



## BREATH OF LIFE: YOU, YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT, AND THE CHURCH

### “The Reaching Church” Acts 1:8

#### Introduction

Paul instructed Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" and "teach" (2 Timothy 3:15-4:5)! His words apply fully to this very day. Therefore, with the Scriptures as a critical tool for evangelism and teaching, every disciple should seek carefully to bring the truth of God's Word to bear upon every human life. I often used a question when seeking to determine the usefulness of a proposed church activity: Where's the hook in it? Somewhere along the ministry path, I became aware that an excellent means for stabilizing a church and providing depth and care was through the evangelism and equipping ministries. Therefore, everything--including newsletter articles, "providential encounters" (e.g. at a local restaurant), and even fellowship events were filtered through one or both of these aims. (cf. Lesson 2: The Discipling Church; Ministry Star).

**Lesson aim:** From the broad teaching ministry to one-on-one personal soul-winning, the total care of souls includes evangelizing and discipling.

#### I. Placing the Text in Our Context

##### A. A Quick Review: Proclamation (*Kerygma*) 1 Corinthians 3:5; Acts 1:8; 1 Timothy 2:7

1. Proclamation is the translation of the Greek word *kerygma*.
  - a. It means “proclamation by a herald” of the message or proclamation by the herald of God or Christ.
  - b. Parallel words are *euangelizo* meaning to proclaim or bring good news and *euangelion* meaning the glad tidings of salvation through Christ, or the Gospel.
2. Both *kerygma* and *euangelion* are translated “preaching,” but this gives an unfortunate meaning to those who equate preaching with a formal church worship service.
3. In the New Testament, proclamation was heralding the Gospel by anyone, anytime, and at anyplace.
4. Proclamation is a universal goal and it is imperative to announce the Gospel to all mankind (Matthew 28:18-20).

##### B. Reaching in Biblical Context: Acts 1:8

1. Bible Text: “*But 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.*”
2. Bible meaning:
  - a. You shall be my witnesses (**see endnote**): This was a command. Vaughan states that they were sent into the world not to make predictions about the future (cf. v. 7)

but to bear witness to Christ. This meant that they were to testify to “what they had seen, heard, and known of Him.” (Vaughan, 15).

- 1) Personal—“My” witnesses. It is special to know that we *belong* to Him, but it is also important to know that His disciples bear witness *to* Him (See Luke 24:47-49).
- 2) Plan—witnesses in Jerusalem (ch. 1-7), Judea and Samaria (chs. 8-12), and the ends of the earth (chs. 13-28; See box above. The eyewitnesses *and* we who followed them are to be witnesses). Christ’s concern before His ascension was \ for the whole world (cf. Isaiah 49:6). The circle was to be completed through His followers. God so loved the world that He gave His son, and His followers are to proclaim that love to the whole world. (Vaughan, 15)

- b. Implications for all disciples: Here the mandate to witness that stands as the theme for the whole of Acts is explicitly set out. It comes as a direct commission from Jesus himself—in fact, as Jesus’ last word before his ascension and, therefore, as one that is final and conclusive. All that follows in Acts is shown to be the result of Jesus’ own intent and the fulfillment of his express word.

### 3. A Brief Historical Overview: Shifting Paradigms

- a. Apostolic
- b. Christendom Paradigm (4<sup>th</sup> Century)
- c. “Laity”? Paradigm

## II. The Reaching Church: Sustaining a Vital Public Witness

- A. Intentional casting of vision to care for souls
- B. Careful construction of strategy
- C. Vision Shapers (Barna, 152ff)
- D. Personal Witness at the Core of all that is Done: Acts 2:22-41
  1. Declaration: ***God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*** Jesus was approved by God (v. 22) meaning he was *attested* and *appointed*. This attestation was effected by “miracles and wonders and signs.” Their point was to point people to God.
  2. Proclamation: ***He is Lord*** (v. 36). Peter offered three proofs: 1) prophecy (vv. 25-31; Psalm 16); 2) eyewitness accounts (v. 32) and 3) the proof of the Holy Spirit (vv. 33-35).
  3. Invitation: ***They were cut to the heart.***
    - a. **Repent:**
    - b. **Be baptized:**
    - c. **Unto remission of sins:**
    - d. **The gift of the Spirit:**

### **III. Gifts for Sharing the Good News**

#### **A. Apostleship (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11)**

1. Bible Meaning
2. Bible Examples
3. Practical Application (wider sense of the word)

#### **B. Evangelism (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11)**

1. Bible Meaning
2. Bible Examples
3. Practical Application

#### **C. Speaking in Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:20, 28)**

1. Bible Meaning
2. Bible Examples
3. Practical Application

#### **D. Interpretation of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10, 30)**

1. Bible Meaning
2. Bible Examples
3. Practical Application

#### **E. Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28)**

1. Bible Meaning
2. Bible Examples
3. Practical Application

#### **F. Healing (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30)**

1. Bible Meaning
2. Bible Examples
3. Practical Application