

Confronting with Care!

Session 4

I have declared to you the gospel. How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. How He was buried, and having rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, I have declared to you the gospel. I declared to my prospect the gospel. I am sure to do that every time at this point before I go any further at all. I declare the gospel. Brethren, let's declare the gospel before we go any further.

Now, I am sure to show my prospect another life and death statement concerning that we must believe the gospel if we're going to be saved. I take my prospect now to Romans 10:9 where the Apostle Paul has said, "if you confess the Lord Jesus with your mouth and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead...". Isn't that the gospel? "Raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." That IF word is a very vital, conditional word. IF you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, if you believe the gospel, you will be saved. So in that life and death statement I show we must believe the gospel or we're not going to be saved.

Now, I ask my prospect, taking my prospect to 1 Corinthians 6:9, "Must we change our lifestyle in order to be saved?" And I show my prospect verse 9. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." Now, I am sure to help my prospect to understand these words, even though today we have painted a milder picture, it's still talking about the same thing. Isn't it amazing that fornication, even though it's between two consenting adults, is still fornication. That homosexuals, even though it's an alternate lifestyle, it is still homosexuality. That thievery is not just wise, or good, or effective business practices; that drunkards, even while they may be alcoholics, are still drunkards. And those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

I next take my prospect to Luke 13:3 to show it is another life and death statement. I ask, "What if we don't change?" Now, here is Jesus Himself speaking. And Jesus said, "Except you repent you will perish." And in fact, Jesus repeats it just two verses later. The very words. "Except you repent you will perish." And I take some time, and I'll spend some effort with my prospect, showing that this is a life and death threat. If we don't repent what's going to happen to us? We're going to perish. I'm very careful, and I want to make this very vivid with you. Brethren, I am very careful not to talk about repentance until, first of all, by all means, I declare the gospel. What is our motivation to change? What is our motivation to give up some old ways? Isn't it the gospel? Isn't it the desire to get in on what Jesus has actually brought us? What He actually died to share with us? And to rescue us from as He conquered the grave? Isn't that motivational? Making us want to change our lives? Sometimes we forget. Faith comes by what? Hearing. And hearing what? The Word of God. For us to have enough faith to want to change our lifestyles we've got to hear the gospel. The gospel is God's power in our lives. To change our lives. If we don't change we will perish.

I take by prospect now to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, asking the question, "What must we do to escape God's vengeance and everlasting destruction?" Notice what it says here. "The Lord Jesus one day, is going to be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire," notice what He's going to do, "taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not", now get this, "who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." This is a life and death statement. More specifically, it's a death threat. And I am sure to show my prospect those words. What if we don't know God? It's vengeance and everlasting destruction. What if we do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? It is vengeance and everlasting destruction. So, whatever it means, there is no doubt, that I have got to know God and obey the gospel. Now, what is God talking about here? I am sure to show my prospect that the Bible always interprets itself. So let's let the Bible interpret itself. One thing is for sure, I must obey the gospel. What is the gospel? It's the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. How can I obey something if I don't know what it is? How can I get out here on the Interstate and obey the speed limit if I don't know what the speed limit is? Alright, first of all, the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now, as the Bible interprets itself, I ask my prospect, "Isn't it amazing how the Bible interprets itself."

I quickly turn to Romans chapter six. Now you know what Romans chapter six says. It says, "Do you not know that as many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? We were buried, therefore, with Him..." How? "Through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Now, in the Scriptures, I show with my finger, the gospel. There's the death; He was buried, rose. Death, burial, resurrection. How do we get into the gospel? Through baptism. Through baptism.

In verse 17 it says, "Though you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart...". You see, it is a faith response. "You obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine." Doctrine. What doctrine did Jesus say to go into all the world and preach? The gospel. So, "you obeyed the form of the gospel, the pattern of the gospel to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." Obeying the gospel is performed in the watery grave of baptism.

I quickly then next take them to Galatians 3:26-27. It seems that we forget 26, and so many of our friends forget verse 27. Verse 26 says it's a faith response. You're children of God through faith. But verse 27 says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." So, how do we become a Christian? In baptism. Now, you can well see, that my story, at this particular point, is challenging their story. Tremendously. And they'll come back, many of them do, with me, and they will say, "Oh. Baptism. Well, now. I've been baptized." At this particular point, I find myself needing to remind them concerning their own story that they had given to me when we went through the flowchart, when I was interviewing them. I will say something like, "Well, if I remember correctly, and please tell me if I misunderstood you; if I remember correctly, you told me that on that Tuesday night, you went forward at that revival, and the preacher prayed the sinners prayer. Is that correct?" "Yes, that's correct." "And you accepted Christ as your personal Savior, and you called upon the name of the Lord for salvation. And I asked you when you opened your eyes at the end of that prayer, and looked around, was everybody smiling?, and you said, 'Yes, they were smiling.' And I asked you why? And you said, 'Because I just got saved.' Right? And I asked you if you had died on the way home that night in a car accident, do you believe you'd gone to heaven? And you told me, 'Yes'. You believed that you would have. And that was on Tuesday night. But it was the next Sunday then that you were baptized. Is that correct?" "Yes. That's correct." At this particular point in our conversation, I will ask my prospect three questions in this order.

1. Can a person be saved outside the blood of Jesus Christ?

And that person will give me the correct answer. "No."

2. Where was the blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins?

The correct answer is, "In Jesus' death."

3. Where, according to the Bible, (now, always let the Bible take the heat); where, according to the Bible, do we get into the death where the blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins?

And I go right back to Romans 6 where the Bible says, "Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" Now, in my Bible, those four words are there even on the same line. "Baptized into His death." How do we get into His death? Right there is the word. Baptized. It doesn't happen on the front pew. It doesn't happen at the foot of a mulberry bush, or around a campfire at some Christian youth camp. It happens, according to the Bible, in baptism. So, can a person be saved outside the blood of Jesus? No. Where was the blood shed? In His death. According to the Bible, where do we get into His death where we reach the blood to get forgiveness of sins? According to the Bible, it is in baptism. So I'll ask my prospect, "How in the world, then, could you have been saved that night on that front pew, outside the blood of Jesus Christ? You weren't baptized until the next Sunday." I had a young man tell me in Jefferson City, Missouri; he said, "They told me wrong, didn't they?" "Well, yes, they did." Now, the response comes,

"Well, I was baptized. I made it." And I will ask, "For what reason were you baptized? You thought you were already

saved. You thought you had already been forgiven of your sins, because you can't be saved in sin. You can't go to heaven in sin. You thought that you had been saved on that front pew. You were baptized for another reason. You were baptized to show that you had already been saved; or to become a member of a church; or as an outward sign of an inward grace. You were baptized for another reason besides the Biblical reason. According to the Bible you are baptized into His death. Or, as the Bible says in Acts 2:38 for the remission of those sins. In other words, according to the Bible, it is when we, by faith; you see, Romans chapter 6 says, "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him that the body of sin might be done away with, or destroyed. The old man of sin. We've got to know we're taking that old man of sin down into the death of Jesus, where the blood was shed. Yes! That we might get the remission of sins. That's why baptism is for the remission of sins. I try to help my prospect to see that baptism is not for saved people, it's for lost people. And most, well, I haven't found one that doesn't practice it; evangelical churches, I haven't found a one, but that says baptism is for saved people. They practice baptism only on those they say are saved. But according to the Bible baptism is only for lost people. I show that in Acts 2, as I take them step by step, in Acts 2, showing that as Peter was preaching for the first time the gospel to those people; they were lost people. And their very response, "What must we do?" They were asking that, not because they were saved, but because they were lost! And Peter is about to answer lost people's question, when they asked, "What must we do?" So, telling lost people, not saved people, but lost people, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins."

At this particular point, now, in our conversation, I will ask my prospect, as I have drawn a picture of the arrow coming down, the cross, the tomb, and the arrow coming out of the tomb, showing the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ; as I have already drawn the water showing we reenact the gospel of Christ in that sequence. I like to draw little stick figures. I draw one up in the left hand corner, and then one in the tomb of Christ, and then when I get to the tomb of Christ, I put a little suit on that stick figure to show that it's in baptism that we put on Christ. Then on the right side of the paper I will draw that stick figure again at the top of the page; this time with a suit on the stick figure, as that person is now in Christ. And I will now at this particular point, ask my prospect, showing him all the stick figures, asking him, "Where in this picture are you now standing?" Most of the time my prospect will respond by saying, "Well, according to what you show me in the Scriptures, I am still here." And he'll point to the left side of the sheet, the correct side of the sheet. He knows he has not obeyed the gospel. Pointing to the right side of the sheet, I will ask him, "Do you want to be here, in Christ." And he will say, "Sure." Pointing to the stick figure in baptism, I will ask him, "Do you know what you need to do to put on Christ?" "Yes." And then I will ask him, "Are you ready right now?"

I have found most of the time my prospects to say, "Yes, I'm ready. I'm ready." I am quick now to try to help my prospect to understand that he is going to face some persecution. I take him to John 15:20 where Jesus says, "Remember the word I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."

Then I will ask my prospect, "What is the fiercest kind of persecution it seems, that we seem to face these days?" I next then will take him to Luke 14:26 where the Bible; Jesus Himself is speaking, and He says, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." In other words, where is the greatest source of our persecution? Isn't it from our families? We love our families, they love us. But they, at the same time, seem to be the greatest source of persecution. There in verse 28 Jesus says, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has ENOUGH to finish." In other words, at this particular point, it's almost as though I try to talk my prospect out of obeying the gospel, because I want to make sure that he understands it's a commitment, it's some demands that God is making on his life. It's the most important decision that he can possibly make in life.

And to show him how important that is, I take my prospect to 2 Peter 2:20, where God says, "If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them." Verse 22 says, "It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A dog returns to his own vomit, and the sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire'".

I cannot imagine hell being any worse than hell. But according to the Word of God, it will be for those who have come to a knowledge of the truth. So I take my prospect to these words to show that he is making the most important decision, the most vitally, important and demanding commitment of his own life.

If there is hesitation, then, I will take my prospect to Acts 22:16. And I will simply ask my prospect, "Would you read these words out loud?, and give God your response. And you know what those words say. " Why do you tarry? Why do you wait? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

That's it! That's the initial way we open the conversation. Initiating dialogue by going to the flowchart, asking them to tell us their story. And I guess there are as many stories as there are beautiful people. But, asking them to give us their testimony, asking them to witness to us, I find out the details of their story. And then turning it around, "I was not saved that way. May I simply tell you how I was saved? I was saved by the gospel! I was saved when I obeyed the gospel. Where was I saved? When I obeyed the gospel. How was that done?"

But I am first to declare the gospel before I get into the right response to the gospel. Now, brethren, now comes the church. Now, in proper chronological order, the church comes into the picture. I am quick to take my prospect to Acts 2. Starting with verse 14, Peter is the one who, for the very first time, was able to preach to a bunch of lost people the gospel of Jesus Christ. Verses 14 through 36 the gospel is preached. In verse 37 they cry out, "What must we do?" In verse 38, as you well know, Peter tells them what they must do to be saved. In verse 41 they do it. And then the church comes into the picture. After we have already declared the gospel to the prospect, I show them this is exactly what Peter preached in Acts chapter 2. And when it comes to the response, that's what Peter preached that they must do in order to be saved. Now, what happened to those people when they obeyed the gospel, when they did repent, when they were baptized? Well, in verse 42, the Bible says, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers." In verse 44, "All who believed were together, had all things in common, sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

On the right side of the sheet of paper where I had drawn the stick figure who is now in Christ, I will draw another one in Christ, and a third one in Christ. And then I'll circle those three, showing that all of those who obeyed the gospel now are members of God's church. And I'll ask my prospect, "Are you ready now to become a member of us? You do realize that you are changing churches." Now I have found sometimes, my prospect is a little bit shocked. "You mean I have to change churches?" I am finding there are a lot of people who want to get in on salvation, they want rescue, they just don't want a Lord. They do want a Savior, they don't want a Master. They want to stay with their own church rather than having to change fellowship, to change churches. And so I handle that through the gospel. Brethren, God's church is always identified when one obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so I will point to the left hand side of the sheet, asking my prospect, "Isn't it obvious you learned something new today?" "Yes." "Isn't it obvious that you learned something fundamentally new?" Now that may throw him. "Fundamentally new? What do you mean, fundamentally new?" "Well, that you learned that you were not in Christ. You already showed me that you were over here. And you want to be in Christ. You know what you need to do to get into Christ. Fundamentally, you found out you were outside of Christ. Now, you didn't learn that from these precious people."

I will throw this out. Because sometimes I feel a little tension in the atmosphere when I am talking to my precious prospect. I will throw this out. "I want you to know, I do not question hearts. I don't question your pastor's heart. I don't question your member's hearts." Brethren, I don't question hearts. I've baptized too many denominational pastors. Their hearts are right. They, like Apollos, just needed to be taught the way more perfectly. I've baptized, I've helped too many of them to obey the gospel. And so I'll tell my prospect, "I don't question hearts. I question doctrine." For the Bible says, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." So I don't question hearts. That helps to relieve some tension. I've had a lot of prospects to say, "Okay, I'll go along with that. I'll accept that."

Wonderful. "So it's obvious that you didn't learn this from these precious people. You learned it from us. We have obeyed the gospel. Now, when you obey the gospel God's going to add you to the rest of us who have done this very thing. He's going to add you to us automatically. So come on in!, to Christ, according to the way the Bible says it, in baptism. You're automatically going to become one of us. Then let you and me, let us, go to that old church of yours, to those precious people, and say, "Hey! I know you love the Lord. Do you realize there are some life and death statements that we have to obey in order to truly, Biblically speaking, become Christians?" Let's go to them; if they really love the Lord, they're going to open their eyes to the Bible and let God speak to them, aren't they? And that way I'm helping to motivate my prospect to come on in, obey the gospel, and to become members of us, God's church.

My challenge for you now is to go next door, go across the street. Step up to that buddy of yours at school; to that friend of yours down at the plant. Ask the question, "What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure, nothing doubting, that you'd go to heaven?" Brethren, listen. We can come up with the easiest approach in the world!, but it is not going to work on automatic pilot. You can't just live your life in such a way, so that when people watch you long enough, why, they'll just ask you what you believe!! Brethren, it's not going to work on automatic pilot. You're going to have to go ahead and bite the bullet, muster up the courage, and ask the question, "What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure, nothing doubting, that you'd go to heaven?" And get into salvation dialogue. Brethren, we're not going to win souls to Christ until, first of all, we start talking the talk! God's given us a message to declare. I'M SERIOUS!! It's time we start talking. So get out there and ask the question. Ask the question! Ask the question! "What if the Lord were to come right now? Would you know for sure, nothing doubting, you'd go to heaven?"

Let's go rescue the perishing. Let's do God's work. Let's do the will of the Father.