

Biblical Evangelism (1)

Laying the foundations

In this course you will learn why it is that salvation can come only through a personal relationship with Jesus, how the plan of salvation works and how you can share your faith in Christ Jesus with others, whether that be one-to-one or in front of a large crowd. 1 Peter 3 v 15 reads: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

Jesus told His disciples in Luke 10 verse 2 “The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray, therefore that The Lord of the harvest will send forth labourers into his harvest.” There are some harvests, like for instance the grape harvest that those gathering it in require training so that the harvest will not be damaged or lost.

There are many hurting people in this world, it is The Lord’s desire that none of them should be lost, but all of them come to salvation. When Jesus ministered on earth He went to places and people others would never go to because God has a tremendous heart of compassion for the outcast of society as well as others.

Mark chapter 2 verses 15 to 17 inclusive shows us the people that Jesus came for early in his account of the gospel. “It came to pass that as Jesus sat at table in the house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples: for there were many who had followed Him.

When the scribes and Pharisees saw him eating with publicans and sinners, they said unto His disciples, how is it that he eats and drinks with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, he said unto them, they that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

In order to bring in these and others that The Lord has called unto Himself a person must know, understand and practice the biblical instructions on how to gather in the harvest. In Exodus chapter 25 verses 8 and 9 The Lord reminds Moses to do things exactly as he has been instructed.

“Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make them.” In Matthew chapter 16 verse 18 Jesus tells Peter: “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

There you see it, God is going to build His church and have it built in the way He always intended that it would. Psalm 127 begins with these words: “Except The Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it”

Before Jesus was taken up into heaven He taught His disciples the way He wants His church to be built. The first instruction is found in John’s gospel chapter 12 verse 32 reads: “If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.” Do you understand that? If Jesus is lifted up He will draw all unto Himself.

We are not required to lift anyone up except Jesus, not our guest speaker, not a famous Christian author, not a rich man who comes to know Christ Jesus as his personal Lord and saviour, but only Jesus. Sadly many sermons in churches today make no mention of the name of Jesus, therefore it is no wonder that so few people are drawn to Him.

There are hundreds of millions of people in the world who have been taught that it is only through Jesus that salvation can come yet nobody has ever explained to them what the plan of salvation is or how it works. To most it is a complete mystery, therefore if anyone is asked to testify as to why they believe this, most are completely at a loss to know where to begin.

This should be foundational knowledge, something a person learns a matter of days after He commits his life to Christ, but so many people even born-again, Spirit-filled Christians do not know where to begin, that is why we shall look at this subject before we look at anything else, so that you will be able to understand the simplicity of the plan of salvation and be able to explain it to anyone who asks you to do so.

Let us start with a misunderstanding that many people have about the story of Adam and Eve found in Genesis chapter 3. The bible states that it was **the serpent** (not a serpent) who tempted Eve to disobey God. Whenever in scripture you see the words **the** and **serpent** together it **always** refers to the devil.

We can see this from Revelation chapter 12 verse 9 which reads “The great dragon was cast out, that old **serpent**, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceived the whole world: he was cast out down to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Further we see from 2 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 13 and 14 that the devil can appear very deceptively. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light..”

The description of the devil as a serpent does not refer to his appearance but his character. Look for instance at Luke chapter 13 verses 31 and 32 we see Jesus giving His reaction to the threat of Herod. “The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get out and depart from here: or Herod will kill you.

He then said unto them, go and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” This is another biblical reference to character not appearance, this time Jesus describing Herod as a fox. He did not mean that he had red hair, a bushy tail and walked around on four legs, Jesus was describing an aspect of Herod’s character not appearance.

Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden because of one sin. Some say this is very harsh but it was in fact a great act of love. God stated clearly why He turned them out of the Garden, we see the reason declared in verses 22 and 23 of this chapter.

“The Lord God said, behold, the man has become as one of us, knowing good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and

live for ever: therefore The Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.”

If Adam and Eve had eaten of the tree of life and lived forever in their state of sin they would be irredeemable, but God put into place a plan whereby He could redeem Adam and Eve and all who would come to believe in the one who was to come as our redeemer.

Adam’s father was God, therefore the second Adam would have to have God as his father otherwise he would inherit a sin nature through his father. He would also have to lead a life free from sin, for God turned Adam and Eve out of the Garden also because He could not tolerate sin in His presence unless it had been atoned for.

Later the Jewish festival of atonement (at one ment) where the whole community were made at one with God through the blood of an unblemished lamb was to become a forerunner of what Jesus would do on behalf of mankind, acting as our High Priest, Scapegoat and unblemished lamb at the feast of the Passover.

We see from the New Testament that Jesus fulfilled all the duties required for this festival to be conducted perfectly except that this time the community (all believers throughout the ages) would be made at one with God (atoned for) for all eternity.

Only a sinless person could do this since if he did sin or had an earthly father thereby inheriting the sin nature, he would not even be able to atone for his own wrong-doing much less the sin of everyone past, present and future who would put their faith and trust in Him.

Christianity is unique, in every other religion you have to try to outweigh your good deeds with your bad deeds, and even then you cannot be sure of a place in heaven but Paul described Christianity in these terms in Romans chapter 10 verses 9 and 10:

“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God hath raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

If you were to ask God to forgive all your sin and cleanse you from it, and be your Lord, your God, your Saviour, your King and your friend forevermore, then He will do as you have asked.

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Study No. 2 How the plan works

Now it is time to look at how many of these requirements Jesus met in order to redeem us. Firstly, it is clearly stated that the child born of Mary was conceived by The Holy Spirit, God Himself. It was the seed of Eve (the woman) who nurtured and gave birth to Him.

Matthew chapter 1 v 16 gives the ancestry of Jesus through Joseph, the man chosen to be like a father to Jesus on earth, and Luke chapter 3 verses 13 - 28 gives the ancestry of Jesus on Mary's side. Both agree that the ancestry of Jesus goes back to the tribe of Judah since God demonstrated that out of the Tribe of Judah the promised Messiah would come.

This is shown by the fact that The Tribe of Judah camped directly in front of the only way in to the presence of God through the Tabernacle. Having said all this, we must go forward now to see how Jesus acted as our high priest, sacrificial lamb and scapegoat so that we could escape the wrath of God.

All that the High Priest had to wear to minister at the Day of Atonement and what he had to do can be seen in detail in Leviticus chapter 16 and the reason for the Feast of the Passover in Exodus chapter 12. If you read these chapters in conjunction with the New Testament verses quoted below you will find that Jesus fulfilled everything necessary for the completion of these festivals.

Before ministering as high priest of the whole community, the high priest was instructed to bathe and put on linen clothing. Through reading what Jesus did with His disciples on the night of His last supper with them, we can clearly see that Jesus did bathe and put on linen clothing (John chapter 13 v 1 - 15).

Later Jesus was brought before Pilate on false charges, and led out of the city to be crucified. Like the scapegoat He had to be led outside the camp, and Jesus was taken outside the city wall (John chapter 19 verse 17). Then He had rammed on His head a crown of thorns.

At this time He would have without doubt been confessing the sin of Israel and the sin of the whole community and indeed the whole world (Matthew chapter 27 v 27 and John chapter 19 verses 22 - 24).

Since it was an outrage to leave a body on a cross over the Sabbath and to make sure that He was really dead at this time, they broke the legs of the two criminals being crucified with Jesus but when they came to Jesus they found Him already dead, so there was no need to break His legs (John chapter 19 v 31).

Moments before three o'clock in the afternoon, the Jewish ninth hour, between the two evenings, Jesus cried out from the cross "It is finished" (John chapter 19 v 30). He said this because at that time He had accomplished everything on earth necessary for the salvation of all mankind, throughout the ages.

To make sure He was dead, a Roman soldier pierced Jesus side and out came blood and water. Jesus was presenting His life, Himself and His blood as a substitute before God so that we could be forgiven (John chapter 19 v 31 - 37). The Sunday following, was the day He rose from the dead. Not for our salvation, He had already accomplished that for us.

But just as the people of the community of Israel knew the sacrifice for their sin had been accepted when the high priest came out alive from the presence of God, so Jesus rose from the dead that day to prove to us that God had accepted His sacrifice, and our sins were now atoned for if only we believe and trust in Him.

This way we are made members of the community. Now the community is much bigger than the community of the Israelites, it's the community of all believers who will ever live. This sacrifice was so precious to God, the forgiveness and redemption it secured is not just for one year, but for all eternity. Thanks be to God.

Many may have wondered why it was that Jesus had to go into the wilderness and be tempted by the devil after Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. The answer is that when Adam and Eve sinned they lost their authority over the earth to the devil. Jesus won it back for us by winning over temptation as a man.

Therefore the authority and responsibility for what goes on around the world rests once again with mankind collectively. After His resurrection from the grave Jesus told His disciples that as He is in The Father so mysteriously shall all believers be in Christ. Therefore in and through Him we have this power and authority also.

Speaking to His disciples after His resurrection Jesus told them "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

The Greek word used here for "power" is the same word as is used for the word "authority" the implications of this and other parts of scripture are that Jesus has been given **all power and authority** in heaven and on earth.

John chapter 15 verse 5 reads as follows; "I am the vine, y are the branches: He who abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing." If you abide in Jesus and He abides in you not only shall you produce much fruit but you will have the same power and authority over the works of darkness that Jesus had when He walked the earth as a man.

This is made clear by a verse in John chapter 14 which is repeated for emphasis by Jesus Himself. Again speaking to His disciples Jesus tells them in verse 12 of this chapter; Truly I say unto you, He who believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Therefore the same power and authority that Jesus won back for mankind on earth is available to us today, not when we act on presumption but only when we act on

command by The Father as Jesus did. We can see this when we look at John chapter 5 which is the story of the man who had been sitting at the pool of Bethesda for more than 30 years.

In verse 19 of John chapter 5 Jesus makes it clear how He is able to do such great miracles. “Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do: for what things He does the Son does likewise.”

This simple but very important lesson is nothing new, it is something God has been trying to teach His people since the time of Moses when he set up the tabernacle in the wilderness. Exodus chapter 40 reminds us of God’s command about moving the tent of meeting or leaving it where it is for the time being.

Verses 38 to 40 inclusive of this chapter read: “When the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. The cloud of The Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys”

The simple lesson to God’s people is very clear God is saying to them if you want to see great miracles happening all around you and in your midst, “you do not move until I do” or to put it another way “Stay where you are until you see me moving, then you move and walk in harmony with me doing only those things that I tell you.”

How do we know what God is telling us to do? The same way as Jesus did, through His relationship with Father built up on earth doing only those things that any man could do if they walked an upright life before God. The way to establish the kind of relationship Jesus had with His father on earth is the subject of our next study.

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Knowing your Master's voice

In many countries of the Western world, when couples want to adopt a child, even though perhaps they have a child of their own, they will visit an adoption home after being sifted by an adoption agency to see whether their home is suitable to take in another child, feed it and in every way tend to its needs when the child is sick and will encourage the child to grow at a steady pace towards the fullness of their potential.

If these things are found to be the case, the parents wanting to adopt the child will be taken to a part of the building where there are many children who need adoption, they will talk to the children individually and they will eventually find one where there is a natural bond between the parents and the child.

When this happens the parents will visit the child often so that the child will get to know them and they will get to know the child more and more. If all goes well eventually the child will be ready and happy to leave its current surroundings and take up residence in the family home of the couple who will legally act as the child's parents and guardian.

This is a very close likeness of what happens between God and man. Although God knows us well and knew all about us even before we were born you did not know Him until you responded to the drawing unto Him by The Holy Spirit. Jeremiah chapter 1 verse five reads: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you as a prophet unto the nations."

Though we do not all have the same calling, it tells us that God knew and loved us even before we were conceived and that He ordained what our purpose in Himself would be. Building a relationship with God is similar to the way you build a relationship with another person; you get to know them, spend more and more time with them and eventually fall in love with them and are legally bonded to them for eternity.

The kind of relationship Jesus had with His Father was no different from the kind of intimate fellowship that God longs to have with each one of us. In the first seven verses of Ephesians chapter 1 we read something that is rarely expounded on by teachers yet is of tremendous importance.

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us to be adopted as His children through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

The passage continues and the whole of the first chapter of Ephesians was actually originally written as one sentence. The point that is very rarely spoken of by teachers and preachers is the fact that things were very different in the days of Paul, and although they are very different now Paul chose his words carefully so that they would reflect what he meant.

In those days if your natural born son rebelled against you there was provision for you to exclude him from your will, completely cut him off from an inheritance and denounce him publicly. No such provision existed for those who were adopted; they could not be written out of their adopted Father's will or denounced publicly or privately.

This shows you the depth of our security in Christ, He promised that He would never forsake us or desert us and here we have an extra assurance of this. Towards the end of the book of Ephesians in chapter 5 verses 18 to 21 Paul writes something that gives us a hint of how we can build a relationship with our heavenly father as intimate as the one that Jesus had with God when He was living in the body of a man on earth, subjecting Himself to all the limitations that we have.

The verse in question reads as follows: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God The Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in **the fear of God.**" What is the fear of God? Well that is another subject altogether.

If we follow Paul's advice and sing and make melody in our hearts unto The Lord then we are indulging in something that has been forgotten by most churches for centuries and that is the gift of silent prayer. This means that you can be praying, praising and worshipping God in your spirit with crowds of people around you and nobody but you and God will know that this is happening.

There is an example of silent prayer as early as Genesis chapter 24 and verse 45 though some translations miss the point of this verse altogether. The full context of this story can be found in verses 37 to 48 inclusive of that chapter.

The passage reads as follows: my master made me swear saying, you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: but you shall go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, to take a wife for my son. I said unto my master, what if the woman will not follow me?

I came this day unto the well, and said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now you do prosper the way that I go: behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when a virgin comes forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray you, a little water from your pitcher to drink; and she says to me, both drink and I will also draw water for your camels: let the same be the woman whom The Lord has appointed for my master's son.

Before I had done **speaking in mine heart**, behold, Rebecca came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well, and drew water: and I said to

her, let me drink, I pray you. She made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, drink, and I will give your camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

I asked her, whose daughter are you? And she said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore unto him: and I put the ear ring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. I bowed down my head, and worshipped The Lord, and blessed The Lord God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son."

What is "prayer in my heart"? Without doubt this is silent prayer. Jesus seems to have used it always in His relationship with His Father when He was out and about in the towns that He visited.

The deeper and more intimate our relationship with our creator the easier we will find it to identify that still small voice when it speaks to you. One of the quickest ways of growing in your ability to identify that still small voice is to obey it immediately and do what ever God is telling you to do. No relationship can grow whilst one is doing the things that are hateful to the other.

Another important way is to spend quality time with God usually in the morning when you rise from your bed. This is what Jesus did and it caused Him to grow in His relationship with The Father. The early morning is the best time of day to have quality time listening to what God wants to say to you, worshipping Him and reading His word before the problems and distractions of the day begin in earnest.

God wants to have a two way relationship with you just like King David did in Psalm 142. verses 1 and 2 read: "I cried unto The Lord with my voice, unto The Lord did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I showed before him my trouble." Isn't this what people in a close relationship do? You share something of your heart with God and He will share something of His heart with you.

Any relationship takes time to develop and has its ups and downs yet The Lord is worth pursuing just "like a deer that is searching for cold water in a drought" as a well-known chorus would say. Relationships have to be worked at, never give up, always keep searching and remember God's promise in Jeremiah chapter 29 verse 13 which reads as follows: "When you seek me, you shall find me, when you seek me with all your heart."

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Everything we need for victory

There is much false teaching about evangelism and many other subjects today, we must learn to recognise the false from the true. This we will be able to do the more effectively if we familiarise ourselves with the scriptures and walk close to The Lord every moment of every day. We are warned by Jesus that there will come a time when many will fail to recognise false teaching because they do not check out with scripture all that they are told.

One of the most popular items of false teaching is to take a verse of scripture out of context and give it a meaning it was never intended to have. Our enemy is good at this so we must be especially careful that we do not become deceived through lack of knowledge of the truth.

Many people teach from 2 Chronicles chapter 20 and read verse 15 which reads: “He said, hearken all Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you king Jehoshaphat, thus says The Lord unto you, do not be afraid or dismayed by this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.” This is usually followed by a great shout of “Amen” by those gathered together.

What a pity they do not go to the next verse also which reads: “To morrow go down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and you shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. You shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of The Lord with you, Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for The Lord will be with you.”

Clearly then what God requires of His people in order that victory may be one is obedience. If these people had not obeyed God’s instruction they would not have seen the victory, but the reason they did see it was because of their obedience to God. We shall be looking at the importance of obedience in our next study.

Whether we like it or not and whether we realize it or not each one of us who are truly born-again are in a battle every moment of every day of our lives until we are taken up to be with our Lord and Saviour forever. This is obvious through what Paul writes in chapter 6 and verse 12 of his letter to the church at Ephesus.

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world and against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Since we are not fighting flesh and blood why are we trying to fight evil governments and anti-Christian laws with petitions and protests? Time and time again it has been proven that the best way to deal with such situations is on our knees united in our prayer to God.

Through this method governments have been changed and anti-Christian legislation has failed to get through Parliament because of the fervent prayers of God’s people. James chapter 5 verse 16 encourages and instructs us further: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man achieves much.”

Whenever a nation is threatened with a war by any other nation it naturally will prepare itself for such an event. Since we are already in a war (not a physical one but a spiritual one) we ought logically to make sure that we know what weapons we have and how they should be used.

2 Corinthians chapter 10 verses 4 and 5 read thus: “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the **obedience** of Christ” There’s that word again, can you see it? The word **obedience** I mean.

Before we go out to battle and learn through experience how to use the weapons that we have been given it is only sensible to do what all soldiers do when they go out to do battle and that is to put on the fullness of the armour that has been made available to them. Our spiritual armour is outlined for us in Ephesians chapter 6 verses 14 to 18 which read as follows:

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, whereby you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints”

The whole idea of the spiritual weapons that we have been given is that we will use them against the enemy not against each other. United we shall stand, divided we shall fall. Let us not as denominations or individuals fight one another but let us all unite in the common purpose of defeating the real enemy who stands before each one of us every moment of every day in order to obstruct our progress in The Lord.

Jesus was able to raise Lazarus from the dead in a matter of a few seconds but He has been waiting more than two thousand years to see the churches come together in true unity. John chapter 17 verse 23 Jesus is praying for His disciples. Not simply the twelve that have been with Him for more than three years, but for all who would come to know Him throughout the ages before His return to earth.

“That they may be made perfectly one; so that the world may know that you sent me, and have loved them, as you have loved me.” Now do you see why the enemy will bring all sorts of petty excuses and reasons why one denomination cannot work with another? Because if they did work together in unity then the world would **know** that Jesus was sent from and by God Himself.

We have seen already in this series of studies that 2 Chronicles chapter 7 verse 14 requires us (the people of God) to **humble ourselves** and **pray** not humble ourselves **to** pray. If we think that any other denomination has not had so great a revelation of the truth as we have then we are guilty of the sins of pride and arrogance which are the opposite of humility, both pride and arrogance are an offence to God.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verses 12 to 14 inclusive Paul writes as follows: “For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being

many, are one body: so also is Christ. By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink of that one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”

God always intended that each mature member of His body, the church on earth, would play the part assigned them by God, not just turn up to a meeting on a Sunday and perhaps another meeting in the middle of the week and not commit yourself to **any** work of service between times or even at those times then quite literally you have made that body sick. No sick body can bring about the works of God.

Even if the only vacancy on the church help rota is putting out the chairs or cleaning the toilets each week do it as though you were doing it for The Lord. Be faithful to a seemingly small but important task such as these and God promises that in due time you will be exalted and given other things to do. Christ humbled Himself to the maximum possible extent and if we are to please Him we must humble ourselves also.

The other side of the coin is that it is the job of the leaders to recognize, encourage and help you develop the gifting that you have in you. It should **never** be the case whereby the leaders do all the most (seemingly) honourable jobs and leave “the dirty work” for other people but that they should lead by example and share with you the honours and privileges that they have once you are ready and mature enough for this.

One of the things that surprises many people about the full armour of God is that it includes **all prayer** and an instruction to “pray in The Spirit” on every possible occasion. We shall look at how to use this weapon and what it means to “pray in The Spirit on every possible occasion” in our next study.

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Prayers that move the heart of God.

Now it is time to look at some of the prayers recorded in scripture that have moved the heart of God. Firstly we shall look at the prayers of Daniel in chapters 9 and 10 and Nehemiah chapter 1 verses 6 to 10 inclusive. Though Daniel prayed the same type of prayer as Nehemiah translations of the prayer of Nehemiah are much easier to understand.

Nehemiah's prayer was as follows: "Let your ear now be attentive, and your eyes open, that you may hear the prayer of your servant, who prays before you now, day and night, for the children of Israel your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, that we have sinned against you: both I and my father's house have sinned.

We have behaved very corruptly against you, and have not kept the commandments, or the statutes, or the judgments, that you commanded your servant Moses to obey. Remember, I beseech you, the word that you gave your servant Moses, saying, If you transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations.

But if you turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though you were cast out unto the uttermost part of the world, yet I will gather you from there, and will bring you back unto the place that I have chosen to set my name. Now these are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power, and by your strong hand."

Do you understand what these two great men of God were praying? Basically they were both confessing their own sin, the sin of the nation that they lived in and the sin of their forefathers. Individually nobody but God knows your sin better than you do yourself, and if you walk around the town or city where you are living it will not be difficult to realise what sins need to be confessed on behalf of the people today.

You may wonder what you should be looking for in order to establish which sins need to be confessed before God on behalf of your city or town. The answer is very simple thanks to the writings of Paul who writes in Galatians chapter 5 verses 19 to 21 inclusive that the works of darkness are obvious, and then gives us a list as a guide.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envy, murder, drunkenness, revelling and such like: of which I told you before, they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Surely in every city or town of the world today it will be easy to walk round and identify people and places that fall under one or more of these categories. Idolatry is simply having a greater regard for something you possess or do than you have for God. This could be a hobby, a material object, alcohol or sex – either watching on film or illegally participating in it.

Not only are these things sinful but they can be addictive and take over your life so slowly that you will not realise that it is happening. Psalm 66 verse 18 reads as follows: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

Therefore if you are doing something and intend to continue that something which is offensive to God whether that is holding back forgiveness to someone or doing some sinful act then your prayer will not be effective in the ears of God.

God loves everyone and wants **everyone** to come to salvation in and through Christ Jesus, therefore we know that if we intercede for the lost by crying out to God to forgive their iniquity and open their eyes to hear and respond to the gospel then we know – especially if two or three pray this prayer together – that at some time in the future whether that be near or far off what you have asked will be granted if you have prayed in faith believing that at the appointed time what you have asked will come to pass.

Both Daniel and Nehemiah saw their prayers answered because it was not just once that they prayed those things, nor was it once a month or even once a week, but it was every day that they brought these prayers before God and did not cease to do so until their prayers had been answered.

The enemy will try anything that he is allowed to in order to discourage you and make you give up praying in unbelief, but Daniel was told that his prayer had already been granted in heaven but the manifestation of it was being contested by demonic forces. It was only as he kept praying in faith and continuously that the battle was won. Had he given up out of discouragement the spiritual battle would have been lost.

Praying in faith is praying something that you know to be in the will of God and **continuing** to believe that what you have asked for will be granted in time because you are praying in the will of God. James wrote something about the prayer of faith in one of his letters to the churches of his day.

James chapter 1 verses 6 to 8 inclusive read as follows: “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

Do not forget though, that faith comes through hearing, not wishful thinking. Jesus was able to do the miracles that He did because He would not do anything unless He was directed so to do by The Father.

If God lays this kind of prayer on your heart then of course you should pray it, but if you do not know what or how to pray then take the advice that Paul gave to the church in Rome in Romans chapter 8 and verse 26 which reads as follows: “Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.”

What God looks for above everything else, even our ability to pray is character, integrity and sincerity, He does not listen to half-hearted prayers that are very good at

putting things into words but very bad at believing and practicing in their hearts what they say they believe. Also it is not a question of the length of a prayer being the most effective but the quality and sincerity of the prayer that counts. Remember psalm 66 v 18 states that if we have sin in our hearts (wrong doing or unforgiveness) then The Lord will not have regard for our prayer.

Matthew chapter 5 verses 21 to 24 we read as follows: “You have heard that it was said by those of old times, you must not kill; and whoever does kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whoever shall say to his brother, *raca*, shall be in danger of the council: but whoever shall say, you fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you; leave your gift at the altar and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

Although there is a danger of this particular thing being repeated to almost over-emphases in these studies, scripture itself mentions this point several times and therefore obviously regards it as something very important, therefore since scripture regards it as important enough to be mentioned several times so must we.

Biblical Evangelism (6)

The woman at the well.

The story of Jesus talking to the woman at the well is found in John chapter 4 verses 5 to 30 but in order to draw out the relevant points we shall look no further than verse 19 in our reading of this story.

These verses read as follows: “Then Jesus came to a city of Samaria that is called Sychar, near to the piece of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there and Jesus, being wearied by His journey, sat down at the well at about the sixth hour.

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus said unto her, give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) The woman of Samaria replied: how is it that you, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, woman of Samaria? The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, if you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, give me to drink; you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water. The woman said unto him, sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from where then have you that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, his children and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said unto her, whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again: but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give shall be in a person a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman said unto him, sir, give me this water that I shall not thirst again, or come back here to draw water.

Jesus said unto her, go call your husband and come back. The woman answered, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, you have spoken truly saying I have no husband: for you have had five husbands; and he whom you now are living with is not your husband. The woman said unto him, sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.”

The reason why Jews have no association with Samaritans is because the Samaritans brought a curse on Israel by breaking the commandments of God and thereafter were considered as outcasts, scum, not even fit to be considered as part of the Jewish community. Jesus knew this yet sat down at the well during the hottest part of the day.

This shows how much God values everyone, even those that are considered to be outcasts of society today, and that he wants us to reach these with the true gospel of Jesus Christ also. In Luke chapter 14 verses 16 to 24 we read the parable of the great banquet, likened unto the Marriage Supper of The Lamb.

“Jesus said unto him, a certain man made a great supper, and invited many: he sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, come; all things are now ready.

They all began to make excuses. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go to see it: I pray you have me excused. Another said I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to prove them: I pray you have me excused.

Still another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

The servant said, Lord, it is done as you commanded, and yet there is still room. The master said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. I say unto you that none of those men who were invited shall taste of my supper.”

When Jesus first met the woman at the well He could have told her that she is a sinner and needs to get right with God through true repentance,. But instead of this He started the conversation with her about something that was obviously relevant and important to her, then brought round the conversation to the subject He wanted to talk about.

There are many things that might trouble a person in society today, money matters, the prospect of unemployment, being an outcast of society or having a terminal illness. When we go out evangelising we need to speak to people first of all about matters that are relevant and important to them.

Once we have begun such a conversation if we keep our ears open to God it is quite possible that He will give us a word of knowledge that will prove to be the key to winning the person’s soul for Christ just like happened here with Jesus.

Our job is not to persuade someone of their need for Christ or to convict them of sin, that is for God to do, what we must do is show them compassion, concern for their well-being and understanding. This will melt the hearts of many people. Our job is to listen out for the direction of God as to how we should speak to these people and let God get on with the job of leading them unto Himself.

It is the work of The Lord to bring a spirit of conviction and repentance on someone, we cannot do these things for ourselves and we should not even be trying, though we are permitted to pray about such things before, during and after any outreach. These are not alternatives but essentials that we should be praying throughout an outreach meeting whether in the church, another building or out on the street.

Some years ago there was an outreach meeting taking place in the open air of a major city. After walking the streets for several evenings confessing the sin of the nation, the sin of the city and their ancestor’s sin along with their own sin the people were advised then to start spiritual conversations with people in the street.

One person, not use to sharing one to one with people, prayed that since he found it so difficult that God would send people up to him who would start spiritual conversations. Having sat down by the roadside after walking the street in prayer this is exactly what happened.

Whenever these things were done it was easy to start a spiritual conversation with someone in the street, indeed many of them would start one with you, when people did not pray no worthwhile conversations were started up and people discarded the leaflets that they had been handed into the waste bin.

These things may be co-incidence but it is much more likely that there is here a clear lesson in spiritual warfare and soul winning. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew chapter 12 verse 29 “How can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? Only then he will be able to spoil his house.”

Again in Matthew chapter 18 verse 18 to 20 Jesus tells His disciples “Verily I say unto you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

You should not ask God to do the binding and loosing, doing that is clearly our job, God will when we act Himself on our behalf and authorise what we have asked provided that we are responding to His instructions in the situation and not acting on presumption which is always dangerous.

Biblical Evangelism (7)

Be doers of the word not just hearers.

In Luke chapter 14 verses 15 to 24 which we looked at in our previous study speaks about inviting the blind, the lame and people with other sorts of disabilities that might not be in a position to feed themselves properly let alone return the invitation to a meal in their home.

The whole idea of inviting someone to your home for a meal (either one-to-one or more if you can afford it) is that you will be able to minister to their physical need before you try to minister to their spiritual need. Many have found that this way round the hearts of the people will be much more open to receive the true gospel.

Revelation chapter 12 verse 11 reads as follows: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” There is no question here of telling someone what Jesus has done for you if they are going to want to kill you for it afterwards.

If you witness to a Muslim remember that they do not have any concept of love, but they do understand what it is to live your life in honour of someone. If you then tell a Muslim that you live your life in honour of Jesus and then tell that person why they are much more likely to listen to and understand what you are saying.

Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, God incarnate or anything other than a great prophet. At this stage, do not argue with that, just give your testimony in a short time and leave God to move things on from there, rather like the experience of Jesus with the woman at the well.

You have your testimony to tell which is very important, if in addition you have the opportunity of telling them about the uniqueness of the Christian faith then the short study below may be of help in summarising what the differences are between the Christian faith and any other faith around today. Jesus is the **absolute** truth, way and life, it is not a question of what works for you He is this for everyone.

Christianity is unique; there is no other faith like it.

The Christian faith is the only faith whereby you do not have to work to get to heaven, it is through putting your faith and trust in Jesus the chosen one of God. In every other faith you have to try to out-do your bad works with your good works, and even then when you die you have no certainty of a place in heaven.

Some believe that a person is re-incarnated and if they do a lot of good in their life then they will once again come back as a human being. Christianity says that when you leave this world through death you will never again have to come back to such a wicked, uncaring merciless environment, and that if you have walked all your remaining days with Jesus then you will live with Him in splendour forever.

Christians believe that God **created** the world by speaking it into being and that Jesus is the embodiment of God’s spoken word and is in fact God Himself who took upon Himself human likeness so that later He might take the punishment of our rebellion

against the ways of God upon Himself in order that through a change of heart, mind and life we might move away from that kind of life and walk in fellowship with Him.

In two of the books of The Bible (Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28) is true story is told of a high-ranking angel who tried to overthrow God so that he could have all the adoration and worship for himself. For this act of wickedness and rebellion he was thrown out of heaven and now seeks to continue to persuade mankind (the pinnacle of God's creation) to continue in rebellion against God and resist His authority over us.

There is the story of how this world was created perfect until this fallen angel introduced sin into it by persuading the first two people ever created – Adam and Eve, that God is a liar and does not mean what He says. He is still trying to put across this lie to everyone in the world today.

Adam and Eve lived in a beautiful garden where everything had been perfect but were thrown out of the garden when they ate fruit from a tree they had been told by God never to touch. This was an act of great love because had they remained in the garden and eaten from the tree of life they would have lived forever in their state of sin and would therefore be irredeemable.

When God found out about their disobedience He immediately began to outline and put into effect a plan of redemption for all mankind whereby their natural tendency to sin would be dealt with and if they wanted to they could come back into intimate fellowship with their creator and live forever in His presence, which is what God wanted so much from the very beginning.

The man who stood in the gap for us and took the punishment we so richly deserve was a man called Jesus who rose from the dead more than 2000 years ago in order to prove to the world that His sacrifice of Himself on the cross on our behalf had been found acceptable by God and now whoever turns unto Him in sincerity of heart and walks in fellowship with Him need have no fear of further punishment in the next life.

All that God requires of us now is that we put our faith and trust in what Jesus accomplished on our behalf through the cross and trust in Him alone, believing that He is our Saviour and Redeemer who is God's Son and lived a life free from sin whilst on earth and because of His obedience was raised from death and taken back into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of His Father, God Himself.

Christians also believe that He is to come again to judge everyone who has chosen not to walk in fellowship with Jesus and to punish them for their evil deeds for all eternity. Those who truly believe what The Bible says about Jesus and have asked Him to be their Lord and Saviour and are walking in fellowship with Him by praying to Him day by day will escape judgement and share in the magnificence of heaven forever.

There is a prayer that everyone needs to say in sincerity of heart and it now follows, if you really want to walk in fellowship with God and have Jesus as your Saviour then I invite you to repeat those things written in this prayer and say "amen" at the end of it if you sincerely want what the prayer is all about.

“Lord Jesus I acknowledge that I am a sinner who has rebelled against your commands, refused your ways and in preference and gone my own way in everything. I ask you now to forgive all my sin, wickedness and rebellion, to cleanse me from it all right now and to be my Lord, my God, my Saviour, my King and my friend forevermore.

I acknowledge that there is nothing I can do to redeem myself from the punishment I so richly deserve and turn to you to make me right and at peace with God your Father. Please help me now to walk in fellowship with you and to trust in you alone every day. I ask these things of you oh God by your grace and mercy. Amen.

The website addresses below are two places where further instruction in the Christian faith and in Christian ministry can be found, these may be very helpful to new believers and/or those seeking a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. The studies on these websites are available in both English and Swahili by writing to dchesoli@yahoo.com

See also www.jesuspowercenter.com

For copies of the complete course through the post please send your full postal address to the contact addresses at either of the above websites.