

I. L.E.A.D. in Biblical Perspective
Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship
“The World-Shaking Ministry of the Apostles”
Luke 24:44–49, Acts 17:1–9
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This is the Word of God. It is the Truth. Luke 24:44–49 happens after the resurrection of Jesus and it says [44] *Then he (Jesus) said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”* [45] *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,* [46] *and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47] and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things. [49] And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”*

Now we fast forward 25 years in Europe, and Acts 17:1–9 says [1] *Now when they (Paul and his team) had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. [2] And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, [3] explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.” [4] And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. [5] But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. [6] And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, [7] and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” [8] And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. [9] And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may this His Word be preached for you.

Our ministry theme for this coming year is L.E.A.D. which stands for Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship. Why is this our theme this year? Here are three reasons for this. The first reason has to do with our theme last year which was revival. Revival is not a man developed and delivered worked up revival but a prayer sought, heaven sent revival from God in the lives of God’s people. When that revival comes it brings certain evidences with its presence and one of the reasons we are looking at L.E.A.D is because of those evidences.

When I say revival even though we have spent the last year looking through various scriptures on this plus Biblical and church history, almost every single one of us by default think revival is a worship service that is very emotional and we sense the presence of God in that worship service. That does happen in revival but I’m going to suggest to you from the Bible and church history most of the time we find and identify when revivals began, not because of the experience when they began, but by the effects revivals had over a period of time.

I would like to illustrate it this way. In 1805 there were five students who had gathered for prayer asking for revival and there is actually a monument at Williams College that marks the place where they had this prayer time. It had begun to rain so they slipped under a hay stack to pray and years later everybody identified that as the beginning of the revival that gave birth to almost all the mission agencies that you know of today. There have been thousands upon thousands of people who have been called of God and left the church of Jesus Christ ministering in the United States of America to take the Gospel to all of the nations of the world and almost everyone looks back to that moment. Those students had no idea that was happening at that moment. It became known as the haystack revival.

I don't think the six people who were 30 minutes late to a called prayer meeting at the Dutch Reformed Church in New York in 1858 knew that was going to be the beginning of a Gospel Awakening with a revival that began in that prayer meeting. His name was Jeremy Lanphier and he was so concerned for his city that he began to pray for a revival. He sent out word for people to join him in prayer and at noon no one had showed up but by 12:30 six people had straggled in to pray. The next week they went to 14 people. The week after that there were 70 plus people there praying. Within six weeks they had to go to another venue to pray and then came a sweeping revival in NYC. It not only totally transformed that city but it sent the Gospel to the seaports that it was connected to around the world. It wasn't the experience of those 6 people but the effects of that time those 6 people got together to pray, what happened from that moment that started that NYC revival.

When revival shows up two marks always accompany it. Number one is a passionate prioritizing of an assembling together of God's people for authentic God-centered worship. That is the vertical part of it. The horizontal part is a passion to win people to Christ and Gospel awakenings begins to take place. So people know a revival's beginning by not what happens at the moment but by what happens as the Gospel moves and thousands are being swept into the Kingdom, it was what God began in that moment where evangelism and discipleship became a way of life because of God's reviving presence.

I don't believe that the six African Americans who met at the request of their white pastor at what today in Charleston is Mount Zion Presbyterian church, to pray knew what was going to happen. They met for 14 Wednesday nights and then all of sudden the Gospel began to go throughout the city in 1858. The Antebellum churches were the churches where the black congregation was in the balcony in segregated seating but that is not the way it was at Mount Zion for it would literally be covered on the floor level with the African American pursuers of Jesus Christ and then hundreds of the white citizens were crowding into the balcony to be a part of it. John Girardeau was the pastor of this church. As he and these men began to look back and saw what God did Wednesday after Wednesday when all they did was pray for that revival, it became known as a great revival that swept through the city of Charleston and throughout the nation. No one knew it was happening at the moment but it was the spreading harvest of the Gospel.

So we have asked God to teach us and visit us with revival. If God does there will be a prioritization and passion for worship. And there will be an effusive expulsive work of the Gospel in our hearts and from us into the lives of other people. It won't be associated with just evangelistic events. It will become a way of life. L.E.A.D. – a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship.

A second reason why we are doing this theme of lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship is because it is the need of this nation. I believe Christians ought to be engaged in *every* sphere

of life bringing the salt and light of the Gospel but what needs to happen in this nation is not going to come from Pennsylvania Avenue or Wall Street or Hollywood Boulevard or School House Lane or Main Street for it will come from church street as the reviving power of Jesus Christ upon His church expulsively moves with God's people scattering into every sphere of life. So that from the church to Pennsylvania Avenue, Wall Street, Hollywood Boulevard, School House Lane and Main Street come the power of the Gospel everyday by God's people to every place they go. That is what the desperate need of this nation and every other nation in this world. It is God's people with a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship.

A third reason for having this theme this year is that I want Jesus to get back here, His second coming to happen. I love the song by Ivan Parker titled Midnight Cry. Part of the lyrics to that song says, *I look around me, I see prophecies full filling, and signs of the times, they're appearing everywhere, I can almost hear the father, as he says, "son go get your children." At the midnight cry the bride of Christ will rise.* If I understand the Bible rightly in this area, there are two things that have to happen before Jesus comes back. One, according to Jesus the Gospel has to get to every nation and two all of His people have to be brought into the Kingdom because He will lose not one of them. There will come a day when the last one comes to Jesus Christ and He will step out to come get His children. That trumpet will blow and that voice will shout. Peter tells us in II Peter 3:12 to hasten the coming of the Lord and I don't know any other way to hasten His coming than to send missionaries to every nation and us share the Gospel with everybody. So I want us to understand this message of lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship.

In this study I want to lay out a paradigm, a portrait for you of what we are going to be doing with this theme this year. I want to unfold this from the passages I read. The Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:18–20 and says [18] *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* He gives this by precept, command and mandate to Matthew and then we get it descriptively from the passage in Luke that I read at the beginning of this study.

So I would like for you to look at the passages in Luke 24 and Acts 17 like two bookends. Jesus rises and gathering with Him back in that Upper Room are a few of His Disciples, fearful, confused, discouraged and wondering. Jesus turns it into a home small group Bible study, *and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself* (Luke 24:27). He told them that all of this had to be fulfilled and that is why He came to this earth to go to the cross and rise again on the third day. Then He said 'You are going to be My witnesses and you will start right here in Jerusalem, then you'll go to Judea, Samaria and the utter most part of the world.' Yet He knew they were still trying to understand all that had happened up to that point but He also told them not to do it until He had sent the Holy Spirit with power from on high because that would be the only way they could do it. We hear the echo of Matthew 28 here as He is with them always even to the end of the age by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

So we left that confused group in Luke 24 that heard this Word and then went to 25 years later after the ascension of Jesus in Europe. We are no longer in Jerusalem for the Gospel has gone to Judea to a church in Antioch, to Samaria and to the world. There is this pagan adversary who hates the Gospel who then says 13 words that I would give anything to hear again before I go meet Jesus. He shouted, *"These men who have turned the world upside down have come here*

also.” So here we have gone from Jerusalem to the world passing through Judea and Samaria and the world is being shaken. I know Who shook the world and that is the Holy Spirit through the people of God. I know what shakes the world and that’s the power of the Gospel but it absolutely captivates me to try and understand how He did it.

How did this group of fearful, confused people in an Upper Room have mission teams going out that are shaking the world all the way to Europe in less than 25 years after the ascension of Jesus? So I will unfold this briefly and then make a takeaway from it so let’s start by looking at Acts 1. So we will leave the Upper Room and go to the Mount of Olives to hear the words of Jesus in Acts 1:6–13 which says, *[6] Then they gathered (God’s people come together and God’s people have a personal relationship but they don’t act individually. They act in concert with each other.) around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” [7] He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. [8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” [9] After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. [10] They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. [11] “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”*

[12] Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. [13] When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

There are five essentials He gives in this passage for a world-shaking Gospel movement from the revived church. Essential number one is you must be Spirit empowered, Spirit filled. You cannot do this on your own. If you are Spirit filled then that leads to essential number two.

Essential number two is you will be Christ-centered. He said in the Acts 1 passage that when the Holy Spirit has come upon them that they will be Christ’s witnesses. The evidence of the Holy Spirit is not any spiritual gift. The evidence of the Holy Spirit is a love and a passion that is relentlessly unstoppable for us not to speak of Jesus. The Holy Spirit doesn’t come to bring attention to Himself and His gifts but for us to bring all attention to Jesus. When the Holy Spirit comes into your life He gives you power to be Christ’s witnesses – you will witness to Jesus and that’s how you know the Spirit of God is in a church and with an individual for they make much of Jesus.

Essential number three is that you are Gospel driven. There is an atoning death and a triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ to save sinners that will absolutely pulsate in your life and heart.

Essential number four is that you will be prayer saturated. They went back and had a prayer meeting. All of the illustrations I gave earlier about revivals began with prayer meetings.

Essential number five is that you will be witness committed. You will be His witnesses in Word and deed. Here is where we have taken a noun and turned it into a verb. We will say to others ‘Let’s go witnessing.’ It is interesting to note that the Bible does not focus upon the word ‘witness’ as a verb. The Bible doesn’t say that is what you go do but it tells us that is what we are. It’s a noun. That doesn’t mean that you don’t do something. In other words, if you claim to be a Christian today then you are a witness. People out there, by looking and listening to us, are

forming ideas about Jesus and Christianity. We may be a good witness or we may be a bad witness but we are witnesses. So we will be witness committed in word and deed.

When the Spirit of God empowers the people of God to proclaim a Christ-centered Gospel of God in Jesus Christ they will talk about it. They speak. It is filling their heart and comes out of their mouth. I want to show you this in Acts 2 where you will see the five evidences of a Spirit empowered, Christ-centered, Gospel driven, prayer saturated, witness committed revival work in the lives of God's people.

Acts 2:1–8 says [1] *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.* [2] *Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.* [3] *They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on **each of them.*** [4] ***All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (languages) as the Spirit enabled them.***

[5] *Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.* [6] *When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.* [7] *Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?"* [8] *Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?*

When you are filled with the Spirit you will speak and it will be very pointed. Here are the five evidences of a world shaking ministry of the Apostles. One is they spoke. Two is that they spoke understandably. Here were people who needed to hear the Gospel and God went so far that the people He used to tell them He decided they could skip language school and He gave them the ability supernaturally at that moment the language they needed for these people to hear the Gospel as a witness of Christ. We look for the power of the Holy Spirit so that when we speak we speak in the language of the people that we are talking to. So what is the language of the millennial or a rich person or a poor person or a Hispanic person or Korean person or old or young or up an inners or down and outers? We take the Gospel to everybody. What is their language? So we want to speak understandably in the power and leading of God.

Thirdly, we speak powerfully because of the Holy Spirit. Number four is that we speak passionately. This is big stuff for us. This is not just a philosophical discussion about the meaning of life. This is life and death, heaven and hell, right with God or apart from God, this is the power of the Gospel or the impotency of a false gospel.

Fifthly, we want to speak effectively. I know I can't convert anyone but I don't think it's any accident that King Agrippa said to Paul in Acts 26:28, [28] *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian* (KJV). What does this tell us? Paul couldn't convert Agrippa but that didn't mean that Paul was going to put himself by the power of the Spirit of God as an instrument to speak understandably, powerfully, passionately, and effectively as he could and Paul basically answers Agrippa in the next verse "I would persuade you if only I could..." We want to speak persuasively to people. So this is how we speak.

This witness to others is absolutely crucial because there are many who won't listen to us because of the way we live but no one is going to heaven admiring the way we live. They only go to heaven by a relationship with Jesus and that relationship comes by faith and faith comes by hearing so we have to speak! St. Francis of Assisi supposedly has been credited with saying the following but it has not been proven he did but the statement is this; Preach the Gospel, use words if necessary. If he did say that I would say 'wrong! Preach the Gospel, use words they are necessary.' People are converted by hearing. We want to have lives that open up and

authenticate what we speak but it is not our lifestyle that will convert people. That is why we are not saying 'lifestyle evangelism' but a lifestyle of evangelism. We have to speak the Gospel.

Thirdly, when we are empowered by the Spirit of God with a Christ centered communication of the Gospel outwardly as we give this witness verbally then there will be five effects. I will show you this as we look at Acts 2. So what happens because of this great work of the Gospel? Here the context is Peter preaching and the people sharing.

Acts 2:37–47 says [37] *Now when they heard this they were **cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"* [38] *And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."* [40] *And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."* [41] *So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

[42] *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, **attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes**, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

So here are five effects when the Gospel was spoken in the Spirit of God. One is that the people were committed to intentional discipleship. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching and they even gathered in small group discipleship. How do I know this? It says in the text that 3,000 were converted and that is likely just counting the men so there are probably somewhere around 6,000 to 8,000. How many people do you think had a house that could accommodate that many people in Jerusalem? House to house meant they were in small groups. This is life to life, life to lives, life on life discipleship.

A second effect was that there was a loving fellowship. They were together. Thirdly there was a generous stewardship. When someone had a need they would sell what they had to meet that need. A fourth effect was authentic worship for they met daily to praise God in the courtyard of the temple.

A fifth effect was personal evangelism and we know that because the text says that everyday people were being saved. Remember the program EE? That stood for Evangelism Explosion. We are going to go to another level and that is EEEEE which stands for Everyone Evangelizing Everybody Everywhere Everyday. That is what we want to focus on in this next year. That means we'll be committed to life to life discipleship. Jesus always put the two together. He would say 'Come to Me as Savior (evangelism) and follow Me as Lord (discipleship).' They relate to one another and are together and we want to commit ourselves to that.

So here is our takeaway. This will guide us through the rest of this year as we focus on this issue. Our God-given mandate is to speak our God-given message to fulfill our God-given mission to make disciples. (L.E.A.D. – a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship) This means our lifestyle is one of sharing the Gospel and putting our life on the lives of other people.

When I say revival almost all of us think of some meeting with a big experience tied to it and yes those things do happen but the reality is that revivals are pinpointed by their effects of evangelism and discipleship. A great Gospel harvest will take place. When I used the term evangelism many think of a meeting with a lot of people coming forward to give their life to Jesus and I'm all for that. I grew up in a church where my family sat in a pew next to the Graham family (the family Billy Graham came from) and my parents came to know the Lord at one of his crusades.

I want you to understand why I am saying 'lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship.' Here is my illustration of this. Let's say there is a man named Sam who can really preach the Gospel and every time there is a meeting there is a guarantee that 1,000 people will come to Jesus. So if Sam preaches every day in a year then that means 365,000 people will come to know the Lord in that year.

Now let's say there is a man named George who will lead one person to Christ this year and then will put his life on that person's life to disciple them so that the following year both of them will each lead another person to Christ. Foundationally for the life of this church which one would you put your heart on, Sam (1,000 saved a day) or George (1 saved a year and discipled, and will become like George the following year, etc.)?

I want to show you in the following table how this would play out depending on who you would choose, Sam or George. This was given to me years ago and I have kept this ever since. I can't give you the whole table but this will give you the idea of perhaps who you would choose.

	<u>George (1 a day)</u>	<u>Sam (1,000 a day)</u>
Year 1:	1	365,000
Year 2:	2	730,000
Year 3:	4	1,095,000
Year 4:	8...	1,460,000...
Now let's skip to the following year where they have almost caught up.		
Year 24:	8,363,128	8,760,000
Year 25:	16,736,256	9,125,000
Let's skip again.		
Year 34:	8,568,963,072	12,110,000

That multiplication, that investment of putting your life into someone else's life has an even greater effect. Very seldom do 'Georges' do one a year but I'm just trying to make a point here of the multiplication process of discipling with evangelism. Do you see how big a difference in in year 25? Praise the Lord for both but what a difference. By the time we get to year 34 which is sociologically the definition of a generation so at the end of one generation there is a difference of over 8 billion where George's numbers have substantially been effective. It is a lifestyle of evangelism AND discipleship. We want to reproduce this.

How many people are in this world right now? It is approximately 7.6 billion. So according to this table in one generation we could win the world. Here is the good news. We don't have to choose between George and Sam. We can have both. We can have Andrews and Peters and praise the Lord we don't have to choose but George's lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship is foundational and Sam is a blessed occasional.

I'd like to close by giving you these three statements. One evangelism and discipleship is a way of life not simply an event in life. Will we have seven evangelistic events in this coming year? I hope we have more than that for open to having many but I know that those events will be pretty much ineffective if you and I are not sharing the Gospel with people every single day.

I'll give you an example of this. I grew up in a Missionary Alliance Church and every Sunday night was the evangelistic service with an evangelistic message as we ended the service with the typical evangelistic closing hymns of Have Thine Own Way, I Surrender All and Just As I Am. We would sing one of those hymns until someone came forward but the problem was that there were not many unsaved people being brought there. So the saved kept having to get saved if we were ever going to get home that Sunday evening.

What would happen if we had a Sunday evening evangelistic series and had people to talk to? That becomes a tool in our tool box and not something that is doing our evangelism for us. We build bridges to life as we share with others individually as we use our life as a bridge to take the Bridge of Life to people. Now you have people to bring to those events and follow up with after those events.

Secondly, evangelism and discipleship are integrated and interdependent and thirdly they are foundational as a way of life making them effective as occasional events in life.

There are two things that we will not do in heaven that we are doing now. One is that we will not sin in heaven and two is we will not evangelize in heaven. The opportunity to share the Gospel with lost people will be gone when Jesus returns and praise the Lord I won't sin anymore in heaven. I can dismiss my accountability group.

My plea to you is that you would join me in prayer with our eyes fixed on Jesus in our mandate, message and mission to make disciples. We will do this with evangelism as a way of life sharing the Gospel and putting our life on the lives of others in discipleship with wonderful, occasional events that can supplement it and take it to another level. In other words, since I won't sin in heaven and I can't evangelize in heaven now I want to do less of one and more of the other. I want to sin less and evangelize more on my way to heaven. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. I thank You so much for Your people. I know there may be some reading this today who are seeking. My friend we are under a mandate to share with you the Good News that Jesus can do with you what you can't do and that is to save you. He died on that cross to save you from your sin, rose again triumphantly and so what you are seeking is found in Him. If you want to pray with someone please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 we would love to pray with you. Today can be the first day of a forever life for you. I know this congregation for 50 plus years has had the blessing of a commitment to evangelism and discipleship and I praise God for it but would you ask God to do what those have gone before us want us to ask God to do. O God, take us to another level. Give us a Gospel harvest of men and women drawn into being Christ followers. Lord, help everyone of us evangelize everybody everywhere every day and then put our lives on the lives of others as they are nurtured in that Gospel so they too can become reproducers in the power of the Spirit with the truth of the Gospel. I give You the praise with Your people, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

THE WORLD-SHAKING MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES

I. FIVE ESSENTIALS

- Spirit Empowered
- Christ Centered

- Gospel Driven
- Prayer Saturated
- Witness Committed

II. FIVE EVIDENCES

- Spoke
- Spoke Understandably
- Spoke Powerfully
- Spoke Passionately
- Spoke Effectively

III. FIVE EFFECTS

- Intentional Discipleship
- Loving Fellowship
- Generous Stewardship
- Authentic Worship
- Personal Evangelism

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Our God-given Mandate is to speak our God-given Message to fulfill our God-given Mission –
 Make Disciples – L.E.A.D. – Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship

Year 1:	1	-	365,000
Year 2:	2	-	730,000
Year 3:	4	-	1,095,000
Year 4:	8	-	1,460,000
Year 24:	8,368,128	-	8,760,000
Year 25:	16,736,256	-	9,125,000
Year 34:	8,568,963,072	-	12,110,000

L.E.A.D. — Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship

- A way of life not simply an event in life
- Integrated and interdependent in life
- Foundational as a way of life making them effective as occasional events in life