving the gospel are obligated to be a blessing in passing it on."

Henry's commentary on Acts reflects his conviction that the scattered church of Acts 8 was not a cautionary tale but a model—ordinary believers carrying the gospel wherever they went.

David Brainerd *(1718–1747)*

"I care not where I live or what hardships I go through, so that I can but gain souls for Christ. All my desire is the conversion of sinners, and all my hope is in the grace of God."

Brainerd's missionary journal, which shaped generations of missionaries including William Carey and Jim Elliot, breathes the spirit of someone who has understood that the work is always outside the camp.

Charles Spurgeon *(1834–1892)*

"Every Christian is either a missionary or an impostor."

Spurgeon, the great Victorian preacher, understood that the Great Commission was not addressed to ministers alone. He trained his Metropolitan Tabernacle congregation to be aggressive personal soul-winners in the streets and neighborhoods of London.

D.L. Moody *(1837–1899)*

"The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him."

Moody, himself a layman with limited formal education, became one of the most effective evangelists of the nineteenth century precisely because he believed that God could use ordinary people fully surrendered to His purposes.

Oswald Chambers *(1874–1917)*

"We are not here to win souls; we are here to be witnesses... The soul-winning is God's job; the witnessing is ours."

Chambers wisely distinguished between the believer's responsibility—faithful, obedient witness—and God's sovereign

work of bringing people to faith. The witness sows; God gives the harvest.

Jim Elliot *(1927–1956)*

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

Elliot, martyred by the Auca people of Ecuador in 1956, embodied the call to go outside the camp and bear Christ's reproach. His death, far from silencing the gospel, became the seed of one of the most remarkable missionary harvests of the twentieth century.

John Stott *(1921–2011)*

"The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no church; and where there is neither church nor mission, there is no Christianity."

Stott's lifelong commitment to biblical evangelism, expressed through both his writing and his personal practice, stands as a model for the kind of theologically grounded, evangelistically active Christianity that this book seeks to call forth.

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."
— Ephesians 3:20–21

About the Author



Timothy Downing is a missionary, author and pastor who has spent over a decade serving in Ecuador alongside his family. He writes at the intersection of theology, and everyday faith-offering biblical clarity for those navigating the hard and holy work of Christian living.

Other Books Written by Timothy

(Available on Amazon. Many titles are available in English or Spanish.)

Mission, Ministry & Practical Christian Resources

- Wisdom for the courageous shepherding of souls
- Spiritual Discipline: The tools of our faith
- The Crucible of Faith: Apostolic Wisdom in Times of Trial
- Immersed: Baptism guide for the Church of God
- The Covenant Garden: Biblical Guidance Through Marriage Season
- Honoring the Marital Bed
- The Unmoored Generation: The Real Reasons Many Youth Are Walking Away
- Forge the Man: Embracing Biblical Manhood Without Excuse

Creative, Cultural, Fiction & Folklore-Style:

- Whispers From The Obsidian Peaks: Phantasmagorical Fables from Ecuador's Forgotten Corners
- The Buckeye Grimoire: A Most Terrible and Wondrous Account of Spectral Manifestations in the Valley of Shadows Between Lake and River
- La Quinta Níspero (cookbook)

Commentary and reflection:

- All of The Flames Find Life in The Fire: A study of the book of Acts
- All of The Flames Find Life in The Fire: A study of the book of Acts Chapters 13-20
- All of The Flames Find Life in The Fire: A study of the book of Acts Chapters 21-28
- The Sacred Trust: A Commentary on First Timothy
- The Unquenchable Spirit: Fanning the Embers of Holy Passion: Commentary and Reflection over 2 Timothy
- The Crete Challenge: The Art of Countercultural Living: A Commentary and Reflection on Titus
- Steadfast in the Promise: A Journey Through 2 Peter
- Contending for the Faith: A commentary on Jude
- Written That You May Believe: A Commentary and Reflection on John's Gospel Part One John 1:1-18

Theology:

- Kindling the Flame: Rekindling Wesleyan Passion in a Lukewarm World
- Returning to the Roots: The Healthy Church as Established by Jesus in the New Testament
- Biblical Farming: Timeless Wisdom from Scripture for Modern Stewards of the Land

Godly Government:

- Divine Rule: Theological and Philosophical Underpinnings of a Christian Nation

- The Christian Inheritance We Cannot Afford to Lose: Reclaiming Western Civilization's Moral Legacy Before It's Too Late
- The Bill of Rights: Divine Foundations of American Liberty

Eloquent Authority: The Art of Persuasive Leadership

- The Divine Art of Conversation: A Reflection of God's Nature
- The Logos of Leadership: Embodying the Word in Guidance
- Thorns and Glory: Redefining Power in the Light of the Cross
- Make Clear Decisions
- Having Fierce Conversations: Igniting Transformation Through Divine Dialogue
- From Sinai to Synapses: Loving God With All Your Mind

Missionary Encouragement

- Go Where You Sow: Visit Your Missionaries
- Disciple!
- More Than Complicated: A Gospel Hope for Missionary Kids, Their Families, and the Churches That Love Them

Narrow Path Teachings Series (Discipleship curriculum)

- The Living Word Alone
- God
- Salvation from Sin by Grace Through Faith
- The Divinity and Lordship of Jesus Christ
- Born Again

- Sanctification
- Holiness of Life
- Separation From the World
- Clothed with Humility
- One In Christ