**We Cannot But Speak**

*Acts 4:20*

**Introduction**

1. Jesus calls all of His disciples to the work of evangelism – **Matthew 28:18-20**
2. It was all members of the church who went about preaching the word as the persecution progressed – **Acts 8:4**
3. Evangelism is a fundamental topic of scripture that is often overcomplicated:
   1. It can be a daunting task to many and causes them to overthink it.
   2. Some search in vain for an exact formula to follow for success.
   3. Often, churches and individual Christians seek out books, materials, and programs designed to offer strategies and tactics for successful evangelism.
      1. There is a lot of good in these materials.
   4. However, there are basic concepts in scripture that will take care of our evangelism if we simply apply them and grow in them.
4. After Peter and John healed the lame man, were taken into custody by the Sanhedrin, and sat before them giving a defense – **Acts 4:18-22**
   1. **(v. 20)** – Peter manifested an attitude of not being able to do anything but tell others about the gospel.
   2. We need to reach this mindset that Peter, John, the apostles, and the 1st century disciples had – that we cannot but speak the gospel to others.
5. The following points are fundamental, but if they are owned by us as individuals then we will have the sense that Peter had, and we will be spreading the gospel consistently and affectively as God intends.
6. A Sense of Duty
7. **Luke 6:46** – Jesus’ words on confessing Him as Lord – MUST do what He says.
8. **James 4:17** – if we don’t do what we know we must then we sin. (Sins of omission)
9. Paul’s sense of duty – **1 Corinthians 9:16**
10. This was Peter’s mindset:
    1. **Acts 4:18-20** – the Sanhedrin was putting their authority up before God’s, and Peter made that known.
    2. Peter – “If you were in our position – having been given a mission by God Himself – would you obey God, or those telling you not to do what God told you to do?”
    3. After matters progressed – **Acts 5:29** – obey God rather than men.
11. We need to understand that evangelism is not optional, and it is not exclusively commanded for a select group of people within the Lord’s body, but a command for the whole body.
12. Jesus’ words to the disciples in the limited commission:
    1. The command – **Matthew 10:5-7** – preach kingdom to Israel.
    2. The expectation – **Matthew 10:16, 22** – hostility from many.
    3. The encouragement – **Matthew 10:28-31** – God is with you to protect you.
    4. The lack of choice – **Matthew 10:32-33** – they had no choice but to confess Christ, for if they didn’t, they would lose their souls.
13. If we truly have a sense of duty, then we will not keep from speaking the gospel in every opportunity.
14. A Passion About What We Have Seen and Heard
15. Peter felt compelled to tell others what he had seen and heard – **Acts 4:20**
    1. **Acts 3:14-15; 5:29-32** – witnessed the resurrected Lord.
    2. **Luke 24:44-49** – heard the gospel concerning Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection fully revealed – for remission of sins.
    3. Witnessing such things as the resurrection of Christ and hearing the reason for all that happened and its power to save drove Peter and the other apostles to tell everyone about the good news.
16. The example of the Samaritan woman:
    1. **John 4:25-26, 28-30** – hearing Jesus plainly state who He was, the woman could not wait to tell others. (**v. 25** – the Messiah is one she had longed for, and He was here.)
    2. The living water was springing up in her – **John 4:14; 7:37-38** – i.e. the truth which Jesus gave to her concerning Himself could not be contained within her, but drove her to tell others, and in turn give them the living water.
17. The example of those on the road to Emmaus:
    1. Two disciples talked with each other about the events of Jesus’ death. Jesus joins them and asked what they talked about but didn’t reveal Himself. They manifest their disappointment that Jesus died, but then mentioned the resurrection.
    2. Jesus’ reaction – **Luke 24:25-27**
    3. They asked Jesus to stay for a little longer, their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and HE vanished.
    4. Their reaction – **Luke 24:32-35** – they had a burning passion about the truth revealed by Jesus on the road, and they couldn’t wait to tell the others.
18. We need to have a burning passion about the gospel, and if we do we will not be able to keep from telling others – **Jeremiah 20:9** (speaking of his weariness of those who derided him and his preaching)
19. Are we passionate about the gospel?
20. Sincere Faith in Christ
21. Paul expresses what prompted his, and the other apostles’, preaching – **2 Corinthians 4:13** – faith.
    1. The reason he was moved to preach the gospel to men and was willing to do so even in trial and affliction was because HE HAD A FIRM CONVICTION IN THE THINGS HE SPOKE.
22. The word of the Lord will sound forth from us as our faith goes out in the world – **1 Thessalonians 1:8**
23. The gospel is intended to produce sincere faith – **1 Timothy 1:5**
    1. We will not be able to evangelize successfully if our faith is not sincere.
    2. I.e. our faith needs to be genuine, and rooted in deep conviction.
24. Paul as a proof of the Lord’s resurrection:
    1. The fact that the great persecutor Saul would make a complete turnaround to defending the faith he once persecuted acts as evidence of the Lord’s resurrection – **Galatians 1:22-24**
    2. Paul’s preaching was rooted in conviction – **Acts 26:24-25** – truth and reason.
    3. He was ready to die for preaching the truth – **Acts 21:12-13**
25. If our faith is shallow, and not nurtured we will not feel compelled to speak on it.
    1. **1 Peter 3:15** – the Lord must be sanctified in our heart. (Does he hold that special place in our heart?)
    2. Our faith cannot be divided (double minded) – **James 1:8** (unstable in all ways – evangelism included)
    3. Our faith cannot be founded on another’s but must be personal.
    4. Our faith must be real to us, and not just something we happen to be on the side, or else we will not be looking to tell others.
26. If we work to establish our faith, and deepen our conviction then we will not be able to help but tell people of the things we deeply believe in.
    1. **Romans 10:17** – comes by hearing God’s word.
    2. **1 Timothy 4:16** – save both self and those who hear us.
27. A Knowledge of the Terror of the Lord
28. Paul was compelled to preach the gospel because he knew of terrors of judgment day – **2 Corinthians 5:10-11**
    1. It is not that Paul was afraid – He was right with God.
    2. However, he knew those who didn’t obey the gospel would be destroyed – **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**
    3. Therefore, he sought to persuade men – **cf. Acts 24:24-25** (As with Felix)
29. Judgement is a fearful thing for those not ready – **Hebrews 10:31**
30. We know what God is capable of **– Matthew 10:28**
31. We are convicted by the truths of hell, and wish to avoid it at all costs ourselves – **Matthew 5:29-30**
32. Such should be enough for us to warn men when we have opportunity.
    1. “I’ve always said that I don’t respect people who don’t proselytize. I don’t respect that at all. If you believe that there’s a heaven and a hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it’s not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward—and atheists who think people shouldn’t proselytize and who say just leave me along and keep your religion to yourself—how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?...I mean, if I believed, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that a truck was coming at you, and you didn’t believe that truck was bearing down on you, there is a certain point where I tackle you. And this is more important than that.” (Penn Jillette, an atheist, of the magician duo, Penn & Teller)
33. The Compelling Love of Christ
34. In addition to the terror of the Lord, another thing overwhelmingly compelled Paul to teach others about Christ – **2 Corinthians 5:13-15** – the love of Christ.
    1. I.e. the love Christ had, not only for Paul, but everybody compelled him to tell everybody about Christ.
    2. **(v. 14)** – Christ died for all, that means all had died in sin – all needed the sacrifice of Christ.
35. **John 3:16; 1 John 3:16** – God’s love for the world, and Jesus’ love for the world expressed in His death should tell us something about the world.
    1. The world is valuable to God and Christ.
    2. All men’s souls should be of value to us.
36. The greatest thing we can do for anybody is to tell them about Christ. This is the greatest way of showing love to those in the world.
37. Christ’s love expressed – **Philippians 2:3-8** – He looked out for our interests, not His own, when He came to earth and died. He was a servant to us.
    1. Having experienced this love, it is a logical response to seek to share it with others.
    2. If Christ had such interest in us, how much more should be show interest in others?

**Conclusion**

1. We are called to spread the gospel to the world.
2. There is no secret to the success of evangelism. It simply takes motivation, and action.
3. If these matters are true for us, then we will not be able to help but speak the matters of the gospel to the world.