

## Paul—A Lifestyle Of Evangelism

Franklin Church of Christ  
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PM Worship

### Introduction:

Most of us consider Paul to have been one of the greatest evangelists of all times. Do you ever wish you could evangelize as Paul did? I think that if we do what we see Paul doing in scripture, we can be as successful as he was. Specifically regarding evangelism, take a look at **Acts 16**. In this chapter we find two examples of Paul's evangelism—Lydia, the seller of purple, and the Philippian Jailer. As we look at these two examples, we learn why Paul was successful. He had a lifestyle that catered to evangelism. Notice several aspects of Paul's evangelistic life in this chapter.

### Discussion:

- I. We must desire to save souls and strengthen others.
  - A. The very first key to leading an evangelistic life is about desire. You have to want to so much that it drives you to do whatever it takes to evangelize others. Paul desired to teach others, not because of the joy of teaching, but because of the joy of salvation that came with the teaching.
  - B. **I Corinthians 9:19-23** and **Romans 1:13-15** both demonstrate Paul's overwhelming desire. In **Acts 16**, we cannot miss this desire. His first thought when coming into a town was to find people to teach. His desire while in jail was to teach others. The desire to help others go to heaven was overwhelming in Paul. That is the key. You have to see it, not as just teaching others, but as helping people go to heaven. Do you desire to help people get to heaven?
- II. We must know what to teach.
  - A. We cannot be evangelists unless we know what to teach. In **Acts 16:10**, Paul and his companions recognized they were to go into Macedonia and preach the gospel. In **Acts 16:13-14**, Paul spoke to the women by the riverside. In **Acts 16:32**, he spoke the word of the Lord to the jailer and his household. Paul knew what to teach.
  - B. Understanding this point leads us to two different conclusions:
    1. I must know the gospel message. I need to become familiar with the Bible. I need to know how to give an answer for the hope that is within me (**I Peter 3:15**). I must follow the advice that Paul gave Timothy in **II Timothy 3:14-15**, continuing in the word that will make me wise for salvation and help me pass that message on to others.
    2. I must have a plan for presenting the gospel message. In **I Corinthians 9:19-23**, Paul demonstrated planning. He had considered the various kinds of people with whom he would come in contact and he had considered various ways in which he would behave around them. You need to develop a plan for prospecting, contacting and teaching others.
  - C. Second to lack of desire, this is probably the greatest obstacle people have to evangelism. They fear that they do not know enough to teach. But allow me to say, if you have the hunger and desire to teach, you will not allow this to get in your way, you will learn and plan what to teach.
- III. We must have targets in mind.
  - A. When Paul and his companions arrived in Philippi, one of the first things they did was to go to the riverside on the Sabbath (**Acts 16:13**). They knew that religiously minded Jews would be meeting there for prayer. Part of Paul's plan was targeting this kind of person.
  - B. We need to give consideration to the kinds of people who will be most receptive and we need to make plans to go after them. We need to take stock of the people with whom we come in contact, developing specific targets for planting and watering the seed. Can I tell you the number one target—people who visit our services. We must not view our guests as simply observers. We must see the great spiritual interest they have to sacrifice their time to visit with us. We should target them and develop plans to plant and water the seed with them.
- IV. But recognize that everyone is a contact.
  - A. We must also recognize that Paul did not limit himself to his targets. He recognized that contacts come from everywhere. Who would have imagined that the Jailer would pay attention to anything that Paul said. Yet, he was converted. Could there be anyone more different from Lydia than this Jailer? Yet, his response was, in the end, the same as hers.

- B. If we are going to have a lifestyle of evangelism, we must learn that contacts may come even in the oddest, most unexpected places—be ready! We must never be so focused on our targets that we neglect the innumerable contacts that surround us every day. If Paul made contact in a prison, might we make contacts in the places where we go? We must be ready.
- V. Understand that people are not always at the same level of receptivity.
- A. Consider this Philippian Jailer, for some time that evening he heard Paul and Silas praying and singing. No doubt this made some impression upon him. But while he listened to their singing, he was not receptive enough to obey (**Acts 16:25**).
- B. However, when the earthquake occurred, something clicked with the Jailer. His receptivity level skyrocketed. He immediately came to Paul and wanted to know what to do to be saved. I do not know exactly what contributed to this increased level of receptivity. What I do know is that the first seeds were planted while Paul and Silas prayed and sang. But he was not receptive until later. We must keep that in mind, because it leads us to our next two points.
- VI. Do not be discouraged when many are unreceptive.
- A. Paul went to the riverside on the Sabbath because he knew there would be Jews gathered there in prayer. While there, he spoke to women, plural (**Acts 16:13**). But only one responded—Lydia (**Acts 16:14**). Paul could be discouraged by that, but he was not. I know that because of the way he acted in the prison.
- B. At the same time, what we just noticed about the Jailer should help us refrain from discouragement. Remember that our job is only to plant and water (**I Corinthians 3:6**). God gives the increase. Someone may not be receptive now—as the Jailer was not at first. But you have no idea what “earthquakes” will come and where today’s seed planting will lead. Keep planting.
- VII. Live in such a way that when they become receptive, they know to whom they can turn for help.
- A. Why did the Philippian Jailer come to Paul and Silas to learn how to be saved? Because the way they lived impressed the Jailer. When Paul and Silas were singing and praying in **Acts 16:25**, they were not trying to be manipulative. They were not forcing their prayers and songs because they viewed it as a “good evangelistic moment.” They were simply living their lives as Christians should, counting it all joy when they encountered trials (**James 1:2**).
- B. Paul and Silas were not praying and singing in order to be seen by men. But they were not afraid to be seen by men while praying and singing. In **Matthew 10:32-33**, Jesus said we are to confess Him before men. We need to live in such a way that we confess Jesus before others. They should see the godly life in us. They should see us respond to God in our lives. When good things happen, they should see us give praise to God. When we are happy, they should see us sing to God [cf. **James 5:13**]. God, His Word and His church should be a natural part of our conversation. We should recommend God’s church to people. When people want to know what we enjoy doing, worship should be mentioned. When people want to know why we are happy, God’s blessing should be named. When people want to know why we have certain abilities, God’s grace should be mentioned. When people want advice, God’s Word should be used. If we live in this way, not manipulatively, but naturally, when the earthquakes happen to our friends and neighbors, they will know to whom they can turn. Paul’s life granted him opportunities to evangelize and we need to live in that way also.

### Conclusion:

We need to mirror Paul’s lifestyle of evangelism. When we do, we will have his success. But it all begins with desire. Do you desire to help people go to heaven? If you desire that, valuing it above all other works in life, then these other issues will come naturally to you. You will be driven to learn and plan how to teach. You will be driven to target people for teaching and yet stay open to the myriad contacts you may make in everyday places. You will not be discouraged, but encouraged to keep teaching and you will plant the seed and pray that God give the increase in receptive hearts down the line. What is your greatest desire?