

Reaching the Spiritually Dead with Compassion and Truth

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Summary

Seeing the Lost: Dead in Sin, Moved by Compassion

Scripture References

Primary text

- Ephesians 2
- Romans 1
- Matthew 9
- 1 Corinthians 6

Other references

- Genesis 2:17
- John 3
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Psalm 23

Overview

Evangelism flows first from love for God—His glory compels us to speak—but it is also fueled by compassion for people still “dead in trespasses and sins.” The lesson traces three moves: understanding the unbeliever's true condition, watching how that condition surfaces in daily life, and letting Christ's own compassion set our tone and urgency. Remembering that “such were some of you” removes pride and stirs us to share the gospel faithfully, trusting God for the results.

Main Points

God-Centered Motivation to Evangelize

- Primary aim: make God known, worship Him, and glorify Him by speaking of His redeeming work.
- Secondary aim: genuine compassion for others who, like us once, are lost and need the gospel.

- “How will they know unless someone is sent?” – every believer is now privileged to stand in that gap.

The Lost Person's Condition: Spiritual Death (Ephesians 2)

- Paul's description: dead in trespasses, following the world, the devil and fleshly passions, “children of wrath.”
- Spiritual death is the fulfillment of Genesis 2:17—Adam's sin brought death to all his offspring.
- Illustration: corpses in a cemetery have zero awareness of passers-by; likewise the spiritually dead have no awareness of God's Spirit.
- Result: people are not what they were created to be—Adam and Eve were spiritually alive; we are not.

How Spiritual Death Shows Itself (Romans 1)

- Four main expressions:
 - Suppressing the truth.
 - Refusing to honor or thank God.
 - Trusting human wisdom and experience.
 - Exchanging God's glory for controllable idols.
- Examples offered:
 - **Illustration:** Science once pursued to explore God's handiwork is now weaponized to deny Him (evolution, big-bang explanations).
 - Government, language, entertainment, and sexuality are twisted to celebrate rebellion rather than reflect God's order.
 - Television profanity—once rare—is now everywhere, evidencing untamed tongues.

Christ's Compassion Model (Matthew 9)

“He saw the crowds, and was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered like sheep without a shepherd.”

- Compassion: “entering another's misery,” stirring the whole inner being toward merciful action.
- Jesus addressed both symptoms (diseases) and the root (lostness) while proclaiming the kingdom.
- **Story:** Children's book “Sammy and His Sheep” depicts the shepherd's feeding, guiding, correcting—a picture of Jesus' care for leaderless crowds.

Remembering “Such Were Some of You” (1 Corinthians 6)

- A litany of sins that exclude from the kingdom is followed by, “And such were some of you.”
- The gospel therefore destroys any sense of superiority; we were washed, sanctified, justified only by grace.

Practical Implications for Sharing

- Expect sinners to behave like sinners; don't be shocked when darkness resists light.
- Patience is needed when people lash out—anger or ridicule is often the reflex of a conscience pricked by truth.
- **Illustration:** Penn (of Penn & Teller) said a Christian who stays silent is like someone who lets a stranger get hit by a bus—absence of warning looks like hatred.
- Biblical compassion neither excuses sin nor withholds truth; it holds both together:
 - Conduct shaped by love.
 - Clear words that call sin what God calls it and point to Christ's sufficient work.
- Even a brief seed-sowing encounter (“Come, see a man who told me everything... Could this be the Christ?”) is faithful. Results belong to God.

Key Truths

- Spiritual death, not merely bad behavior, is the unbeliever's core problem.
- Suppressing truth and idol-making are inevitable fruits of that death.
- Jesus' response to lostness is visceral compassion that moves Him to gospel action.
- Remembering that we once shared the same condition protects us from pride and stokes empathy.
- Evangelism is obedience: success is measured by faithfulness to proclaim, not by visible conversions.

Response

- Worship God aloud for His redeeming work in your own life.
- Look at neighbors, coworkers, and family first as image-bearers who are spiritually dead—let that shape your tone.
- Speak the gospel plainly this week; trust the Spirit rather than your own persuasion.
- Cultivate patience when conversation turns hostile; remember the cemetery illustration and keep sowing.
- Pray earnestly that the Lord of the harvest will send (and make you) available laborers.

Closing

Jesus saw people “harassed and helpless,” and His heart moved—not to condemn but to rescue. The same fields surround us now.

“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”

Therefore, filled with gratitude for grace that reached us, we go with humble urgency, lifting high the only word that raises the dead.

Prayer

Father, thank You that while we were dead in sin You sent Your Son, who kept the law perfectly and bore our condemnation. Shape us by this gospel: make us compassionate, patient, and bold. Strengthen the sick among us, protect our sisters away on retreat, and dismiss us in Your grace, that we may reflect Christ and proclaim Him. Amen.

Resources

- “Sammy and His Sheep” (children's book on Psalm 23)
- Interview clip: Penn Jillette (atheist magician) discussing Christians' responsibility to warn of coming judgment