



30 Days of Devotions
EVANGELISM EMPHASIS MONTH
September 2017



September 15
Rev. Garison Taylor
John 21:6

“He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”

Jesus calls Peter (and Andrew), telling them that he will make them fishers of men (Matthew 4:18-22). Immediately, Peter leaves his former life of fishing behind (nets, boats) and follows Jesus. For the next three years, he sits under Jesus’ teaching, witnesses him perform miracles and heal the sick, and is sent by Jesus to do as he had witnessed and learned. Yet, Peter misses the point.

After Jesus dies, Peter flees. He is fearful of being persecuted, fearful of what others will think, fearful that he had believed a lie and that Jesus wasn't the Messiah. When Jesus resurrected, Peter still didn't quite understand his original call, “I will make you fishers of men.” So he goes back to the only life he knew, fishing. Peter, a professional fisherman is out all night and caught nothing, until Jesus tells him to cast his net on the other side.

Later, Peter would encourage believers to live amongst those who don't know Jesus, in spite of persecution and possible death so that “they (non-believers) may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).

This is evangelism. God must be at work first if we are going to be fishers of men. He is the one who gets all the glory just as he did for the great catch in John 21. We must not fear what others will think, say, or do, rather we are to trust God in his call, go, and live as example for what God has done. We don't necessarily have to go to the other side of the world, but we might just need to go to the other side of the street.

September 16
By Rev. Nathan Scholl
Matthew 13:44-46

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

I have been watching a show on the history channel recently called *The Curse of Oak Island*. It is a story of men and women throwing their lives and their fortunes at a hole in the ground in Nova Scotia hoping to find treasure. So far, since 1795, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent and six people have died looking for this theoretical buried treasure. Total treasure found: none. Massive effort, no return.

The gospel is a treasure, but it is exactly the opposite from Oak Island. The gospel message is often overlooked and ignored. Jesus Christ died for our sins to save us from God’s wrath, and he gives us his righteousness that restores us to right relationship with God. Been there heard that, right? But this is a treasure that requires no effort to earn (it is received by faith) and yet it gives massive returns. This gospel message is enough to change lives and the entire world. This is the good news and it never stops making us rich! It is not hyperbole to claim that all our problems are solved by this simple gospel. We must never stop digging into and sharing the gospel treasure we have been given. Jesus shows us in this parable where true riches are found. The gospel is a treasure worth giving all we have to gain it.

September 17
Rev. Brooks Pipher
Ephesians 1:4

“even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him”

If you take a few moments now to consider the abundance of God’s love for you, believer, in the gospel, you will, I know, be astounded. I can state this confidently because the gospel is of infinite richness to astound, no matter how many times you’ve read or heard of God’s very love for you.

Consider again, believer...

- God’s particular love for you from “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).

- The Father's overflowing love for you, enough to give his Son to go to a cross for you (Luke 22:42).
- The Son's true love for you, love enough to die for your past and future sin, and he lives now in love, interceding for you (John 14:19, Romans 8:34).
- The Holy Spirit loving you enough to work in your heart for repentance and faith when you were rebellious in trespasses and sins (John 16:13, Ephesians 2:1).

These are wonderful truths to consider! And every time I read of these things or hear them preached, I cannot help but think "Me? Me? God did these things for me?" And with joy, believer, I realize "Yes! For me and for you." Suddenly our sharing the gospel with others is put into perspective. Because we realize that it's not the goodness of one's life, or the softness of one's countenance that allows for faith in Christ, but it's the great working of God on a person's behalf. As you reflect on these things, let them be an encouragement to share the gospel of salvation by repentance and faith with all whom you meet.

September 18

Rev. Justin Westmoreland

John 20:21

"As the Father sent me, I am sending you."

Jesus' work is gospel. He fully completed all of his work on behalf of his people to forgive and constitute their righteousness so they could all be at peace with his Father. After finishing everything he was sent to do, and being sent to the tomb and then rising from the dead by his power, John 20:21 tells us that Jesus sent. Sent to do what? To tell the gospel.

The gospel is done; the telling has commenced. Jesus' work is gospel. Christians are sent to proclaim the gospel and pray for others to receive the Holy Spirit's application of the gospel.

This is evangelism, a fancy church word for "telling the gospel to others and asking them to believe it." We are sent, not to be the savior, but to proclaim and point skeptics to our savior and Jesus "shows up" and gives people ears to hear the gospel (Matthew 11:15).

Following John 20:21, immediately after the resurrected Jesus' sent his disciples, they went and told the gospel (that Jesus is alive again) to a friend, Thomas. Thomas didn't believe at first, but then Jesus appeared. As those who are sent by the Sent One, we go and tell the gospel. Skeptics, like Thomas, will believe the gospel when Jesus appears to them in conjunction with your telling. Go and tell. In John 20:29, Jesus promises blessing to those who will hear and believe in him through those who are sent. You and I live in the age of evangelism.

September 19
Rev. Brian Howard
Matthew 10:5b-7

Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Upon hearing that her daughter planned on raising money for a yearly mission trip to Florida (seven hours away) a friend of ours exclaimed, "Heavens! Is Daytona Beach the only place for lost people these days?"

With no offense to the many excellent long-distance missions trips our youth can choose from, there is always time to be a missionary in the context of our daily routine. In Matthew 10, Jesus tells his disciples to minister "as you go." He wanted them to minister right next door in Jewish Galilee rather than traveling further abroad.

"Proclaim as you go" takes on additional meaning in your daily sphere of influence. The grocery store, coffee shop, the gym, and more are all fertile grounds for gospel conversations. If only we'll be attuned to the opportunities!

Like many who grew up in church, I've handed out my share of tracts and knocked on many doors. But my most fruitful conversations came when I prayed for the opportunity to talk about Jesus and asked the Lord to show me the people he sent my way. God is eager for us to share Jesus Christ. When we show a willing heart and a little bit of margin in our daily schedule, he often surprises us.

September 20
Rev. David Griffin
Zechariah 4:10

"For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel."

The Old Testament prophet Zechariah encouraged God's old covenant people not to despise "the day of small things," as they labored under discouraging circumstances while rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem following their Babylonian captivity. The people's labor and Zechariah's words have their fulfillment, of course, in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For us who live under the new covenant, such "small things" (and what God can do through them) was witnessed by me during our church's VBS this past June. Each summer I have the joy of teaching the Bible lesson to the younger elementary-age children. The theme for this year's VBS was the Reformation, and each day we focused

on one of the five Solas. As I was teaching *Solus Christus*, I drew a diagram on the whiteboard and explained the gospel to this class of precious children: how sinful man is separated from our holy God and how Christ alone was able to break through the barrier and draw near to God on our behalf – and thus how, if we put our faith in Christ alone, we too may draw near to God and dwell with Him forever.

On the following Sunday, the grandmother of one of the children in the class sought me out to share with me how her grandson was able to explain to her what I had told the class – the good news of salvation for this little boy who had put his faith in Christ alone. Let us not despise the day of small things, even the retelling of the gospel to a class of young children! Soli Deo Gloria!

September 21
Rev. Stephen Richardson
Song of Solomon 5:9

*“What is your beloved more than another beloved, O most beautiful among women?
What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you thus adjure us?”*

I'll never forget the influence of a man I met in my teen years. He was an old man and we had absolutely nothing in common. But he was staying in our home, and over the course of that time I realized he had something I didn't; and I wanted it. I was drawn to him. I could tell somehow that he had been with Jesus (Acts 4:12), and I began to want to know Him as he did.

That's what happened here. The daughters had seen something unusual in the bride. She was lovesick. She was so taken with her beloved that they had to know more. And so they asked her to tell them about Him. “What is your beloved” they asked, “*more than another beloved?*” The Song is an analogy. They were asking the bride of Christ about Jesus (1 Peter 3:15). So she told them about Him, and it led to this tremendous question: “Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?”

This should happen as a result of our presence in this world. We would like our neighbors to come asking this question. But if that is going to happen they need to see something peculiar in our lives. There needs to be a savour of life about us: evidence that we have been with Jesus. Our message to them must be such that they would want to know not just about our church or our denomination but Him.