

XV. L.E.A.D. in Biblical Perspective  
*Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship*  
“A Lack of Biblical Motivation and Incentive”

Luke 24:44–53

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I'd like to start by looking at Acts 4. This is an interesting moment in the lives of the church. They started at 120 and then added 3,000 with evidence of Scripture that was likely just counting the men so it would have been 3,000 households. After that it says that day by day people were being added to the church. Evangelism is a way of life where everybody is evangelizing everyone every day everywhere. Then another 5,000 households are about to be brought in which is likely representative of 8,000 to 9,000 and one of the reasons for this burgeoning growth, not only because of everyone evangelizing but because of the incentive that made for them to insistently evangelize.

Acts 4:1–12 says *[1] And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, [2] greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. [3] And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. [4] But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.*

*[5] On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, [6] with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. [7] And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” [8] Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, [9] if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, [10] let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. [11] This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. [12] And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

God has provided a mountain and Peter and John have gotten up on it and they have proclaimed Jesus, under threat, persecution, intimidation and arrest yet they proclaim Jesus. Thousands of people are coming to Christ where households are being brought into the Kingdom. Here are men who were motivated and so as they have proclaimed Jesus here is the response.

Acts 2:13–20 says *[13] Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. [14] But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. [15] But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, [16] saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. [17] But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” [18] So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. (Silence the message get off the*

*mountain and what's their answer?) [19] But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, [20] **for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.**"*

The key phrase is that in bold but built into that is the evidence that you can't speak about what you haven't witnessed. Once you have witnessed it by the truth of God's Word and the Spirit of God and you this relationship Jesus, (the people had taken note they had been with Jesus) you can't but speak. You must speak! Basically they were saying they would submit to whatever the authorities put on them but they couldn't help themselves when it comes to speaking about Jesus and they will continue to do so.

I have found something very clear in my own personal life as a Christian first and then a pastor in observation. Remember our objective and that is a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship. What is clear to me is that once someone is converted they make evangelism a lifestyle for a certain period of time after their conversion and they can't help it. I found this true in my life. In the fall of 1969 I came to saving faith in Christ. I had heard of the Savior throughout my life before then and rejected Him. I had gone to the far country of the pig trough of sin feeding on that which was nothing but destructive and was lost. Christ wove things together through a series of things and I came to Jesus.

When I came to Jesus immediately I started telling people about Jesus. When I told my best friend about Jesus he asked me if I was crazy so I just kept telling him about Jesus. I remember when I was three jobs to put my wife through school which was the deal I had with her day but one of those jobs was working at UPS driving a truck. I got to meet a lot of different people in these jobs but this group of truck drivers was a profane group. I just went in and started telling them about Jesus. I tried to figure out ways to tell them about Jesus because it wasn't the most welcoming environment. Sometimes they would ignore me.

One time as I got into work early, putting on my uniform for UPS, I would get my Bible out and start reading it. That would evoke some conversation and give me some opportunities to talk about Jesus with an open Bible. The point I'm making here is that though there was opposition I just had to tell people about Jesus when I was first converted. I wish I could tell you that lasted a long time but it didn't. That lifestyle of evangelism, like most believers, began to fade away.

Satan is at work on that and he will try and get you out of that initial lifestyle of evangelism that almost every new convert has. Another group of people I went to was my family. I wasn't trained in this but I was so obnoxious about it that I pretty much say 'I have gotten saved and you need to get saved.' I was that beggar that found bread and just wanted to tell everyone else that this is where they needed to find bread and if they didn't think they were a beggar, I'd say you are one and you need that bread. I had one family member tell me 'I just soon you get lost again because I'm tired of you being a holy roller around me.' It wasn't all that welcoming but it kind of just stayed with me, but it didn't stay long.

There are two things that Satan does here. He begins to bring his marginalization and his intimidation and he is insistent to shut you up and get you off of that mountain. Secondly, that impetus that made you get converted begins to get dull. Why is it that the best evangelists are the least equipped, new converts in the church? I think it is this way for a couple of reasons.

One is they haven't been a Christian long enough to be more concerned about them being embarrassed than where their friends are going to spend eternity. Secondly, is that they are excited. Thirdly, they are really amazed at grace. It's not like us where people will sing it and then we'll evaluate how they sing it or perhaps we'll yawn while we sing it or think 'Are we

going to sing all the verses?’ That is not the way grace hit us early on. Early on we’re kind of like the man who was healed by Jesus who was asked who healed him and he basically said ‘Jesus did it for all I know is that I was blind and now I see.’ They tried to tell him he couldn’t say that even though it was true and they even got his parents involved to try to silence him about what had happened to him. He had that initial work of grace in his life and he just kept saying that it was Jesus who healed him, regardless of what others were trying to tell him or do. He couldn’t help but tell people about Him and that is what happens to us initially, but it gets dull after a period of time. We lose that incentive. This is how Satan will just let it do its work in us for we lose our astonishment of salvation by grace.

So in this study on evangelism I’m trying to lay out five hindrances to a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship. When we first get converted we have this excitement and desire to hear the Word of God preached together with God’s people and that heart of excitement to share the Gospel begins to wane in our life as we lose that motivation. At this point all Satan has to do is throw out a hint of mockery, persecution, or ridicule and then we no longer have evangelism as a lifestyle. What would be a Biblical antidote to losing motivation? One of the hindrance to a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship is the loss of incentive/motivation. So I would ask that you meditate upon these five things I’m about to give you that may move you to think ‘I can’t help but speak of Him who has saved me.’

Evangelism is a command. Matthew 28:18–20 says [18] And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” The Bible says to go and proclaim the Gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15). Then in Acts 1:8 says [8] *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.* It’s interesting that the very last thing Jesus leaves His people with is a command to do evangelism and discipleship as a way of life. So how can this command become a way of life for us and how can it be embedded in our life? How do we rekindle this excitement when we were first converted?

The first of the five to consider is the worthiness of Christ and His authority. One of the things that intrigues me are the last words of people I have studied before they go to meet the Lord. Last words are important. When you are about to leave this world the last words out of your mouth will be something very important. Jesus’ last words before He ascends is for us to go proclaim the Gospel to all the nations. The One who tells us this is the One whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given. He gives us the Spirit who gives us the power to go and proclaim the Gospel to all the world. When that King comes back and I meet Him I want to hear Him say to me ‘Well done good and faithful servant.’

What is it that I want to do well? It is what He has commanded me to do well. Praise God that my obedience is not what saves me to His commandments but that does not make His commandments any less dear to me. So if Christ has commanded this is He not worthy of our obedience? Or have we somehow so perverted our understanding of being saved by grace that we feel we can dismiss the majesty of Christ as the One who gives us this command? Being saved by grace means we have been saved by the unmerited love of Christ. Has this become something that doesn’t matter to us anymore? Here is where we must reclaim the blessing of the fear of the Lord, the awe and respect that is due to King Jesus. We not only revel in the benefits of the cross but we reverence the commands of His crown. King Jesus has called us and sent us

and He is worthy of our obedience. God, let me do this command and don't let me do it by perverting the Gospel that somehow what I do is what saves me or lets You save me but don't let the Gospel of grace diminish the call of obedience for my King. I long to bring pleasure to Him by bringing the Gospel of Christ to this world.

As we see in this Acts 2 text they are not going to obey the command of the authority to not speak of Jesus but they will submit to the authority and take the consequences this will bring. For the instruction of this authority goes against the commands of the Lord and they cannot help but speak what He has commanded them or what they have seen and heard. If they are put in prison for this they are okay with that and that just means they will do their speaking in prison. But the worthiness and authority of Christ fully overshadowed the threats of those in authority around them that King Jesus and the majesty of God was the incentive to obey even under the threat of intimidation. That motivation kept evangelism as a lifestyle even though it was going to mean persecution for them.

I would ask your prayers for me. I feel a gigantic responsibility and yet an utter incapacity to do. I know much of your consistency, growth and progress in your Christian life in an age that would marginalize you and seek to intimidate you, is directly related to how big your God is and I have asked God to let me preach the Word in such a way that you see how great is your God and when we see His majesty and worthiness we can't help but speak that which He has commanded us to speak.

A second motivation is your love to Christ. Did not Jesus make this abundantly clear? In John 14:15 Jesus said, [15] "*If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*" He didn't say 'If you keep My commandments I will love you.' We have already affirmed a repeated last words of Jesus which was to proclaim the Gospel everywhere. This is not only the worth, majesty and reverence of Christ but now this is a testimony of our love for Christ. If I can have 30 minutes with you in a conversation it will be abundantly clear before long that I will know what you love, because we can't help but talk about who and what we love. It will come out. Within 30 minutes of a conversation with someone will they hear about Jesus from us? Will they hear the Gospel from us because we love Him? Because we love Him we can't help but speak of Him and because of that love we can't help but do what He has commanded. We love Him so we desire to keep His commandments.

A third incentive that keeps evangelism as a lifestyle, is the love of your neighbor. You might think that if your neighbors are already saved that you don't need to share the Gospel with them. That is why we sing 'tell me the old, old story' because we long to hear it and it's a way to disciple. You don't share the Gospel with them to convert them but to encourage them. However, specifically bring the Gospel to your neighbors that don't know the Lord. This reminds me of the song titled *People Need the Lord*, for everyone you know is headed to the judgment seat and there is only one answer that can deliver them in that day. That answer is the Good News of the Gospel that calls men and women to repent in Jesus. That answer has been given to you, now will you give it to them? Do you love your neighbor enough to warn them about the hell to come?

I'm going to ask you to do something that I think is very difficult. It is something I am working on in my life. I believe I have fallen into proclaiming the Gospel to people on the basis that you need it for this life and you do. I want you to have a Gospel marriage, a Gospel family, a Gospel saturated record as an employer or employee and I want you to have the Gospel saturate every area of your life. I believe you need the Lord for all of life in this life but I think we've lost something. For all of the blessings of the Gospel in this life, nothing compares to the

truth that the Gospel delivers you from the torment of hell. Everybody you know that doesn't know Christ is facing it.

God has so loved sinners that He has sent His Son (John 3:16). God the Father and God the Son has so loved sinners that they have sent the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). This God who said to come unto Me so that you can have life sent His Son and the Father and the Son sent the Spirit so you could be brought to life. The Father, Son and the Spirit send you and me, for the church says come. So if the Father, Son and Spirit did all of this are we going so that others might come? This isn't just sharing the Gospel to see people come to the church yet I long for that, but this is a matter that they come to Christ so they miss hell and hit heaven, because hell didn't miss Jesus and He will bring them to heaven. You have brought Jesus to them. At the end of the vanities of the dreams of this life, people need the Lord.

A fourth incentive is something Peter says in his epistle and that is that we will hasten the coming of the Lord. How do you hasten the coming of the Lord? You address those things that stand between now and the right timing of when Jesus comes. We hasten the coming of the Lord with personal evangelism. Let's look at Matthew 24. Jesus was asked three questions but I'm only going to go into one of the aspects of His answer.

Matthew 24:1–3 says *[1] Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. [2] But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."* (This was fulfilled in 70 A.D.) *[3] As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"*

Here Jesus was talking about what was going to happen in 70 A.D. but because His Disciples were thinking of how large the stones were to build the temple they thought Jesus was talking about this happening at the end of the age. Some of those stones were about 8 tons in weight so it's not surprising they couldn't imagine those stones not standing. Now I want you to see in part how Jesus answered their question.

Jesus says to them in Matthew 24:13–14, *[13] But the one who endures to the end will be saved. [14] And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.* When we evangelize our community, our nation, and to all the nations then Jesus comes again. Why do we have to evangelize all the nations? It is because His elect are coming from all the nations.

Now let's see what Peter has to say about the glorious truth of our Savior in I Peter 4:7a, which says, *[7a] The end of all things is at hand.* A couple of years later Peter expounds on this. As a side note in I Peter, Peter refers to those who are saved as elect exiles and in II Peter he refers to them as the beloved.

II Peter 3:1–13 says, *[1] This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, [2] that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, [3] knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. [4] They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." [5] For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, [6] and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. (So things had not continued since creation when God flooded the earth during the time of Noah, as the*

people said earlier in this text to Peter.) [7] *But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the Day of Judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

[8] *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* [9] *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* [10] *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

[11] *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, [12] waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! [13] But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

Here are the unbelievers who are mocking the promise of the coming of Christ and saying ‘where is His coming because everything has been just like it was, for you people have a fool’s hope.’ Then Peter tells them to take a look at the history of humanity which is recorded in the Scripture everything hasn’t continued as it always has. The Lord has intervened in places like judgment, creation, Sodom and Gomorrah and then of course the flood of Noah’s time. Then Peter tells them the Lord hasn’t come because He is patiently waiting till all come to repentance. So Jesus will not come back till all come to repentance.

So hastening the coming of the Lord is taking the Gospel and calling men and women to repentance. By the way, who are the ‘all’ that are to come to repentance? In II Peter 3:8–9 we see that God’s patience is demonstrated in His patience toward you and the ‘you’ is referred to in verse 8 as the beloved. In II Peter 3:1 the beloved are those who have received this letter from Peter and have already received a previous letter from Peter. Who did Peter send the first letter to? We have to go back to I Peter to find that out.

I Peter 1:1–2 says [1] *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.* He is writing to the elect of God.

Peter is saying that Jesus will not come until the Gospel goes to all the nations because the elect are coming from all the nations. Jesus told the Father He would lose not one of those whom the Father has given Him (John 6:39). So He will not come until all the elect have come to faith and repentance in Christ from all the nations. Then He comes again, therefore Peter is talking about missions and personal evangelism here, in terms of hastening the coming of the Lord. Christ will not come until all His elect have come to faith and repentance in Him from all the nations.

Would you like for Jesus to come? Then go out and share the Gospel because someone somewhere is going to lead someone to Christ and it will be the last one of His elect that comes to faith and repentance. It may be you who shares with the last of His elect. Out there somewhere is the last of His elect from all the nations. If you want Christ to come then pray for Him to come but He won’t come until all of His people is saved from all the nations so why don’t we get out there and share the Gospel to bring them all in? That is part of what God has called us to do and I can’t tell you how that motivates me.

Here's how simple I am. I have the privilege to pray with people to receive Jesus and then I always say to an unbeliever John 6:47 which says *[47] Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes (in Me) has eternal life.* But what I am thinking inside is 'Lord, could this be one (of Your elect) and if it is then blow that trumpet. Come on.' I long to see that day when He returns.

Here is the fifth and final incentive is the glory of God. As a Presbyterian I'm going to get to the glory of God. There is a reason this church loves to sing the hymn To God Be the Glory and that is because it's the glorious privilege of conversion, where instead of now glorying in ourselves we now glory in the glory and praise of God. God is glorified when His people have been evangelized and saved. Ephesians 1 describes the saving work of the Holy Spirit from the cross of Christ and it says three times in this text, 'to the praise of His glory.' When you witness for Christ in evangelism, that is an act of worship and that brings worship to Christ to the praise of His glorious grace. I believe that people who love to witness are people who love to worship. People who love to worship will love to witness that He would be glorified.

The loss of incentive is just one issue that's a hindrance to evangelism. Do you remember the days when you had that incentive? By God's grace ask Him to restore it. In prayer, ask Him to give you a sense of the worthiness of Christ for you to obey His command to evangelize. Ask Him to give you a love for the Lord that's so deep, so insistent and so reflective of His love for you that you want to keep His commandments. Ask the Lord to help you love your neighbor enough to tell them the most important thing they will ever hear – Jesus saves sinners. Ask the Lord to give you such a desire for Jesus to come that you're going to do that one thing that stands between this day and that Day, when He does come. This is when the Gospel is shared to the nations, to individuals and the elect are brought in and He is patiently waiting until all of His elect have been brought to faith and repentance.

Then ask the Lord to overshadow and undergird and to penetrate all of these with the desire for the glory of God that you can tell people something that they will never hear anywhere else and that is there is a God who has loved you. He sent His Son who sent His Spirit and He has sent me to invite you to come to Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You O God for the ability by Your Spirit, with Your Word, to restore the motivations and incentives that once made evangelism a lifestyle. Lord, would You build it back into our lives, gloriously and powerfully? Father, so work in our lives that these incentives would be seen and felt, not only that we would know what we have looked at from Your Word in this study but we would feel it in our soul, even in those initial days of our conversion as we felt the love of Christ, having heard of Christ's love for us. Now O Lord, help us to now bring that passion to the proclamation to others – Jesus is a Friend to sinners because this Jesus will deliver you from the penalty, power, place and increasingly the practice of sin and one day will deliver you from the presence of sin. Come to that Savior who came for you for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.