

# What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

A Christian Is A Preacher



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

# A Christian Is A Preacher

Learn that preaching is every Christian's work and some important principles in preaching

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## Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

**Study Number:** DGW107

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**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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**What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?**

# A Christian Is A Preacher

What does it mean to be a Christian? Being a Christian means a great deal. Fortunately, God has given us all the information we need to know about what being a Christian really means. As we study His saving message, we discover that a Christian is a preacher.

## *Preaching Is The Work Of Every Christian*

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To engage in “evangelism” is to proclaim the saving message of God to others. To “preach” is equated with the work of a herald (whose job it would be to publish the decrees and announcements of a king, for everyone to hear). Therefore, the evangelist (gospel preacher) has the work of publishing God’s message to everyone he possibly can, so that they will know the decrees of the great and awesome God!

### **Who must preach**

God could have chosen to use any number of avenues to publish His message. In fact, He has used a number of methods in the past. He could have chosen to directly communicate with each individual (like He did with Adam, Abraham, Moses, etc.). He could have chosen to communicate with each person

through visions and dreams (as He did with Peter in Acts 10). He could have given every person the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (as He gave to the apostles). But, He didn’t.

I don’t always know why God has chosen to do things in the ways He has chosen to do them. However, I do trust in the ways of God – knowing that His ways are much higher than my ways and His thoughts are much higher than my thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). And, as I search the Scriptures, I learn that God has revealed His will through the words that were written by the apostles and prophets (who wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit). Now, when we read the things they have written (in the pages of the Bible), we can know what the will of God is (see Ephesians 3:3-5 and Ephesians 5:17). Then, I also learn that God expects those who have learned His message to take that message and publish it to others.

2 Timothy 2:2 is one passage that helps us see this way that God has designed for His saving message and His will to be spread. “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Paul addresses this statement to Timothy. Timothy had been taught the gospel of Jesus Christ in the past. Now, he had the God-given responsibility to teach this same message to others. Then, those who heard that message from Timothy would also have the God-given responsibility to tell other people this same saving message. This is the work of evangelism in a “nutshell”!

Now, let’s continue to think about Timothy and observe Paul’s instructions to Him later in the letter. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 says, “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Timothy was an evangelist – and was instructed to do the work of an evangelist. By all indications, Timothy was a “full-time evangelist.” This designation is simply used in reference to those who make their living by the gospel and have a greater amount of time to devote to the work of evangelism. However, the work of Timothy to preach the word and to be diligent in doing so (whether it is accepted or rejected) is no different from the basic responsibility of all those who are Christians.

Every Christian has this same responsibility to be a preacher of God’s message. This work is not *just* for a select few people who are given financial support to accomplish this work (like Paul was on many occasions, see Philippians 4:15-16). Instead, every Christian (having learned the word of God) has the responsibility of 2 Timothy 2:2. Consider two passages to illustrate this truth.

(1) Acts 8:4. “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” This passage describes the work of Christians who were scattered due to the persecution in Jerusalem. Notice that these were not just paid evangelists. In fact, I don’t know whether there were any paid evangelists at this particular time. Rather, these were individual Christians who were dedicated to taking God’s saving message with them wherever they went. Was God pleased with their work? Is this an example to be imitated? Absolutely! And, because of their work, the gospel spread beyond Jerusalem (see Acts 11:19-26).

(2) Hebrews 5:12-14. In this passage, the Hebrew writer rebuked those who should have grown enough to be at a point they could be teachers. However, they were still in need of someone to teach them the first principles of God’s word. Clearly, then, we can conclude that God expects each Christian to be growing in his/her knowledge and ability so that he/she will be teachers. Again, this is not just the expectation of certain people who become “full time evangelists” – but for all Christians.

The gospel of Jesus Christ calls you to be a preacher (publisher) of God’s message. This is part of being faithful to Christ to death (Revelation 2:10).

To fail to fulfill this responsibility is a sin! Remember, a sin is anything that violates the law of God (1 John 3:4). And, James 4:17 says that the one who knows to do good but refuses to do it commits sin! Are you doing your part to spread God’s message?

## **What you preach**

To publish something is to make its message/contents known to others. It is to take something from being hidden/concealed to making it available to others. For instance, a herald would take the king’s message and would make it known to the citizens of the kingdom. Similarly, the work of evangelism is the work of making God’s message known to others.

This work is summarized by 2 Timothy 4:2 in the phrase, “Preach the word.” Publish God’s word. Make it known among the people as you have opportunity! You must always remember that this is *God’s* word that you must publish. He does not authorize you to make any changes to His message (see Revelation 22:18-19). Instead, He expects those who are His heralds to accurately and faithfully make His message known to others. Just imagine if a herald would (while claiming to speak the message of the king) change or misinterpret the king’s message. This would result in all of the citizens of the kingdom failing to follow the instructions of the king. Instead, they would be following the false ideas and misinterpretations of the herald!

As a Christian, your responsibility is simply to publish God’s message. Your responsibility is *not* to publish your own ideas, your own opinions, your own traditions, your own recommendations, etc. You must be diligent as a Bible student to rightly interpret the word of God so that you can accurately convey God’s message to others. For instance, when Paul was writing to Timothy, an evangelist who was charged with preaching the word and doing the work of an evangelist, he said, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Now, in order to be faithful and do the work of an evangelist, you need to understand what

message you are publishing. Consider two basic points about the message God has given you to publish.

(1) You publish God's good news about the opportunity of salvation through Jesus Christ. The word "gospel" literally means "good news." In Romans 1:16, Paul said that he was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." This is the good news that is focused on Jesus Christ and the opportunity for all people (regardless of nationality, economic background, level of education, etc.) to be saved from the consequences of sin and have everlasting life in Heaven! Therefore, through all of your work in publishing God's message, you must remember that you are publishing a message that is full of good news!

(2) You publish what God has required for salvation. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not just a message to be heard. It is a message which must also be obeyed. Failure to obey this message results in everlasting punishment in Hell (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Therefore, as you publish God's message, you must also be publishing what God's message requires of individuals. Central to this is to teach the gospel's plan of salvation. In addition, this requires that sin must be rebuked so that those who are in sin can repent. Consequently, there will be many people who will not desire to hear and obey the gospel's message (because they will not desire to do what the gospel requires of them, 2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Is this message a message you consider to be worth publishing through your life? Do you want to help others understand their opportunity for salvation and what God requires of them in order to obtain this salvation? Or, are you ashamed of this saving message?

## **Why you must preach**

Think about what happens if no one publishes the message of the King? What would happen if the herald would not fulfill his responsibility to publish the message of the king? I suppose there would be two consequences of his decision. First, the message would never be known by the citizens of the kingdom

and they would be guilty of living contrary to the decree of the king. Therefore, they would suffer the consequences of living in violation of the law. Second, I suppose that the herald himself would be in danger when the king discovered that his decrees were not being published by the one who had been given that responsibility.

Now, think about these same two points relative to the work of Christians – who have been given the responsibility to be heralds of the gospel's message.

(1) Others will not learn the truth of the gospel. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul told Timothy that he was to teach other people the message of the gospel, who would then spread the message to others. We have already discussed that this is the way God intended for His saving message to be spread throughout the world – and throughout the generations. Therefore, you must consider how others will learn God's saving message if God's people are not spreading His message.

Romans 10:13-15 demonstrates this same truth. The passage teaches that it is necessary to call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Then, it asks, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?"

You need to ask yourself this same question: "How will others be saved if I am not being diligent to spread God's message?" Who will teach them God's saving message? How will they be obedient to His instructions if they do not know what He requires? Like Paul, you need to consider the "terror of the Lord" (which will be experienced on the Day of Judgment by those who have not obeyed God) and work to persuade men to give their lives to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

(2) The Christian will be held personally responsible for this failure. Do you believe that God will not hold you personally responsible if you fail to accomplish the work of evangelism He has given you to do? Again, you must recognize that the work of preaching God's message is a God-given responsibility for all Christians. Therefore, you will

be judged as to whether or not you have faithfully executed this responsibility. If you fail to fulfill this responsibility, you commit sin (James 4:17). And, recognize that the wages of this sin is the same as the wages of any other sin – spiritual death (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8).

Ezekiel 3:16-21 uses the illustration of a watchman on a wall. Specifically, God told Ezekiel (a prophet who had the responsibility of making God’s message known to the people) that he had personal responsibility in whether or not people knew His message. God told Ezekiel that if Ezekiel would not warn the wicked of their wickedness, both he and the wicked people would be punished. However, if Ezekiel faithfully told the people God’s message, Ezekiel would not be responsible for the destruction of the wicked (even if they refused to heed the warning).

In the same way, God will hold His people responsible for whether or not His message is being spread to those who need to hear it. Jesus Christ has no hands, no feet, no tongue, etc. to do this work. Instead, He has left this work (that He died to accomplish) into the hands of those who are Christians. How can any Christian expect to be rewarded by Jesus Christ on the Day of Judgment if he/she did not do what he/she could do to help others learn this great message of salvation?

## ***Important Principles In Preaching***

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Now that you understand your personal responsibility to publish God’s message, you need to embrace some important principles in preaching that message. These guiding principles will help motivate you to preach the gospel, help you accomplish the work, and help you to deal with the results.

### **Recognize what it means to be “lost”**

Jesus said that He came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Similarly, God has given every Christian the responsibility to be a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, looking to

spread God’s message about salvation to anyone who is “lost.” Therefore, the Christian is a lost-soul-seeker. But, what exactly does it mean to be “lost”?

Ephesians 2:1-3 says, “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

Sin is the problem that makes a person “lost” as opposed to being “saved.” When a person is in “trespasses and sins” (which results from violating the law of God), that individual is identified as being in a “dead” condition. Now, this is not a physically dead condition, but a spiritually dead condition. “Death” is identified as the “wages of sin,” in Romans 6:23. To be spiritually dead is to be separated from God – separated from all of the blessings and spiritual life that God provides. As long as an individual lives in his/her sin he/she will be separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 John 1:5-6) and will be spiritually dead while he/she is physically alive (1 Timothy 5:6).

Then, the ultimate consequence of sin is that it will result in eternal spiritual death (separation from God). Yes, God has prepared a place in which all those who die (physically) while in sin will spend eternity. This is the place the Scriptures call “Hell.” 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 says that whenever Jesus Christ returns with the holy angels, vengeance will be taken in “flaming fire” on those who “do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” These will “be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” So, whenever Jesus comes and the final Judgment takes place, those who were “lost” in their sins will be forever separated from God and cast into this place of punishment. They will hear Jesus tell them, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). They will have “their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

## **Realize that Jesus died for the lost**

Jesus knew all about these consequences of dying in sin. And, He also knew that those who were “lost” in their sins could not save themselves by their own meritorious works. Instead, they would be forever “lost” in their sins – unless He would provide the sacrifice that would give them an opportunity to be saved. Therefore, Jesus Christ came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Jesus knew that the only way those who were “lost” could be “saved” was if He would shed His blood and sacrifice His life to make atonement for sin. No other sacrifice could accomplish this salvation from sin. Not even animal sacrifices (Hebrews 10:4). Therefore, consider what is said about Jesus in 2 Corinthians 8:9. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” He left the riches of Heaven (where there is no pain, suffering, sorrow, or death) in order to become “poor” by living on this earth and experiencing pain, suffering, sorrow, and death. Why did He do it? So that we (all humanity) could become “rich” through His poverty – meaning that we could have the opportunity to be saved from the consequences of our sins and have everlasting life in Heaven!

You can read through the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to see exactly what Jesus endured after leaving Heaven – so that we could all be saved from our sins. He was mistreated and hated throughout the course of His earthly life. He was betrayed by His own apostle. He was arrested. He was given unfair trials. He was beaten severely. He was mocked. He was spat on. He had a crown of thorns placed upon His head. Ultimately, He had nails driven through His hands and His feet – and died an excruciating death on the cross. Now, because of the love and compassion Jesus Christ demonstrated in giving His life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, those who were “lost” can be saved!

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Therefore, while the “wages of sin

is death,” the “gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Through Jesus Christ those who are lost in their sins can be saved from God’s wrath and be reconciled to God (Romans 5:8-11) – if they will be obedient to the saving message of the gospel!

## **Understand that God requires obedience for salvation**

Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God has given all mankind the opportunity to be saved from their sins. Titus 2:11 says that “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” However, Jesus said that most people will be lost and few would be saved – in Matthew 7:13-14.

The implication is that God requires something from mankind in order to be saved. What God requires is obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Remember, it will be those who did not know God and did not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ who will be punished with everlasting destruction and eternally separated from God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Then, consider what the writer of Hebrews said in Hebrews 5:9. Speaking about Jesus Christ, “He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”

You see, God requires both faith and obedience in order for a person to be forgiven of his/her sins and be saved eternally. God requires every person to hear His word (Romans 10:17), believe (John 8:24), repent of his/her sins (Acts 17:30), confess Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and be baptized (Acts 2:38) in order to be forgiven and saved from his/her sins. Then, after becoming a Christian and being saved, God requires that every person continue to be faithful until death (Revelation 2:10), continuing to obey all the instructions God gives in the pages of the New Testament.

## **Remember that you were once lost in sin**

Now that you recognize what it means to be “lost,” realize that Jesus died for the lost, and understand that God requires obedience for salvation, let’s make this personal. The Bible teaches that *you* were the one who was lost in sin. Romans 3:23 says that “all have sinned and fall short of the

glory of God.” Ephesians 2:1-3 implies that it was *you* who was “dead in your trespasses and sins.” Therefore, it was *you* who was headed for an eternal punishment in Hell fire!

And, it was for *you* that Jesus Christ died to save. Therefore, “you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). He left Heaven, came to this earth, was spitefully mistreated, was betrayed, was arrested, was severely beaten, was spat on, was mocked, and was put to death by crucifixion – for *you*! He has given *you* the opportunity to “not perish but have everlasting life” in Heaven (John 3:16)!

Yes, He has given *you* the opportunity to be saved from the consequences of the sins you have committed against God. However, He required that *you* must be obedient to Him in order to be saved from your sin and access the grace of God. And, in order to be obedient to the gospel of Christ, *you* were the one who was in need of someone to preach the gospel to you. Romans 10:13-15, for instance, teaches that you must call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Then, it asks, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” Please appreciate that (at one time) *you* were the one who needed a preacher to come to you and teach you the gospel, so that you could hear, believe, and obey! Just imagine: Where would *you* have been if someone had not taken the time and put forth the effort to teach *you* the saving message of the gospel of Christ?

## **Recognize how God is using you to reach the lost**

While you need to appreciate the fact that you were the one in need of having someone preach the gospel to you in the past, you also must realize that God is using you today to fill that role for other people. Today, there are many lost people around you who need to hear, believe, and obey the message of the gospel so that they can be saved from their sins. God has loved them enough to send His Son to die on the cross for them. But, they need *you* to teach them the gospel’s message!

Today, you need to view yourself in the role of the preacher in Romans 10:13-15! Remember, God’s plan to save people includes those who will preach His saving message to the lost. Therefore, God can use you to preach His word to those around you – no matter what your abilities are! But, you must present your life and your body to God as a tool He can use to accomplish His purposes (see Romans 6:12-13).

Consider Matthew 4:18-22. On this occasion, Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee. When He saw two brothers (Peter and Andrew) doing the work of fishermen, Jesus called them. He said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They left their nets and followed Jesus. He proceeded from there and saw two other brothers (James and John) mending their nets. He called them – and they also followed after Him.

Now, please appreciate that Jesus called these fishermen to be “fishers of men.” Jesus was going to use these four uneducated and untrained men (Acts 4:13) to accomplish great work in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to thousands – and even converting thousands (see Acts 2:41). You see, when they devoted themselves to following Jesus Christ completely (learning from and imitating Him), God would be able to use their abilities to His glory! So it is with you. If you will devote yourself completely to following Jesus Christ, He will use you (with your abilities) to His glory – including through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **Be prepared to preach the word**

In order to preach the message of the gospel effectively, you must first know the message of the gospel. You simply cannot teach what you do not know. 1 Peter 3:15 says that Christians should be “ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” Colossians 4:5-6 instructs the Christian to “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

Teaching the gospel of Christ will begin by learning the “first principles” of God’s word. These



are the very basics of the gospel. And, anyone who is a Christian ought to be able to explain the basics to others – because he/she has already believed and obeyed it. So, even a new Christian should be able to tell other people about the problem of sin, the grace of God, and the required steps of salvation.

Then, every Christian is expected to mature in the faith of the gospel. He/she is expected to move beyond just an understanding of the fundamentals of the gospel and be able to comprehend much more of the gospel's message. This will enable the Christian to answer more questions and help a greater number of people understand and obey the gospel's message. In order to accomplish this growth, the Christian will have to be continuously devoted to learning God's word. So, if you want to fulfill your God-given role and help the lost be saved, you need to spend time every day studying and meditating on God's word so that you will better understand and be able to teach its saving message!

### **Understand that not all will accept the word**

As you endeavor to tell people about the gospel of Christ, you must understand that you will encounter mixed results. After all, Jesus, His apostles, and the early Christians did not have a 100% conversion rate with everyone they taught. Actually, only a very small percentage of the people they taught were converted. For instance, of all the people Jesus taught while He was on this earth, there were only 120 disciples in Acts 1. Even in Acts 2, when the gospel was preached by the apostles and about 3,000 people were baptized, there was likely only a very small percentage of people actually converted. Though we are not told how many people were present for the preaching, the number could have been in the hundreds of thousands (or even over a million). The same can be seen throughout the Scriptures.

Remember that Jesus said “few” would be saved (Matthew 7:13-14). Therefore, most people you come into contact with will not choose to believe and obey the gospel. In fact, there will likely be some you try to teach who will mistreat you because of your preaching. However, remember what Jesus told His apostles. “And whoever will not receive you nor

hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet” (Matthew 10:14). Certainly, whenever someone you teach rejects the gospel of Christ, you must not get discouraged and give up on teaching! There are still other people who need to hear the gospel – and you will not help them unless you continue preaching.

Whenever the apostle Paul instructed Timothy to “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season,” he also instructed him to be “longsuffering” (2 Timothy 4:2). This instruction implies that preaching will not always be easy and the gospel of Jesus Christ will not always be accepted. Yet, the Christian must persevere through these times of rejection and recognize that “success” in preaching is anytime God's word is taught. God simply never measures “success” in preaching by the number of people who are converted!

### **Realize that you are not responsible for the results**

The work of preaching the gospel of Christ is equated to the work of sowing seed, in Jesus' parable of the soils (see Luke 8:4-8, 11-15). Jesus says that the seed is the word of God – and demonstrates that the sower simply takes the seed and plants it in the hearts of mankind. However, as he does so, he finds mixed results based on different soil conditions. Some soil will not receive the seed. Some soil produces immediate results, but the results are short-lived. Then, there are others who will accept the seed and produce the desired fruit.

Now, the differing results in this parable was not the product of the sower's work. Nor was it because of a defect in the seed. It was the product of the different types of soil conditions. Furthermore, even the fruit that was produced whenever the seed was planted in the good ground was not because of the sower. Instead, it was the product of the seed finding the right soil. So, while the sower is important (because the seed will not have any impact if it is left in the barn), the sower/preacher is not responsible for any of the results – positive or negative (as long as he/she is planting the right seed).

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 explains. “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through

whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.” Ultimately, any good that is done through the preaching of God’s word is because of God. And, any time the gospel is rejected is because of some problem with the hearts of those who hear the gospel. The Christian just publishes the message.

### **Petition God for help in preaching**

With the results of preaching being outside of your ability to control, you must simply be diligent in petitioning God for help. After all, He is the one who gives the increase to the word that is sown in the hearts of men and women (1 Corinthians 3:6). As a Christian, you have the wonderful opportunity to pray to God and find help. And, He has promised that there is power in the prayers offered by righteous people (see James 5:16).

The Scriptures provide you with examples of prayer being offered in connection with the preaching of God’s word. Let me give you two examples. (1) After the apostles Peter and John were threatened not to preach in the name of Jesus anymore, they went to their companions and prayed together (see Acts 4:23-31). As they prayed, consider what was said in verses 29-30. “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” Then, after praying, verse 31 says that they “spoke the word of God with boldness” (which can be seen in chapter 5).

(2) Consider what Paul requested from the Christians in Colossae. Colossians 4:2-4 says, “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” Paul certainly recognized that preaching God’s word was too great a task to undertake without the help of God!

### **Use your time wisely**

Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is going to require a time commitment. It will certainly take time to find someone to talk with about the gospel, talk to them, and study with them. Therefore, if you are interested in fulfilling the command of God to preach the gospel of Christ, you must be prepared to sacrifice some of your time in order to serve God through preaching.

Look at Colossians 4:5 again. Paul said, “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.” The concept of “redeeming” time means that time needs to be bought up. That is, you must make the best use of your time (see also Ephesians 5:15-16). Specifically, this passage implies that there is a way to *not* make the best use of your time in the area of preaching.

It is certainly possible for Christians to become so consumed by other things that they fail to make the appropriate time commitment to preaching the gospel of Christ. By filling their schedules with other things, they can have little/no time left to make a determined effort to find and teach those who are lost in sin. Please, dear Christian, do not allow your schedule to become so filled that you cannot make an appropriate time commitment to find and teach those who are lost in sin and headed for an eternal punishment in Hell fire! Redeem the time!

### **Preach with boldness**

Then, what happens whenever you do put forth the effort to seek out the lost – and an opportunity does present itself? Are you bold enough to take advantage of that opportunity by teaching the message of the gospel? Or, do you cower from the opportunity because you are afraid of how the person will receive the message?

To be bold is to be unreserved. It does *not* mean that you must speak the truth in an unkind or angry kind of way. Instead, boldness simply means that you must be willing to say what needs to be said – in the way it needs to be said. It means that you will always preach the word – whether it is “in season” or “out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). But, it also requires that you speak “the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15).

Boldness is an essential element to effective gospel preaching because God does not want you just to tell people whatever they desire to hear (read 2 Timothy 4:1-4 again). In fact, what people want to hear and what they need to hear are often two very different things. What they want to hear will often not result in the salvation of their souls. However, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the “power of God to salvation” (Romans 1:16). Therefore, like the apostles in Acts 4:31, you must dedicate yourself to preaching the word of God with all boldness.

## Recognize the value of one

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the vast number of people who need to hear the message of the gospel. However, preaching the gospel is not a “one size fits all” kind of work. Instead, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is extremely personal. In fact, methods of preaching that are the most personal in nature often produce the greatest number of conversions.

So, as you seek to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, you must be able to see the value of each soul that you meet and the potential that each person has to serve Jesus Christ – and have compassion on each soul! Jesus teaches this great lesson in a couple of places. First, He teaches this lesson by example in John 4. In this chapter, Jesus shows compassion on one woman who He had the opportunity to teach. And, by teaching this one woman, she returned to her home and told the people she knew – and many people believed in Jesus.

Second, consider Jesus’ parables in Luke 15:1-10. Jesus teaches two parables in this passage. One parable is about a man who lost one of 100 sheep. The second parable is about a woman who lost one of 10 coins. Both of these parables demonstrate how the individual valued the one that was lost so much that diligent search was made until it was found. Then, when it was found, there was rejoicing over it. Likewise, Jesus says that “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10)! Though one person may seem insignificant, God says that each one is extremely valuable – because each soul is worth more than everything that is on this earth (Matthew 16:26). And, that one soul will then be able to avoid the

eternal punishment of Hell fire and live eternally in Heaven. Dear Christian, please do not view any soul as insignificant.

## Always be preaching

One final principle I wish to offer from the Scriptures is the principle that you should always be preaching. You should not view your work as a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ as something you start and stop. Instead, you should always be praying for opportunities to preach and be looking for the opportunities that are presented – as they sometimes come when you least expect them.

There are two ways you should always be preaching. First, you should make the best use of whatever opportunities you have to point people to Jesus – even during the course of your normal conversations. Give people the opportunity to talk about Jesus and the gospel. You can learn from Jesus concerning how He turned a conversation about water into a transformative spiritual conversation (see John 4). Second, you should be dedicating your life as a message of righteousness. Matthew 5:16 speaks of letting your light shine before people so “that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” 1 Peter 3:1-2 speaks concerning Christian women who can lead their unbelieving husbands to Christ “without a word,” by their faithful conduct.

You see, there is a great deal of *generic* authority for preaching the gospel. That is, there is no one set method/avenue God has commanded you to use in preaching the gospel in your life. He has given you the freedom to take advantage of numerous tools and avenues in order to publish His saving message. But, in order to be the most effective in preaching, you must be continually dedicated to publishing God’s message!

## Conclusion

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Are you fulfilling your God-given responsibility to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are lost? Are you looking for every opportunity you can to publish His saving message?

Or, are you sinning against God by refusing to spread His warning? You will be held personally responsible for whether you are doing your part to preach His gospel.

How can you be prepared to preach the word?

Will everyone accept true gospel preaching?

## ***Study Questions***

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### **1. Preaching Is The Work Of Every Christian**

Who must preach?

Are you responsible for the results of preaching?

What must you preach?

How should you ask for help in preaching?

Why must you preach?

How do you need to manage your time in order to preach the gospel?

### **2. Important Principles In Preaching**

What does it mean to be “lost”?

What is boldness? How should boldness be involved in your preaching?

What did Jesus do for the lost?

What is the value of each soul? How should this impact your preaching?

What does require for someone to be saved?

How often should be focused on preaching God’s word?

What was your spiritual condition prior to becoming a Christian?

How does God want to use you in reaching the lost?