

Sermon Series: Church Strategy 2018
Sermon title: Proclamation of the gospel
Scripture reference: Romans 1:14-17
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
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We are in week 2 of our Church Strategy. Last week we started off with an introduction and looked at the 5 cords that we need to lengthen. We talked about prayer as number 1 and not just the first one but one that they all depend on.

So as we talk about the others today and in the coming weeks, just know that we can't do anything in our own strength, but we want to prayerfully depend on the Lord because it is HIS church. And we are weak and frail and don't have what it takes to do anything apart from God.

Apart from him we can do nothing!

The 5 cords or 5 areas that we want to lengthen...that we want to grow in...are:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Proclamation of the gospel**
- 3. Parents and children**
- 4. Planting multiplying small groups** and
- 5. Panta Ta Ethne**, which is Greek for 'all the nations'.

We want to engage the least reached nations in a strategic way.

So, today we are on number 2, **Proclamation of the gospel.**

—Let's pray together.—

If you have your Bible, turn to **Romans chapter 1.**
We will read verses **14-17.**

14 I am under **obligation** both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. **15** So I am **eager** to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. **16** For I am **not ashamed** of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

I want us to simply notice 3 challenging things from this passage. We will ask some hard questions about ourselves and then I will give us some practical ways that we can make some progress.

1. Notice that Paul says he is OBLIGATED to those around him.

Obligated.

The word literally means ‘owing someone’ or ‘indebted’ or our duty.

Paul says that he owes it to the Greeks and Barbarians, the wise and the foolish.

He owes it to them to tell them the good news.

Obligated.

Obligated to the Greeks; those who speak his language.

Obligated to Barbarians; those who don't speak his language.

Obligated to the wise; the educated.

Obligated to the foolish; the uneducated.

Is this just for Paul? Is not every Christian obligated to proclaim Jesus in their sphere of influence?

Why does God have you at your workplace?

Why does God have you in that apartment?

Why does God have you beside those people?

For a reason. Not an accident!

As believers, we owe them the gospel.

As believers, we are obligated to them.

Let that sink in. We are obligated to those around us.

Unless you think, that was only for Paul.

He's obligated but no one else is.

We need to wrestle with that. We need to ponder this long and hard.

We need perspective.

We are obligated!

William MacDonald said, ***“Anyone who has Christ has the answer to the world’s deepest need. He has the cure to the disease of sin, the way to escape the eternal horrors of hell, and the guarantee of everlasting happiness with God. This puts him under solemn obligation to share the good news with people of all cultures.”***

David Platt said in the article that I sent out via WhatsApp, that ***‘ownership of the gospel creates an obligation to the gospel.’***

Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:16**, ***“For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.”***

In **2 Corinthians 5:20** says, ***“We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”***

Do you feel that in your heart?
God is making his appeal through you and I?

So, number 1 is....**I am obligated!**

2. I am eager.

14 I am under **obligation** both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. **15** So I am **eager** to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Paul says he is **eager**. So, not only is there a sense of obligation to others; a duty....but a **desire** to do it.

This word is only used one time by Paul in the New Testament.

It means, '*Willing. Ready. Passionate.*' It literally has the idea of *breathing hard or rushing*.

In the end of **Romans, chapter 15 verse 20**, Paul says, "thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation.

He's eager. He's ambitious. He's ready and willing and passionate about it. He's looking for opportunities.

He is consumed by it.

Proclaiming the gospel is not a side thing that he might do if the opportunity arises but the heartbeat of his soul.

Look in **Acts 20:24**. It says, "I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Oh, how we need that perspective. Oh, how we need that passion!

1. We need perspective, we need to see that we are **obligated**.
2. We need God to give us **eagerness and willingness**.

You see why we need to pray?

I am Obligated.

I am Eager.

And number 3....

3. **I am not ashamed** of the gospel.

I am ashamed at times. Aren't you ashamed at times?
How easy it is to be silent!

Mack Stiles, who writes a lot of good stuff on Evangelism, just wrote an article from northern Iraq, where he lives....and he said this, "**Awkward is better than silent.**"

God can use imperfect and fumbling methods, but it is hard to do anything with silence.

Look at verse 16.

Paul says, **16 For I am not ashamed** of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

Paul, what's the secret to your boldness?
Paul, how are you not ashamed?

Answer: *“because the power of God is at work through the gospel message...to save people.”*

“I am not embarrassed by this message because it works.” “God miraculously saves people when they hear it and believe.”

So, we should not be ashamed of Jesus and the message of salvation through him. And in fact, Jesus has terrifying words for us, if we are ashamed of him.

Listen to **Mark 8**,
34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Brothers and sisters, we are obligated; we owe the gospel to those around us. We should be eager. It should be our very heart to do this and not just a side

job. And we should not be ashamed of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But all of us are to some degree, so repentance is needed.

Now, in our last few minutes, I just want to give us some clarity and some helps; some practical things that can help us, i think.

What is proclaiming? What is sharing the gospel or evangelizing?

I like Mack Stiles definition. **Evangelism is preaching or teaching the gospel message with the aim to persuade or convert.**

There must be this message about Jesus and it must be with the aim to persuade or convert...as Paul said..."It is the power of God for salvation to those who believe." So, it's not telling our story without persuading them. It's not trying to make someone's life better. It's sharing with them how to be saved.

So, the first (1) helpful tip is that we need to know the gospel so well, memorize it, and rehearse it....so that we can communicate it easily and feel more confidence.

AND....then....take the next step in the conversation.

Step number (2) is just that....**TAKE THE NEXT STEP.**

Know the gospel well and then take the next step in the conversation.

And that next step is, “What about you?” “This is what God has done and done for me....what about you?”

“You know I am a Christian, but you have to believe in Christ, too.” “Can I share with you the truth from the Bible?” “Will you put your faith in Jesus?”

1. Know the gospel.
2. TAKE THE NEXT STEP.

Lastly, and this goes without saying...that if we are going to proclaim Jesus to others, we have to **(3) Intentionally spend time with non-Christians.**

Ask them to lunch. Ask them to coffee. Ask them how you can pray for them. That will surely open up the conversation.

Oh yes, we need to **BELONG** to the body, but we also need to **BE SENT**. So, gravitate to your non-believing friends and not just your Christian buddies.

BEHOLD God daily in your own personal times with him. Get fuel there. Get close there.

Then, **BELONG** deeply to the body of Christ, the church, and grow alongside others and encourage them and let them encourage you.

And **BE SENT** out to proclaim Jesus.

May God grant us the grace to feel obligated to share the gospel.

May God grant us the grace to feel a sense of eagerness, willingness and passion for the gospel.

May God grant us to be unashamed of our Lord and the message of salvation in him.

Amen.

Benediction:

Now, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.