



EVANGELISM INSIGHTS FROM JESUS

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Go online and search for books on the subject of evangelism and you will be amazed by the quantity. There are thousands of pages worth of ideas, insights, and suggestions on evangelising our world with the gospel. A bunch of it is excellent material. But yes, thousands of pages, if not tens of thousands of pages!

Our entire Bible is about 1200–1500 pages long in the average print style. The four gospels of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ comprise only about 120 pages! Yet, may I be so bold as to say that those 120 pages contain much more useful material about evangelisation than all the other books put together. Let's look at just one example of many evangelism insights by Jesus. The Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:1–9; Mk. 4:1–9; Lk. 8:4–8) gives us some incredible, non-threatening insights. Plus, Jesus interprets this parable for us in Matthew chapter 13 verses 18 to 23.

Let's learn from just one insight, or parable, from Jesus:

13:1 *'On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.'*

'On the same day': Jesus had been teaching and even arguing with the Jewish leaders, and He did not take the rest of the day off. He continued His work. Evangelism takes work.

'Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea': Evangelism is not waiting for people to come into our church buildings, it is going out to meet people where they are doing life. Jesus was in a fishing community, so He went down to the sea. That's where the people would be. In other words, wherever we go to work, shop, eat, etc., that's where evangelism takes place.

13:2 *'And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.'*

Jesus was a well-known figure in His community. People obviously liked Him and liked to listen to

Him because many gathered around that day. Evangelism is about developing friendships and being a warm, approachable person to whom people want to talk. This is not teaching that evangelism should only be done in crowds. God does raise men like Billy Sunday and Billy Graham, who preached to the masses, but gospel work done one on one is just as valid and is probably more suited to our times and culture. Crowds often represent aimless sheep. One friend you are witnessing to constantly means the 'good soil' at the end of the parable.

13:3 *'Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow.'*

'Then He spoke many things to them in parables': There was a theological reason why Jesus used parables, but the evangelistic tool of storytelling is also a valid application. People will listen to you tell a story when they would never listen to you preach.

Homework: Develop some fascinating stories that explain the gospel in terms people connect with.



'Behold, a sower went out to sow': Today we are the sower. Mark chapter 4 verse 14 tells us, 'The sower sows the word.' Evangelisation is the retelling of God's Word. Undoubtedly our evangelism would be more powerful if we read scripture to people. Better yet, if we memorised it and recited it to them as a story. Or when talking to a person one on one, open your Bible and have them read the verses out loud. That is sowing the seed! Evangelism is not accomplished through gimmicks or shows, which are the methods of the world. Evangelism is giving out the Word of God.

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13:4 *'And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.'*

We cannot control where the seed lands. It is not our responsibility whether the seed takes root and produces fruit or not. We are in a spiritual battle and Satan is also active: *'When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.'* (Mk. 4:15)

Lesson: Do not be discouraged by those who reject you or the gospel.

13:5-6 *'Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.'*

Many people show initial interest in the gospel because we, as believers, are showing interest in them as people. Love, support and understanding are among the most sought-after needs in a person who does not know Christ. But that does not save them. We must not become discouraged when people fall away after we have invested time and effort in their lives. Discouragement can stop evangelism.

Lesson: Many will prove only to have made a profession of faith but have not come to the true faith.

13:7 *'And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.'*

It sounds like Jesus is talking about the year 2023 when He tells us what happens to these evangelised people: *'The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced.'* (Mt. 13:22). A false gospel has arisen in the last century that tries to include these kinds of people. It is called *'prosperity gospel'*, which basically says that spiritual people are rich and wealth is how you know that God is blessing you. But that is not what Jesus taught.

Lesson: Do not fall into the trap of making your gospel an easy-believism gospel. The gospel is not syncretistic. Many roads may lead to Rome, but there is only one way to get to God, and His name is Jesus Christ.

Lesson: The gospel is completely opposed to the 21st-century culture. Only God can cause that complete change in lives.

13:8 *'But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.'*

No one is saved by producing fruit. That is works-salvation. That is religion. In the Asian culture, it must be clearly understood that activities such as church attendance, financial giving, and acts of service are not the source of our salvation. Jesus teaches: *'But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:'* (John 1:12).

Likewise, no one who is truly saved never not exhibits the fruit of the spirit in his or her life. *'Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.'* (Mt.7:19). We bear fruit because the seed—the WORD—is in us and produces its spiritual effects in our lives. Evangelist, when you see that in the life of a new believer, it is time to rejoice!

13:9 *'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'*

Evangelism doesn't require badgering or nagging. It is a call to listen. Jesus did that and then moved on to the next audience.

These are just some evangelism insights from Jesus. Go through the gospel, look for many more, put them into practice in your evangelisation, and let God bless His Word.

