

EVANGELISM

by Bonnie Vereide

A precious sister in the Lord and
faithful servant of Jesus Christ. An
anointed elder, wife, mother, and
grandmother!!

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"Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:3)

And now look at the preceding verse: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established, and then the people shall say, "Come ye, and let us go up."

I was sitting talking to an old-order pastor, and, with a rather critical intent, he said, "Where is your evangelism?" I thought back to what are classified as "mission days," I thought back to the Bible school where I used to teach, where I trained those who would go out to win others to Christ. I thought of the plaza meetings we sometimes held, where we played Gospel music to draw crowds to a little plaza area in a small barrio, where they did not have theatre or other entertainment and would come drawn by the music, where we could then have what we called an "evangelistic service" and invite people to receive Jesus Christ. And occasionally a stone or two would be thrown. I knew what that old-order pastor meant when he said, "Where is your evangelism?" because that's what he meant: Being out in the plaza somewhere, or on a street corner, or knocking on doors with tracts. Many years ago, and I don't remember exactly how Brother Sam put it, he said that we are not called to that kind of evangelism. And he was right, because so much of that "evangelism" is the

work of our religious flesh, seeking to drag people into the Kingdom.

I heard a prophetic word this morning: The cry, "What must I do to be saved?" And the spirit of prophecy gave the answer, "Be yoked to Me." I thought of what that pastor meant when he asked me the question, "Where is your evangelism?" and then I thought back to the time when I made the only trip I have made to our end-time farms in Colombia, back in about 1974, when some of us flew down in a small plane to that nation, and then went to the little town of Florencia and boarded an airplane I was not sure would hold together until we landed at the strip for the farm La Cocha. We then got in a kind of little rocky boat, a little dug-out, and went across the river to La Cocha farm. At that time I only visited several of the farms. The river was not populated by farms up and down it. But I had one singular impression as our boat neared the shore. I looked at the huts that were built along the shore of that river, and, brethren, as I looked I could not tell the home of an American from the home of a Colombian. But when I was what you would call a "missionary" in the established sense of accepted evangelism, my home was very different from the homes of my brethren. There was something in my heart that leaped up as I saw those huts all alike, built together, and I could not tell one nation from another. I entered into that humble tabernacle where all my brethren together ate the same kind of food and one color of skin did not have a better diet than another. I thought, "God, this is what my heart always longed to see." Now, brethren, just because a word has come forth that we are not called to that which is considered as "evangelism," does not mean that in the fullest sense of the word we do not have that pure working of God's Gospel ministry.

I would like to take you to the Scripture to consider what God has to say in that very realm, because, first of all, there is no word EVANGELISM in

the whole Bible! The closest word that we have in the New Testament to the word EVANGELISM is the word EVANGELIST, and this is only used three times. There is no word EVANGELISM; there is the word EVANGELIST. The place where it is used that is most familiar to you is Ephesians, Chapter 4, in which there is the list of the gifts of the ministry to the Church. The EVANGELIST is one of those.

The first reference to EVANGELIST you will find if you turn to Acts 21, verse 8. "And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him," Philip, the evangelist. You all remember the story in Acts, Chapter 8, when Philip, who had been set apart in the ministry of the Church as a deacon to serve food, was sent on the road to Gaza. There he found an Ethiopian eunuch homeward bound from Jerusalem, reading a scroll of Isaiah and not understanding what he read. When Philip asked him if he understood, he said, "How can I?" and Philip ascended into his chariot and explained about whom the Scripture spoke, one Jesus Christ. That man believed and was baptized. Philip was not serving as a deacon in that ministration; he was serving as an evangelist, preaching the Word. In this he was an evangelist.

Paul was called to be an apostle. When he was sent to Lystra or Derbe and preached the Gospel, he was being an evangelist. The only other reference to EVANGELIST is found in 11 Timothy, Chapter 4, verse 5. "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." Timothy was called to teach. He was given order for the Church. He was also told to do the work of an evangelist.

These three Scripture passages are the only translations in English that are close to the term that has

been so frequently used in recent centuries, EVANGELISM. All of these refer to a person and his ministrations of the word.

There is a Greek word from which EVANGELISM is taken, although, again, that word does not appear in the New Testament. That Greek word, EUAGGELION, is the word for GOSPEL. The root of "it" is in the word for evangelist, EUAGGELISTES, and the root of it is also in a verb, EUAGGELIZO. You can hear the word EVANGEL in all of these words, but none of those in the New Testament is translated EVANGELISM. The first one is translated GOSPEL; the second one is translated EVANGELIST. The third one is the verb, and it is usually translated in the King James Scriptures, "to preach the Gospel." In other words, GOSPEL, or GOOD NEWS, as you know it to be, is the root of all three of these words. So we need to know to what the word EVANGEL, or GOSPEL, refers. Is it just taking someone by the lapel and saying, "Don't you want to be born again and not go to hell?" Is that the Gospel ministry?

In the Greek world this was the technical term for the news of victory. That is what the Gospel is, the news of victory. Every man wants to be in on a victory. The pagan world used the word GOSPEL, not just the New Testament world. The pagan world used the word GOSPEL with reference to their emperor: In the Imperial Court, to announce the birth of the emperor, his ascension to the throne, or his ordinances, all these were part of the GOSPEL in the pagan world sense. But none of this is news of victory to us.

Now in the New Testament this word GOSPEL appears 76 times, and it is far more complete than the beginning experience of being "born again." The Gospel is referred to as the Gospel of the Kingdom. It is referred to as the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or, of Christ, or, of the Lord Jesus. There is reference to the Gospel of God.

There is reference to the Gospel of the Grace of God. And there is even a classification which Paul makes when he refers to his own ministry to the Gentile world as the Gospel of Uncircumcision. That reference you will find in Galatians Chapter 2, verse 7. When Paul went up to Jerusalem he explained to what God had called him, and when he referred to the results of his visitation to the Church Council he said, "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed' unto me, as the gospel of' the circumcision was unto Peter" then they did not add anything more. The Gospel of the Uncircumcision, the Good News, to those who were not in the natural man circumcised flesh.

Now for much of the religious world, and in this day of radio and television there is much that is "religious" on both. There is a lot of so-called Evangelism, the preaching of the Gospel, that centers around one particular statement which Jesus made to one inquiring man, on one dark night, when he came to visit Jesus in the shadow of night because of his reputation. You know who that man was, Nicodemus. And you know what Jesus told him that he could not understand. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again. Now, for much of so-called "Christendom" today this is the totality of the Gospel, and to preach the Gospel is to preach this verse again and again and again. I am certain that some of you have come out of old-order churches where you were exhorted to be "born again" Sunday after Sunday after Sunday. The church was called "evangelistic" with a ministry of "evangelism." After you had been saved, you wondered what else there was, because the same word was preached to you again and again and again.

In the whole four Gospels there is a total of 89 chapters, and of those chapters, in only one does Jesus say, "Ye must be born again." That is not the totality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the people of God, we are not called to the limitations of the religious world and its

understandings of what God wills, but we are called to a full proclamation of the Gospel, the Gospel of God, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, the full and total Gospel, which takes a person beyond the Brazen Altar, wherewith his sins are dealt and he begins to move in life. Of all peoples on the earth we are called to a fulness of Gospel in a measure you will search far and wide to find elsewhere.

Now I understand quite first-hand what is in the minds of many of our brethren who stagger around the Brazen Altar and do not even know there is a Spirit with which to be baptized, but do know very well that one verse, "Ye must be born again." Their endeavour is to please God and, in some way perhaps, to become satisfied with their own spiritual achievements by a kind of evangelism. When I first came to Jesus Christ as a teenager, I felt much of my life had passed away because I was fifteen before I knew Him. I came to know Him in a classmate. The religious traditions in the city in which I lived were very circumscribed, and I did not stay in the liturgical church in which my roots were, but I mingled with people who knew what it was to be "born again." We believed that there was some kind of holiness if we would give tracts to people. We did not just hand them to people. We had a special little program. We had colored paper, and we rolled those tracts up in the colored paper and twisted both ends. We called these "tract bombs." As I would go on my way to high school, after I got off the train and was walking the long blocks of the downtown city in which I lived, I would toss a "bomb" here or there with some kind of a prayer that God would bless that bomb and somebody somewhere might find it and read the Gospel, or I would sneak into a public lavatory, because I had no boldness in Christ to go up and declare Christ, and hide a tract in the lavatory, and hope that in some way I was fulfilling the Great Commission. I do not

know how many of you have walked in such a way. This has been what we thought of as Evangelism and the ministry of the Gospel. And we could, at the end of the day, think, "Now I am evangelizing." I do not know if any tract found its way into any hand, but I know that that is not the nature of Christ. He did not run into secluded places and whisper a word and run away again, or toss something at people and hurry out of the village. He stood there and confronted them with the life that was in Him. The Gospel ministry is far more than the repetition of one verse, John, Chapter 3, "Ye must be born again."

You will find that there is a verb, as I have already mentioned, that has the root GOSPEL in it. It is not translated "to evangelize." It is translated "to preach the Word" or "to preach the Gospel" in the New Testament. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the same sense of the word that is in the New Testament word was used. It meant "a bringing news of victory," for the Gospel is news of victory. To preach means to bring news of victory, even if it is the kind of preaching that has a knife or a sword that is turning round about in the midst of us, for that is victory over the flesh. Involved in this kind of preaching, which we find in the New Testament, involved in this which is truly the message of the Good News is far more than "Ye must be born again." Even in the Old Testament, when it was translated into the Greek and this verb was used which means "to preach the good news" it meant, in addition to and carrying on the fulness of salvation, "restoration to Israel, the new creation of the world, the inauguration of the eschatological age." That is what it meant to the Hebrews to preach the news of victory. It is far more encompassing to use than getting someone to the Brazen Altar. The Scriptural revelation is that the good news is to be preached, and it is more encompassing than simply getting people "born again." I have noticed that in the last

two decades that many people seem to be getting born and un-born.

There is an Escape-Hell-and-sign-up-for-Heaven deal that is offered as the preaching of the gospel. We have had a "soft-sell" product. We have had meetings where people are told, "Now every head bowed, every eye closed. Anybody who wants to receive Jesus, slip up your hand while nobody's looking." What kind of an army would come forth with nobody looking? God is calling for men to stand and be counted. That which is called "Evangelism" is so often a crass, cheap, shoddy kind of a Gospel that has little relevance to the New Testament preaching of the Word.

The Good News demands **denial of self** and the Kingdom of God's life. It demands that the whole counsel of God be preached. That is true preaching of the word, or evangelizing. That word brings us to salvation. It brings us to the Passover. That Gospel message is the word that cleanses us. It is the word that leads us into the Holy Place and brings us into our Pentecost. It is the word that feeds and nourishes and matures us at the Table of Shewbread. It is the word that brings us to full surrender at the Golden Altar of Incense. It is the word that points us through the veil to ultimately take us into Tabernacles. And it is the word that shall ultimately unite us to God, all in all. That is the Gospel! That is the Good News! That is the message that we preach and proclaim; Evangelism, if you will, in its truest sense.

There is another verb for preaching in the New Testament that is used even more than this word that has EVANGEL in the root. It means "to cry or proclaim aloud." But the word we are speaking about that is translated "to preach the Gospel" is used 51 times. Some of the instances of it, that you might see what "evangelizing" is, to transliterate the word, are found in a few of the verses I am going to give you.

First of all, Galatians 1: 16. When Paul speaks of his call and being set apart from his mother's womb, he says, "To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen . . ." That verb has EVANGEL in it. "To reveal his son in me that I might preach him..." How is he going to preach him? By the revelation of that Son in himself. It was not just a cheap word off his lips; he knew that God had called him to reveal the Son in him, that he might bring that good news of victory to the heathen.

In Matthew 11:5 and in Luke 7:22 we have the references to the poor having the good news preached to them. There has been, in the twentieth century, what has been called a "Social Gospel" to lift up the naturally poor, but, brethren, the greatest poverty is the spiritual poverty that is all up and down this land. When the good news of the victory in Jesus Christ is preached, those who need that word are the poor, for the greatest poverty is to have no possession in the Spirit.

In Luke, Chapter 9, verse 6, we have that word once again, telling of the ministry of the twelve as Jesus sent them out by twos. "And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere." I have made an observation that many that consider evangelism, in their very limited understanding of it, would not allow for any healing signs to follow that ministry because they consider that those spiritual signs are of the devil. But the preaching of the apostles was accompanied with signs following.

In Luke, Chapter 20, verse 1, that same verb is used. "And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders." Here the preaching of the Gospel, the good news, was accompanied with a teaching ministration. Instruction was given with the gospel, and it was, in the technical sense of the root of that verb, evangelizing.

In Acts, Chapter 8, Peter and John went to a new little Body that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Philip had carried the Gospel to Samaria. We are told in verse 25 that, after Peter and John had laid hands on the believers that they might receive the Holy Ghost, "They, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans." Now we are told that they preached to or evangelized these Samaritans. They were not getting them born again. They were already born again. They were not bringing them into the Holy Place. They had already laid hands on them and they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, but they were still preaching to them, or evangelizing them. This shows that, in the strictest sense of the word, evangelizing cannot be limited to simply getting people to the Brazen Altar. The preaching of the Gospel was done to those who were already in the Holy Place, giving them further good news of victory, for, brethren, there is a whole journey to take.

In Acts 16: 9, 10, we have the call of Paul to go over to Macedonia through the dream. He saw a man, and in verse 9 we have the cry of that man, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them." But be mindful that the preaching of the Gospel, or evangelizing, is not just to get people born again. The preaching of the gospel was to those who were already born again, to some who were already filled with the Spirit. The preaching of the Gospel, in its fullest sense, will take us all the way into the fulness of what God has called us to. The fulfillment of that preaching will not have been completed until we are all the way there.

I do not know about you, but I have not seen any move of God in this day where there is more preaching of

the Gospel, or, by the root meaning of the word, evangelizing, than in this move. I have yet to see people who sit for three to eight, and sometimes longer, hours under the preaching of the Word. "Where is your evangelism?" Brethren, one portion of evangelism is in the conventions. Another portion of it is being lived out in the jungles of Colombia and in the northern reaches of the Yukon, and wherever God has a people to whom He is giving His Word line upon line that they might walk therein.

In John, Chapter 17, verse 21, in the prayer of our Lord, He made this request to the Father: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. " The fullest preaching of the Word, of the Gospel, of the Good News of the victory, is when God's people become one. Then the world may believe. We hear about the struggles, but there are little embryos, portions of that one Man all across the earth, coming into a oneness of a love that we sing about in the song given to Brother Sam before he was taken from us. For, "There is a path that no fowl knoweth," and we are going to come into a love that so binds us together that we shall not be separated. And, brethren, that is the fullness of evangelism of which many so-called evangelists know little. As we become one corporate Man the Gospel is declared. The Gospel is preached by our being one: one in being delivered; one in believing; one in serving; one in obedience; one in accepting the cross; one in laying down our lives, that Christ might come forth again in this great end-time.

In John, Chapter 6, verse 44, is this word: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Brethren, we are not going to have to take people by the scruff of the neck and get them to come to Jesus when He comes forth in a people who are one. He will be lifted up

and He will draw people unto Himself. The Word will be manifested in flesh. It will not just be something that is spoken with the lips, but declared in life. He is going to be seen in a people, the Son standing upon the earth, the Light of the world, to draw men unto Him.

Ancient Israel was to be the evangelist to the nations. You know their call was to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles. God was calling them to be one nation, His Son, that the nations might come up and know the Lord through them. They went into a land God gave them. They, to a measure, established life under God's principles, but they failed. The light went out, but One came out of the nation, and He became the Light of the whole world, and we are in Him. That is why this verse in Isaiah, Chapt.2:2, makes sense: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. "Be drawn unto that mountain, drawn unto that people, drawn unto that Son. There is a people that, even in so slight a measure, is beginning to fulfil that call to lighten the nations, in company with all the saints of the ages who desire it. For the heart, out of which that cry issued, that we might be one, includes all the saints of the ages.

Brethren, I do not know what rumors and reports and bad reputations you are given of the farms, but I would like to report that there is life, there is glory, there is a strong Man coming forth. People are becoming one. They are loving one another enough to die to their flesh. They are loving one another enough to become honest with one another, and to give up their own ways.

When I was down in the jungles of Colombia, there were only five farms along that river bank. I understand that there are more than a dozen there now. Talk about evangelism. You cannot keep the hungry away from food, where the Bread of Life is truly offered.

If we will let God do this work in us, there shall be a light. There shall be a mountain to which the nations can flow up. That is why Satan is raging. He has seen what is happening. That is why he even tried to set up his demonized counterfeit in Guyana a few years ago. He knows where the threat is, even if you, in some corporate discouragement, fail to see that you are a threat to Satan's power. He is not shaken by a Gospel that says, "Just please come to Jesus. You will get all these blessings, and you will feel so good, if you will just come to Jesus." He is not shaken by that kind of approach, and that is not the Gospel in the holy sense in which it is outlined in the Word of God. But brethren, he is shaken by strong sons of God, the army of the Lord that is being mustered and is coming forth and is going to stop compromising. That is what shakes him.

There is a full preaching of the Word that is beginning to come forth, evangelism in its true sense, in its Scriptural sense, and it is bringing forth light and life. There is a cry in Isaiah, Chapter 2, verse 5: "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord that the nations might flow up, that they might see God, that He might be made known in all the glory of His calling, that the whole earth might be redeemed by Him. Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord. That is the truest evangelism on the face of the earth, that the nations might flow up. Amen.