

# Jacob Walker - Evangelizing with Zeal

Thank you, Josh, for reading that passage for us. We will come back to that towards the middle of the lesson this morning. And one of the last things that you read there was talking about being an evangelist. And that's kind of what we're going to talk about today. We have so many things going on in our world and sometimes the word of God is not included in that. And I want you to know everything that I say this morning, Kenny said this couple of weeks ago I think, but I'm talking to myself, myself as included. Often when I preach, I use the pronoun "we." Instead of preaching at you, I include myself because everything that I say, I'm talking to myself as well, and that is no different this morning.

I've titled this lesson "Evangelizing with Zeal." Evangelizing, with zeal. You know, if you ask people, what's the work of the church? They will probably say things like benevolence, edification, and evangelism. And that's exactly right. And I want us to realize that if that's the work of the church, evangelism, then we make up the church. So, if that's the work of the church, then the individuals that make up the church have to be involved in evangelism, as well as benevolence and edification, edifying with one another and all things of that nature. We'll get into scripture in just a minute, we're going to define a few words as we get started as part of the introduction. The word evangelize, to convert or seek to convert to Christianity, or preach the gospel. So, it's kind of a two-part definition to convert or seek to convert to Christianity or preach the gospel. Evangelism is the spreading of the Christian gospel, by public preaching. Another definition for evangelism, zealous advocacy of a cause. So, we see here two things to notice, and I underline that zealous advocacy. We'll come right back to that in just a minute. But two things to notice about those two definitions, both definitions mentioned Christianity, not any other religion, it's Christianity. And we know that to be the case, but it was mentioned. And those were Google's definitions. Those were not my definitions, if you look them up on your phone, right now, that's what you're going to get. Sometimes Google is not exactly right. But Christianity was mentioned in both of those without anything else. The other thing is preaching or teaching is mentioned. And I substitute teaching for preaching. Because to me, those are really basically the same thing. You consider this preaching, because this is traditionally how it goes, someone stands up here in the pulpit, and preaches a lesson, but we're studying God's Word together. And so, we're learning from God's word, and trying to better ourselves. Now, that's not to say that things that we do that don't involve teaching is a bad thing. For example, if I have someone that I've just met, and they're not a Christian, and I'm trying to get to know them, and I asked them to go out to dinner, I may not talk about the Bible, or bring up too much about that in my first dinner with them. But it needs to be in the plans, right? And needs to be in the plans for the future. Get to know them a little bit, make a relationship and then start trying to create Bible studies and teach them things. But with our two definitions there, we see these two things. And we've got to be sure that when we call something evangelism, that it truly is evangelism.

Now back to that phrase zealous advocacy of a cause. Now what would that mean if you were going to explain that to someone? What does that mean to you? Zealous advocacy of a cause. You know, we advocate for things that we truly believe in all the time. We try to persuade others to believe in things that we do as well. I think about maybe weight loss programs and how many people advocate for

different ways to lose weight? Well, this worked for me, you should try it. This is why it worked for me you should try. Well, this first, you know, we see are so many different things, but people are advocating for that and they're trying to persuade us to do different things. People make a living, advocating for whatever the case. We're very good at it. When it comes to different things. Kenny did a lesson a few months ago, or several months back, I guess, on maintaining our zeal, if you remember that, but I want to take a second to define zeal: great energy and enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause. Great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause. What's something that you are zealous about? Something that you pursue with great energy and enthusiasm in everyday life? Maybe your job? Maybe parenting? That can be tiring, sometimes hard to be enthusiastic, sometimes that right? But there's so many things that we are enthusiastic about and that we have energy about spiritually speaking. What about our spiritual zeal? Are we zealous about persuading others to become Christians? Now use the word persuading there, I could have used another word. Sometimes that sounds like a maybe not the best word to use. But does that sentence there "persuading others to become Christians" does that reminds you of anything? Scripture? Maybe. Maybe so. This maybe I don't know how large this is going to be for you. Hopefully, it's large enough where you can read it. But in Acts chapter 26, verses 24 through 28. Now we'll see "Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, you are beside yourself. Much learning is driving you mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason for the king before whom also speak freely knows these things. For I'm convinced that none of these things escapes his attention since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, Do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe." And you remember their response here? This is probably what you thought of, "then Agrippa of said to Paul, you almost persuade me to become a Christian." Well, what was persuading Agrippa to become a Christian? Well, you might say, well, Paul was. But Paul said up there, in 25 he had spoken the words of truth and reason, and that is why he had almost persuaded Agrippa to become a Christian. Paul said, I know he believes. I know he knows what I'm saying. He believes me. He just won't take that step. He won't take that step that he needs to. The words of truth and reason. There was Paul doing something that was almost persuading Agrippa he was preaching he was teaching the gospel.

One thing about zeal, I think we need to understand is it takes action. It takes action to be zealous about something to have that great energy to have that enthusiasm. Second Corinthians chapter nine, verse number two, "for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago and your zeal has stirred up the majority." If Molly tells me to stir a pot on the stove, and I put a spoon in there and just leave it, I haven't stirred it up. I didn't do anything, right? She told me to, but I didn't really make it happen. There was no action involved. I have to literally do something to stir the pot. "Your zeal has stirred up the majority." That word "stirred" if you look up the Greek it actually says it's more of an irritated type of word when it's used most of the time, but this is in a positive way. If you read the first verse of second Corinthians chapter nine here, their zeal had stirred up the majority. There was action there. There had to be. They can't stir them up without doing something, right? There was action. And Revelation three and verse number 19, this is the letter to the lukewarm Laodiceans. Remember that letter says, "as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent." Be zealous, and repent. Fix it and be zealous. There's action involved. If they just said, okay, we're ready to be enthusiastic. We're ready to have energy. It says, you've got to repent. There's action involved if we have that zeal in our daily walk with God. And it's not easy. I'm not standing here telling you this, please, no, I'm again, I'm talking to myself as much as to you today. It's

hard to have that enthusiasm and that energy every day. Life can get hard; it can take its toll on us. And we understand that.

So based upon what we have said so far of our definitions, this is what I've got. And we will end with this again, this would be the last slide that I'll put up. But I'll ask a question at the end. So based upon the definitions of evangelize and the definition of zeal we are as Christians seeking to convert someone to Christianity by preaching and teaching the gospel with great enthusiasm, and energy. I'll take a moment to read that again. Think about it individually. Again, we know that the work of the church is to evangelize, and we do have many efforts going on. And that's great. We all participate in those, that's really good. But as individuals, we also have an obligation to try to spread the gospel as well. And so, are you, am I, this morning zealous about evangelism and about evangelizing? And if not, what can we do to kind of take that next step? Again, I'll ask that question at the conclusion. Maybe I shouldn't have told you that but anyway, now, you know.

So next question. Now that we've talked about all that I kind of just told you the answer here, but whose job is it to evangelize in this congregation? Is it just Kenny's job? He's the preacher here. He preaches from the pulpit most of the time. Been here with you, with us, for a long time. Is it any other preacher that in a congregation? Whose job is it to evangelize? Another definition, I feel like I'm a school teacher, but evangelists defined as a person who seeks to convert others to the Christian faith especially by public preaching. Now, we understand that especially by public preaching, that's what we think about when we think about an evangelist. But especially here does not also mean only. It doesn't say only by public preaching it says especially by. That's the main way but anyone who seeks to convert others to the Christian faith is defined as an evangelist. Doesn't have to be maybe our occupation, but a Bible study, whatever the case is, are we seeking to convert others to the Christian faith? Romans 10, verse 14, I didn't put the entire verse 15 Because the font would have been too small. But verse 14 of Romans 10 says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how should they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how should they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" We understand this to be that preachers can be monetarily supported for evangelizing. You continue verse 15, it talks about how the feet are beautiful. I'm paraphrasing a little bit, but the feet are beautiful of those who spread the gospel, something to that effect. I read this verse in a lesson one time, and afterwards I was in the back and lady was walking out, a sweet sister in Christ. And she kind of walked up to me and she smiled, and she said, you must have beautiful feet. I said, well, I don't know about that. But I appreciate the compliment, I guess. But it talks about how beautiful feet of those who walk around spreading the gospel. But again, especially in that definition does not mean only. And so, all of us can be an evangelist at some time.

Ephesians four and verse number 11 says, "then, he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Now put this one up here, because again, I don't want you to get the wrong idea what I'm saying today. We have different talents. Many of you have talents that I do not have, and we could go on this side of the building and this side, and we all have different talents that God has blessed us with. We all don't have to be able to, men, preach a sermon. Ladies, speak at a lady's day. Fill in the blank. We don't all have to be able to do the same things. That's why as a church we work together. But we can all have that goal in mind and be ready to teach, to study, with people who may ask the question to us. But I wanted to put this up there, I

understand. And I hope that you're not saying well, I can't do that. Well, there are things that we all can do to help the church grow. Christ is our perfect example. We know that we could use that Christ as our example for basically any topic we were talking about, because he is and it's always true. But in Luke 19, in verse number 10, it says, "For the Son of Man, has come to seek and to save the lost." You know, that was what Jesus was doing. He was seeking to save those who were lost. And we want to follow that example, we want to do everything we can to lead others to Christ so that they can follow his example.

Turn back to this passage, please Second Timothy, chapter four, you might still have it marked. Second Timothy, chapter four, one through five. I'm going to read it again. I know we just read it together. But my heading here at chapter four, it says preach the Word. Paul writing to Timothy. It says, "I charged you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the Word. Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers, and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." Now I understand, like I said, this is Paul's letter to Timothy. If you read the next few verses, Paul is coming to the end of his life. And he realizes that and so he's given a kind of an order to Timothy to keep it going. To keep teaching what you know, and I'm running out of time, but the word needs to continue. Fulfill your ministry. Why is he telling him these things? Because Paul understood at the end of his life, he could already probably see and there were people that were questioning all the time of what was true, what was not. People are going to start saying things that aren't true and they have itching, ears. Timothy, teach, preach, fulfill the ministry, lead others to Christ, teach the gospel. All of those things that Paul's talking about right there, is that not true for us today? Those things are still going on today and they will be going on until Jesus returns again. That's going to be happening. And so, we need to be able to teach. He mentioned preaching. He also mentioned teaching in verse number two. I said, I use those as synonyms almost. And so, Paul uses both of those in this passage.

Second Corinthians chapter five and verse number 20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us, we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." I love that verse. I was reading it, and I was putting this lesson together and I thought, you know that would be a good one to read to someone who, if you were trying to study say, Listen, I'm an ambassador for Christ. And we don't want to try to make ourselves feel haughty and make them think that we're saying we're better, right? But this is our this is our goal: is to show Christ to others. I'm an ambassador. Please, on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. Let's study the Bible together and see what God's plan is for me and for you. Do it with love. Not that, like I said, not telling anybody that we're better, we're not ever doing that. They're not going to study; they're not going to listen if we don't do it with love. First, Peter, three and 15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give it a defense to everyone who asked you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." People are going to ask us questions that we don't know. That's happened to you, it's happened to me. It's going to happen again, more than likely. But we try to be ready to answer questions with Scripture with God's word. Because we never know. I would imagine that at some point in your life, and that you've kind of been caught off guard with an opportunity to have a study with someone or just have a conversation.

Somebody randomly might ask you a question and you're caught off guard and you may get into a good conversation. But it's happened. Everything that we plan is great, but things happen. And God may give us opportunities to evangelize when we least expect it. And so, we want to be ready to answer those questions. And why are you a Christian? Why do you believe: fill in the blank? And so, we're ready to answer those questions and to explain to others why we believe what we believe.

So, as I mentioned, we have several evangelical efforts that go on in this congregation. We have one next weekend. We've had several. VBS will be here soon. All these good works that are going on. But again, today, my focus is more on as individuals in the church as part of the church, what can we do? And so, we've been talking about that. And now, quickly, I want to go through why do we struggle with individual evangelism? Why do we struggle a little bit with it? And you're probably already, I've mentioned a couple of these not going to stay a long time on any of them. But why do we struggle with individual evangelism in our daily lives, or whatever the case may be? Well, I've already talked about that a little bit. Maybe it's not my job, I've got my everyday job. It's how I provide for my family. I get it, right? I get it. But Second Timothy, two, the first two verses "You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that you have heard from me, among many witnesses. Commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." He says, Timothy, teach others. Teach faithful men. Why? So that those faithful men and women, in parentheses understood, and women will go out and teach others also. So, teach others so they can teach. So, it's our job as individual Christians to teach the Word of God. And I'm not, again, I'm not coming at you this morning. As somebody would say. I'm talking to myself or we're talking about this together. It is tough. It is tough to have this mindset every day.

Another one you might be thinking this morning is, I'm not very good at it. I'm just not. I'm not able to have a Bible study, I'm not able to talk to people. I struggle. I need somebody with me. Well, if that's the case, then take somebody along. Maybe not 10 people, that would be a little bit intimidating, probably, but maybe just one, let them take some notes. Don't want to feel like you're bombarding the person. But I'll ask this question, right, I'm not good at it, whatever you're really good at because all of you are really good at something. All of you were really good at something. Were you really good at it the first time you tried it? Probably not. You know, maybe you were, but I doubt it. I doubt it. Whether that would be our job, whether that would be when we first started trying a sport etcetera. Whatever it is. Oakley is playing baseball; he's played a little basketball as well. And he gets very frustrated when he can't do something that I'm trying to help him with, or whatever the case. Whatever the case is, I mean, really frustrated. I've got too, we've just got to quit sometimes. It's the first time that he's tried it or the second time and it's okay. You know, it's okay. You're not supposed to be good at it yet. He doesn't like that. But that's just the way it is. And it's with us as adults, we try something new. We're probably not good at it. But we keep trying, and we keep trying. And then we get better, and we get more comfortable doing it. I thought about this, as well. And if you have children or grandchildren, or you will have children one day, aren't you or aren't I, the main evangelist in my child's life growing up? We send them to Bible class, and they hear a sermon once a week. But really that's about two hours a week. Maybe if they go to, you know, Mars Hill, or a private school, it may get a little bit more of Bible class. So that's more. But aren't we as parents and maybe grandparents, the main evangelist as we raise our children? I get chills a little bit. Scares me, right? I think we are. And that's a place where we can practice. I think we can prepare things for our children to study that we could take out to others. But if we are raising our

children, which we all are, we need to be the main evangelist in their lives. So, practice with your children, and then go out and try with others.

Number three, I don't have enough time. I know you've said this one today as well in your head. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God. A worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker. So, we're working, trying to present ourselves approved to God, rightly dividing the word of truth. Now I know that that's, you know, we're individual there. Working for ourselves, but we're seeking first the kingdom of God. And so, let's make sure, if nothing else, that we're making enough time for ourselves individually, to grow spiritually, right, but we want to be able to go out and spread that to others when we have the opportunity. But you know, if I said, talking about physical things, if I just said, you know, Molly, I just don't really have enough time for this marriage. I'm running out of time for that's not going to work, is it? She's going to give me a look. I really don't have time to parent. She's going to give me another look, right? We don't say those things. You know, it's tough. We do run out of time. Work, our jobs take up a lot of our time. But we can do it. We can do it.

This is the last one. Maybe we're afraid of the reaction that we're going to get. If you will, turn with me to Acts. We'll be in chapter seven and chapter two, but maybe we're afraid of the response. The reaction that we're going to get if we're studying with someone. It can be a little intimidating, especially if you already kind of know, or you think you know that it's not going to go well, but you want to try anyway because you feel obligated. This can be an intimidating thing. We do not know the reaction that we're going to get from others. I want to look at these two situations. They're well known to you in the book of Acts, Stephen versus Peter. And we'll go to Acts chapter seven, first. Acts chapter seven. We'll skip down, just read these few verses. We'll start in 54, and then skip to 57. So, this is Acts seven, verse 54, "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth." Verse 57, "then they cried out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears, and they ran it him with one accord, and they cast him out of the city, and they stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul." Stephen was preaching, they were cut to the heart. It says there in verse 54. And their reaction was not what we hoped for, what we pray for. And we know what happened. They stoned Stephen, because of what he was saying. They were cut to the heart. But the reaction was not good. You know where we're going now. Acts chapter two, flip back, just a few pages 37 and 38, and then 41. In verse 37, "Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter, and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Verse 41 says, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized and that day about 3000 souls were added to them." We see the same phrase, in New King James, I'm sure it was very similar in whatever version that you may use. Acts seven, they were cut to the heart, Acts two, they were cut to the heart, two completely different reactions. One was really, really bad. One was really, really good. We don't know the reaction that we're going to get when we talk to others when we try to study with them. But that can't be what's stopping us. I guess that's my main point. It's that can't be what's stopping us from doing it. From doing that.

Evangelizing is so important. We've read so many scriptures. This is, you know, we can look at First Timothy Chapter 6:20, and 21. It says, "oh, Timothy, guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge. By professing it some have strayed concerning the faith." The passage that Josh read for us, talking about the itching ears and believing in things that aren't true. Things that are falsely called knowledge. I saw a different version had "opposing arguments" in this verse, "proposed contradictions" in this verse, that are being called knowledge. And so, if we aren't teaching, other people are and people have itching ears. People want something to believe in. We want something to believe in. So, we need to be ready to teach, to evangelize. We won't turn here but in Romans chapter 10, you remember, they're talking about Israel. It says they were zealous, but they didn't have knowledge. They had zeal with no knowledge. Zeal is a really good thing. But we've got to have the knowledge as well. I told you, I was going to end asking the question, now that I mentioned earlier, and so this is what we'll close on. Thank you for your attention this morning. Again, I'm talking to myself as much as any of you. It's a challenge. It's something to encourage us to go out and do our best to evangelize. To bring people to Christ to teach the gospel. Are we, am I, are you, as an individual, seeking to convert someone to Christianity by preaching and teaching the gospel with great enthusiasm, and energy? Do you have that mindset this morning? Do I have that mindset this morning? We're going to stand and sing in just a moment; the Lord's invitation is always open. This invitation is for all, right? We know that those who are not Christians can become a Christian. Those who are erring Christians can repent. And as we read the verse earlier, be reconciled with God. And if you need prayers in the congregation, I'll do that as well. Whatever you need come as we stand and as we sing.