

Prestonwood Connection 2005

#3 everyday EVANGELISM

Evangelism, Who Is Responsible For Results?

Mark 4

Wednesday, February 9, 2005 • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message #3 everyday EVANGELISM]

Thank the praise team and instrumentalists tonight, a..., it been a great encouragement and thank you for being flexible tonight a..., they literally have all of the wires and the cords pulled out of the auditorium and are putting new one in and so a..., I assured them that we could make this adjustment and move down here tonight and it's just great if you're coming in and sort of there on the back wall there are a few seats over on this side and a..., we'll be glad to make room for you. If you've got a seat near you on the end of an aisle move in so that anyone who comes can a..., get in and get there on the end of the aisle.

We were talking about Teen Impact just a little bit earlier and a..., today I was out of the office midday and decided to a..., wheel through and pick up a little snack at CHICK-FIL-A and a..., when I did and I opened my bag, guess what I found? An invitation to come to Team Impact at Prestonwood Baptist Church. Isn't that a great thing? [applause] They were puttin it in every bag and so a..., I thought that was great and I took it and I put it there and I thought I would use that to tell you that it would be an encouragement to you and we do have a..., little cards, like business cards, like this, you can use them and leave them on a table when you leave a tip at a restaurant. Be sure you leave a tip, don't just put the card down there, okay? But a..., if you do put a good tip on it, that'll even make em more interested and a..., but everywhere you go you can take this, it'll give you the quick information to be able to share with friends and neighbors. We've got some door hangers, things of that nature, but we just wanna saturate the community with a..., the knowledge that this is happening. It was fun because I got that today midday I was back out late in the afternoon, went through a drive thru at Starbucks, reached down to get my money to pay for my cup of coffee and I saw that and I thought okay, be a good steward, I picked it up and handed it to a guy at Starbucks. It went right through my car today from one part of town to another. It was a great thing, but a..., fun to be able to do and to share and to invite people to come and be a part of an event like this. So I hope that you will do that and that you will help us in the process because all of this is a part of sharing our faith and sharing the love of Christ.

Now if we are completely honest, the subject of sharing our faith is a

subject that is very uncomfortable. It's a subject that a..., frankly makes us feel guilty. We know we should do more of it but we...we feel guilty because we don't. We sort of feel when we get in a room like this, I'm caught and you know, somebody's talking to me about witnessing and evangelism and just all of those things are things that tend to cause fear and uncertainty and I want us just to be honest about that and to...and just to get honest with God and honest with each other and say, hey, this isn't comfortable for me. Heh!

Sort of like a lady that I heard about. He 4 year old little boy Zachary came running out of the bathroom screaming at the top of his lungs. "Mommy, Mommy, Mommy" and she said, "What is it sweetheart?" He took her back in the bathroom and he had taken his toothbrush and he dropped it in the toilet. Heh! Well you can see a little 4 year old boy standin there lookin at his toothbrush down in the toilet tryin to figure out what to do and so the mom managed to retrieve the toothbrush out of the toilet and she simply took it and she threw it in the trashcan and she said, "Let's just be through with that." He stood there for just a minute, he looked at her and then he just tore off running down the hall towards her room. In just a minute he came running back out of her bathroom and she noticed that with a smile on his face he had her toothbrush in his hand. He looked at her and he said, "Mommy, we need to throw this one away too, it fell in the toilet about 3 days ago." Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh!" [pause for congregation laughter] Well, it's amazing how a moment like that exposes, you know, the honesty and I want us to get honest with each other about the fact that there're some things we need to confess and to...to just say and agree with and that is that when we talk about sharing our faith and we talk about evangelism and going public, you know all of us are comfortable with having faith in private, but it's when it gets to the concept of going public with faith that we really struggle with that and we're uncomfortable with that and so what we've been trying to do a..., together since the beginning of this series just a few weeks ago is to try to day by day increase our focus, our awareness and our understanding of the importance of *everyday EVANGELISM*. For that reason we've established a website for this series, everydayevangelism.com and many of you...in fact I just wanna know, how many of you are getting the daily everyday EVANGELISM a... website connections? Okay, many of you are doin that. If you're not you can simply a..., put that in, everydayevangelism.com you can sign up, but every day, 5 days a week we're sending a little devotional out, a whole bunch of resources and things to help you, but the whole purpose in this is just to increase our awareness, our prayer, our attentiveness to a matter of sharing our faith with others. I was so blessed last week at the end of the service when we had a time of...of prayer and then as we left we asked people to take the prayer cards for the prayer needs we prayed for and to write a name of someone they knew that had a need to know Christ and we have probably a..., nearly a hundred cards, up here in a little bowl tonight, of peoples names that have been submitted, that were on your hearts to say I'm praying for this person that God will use me, God will use someone, but I want to God...to at least let me be the prayer partner and see this person know and love Jesus Christ and so that's what we've been talking about, that's what we've been focusing on and what we've been

trying to do is to simply ask and answer some of the basic questions a..., associated with this subject of evangelism and sharing our faith.

Week 1—I talked about the subject, *Why Should I Think About Evangelism Everyday?* I mean I go to church, I'm involved in some special things, but every day? And we talked about that, why it is that this needs to be an everyday matter in the life of every Christian; not just preachers, not just evangelists, every person, every day.

Last week we talked about and...and discussed the question, *Would God Use Me?* Would God really use me? I mean, as I am, with all my hang-ups and all my problems and all my shortcomings and all my weaknesses; would God really use me? And we talked about that last week.

And so tonight we come to a 3rd question and...and I think a very important one especially when it comes to the matter of feeling uncomfortable and often feeling fear and the fear of failure, *Who Is Responsible For The Results Of My Witness?* Who is responsible for the results? And what if I don't see any results. You know there's nothing harder to do than something that you just don't feel that you're good at and that you don't see results in, especially in the world we live in. We are so result oriented in our world and indeed this is an area where we long to see results but the question is who's responsible for those results?

Well I think Dr. Billy Graham is probably one of the a..., voices that can speak to the subject of responsibility and results in evangelism and Dr. Graham in speaking on this subject on one occasion really tried to underscore the importance of being responsible as a witness for Christ. This is what he said, he said:

"Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for past generations and we cannot bear the full responsibility for the next one, but we do have our generation and God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibility to this age and take advantage of our opportunities."

Now, Dr. Graham obviously was very strong and very straightforward about responsibility, but he did not specifically address the issue of results. But as good as it is to hear what Billy had to say about this subject, how about we take time to hear what Jesus had to say about the subject? Did you know that Jesus talked about results? Did you know that that was one of the a..., the primary teaching of Jesus Christ on the subject of sharing our faith? Well, I wanna show you that tonight. I want you to take and open God's Word to the book of Mark, the Gospel of Mark, chapter 4. We're looking at some selected texts out of the Gospel of Mark. It's an action packed book in the Bible and it's sort of like spiritual snapshots, a day in the life of Christ that moves very rapidly through a..., the conversations, the events, the miracles, the teachings of Christ, but in Mark chapter 4 I want us to look and to read together something that Jesus had to say on the matter of the harvest of souls and on this subject of results and I want us to begin reading Mark 4 in verse 1:

And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.

So Jesus is out in the boat and they're all up on the land. What a great place to have a pulpit. Pastor mentioned the Chapel by the Lake a minute ago and it's a...a beautiful 2000 seat amphitheater on the waterfront in West Palm Beach, Florida and for many years they had the...the prow of a boat there, where you could preach from the prow of that boat, it was kinda taken from this scene in Scripture, a really neat thing and we had the joy of seeing many people come to Christ through outdoor a..., evening meetings there a..., that he would preach, I had the privilege of baptizing at so many of those meetings, I'm telling you I was like a prune when we got through, we baptized so many people I just wrinkled up in the water, but nothin like being wrinkled for Jesus, this is great, so [slight congregation laughter] anyway that's when I lost my hair too, but that's another message and I'll talk about that then. Mark chapter 4, verse 2 says:

²Then He taught them many things by parables, and He said to them in His teaching: ³"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴And it happened as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. ⁵Some seed fell on the stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up and because it had no depth of the earth. ⁶But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. ⁷And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. ⁸But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." ⁹And He said to them. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Now, obviously this is the parable of the sower and of the soil and it is a parable because what it is is a common earthly story. In that day and time as you could look out across the fields there you could see those who are out sowing the seeds. But it was a common earthly story with a heavenly or a spiritual meaning and Jesus took something that was a very significant word picture in the minds and the hearts of those who lived in that day and time and used it to describe the work of God in the world and He used it in particular to underscore this issue of responsibility and of results. Now as we look at this passage tonight I want us to identify 3 basic principles that will help us to answer the question *Who Is Responsible For The Results?*

The first principle is this, it is the principle of activity, the **PRINCIPLE OF ACTIVITY**. The Bible says here that there was a sower who went out to sow. Now we could speculate and wonder who is the sower, who is this sower that Jesus talked about here? Was it just a..., just a picture of just someone, anyone, what was Jesus talking about? Well, this parable is not only found here in the gospel of Mark it's also found over in the gospel of Matthew chapter 13 and verse 37 and in that passage of Scripture

Jesus makes it clear and plain who the sower is. He says in ~~Mark...er excuse me~~ in Matthew 13:37 that:

He answered and said: "He who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man."

Now let me ask you tonight, who is the Son of Man? Jesus is the Son of Man. Can we all say that together. Who is the Son of Man? [JESUS] Okay, good we got the answer. Jesus is the Son of Man and so here there is a picture of Jesus doing something, God, Himself, in Christ doing something in the world. The sower is none less than God the Son who has come into this world to fulfill the will and the purpose of the Father and there is a divine activity that is occurring in this world. Yes, even in the midst of evil, even in the midst of confusion, even in all of the ugliness and the rebellion, in history there is the unfolding plan of God in redemption and salvation because God has come seeking, searching and saving people who were created but who are marred and destroyed by the fall of sin and who need to be saved. And so the work that we talk about, the work of the harvest of evangelism is not just a human work, it is a divine work, it is something that God is doing in this world and God is moving and God is working and God is a..., is in the process of being active among us and so when we talk about the principle of activity I wanna be sure you understand that when we talk about responsibility and we talk about results we are talking about a principle of divine activity. God is working in this world and you're here tonight because God has worked in your life. It's not just that you have some supper spiritual salesman who came with a bunch of biblical syrup and just hit you with it and just somehow so persuaded you that you needed to change your life and follow Christ. Now God may have used somebody who had all those qualities, but it wasn't that person, because if it was your faith is very shallow, it's only in a person. You see anything that anybody can talk to you ~~ea...~~into somebody else can talk you out of. But if God moves and works in your life God changes you life from the inside out and so the activity at work is the work of God, but the Son of Man has invited us to come and to be...be partakers with Him in the sowing of the seed. He's invited us to come. In fact more than that He's commanded us. We go to the Great Commission, Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 and 20 Jesus said:

... "All authority is given to Me in heaven and earth."

He is the Son of Man, He is the sower. But then He says:

"Go [you go] into all the world and preach the gospel, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

It's not gonna be just up to you, I'm gonna be with you. You're going in My authority, you're going under My command and I'm promising I'm gonna be with you. The sower is the Son of Man, but we, those of us who have received the word of God and have been changed by the power of Christ are invited and therefore compelled to take part in the sowing and in the

reaping that God is doing in the world. Somebody say, Amen! [AMEN!] All right I just wanna be sure you're with me tonight, cause I'm workin real hard up here, okay? Now here's the thing I want you to understand, when it talks about sowing, what kind of sowing is going on? Well, in that day and in that time the sower would often wear, as though it were, a...a...a bag of sorts that would simply wrap around a..., and it would come up over the shoulder and it would just be a bag, sort of a sack that was attached at the shoulder and in it would be seeds and the way in which the seed would be sown is that it would just be broadcast. They didn't go around and dig a little hole and put a hole in the ground and drop a seed and drop another seed. They would simply take the seed and then just broadcast the seed out on the ground for it to be able to take root and to ultimately bring harvest and so here's what God has done with us is that He has invited us to join Him as sowers and we're a part of His broadcast into the world. In fact every day when you look into the mirror you need to look at ~~your say and say, hey, yourself and say, hey~~ I'm to be about the business of broadcasting today and to do everything that you can to be a part of the heavenly broadcast in that day, because the sower is sowing. Now what is the sower sowing? The sower is sowing the seed and what is the seed? Well, look in chapter 4 again, of the Gospel of Mark and look in verse 14:

"The sower sows the..."

What?

"...the word."

The word of God is the seed. The sower goes forth to sow, we sow as partners with God, we are involved in this process of broadcasting the seed, but what we sow is not just our message, our method, our thoughts, we sow the seed of the word of God. Why? Because this is the only seed that can take men from death to life. This is the seed of life and therefore the sower goes and sows the seed and it is in the broadcasting of the seed day after day after day that we begin to see the results and the outreach of that seed in and through our lives and for 2000 years, this seed has been sown and has had incredible power. Though it may have been small at times obscure and often times spurned and not even believed to be true, this seed is a powerful seed. You know the Bible is described in many different ways the...the references to the Scripture, the word pictures, it's described as a light, it's a described as milk, it's described as water, but one of the most beautiful expressions is that of the seed of the word of God. Listen to what the Bible says about this in some other places about this. 1st Peter 1:23 says that we:

have been born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

My new life in Christ has come about because I have had the seed of God's word planted in my heart and faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God and when in my heart I hear the word of God and believe in

faith then it is that faith that leads me unto salvation in Jesus Christ. You see God puts the seed in and God gives me the faith and God does a work by the Spirit to make me a new person in Christ. What a wonderful picture it is of the divine activity at work in us. Isaiah 40 in verse 8 says:

"The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands [or abides] forever."

And for all the other seeds that may give some sprout this is the one that's gonna be forever, it is the word of God. So the first principle is the principle of activity, God is working and moving in this world.

The second principle is the **PRINCIPLE OF RECEPTIVITY**, of receptivity; while the seed is always powerful, the soils are not always equal. While the seed is always powerful, the soils are not always equal and here Jesus talks about 4 different types of soil to which the seed is distributed and in which the seed may fall and He talked about this soil being of such diverse form that many of the crops failed. Now, Dr. Bill Bright, a wonderful godly Christian man who recently went home to be with the Lord, but who trained and taught thousands and thousands and millions of people a..., to share their faith, a..., poses a very interesting question in one of his books, he said:

"Did Jesus fail in His witnessing?"

He said:

"Our Lord's ministry raises interesting questions. Did He fail in His witnessing? Did He fail when the rich young ruler walked away from Him, refusing to give God first place in his life? Did He fail because Judas Iscariot never received Him as his Messiah? Did He fail because one of the thieves crucified with Him refused to acknowledge His Lordship? Was He a failure because many in the throng a...around Him did not trust in Him?"

And then he said:

"Our Lord Himself answered these questions in His prayer to His heavenly Father at the end of His earthly ministry when He said:

"I brought you glory here on earth by doing everything you told Me to do."

Now be sure that you understand this tonight, not everybody that Jesus touched responded in faith, surrender and submission. You see, Jesus had many who were not the results of His ministry. They rejected His ministry and if it happened to Jesus what in the world makes you think it's not gonna happen to you? You say I'm just not successful as a witness. Well, listen, if you look at some of the days Jesus had, Jesus didn't look successful. But that didn't change the fact that there was a principle of activity, divine activity and that there is an issue and a principle of receptivity that we need to understand. The seed is being broadcast and

scattered out day after day, that's something I've gotta be about because I'm a partner with the sower who is the Son of Man, but I must always know and understand in the principle of receptivity there're different kinds of soils. Here He describes 4, He first talks about the **SEED THAT FALLS ON THE WAYSIDE**. The wayside is actually the area just around the field. It's the area where the farmer and others would travel back and forth on the edge of the fields that would be sown, it was a pathway and of course what would happen is as they...people walked back and forth on the path it would get padded down, it would get hard and when they would broadcast the seed not all the seed would fall into the field, some would fall on the pathway, on the wayside, but because it was hard it never penetrated the surface. Because it was hard all it would do would be just to sit there until the birds would come and would take it and would eat it and take it away and Jesus was referring to the fact that some people have hard hearts. Now I know immediately when I say that you think yeah I bet. There are people in prisons tonight who are hard hearted people and you're thinking about people you know who you've seen, who just seem to grit their teeth and shake their fist in the face of God and you're sayin they're just hard and there are people like that out there, but do you know that some of the hardest hearts sit on pews in churches week after week after week? They do because they become so accustomed to being near the seed but never letting it penetrate into their heart and so there is a hardness that can come even to those who are religious. Judas was a wayside hearer. Here was a man who walked with Jesus, talked with Jesus, saw what Jesus did, but the seed never penetrated his heart. So there's the wayside hearer.

The Bible also says that there is the **SEED THAT FALLS ON THE STONY GROUND** and that's just the wrong mixture. There's too much a..., mixture between that which is soil and that which is rock, it's shallow and though things will sprout up they fade quickly. I can remember so well when my son Joseph was in the 4th grade he did a science project and we took this passage of Scripture and went out with a man in Florida, I've never forgotten, out into these fields where the blackest dirt I've ever seen, some very fertile soil on one hand and then we got some of that sandy rocky porous soil there, put those two together, dropped seeds in there and I just knew that boy those seeds in that black soil were just gonna grow and be big and unbelievable. But do you know what happened? I mean within just days the first thing to sprout up was what happened in that sandy rocky soil. It just started comin out of the ground, it looked great, it was a big vine, things were going great. It wasn't until 2 to 3 weeks later that it began to wane and to die when the other one began to grow and to flourish. And the Bible says there're some people who are like that stony ground, that rocky soil, they receive, but only for a moment and then it goes away and so there is this issue of not having roots. They have an emotional experience, they have a religious feeling, but that's all it is, it's just for the moment and then it's gone.

And then of course Jesus speak ~~about the stony a...~~ about **THE THORNY GROUND**, people who are double minded, those who receive the seed, but then suddenly the weeds, the cares of life a..., stir up around them and begin to

choke them out. He talks about this again down in Mark chapter 4 and a..., verse 18, He said:

"...these are the ones sown among the thorns;..."

He said when

"...they hear the word of God, the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire of other things choke out the word and it becomes unfruitful."

That was the rich young ruler wasn't it? You see there are all these different types of soil, but then he said **SOME SEED WILL FALL ON THE GOOD SOIL** and when it comes it will be receive, it will take root, it will bear fruit in some 36 seeds and a hundred fold. Isn't it interesting that 3 out of the 4 soils that Jesus mentioned were soils that were not productive, 3 out of the 4. Now I don't say that to make you pessimistic, I just say that to make you realistic, that when it comes to this issue of results we have to deal with the fact that there are all sorts of soil and just as there is a divine activity in the world, there is the principle of receptivity and their different soils that you are going to face. The issue is not for you to sample all the soils and for you to make your own test and your own judgment. Your job, my job is to scatter the seed and trust God with the soil and that brings me to the last point.

It is the **PRINCIPLE OF RESPONSIBILITY**. *Who Is Responsible For The Results?* Well, you know the Bible really gives us a simple answer in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 the apostle Paul said: [verse 6]

I planted, Apollos watered and God gave the increase.

You see witnessing is not up to you and me to convince people and to save them and deliver them from hell. Now we ought to care about people and we need to connect with people because we care about them, but the result of it all is in the hands of God. My responsibility is availability to God and it's when I'm available to God and I'm scattering the seed that the seed will begin to fall, the seed will begin to grow and before long there will be evidence of the divine activity in receptive soil through a responsible servant that will ultimately bring forth a harvest to the glory of God.

Bill Bright says it this way:

~~"Failure in witnessing is failing to witness."~~

~~I think we've got that and we can get that up. I'm skippin ahead here just a little bit.~~

~~"Failure to witness is failing in witness."~~

~~Literally what he's saying or excuse me failing to witness. I just said~~

~~that all wrong. There we go you can see it for yourself.~~

"Failure in witnessing is failing to witness."

And then he said this and it's just something if I can just put it all in a sentence tonight that's what I'm trying to say to you.

"Witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the..."

What?

"...results..."

Results to who?

"...to God."

So *Who Is Responsible For The Results?* Who is responsible for witness? I am. I do it for Jesus. I do it with Jesus. I do it because of Jesus. Put that back up there one more time.

"Successful witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God."

What that means is that day after day I get up and realize I'm in the broadcast business and I'm gonna trust God to take me to places where I need to sow the seed and that throughout the day when I have those moments I'm going to believe that God is going to guide me and God is going to strengthen me to deliver that seed according to His plan and His...His purpose and then I'm gonna rest in God's wisdom that as I do that God will fulfill His grace, His purpose and His glory in the life of that person.

You know just a..., about 2 years ago I spoke on the subject of witnessing and design appointment in life and how that it's not my responsibility to try to make results happen, but it's my responsibility to be available to God and that if we'll simply open our hearts and be available to God and let God set the appointments for life and when they come just simply open our hearts and respond to the Lord that God will use them. It wasn't long after I preached that message that a..., a wonderful man in our church sent me an e-mail and I just couldn't believe the story that he shared with me in that e-mail. His name is Bob Holbrook. Bob and his wife Stephanie are a wonderful part of this fellowship. But I want Bob to just come and share with you a minute something that God did a couple of years ago with his life, in an hour of need and response and availability to the Spirit of God moving and working in his life.

Bob Holbrook Testimony

Story of Tiffany Brown

Paul and Deb Brown honored guests this evening.