

Prestonwood Connection 2005

#6 everyday EVANGELISM

How Do I Handle Objections?

Mark 10:17-22

Wednesday, March 9, 2005 • Dr. David McKinley

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Of course so much of our prayer, so much of our focus a..., in the opening days of this year have been on the subject of evangelism, everyday EVANGELISM, choosing to witness some way, every day and a..., just putting that as a goal and a standard and a challenge in front of our minds and hearts and we've been trying to stir that and encourage that through the everyday EVANGELISM website and I just wanna thank so many of you who have responded a..., to let us know that you've been reading those daily devotionals and letting them be used in your life as a point of a..., instruction and encouragement and I really do believe that a..., not only is evangelism something that we've been called to do, but it's a mindset that we need to cultivate in our hearts and our lives and a..., so I hope that we've been able to fan that flame in your heart and to bring that challenge to you and to equip you. And I hope that your confidence is growing, not so much in yourself, but your confidence in the promise of God to use you and to bless you when you share the message of Jesus Christ with others and so a..., I'm thankful for these things and for this time and for those who are praying and I am believing God to make this a great season of harvest in the life and the ministry of Prestonwood Church.

Well, tonight I wanna invite you to take your Bible and to open it to Mark chapter 10, Mark chapter 10 and tonight we meet a man who had an encounter with Jesus Christ, who would fit right in to the context of the community in which we live and in which we minister. This man would absolutely be a..., the epitome of the North Dallas community. A..., he was a man who was ambitious, he was a man who was successful, he was a man who was smart, he was a man who was religious and so much of what we see in the life and the lifestyle of people who make this community their home, who live in this corridor that we live in and that a..., shop in these shops and move in the circles that we're in every day; this guy would have fit right in, he would have fit the profile. And I want us tonight to look at him, to meet him and to discover some things about the encounter that he had with Christ that I think will help us in some of the encounters that we have with people that we do meet and that we connect with every day. Mark chapter 10 and we begin our reading in verse 17, it says:

¹⁷Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal

life?"

That was a good question wasn't it? He came to the right person, to Jesus Christ. He asked the right question, what do I need to do to have eternal life? And that, of course, is what saving faith is about, what does it take to go to heaven? What does it mean to be saved? How do you receive or how do you have or gain the gift of eternal life? And Jesus said to him, verse 18:

... *"Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God."*

Literally, Jesus said, if you call Me good you might as well be callin Me God, because God is the only One who is good. Now you notice Jesus didn't rebuke him, He just asked him the question. Jesus was legitimately called God, because that's who Jesus Christ is, He is God in the flesh and He is good. So He even made the right statement when He said that and then He said in verse 19:

"You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and mother.'"

He gave him a quick summary of the 10 Commandments. Was Jesus saying to him you have to believe the 10 Commandments, you have to fulfill the 10 Commandments to go to heaven? It says, well, in verse 20:

...he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I've kept from my youth up."

Yes Jesus, I know that, that's my standard, that's how I live my life.

...Jesus, looking at him, loved him,...

I love that. Jesus looked at this man and He loved this man. He was affectionate, He was attracted to this man.

...and then He said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; come, take up your cross, follow Me." But he was sad at His word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Here this bright, attractive, smart, religious man seemed, as though it were, to fit in as one who could be seen at least in image as one who was in good standing and upright, but he had a major fault and the fault was a fault of his heart. It wasn't something that you saw on the outside, it was something that was going on, on the inside and for all the good that he had and that he had done the problem in this man's life was that he had a streak of greed down inside of him. Jesus wasn't for a moment saying keep the commandments and you'll go to heaven, because the Bible tells us clearly that only those who are perfect can go to heaven and none of us can perfectly fulfill the commandments. In fact we're all sinners, we've

all fallen short of the glory of God and so every one of us needs a Savior and what this man needed to see was how much his need was for a Savior, how much he needed to be delivered from the greed of his sin and how he needed Christ to save him and to forgive him of sin. But the Bible makes it clear this is a story without a happy ending. He went away sorrowfully because he had great possessions. You see his good life, his religious practice all ultimately became an obstacle to saving faith and yet he represents what we find so often in our world today, people who are accomplished, people who are achieving, people who are succeeding, but who so often are living their lives letting all of those things be substitutes for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Certainly, just as much as there are those who are like this man who are up and out, there are those who are down and out as well, those who have great need and great concern and great deprivation in life, but they too need a Savior, because the need of every person is to know and to believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that they may be saved. And so when we talk about the subject of evangelism, we talk about reaching and connecting with people at all sorts of different a..., places and stages of life and life conditions and life needs. But just like this man people around us will often come and they will allow the things of their life to create questions, objections and even the rejection of the gospel of Christ and so what I wanna talk to you about tonight as we continue this series is simply, *How Do You Handle Objections?*

How do you handle objections when they come up? Sometimes the objection will just be a question. Sometimes it literally will be someone who is just fully abrupt and expresses a rejection of the message of the gospel, but whether it's an objection, based on something in their mind or whether it's the rejection on the callousness of their mind and their heart, or whether it's simply a question we have to deal with people who need answers and who need to be challenged to consider the claims of Christ in their life. And so tonight I wanna talk about this subject of answering objections and dealing with people just like this who may come, who you may encounter, who you may speak with, who may even have answers and get the right answers and who still struggle to come to faith because it requires a surrender of mind and heart and will to Jesus Christ. Now let me quickly say that there are millions of people who come to Christ without any questions, there are millions of people who hear the gospel of Christ and when they hear it they simply say that's what I need, Jesus come into my life and thank God for many who hear the gospel and respond to the gospel, but there are those that we encounter who when we begin to share with them the message of the gospel they either create a..., questions or objects that we need to address and that we need to face and so what I wanna do is simply use this encounter tonight as an illustration to help me to provide some instruction for you about how to handle and deal with some of the objections that you may face and some of the questions that you may face when you seek to be a witness for Jesus Christ.

Now, the first thing that I want us to look at tonight and to consider is that we need to expect...**EXPECT TO FACE OBJECTIONS WHEN YOU SHARE THE GOSPEL.** I believe that sometimes a..., we just, of course, shy away from

sharing the gospel, but sometimes it's as though we're suddenly of course, or surprised, we've mustered up the courage to start trying to share the gospel, the plan of salvation and you remember we talked about the gospel, it's the message of the death, the burial, the resurrection of Christ; we've said that the gospel can be a..., shared in 5 simple words, GRACE...MAN...GOD...CHRIST and FAITH, and I've given you a little hand illustration to help you learn how to share the gospel over the last two weeks together, but tonight as we think about this we do understand that though we may begin to share the gospel someone may ask us a question and you need to be prepared and you need to expect that you're going to face objections when you share the gospel. Witnessing involves sharing your faith, but witnessing will always include others expressing their doubts and so when I share faith I expect other people to share their doubts. My question is, what kind of doubts, what kind of questions, what kind of objections are they bringing to me? Because in reality I think that there are probably 4 or 5 basic categories of people that you will deal with who will express objection and will express doubt to you when you try to share the gospel and it will take a lot of discernment, wisdom and prayer in that moment to know how you need to respond and what you need to do. Now, obviously this man approached Jesus as though he had a mental matter, a mental question, but the reality was he had a moral problem in his heart. You see he tried to approach Jesus on the intellectual plan, but the reality was that his real problem was an issue going on in his heart, it had to do with his moral conscience and that's why Jesus addressed that part of his being. But let me just give you several types of object...objections that you're likely to face when you try to share the gospel.

#1 YOU WILL MEET PEOPLE WHO ARE INTELLECTUALLY RESISTANT, people who are intellectually resistant. That is, they live with the mindset that is so predominant in our culture is that we have more reasons to doubt than we have reasons to believe. This is especially true in the intellectual community, in the elitism of the intelligentsia; it's the idea that if you're really smart you won't believe what these bumpkin Christians believe. They're just a group of deluded people who have a mystical faith and who just hope something good's gonna happen. They're weak people, they're deluded people and if they just had reason and if they just had intelligence they wouldn't believe all of that stuff anyway and so there is a mindset in our world, a mindset of intellectual resistance. In fact the Bible addresses this it says in 1st Corinthians chapter 8 in verse 1:

...Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

Many people are puffed up in their knowledge. They believe that they're too smart to believe in God. Tragically I recently read an article that indicated that over 80% of the students and faculty who were associated with Dartmouth University denied the existence of God. It's a predominant thing in the mindset there and sadly because of intellectual institutions all across America that have, as though it were, removed God, there is a mindset that says that nobody who has any sense would believe what Christians believe and so you need to be prepared that some people are

gonna look at you with the attitude, with the look, are you a fool? Don't you know? And so you're going to face people who have an intellectual resistance to the gospel. Now that does not mean that you need to dismiss some of the intellectual issues. Their problem is, is that they think that the Bible and the Christian faith lacks credibility and how surprised they are when they begin to discover that there is credibility, that there is evidence, that there is evidence that demands a verdict. In fact that's a great book, if you don't have that book, haven't read that book, haven't seen that book let me encourage you to pick it up and then let me encourage you to look at many of the online resources that we've been a..., providing for you every week and in the links there on the *everyday EVANGELISM* website. They'll help to give you the ability to respond to some of the intellectual issues, but the issue here is that there is historical evidence for Jesus Christ, for who He is, for what He did and our faith is not based on the unreasonable, our faith is based on solid reason evidence and then the testimony of changed lives. So there is intellectual resistance.

But then you will also find that some people you speak to are people that I would call, are **THE MORALLY REBELLIOUS**, the morally rebellious. That is they may say to you that they have an issue of the mind, but the reality is, is that they got an issue of the heart. That's exactly where this man was. You see you wouldn't have looked at this man and said he was a re...rebel, you would have looked at this man and said he was respectable. But Jesus pointed to the rebellion of his heart, it was the issue of what he had done and what he was doing with his wealth. Now, we don't know how he got his wealth, but what we do know is that it was obviously something that was an obstacle, and obstruction to him coming to Christ and his wealth had actually become the idol of his heart. But men have all kinds of idols, they have idols of immorality, some of them are caught in sexual sins and perversion of all sorts. Other people have idols of addiction, whether it's drug addiction or alcohol addiction in their lives. For some it's the idols of materialism and the gods of gold. The Bible simply puts it this way:

¹⁹*"And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world,..."*

John 3:19 and 20.

*"...and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.
²⁰For everyone practicing evil hates light and does not come into the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."*

What the Bible is saying there is ~~that most~~...that the reason that many men cannot find God is the same reason that a thief can't find a policeman; heh, they don't wanna find Him and though they may look or appear as though they have an interest, there really, underneath it all is a moral issue of rebellion against God. And that is an issue of sin that needs the exposure of the light of a Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit. So there are the intellectually resistant, there are the morally rebellious.

And then there are **THE EMOTIONALLY INJURED**. Truly in life there are people who have been injured emotionally and the pain of things that have happened and occurred in their lives sometimes cause them to doubt the goodness and the grace of God. One of my favorite biblical apologists, in fact just one of the leading voices in the world today is Robbie Zacarias. I believe Robbie's been here in the past and spoken here. He has wonderful books and materials that are available and a..., we carry a number of his books in our bookstore here. But Robbie Zacarias related in an article that I read not long ago that on one occasion he had been up giving a..., biblical reasons to believe and had been dealing with biblical apologetics, but at the close of the service a couple came forward and spoke to him and they asked him a question and they simply said that they had a problem with evil. They wanted to know how a good God could allow evil to exist in the world and Robbie said I began to a..., discuss this matter with them and started to give them a series of arguments when suddenly I looked down and realized that in a stroller not far from them they had a baby that was obviously disfigured and obviously deficient and he said when I realized that, he said I suddenly realized they were bringing me an intellectual issue. He said I knew it was an issue of their hearts and it changed the way that he approached that issue and so you need to be careful when people bring up issues. Sometimes you need to learn a little bit more about the person, learn a little bit more about the background, because if you're not careful you may attack the wrong problem. So sometimes people have objections to the gospel because they have been emotionally injured, they've had something happen in their lives, that has impacted them and they need to have someone help them to see and to experience the grace and the mercy of God.

And then there are those that I would call **THE RELIGIOUSLY CONFUSED**. These are people who live in a fog of faith. They're all about religion they live in the arena of religion, but either they're in a false religion that is based on false teaching and false evidence or else they're a part of a religious system that is filled with manmade tradition and all that they know and all that they do relates to the tradition, the ritual of man and so they have somehow substituted the grace of God for the work and works of man and sometimes when you speak with people you will find that they are religious people, but they are religiously confused. It's just like people who drive their car into a fog and have an accident, they're living in the fog of a faith that is undefined and of course that's even increased greater when the issue is liberalism, when they've been a part of a church or a group that really, as though it were, has a form of godliness, but denies the power there of, that doesn't have a faith of substance and power. And so often we have to try to help them to see the difference between religion and a relationship with Jesus Christ that is life changing and transforming.

But then there will be those who you will speak with who are **SPIRITUALLY SEEKING**, spiritually seeking and they are looking for reasons to believe. You see the intellectually resistant are people who are looking for reasons to doubt and the morally rebellious are looking for reasons to distance themselves from the message of the gospel. The emotionally a...,

injured are those who are looking for reasons to reconcile, they...they're tryin to reconcile something that's distant and broken in their mind and hearts and the religiously confused are looking for reasons to help them to break through, to find some meaning in a religion that is empty. But there are spiritual seekers who are looking for a reason to believe and when you begin to address the issues of life and the issues and the evidences of the gospel many times that can be the very thing that opens the door to that hungry a..., yearning heart for them to believe the message of the gospel and to be saved. So all that I'm saying to you in this first section of our study tonight is simply this, that you need to expect to face objections when you share the gospel. There're going to be objections and though I don't know and you don't know sometimes initially what those are, know that at least one of these 5 are very likely to be standing right in front of you.

So that brings me to the second thing and that is to **EXPRESS INTEREST IN... < turn tape > ...AND WELCOME HONEST INVESTIGATION**. Whenever somebody does ask you a question there're two ways that you can respond to it. One is that you can be very a..., indignant, very resistant, you can immediately try to create a confrontation with them or you can be a person who opens the door and lets them know that you're okay with them asking questions. I learned a long time ago that God was big enough to handle anybody's questions and though I didn't have all the answers God does and...and...and God has the answers and is able to meet every person at their point of need and God can bring the break through that I can't bring to a man or to a woman's heart; it is the power of the gospel that works unto salvation and so what we have to understand is that when people do bring us questions the greatest thing that we can do is to express interest in their questions and to welcome honest investigation. When you hear a word about position, when you hear a question, when you receive an objection don't engage in an argument, open the door for a discussion. If you try to argue with someone you're very likely, either one, gonna win the argument and loose the soul or two you're gonna loose the argument and so one of the best things that you can do is to realize that argument is not a good means of trying to accomplish spiritual goals, it has to be the work and the power of the Spirit and the Word of God. In fact anything that you talk somebody into, somebody else can talk em out of. So even if you can argue and win the argument that doesn't matter. What they need is not just someone who can give them an argument, but someone who can help them to see the need for the power of the gospel in their life. And so don't try to argue with anyone, but instead open the door, talk with them, share with them. Look at what Jesus did with this rich young ruler. He didn't give in to the tendency to try to be very abrupt and...and to injure this man or to beat this man up, He simply engaged the man. He asked a couple of questions and then He gave him a challenge. He challenged to investigate the real issue of his heart, which had to do with his money and his possessions. You see it's easy for us to respond in haste or anger or to retreat in fear, but what the Bible calls upon us to do is to be willing to open the door and to give an answer. I love what 1st Peter 3:15 says:

...always be ready to give a defense ~~for~~...to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

Meekness and fear means with tenderness and respect, that you and I would be ready to give an answer. That doesn't mean that we have all the answers, but that we are willing to open the door and to give discussion and defense for the gospel because you never know when what that person may need is for you to take time to listen and then for you to take time to tell them or to help them to find the answers for the needs of their heart to hear and to know the gospel of Jesus Christ. I love the fact that Jesus was tender in His response and open in His engagement and discussion with this man as he came to Him and that's how we need to be; not tryin to win the fight, but trying to love them by faith to Jesus Christ. Now, every now and then it doesn't hurt to challenge someone. It doesn't hurt to a..., to push them and to ask them questions and to prob. Heh! How many of you remember and know of the life and ministry of Larry Burkett? Do some of you know Larry Burkett, a financial...Christian financial a..., instructor who had a wonderful ministry? He died just a couple of years ago and a..., was a wonderful man. But Larry Burkett a..., was in fact a lost man living in Titusville, Florida when a pastor in that area by the Peter Lord came to visit him on one occasion. His wife was a Christian, she wanted her husband to hear the gospel and he didn't wanna hear it and everybody who'd ever come to talk to him he'd just simply gave a bunch of intellectual questions, sort of a smoke screen to resist them. Well, Pastor Peter Lord came on that occasion and he was there and he talked with the man and the man said he just wasn't interested and Peter Lord just stood up, looked at him and said well, okay then go to hell and walked out the door. [congregation laughter] Well, Larry Burkett said that was the turning point in his heart. [laughter] He said I realized if a preacher could pronounce a judgment over me and walked out I openly realized I needed to deal with it. Well, I don't really suggest that it's the best method of sharing your faith and a..., of...of winning people to Christ but I'm simply saying open the door, give time for discussion, use that as an opportunity, don't feel that you have to argue and certainly don't feel that you have to condemn, but simply use the opportunity to offer evidence for the gospel of Christ.

There's a third thing that you can do and that I wanna encourage you to do and that is to **EXAMINE SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT SURFACE WHEN YOU ARE CONFRONTED WITH OBJECTIONS.** There are some common things that you can expect to come forth and to be asked when you share your faith. Interestingly enough through all these years people still ask many of the same basic questions and if you will take time to investigate the evidence, to study the Scripture and to prepare your mind and heart, you will be able, not just to be caught off guard, but to engage in conversation with intelligence. That same article I mentioned to you earlier that I was reading by Robbie Zacarias, he indicated in that article 9 common questions, in fact he called them the 9 toughest questions that you...that are asked and you often face when you talk to a skeptic. Let me share some of those with you. He says...

#1 Is it really possible to defend the supernatural when every scientific theory argues for a naturalistic explanation of the universe? That is literally a lot of people are gonna try to bring up scientific issues when you talk with them and how do you respond to that?

And then Robbie said another question that is so common is what convincing arguments can you give us for the existence of God? People are gonna say will I just don't know that I believe that God exists. What convincing arguments can you give me for the existence of God? If someone said to you I don't believe in God how would you speak to them?

And then he said a third question is how can Christians possibly argue for the exclusive claim to truth in Christ when there are so many religions in the world? That's the issue that was asked of Dr. Al Mohler and there's a response to a interview that took place with Dr. Mohler who's the President of The Southern Seminary, there in your worship guide tonight, a little portion of an excerpt of a conversation. How do you respond if someone that says I believe that Jesus may be a way but He's not the way? And that's become the most common mindset, in fact that's the message that anybody will accept in our world today if we will say that Jesus is One of many ways to go to heaven we're gonna have one big religious smorgasbord and everybody can just go happily down the road. But you see we don't believe that. We believe that He is the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father but through Him. So how do we deal with this issue in a world of religion all around us?

And then how do you explain and justify the presence of suffering and of evil in the world? That's a question that you often face.

What about this one we do not have the original manuscripts of the Bible, how can you possibly argue for the authority and the accuracy of this book? Robbie Zacarias said I hear that question all the time.

Or how bout this, I don't believe in absolute truth ~~you can't force your moral...~~ how can you force your moral opinions upon me?

And then aren't the concepts of sovereignty, the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man mutually exclusive or contradictory concepts? You see you speak out of both sides of your mouth.

And then religion has been used to cause much suffering and violence in the world how do you explain that?

And then this question, isn't religion a theory of moral belief used to impose their views ~~on~~ of some on the others. That is isn't religions just a means of control of weak people? What do you think about those questions? Have you heard those questions or something similar to those questions? You're gonna face questions like that and I know everyone here is saying okay well give me the answers I'm ready, you gave me the questions, give me the answers. Okay, come back next week. [congregation laughter] I'm not gonna answer all of them but I'm gonna engage the

answers next week, answers that you can use to help you in dealing with some of the issues that come forth, but it will require another session because you cannot listen long enough tonight for me to do that. Somebody has said that the mind can only absorb what the seat can endure and I know you're getting close to the end of your endurance so let me go to the last thing tonight and that is to..

EXTEND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SKEPTICS TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE FOR FAITH AND LEAVE THE RESULTS TO GOD. If you're gonna handle objections effectively you have to extend an opportunity for skeptics to examine the evidence of faith and then to leave the results with God. Jesus spoke with this man, identified the need and gave this man the answer. Well, what did I tell you in the beginning? It's not a story with a happy ending. The man came to the right person. The man asked the right questions and the man got the right answer, but what did he do? He went away very sad because he had great possessions. You see Jesus let him come, Jesus gave him the answer and Jesus let him go. We have to always leave the result to God. Now, did this man at some later point confess Jesus Christ? I don't know, I hope so, I pray that some day we'll meet him in heaven and he'll say you read my story, but you only got half the story. One day I finally bowed the knee and surrendered to Jesus Christ and thank God by His grace I'm here in heaven. But you see I don't know the story and you don't know the story. What we do know is that we need to take every opportunity to engage a skeptic and then we need to share and leave the results to God. Do you see we can get caught in one of two ditches, one of the ditches is that we can, you know, just be anti-intellectual. We can just be people who say well if people are just gonna put up smoke screens I'm not gonna talk to them I'm just gonna share the gospel. Well, share the gospel, but also give evidence for your faith. There's nothing wrong with that, it's a good thing to do. But the other end of that is not just to be anti-intellectual, the other side of that is to have naïve reliance on the fact that you could ever have enough answers to satisfy the curiosities of the needs of people. Some people get the answer and still reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. So don't have naïve reliance on the fact that you're gonna have enough answers. No, the answer is in sharing the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God. The power is in the gospel and the issue is not how many answers, though you can give evidences, the issue is sharing the gospel and when people hear the gospel they are forever changed. Almost every Wednesday night when we gather here there's a couple that sit right back over here, you know them, Bill and Pam Borenstein. Just a few years ago Bill Borenstein was a rich young ruler. He ran a major business in Las Vegas, Nevada; Pam was the president of the largest a...privately owned corporation run by a woman in the state of Nevada. They were living life large, but their lives were empty. He had a religious background, he was raised a Jew and in his Judaism he had heard many thing about God, but his religion had left him empty and there came a day when they came to Dallas and on a Christmas Eve were invited by some friends and neighbors to come to a service at Prestonwood and there they heard our pastor share the gospel of Jesus Christ and they knew there was something about what was said that was different about anything they'd ever known about religion or anything that they found in the material

things of life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the witness of friends and the influence of our pastor Bill and Pam set aside all those things that they might confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and God started working in their heart and their life and their home and today Bill Borenstein serves as the Minister of Men at Prestonwood Baptist Church and the passion of his heart is to see people know the truth about Jesus. He has received the Savior. Pam ministers in that same way with people a..., sharing and encouraging them in the gospel and theirs is a story with a happy ending because ultimately the question was answered and the objection and the obstacle that had kept them from the gospel was ultimately put away when the power of the gospel changed their hearts. You see ladies and gentlemen I stand tonight to say I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ for it is the power of God, of the salvation to everyone who believes. And while I can't answer all the skeptics and overcome all of the issues and I don't even have answers to all my questions I know of the power of the gospel and how I thank God that I can share that message and in the gospel we can see the power of God's grace released in people's lives.