

EVANGELISM Part 1

Transcription of Wednesday Midweek Fellowship by Dcn. Ruben Sevia

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“Evangelism”

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I would want to ask each one of us these questions: “What is your purpose of being here? Are you proud of being a Christian? Are you proud of Jesus Christ?” Sometimes, we don’t know our purpose in life. When somebody would ask us about this, our answer is, “Okay lang. Masaya. Bahala na. Wala lang.” Our life is blessed because we should be a blessing.

Our topic for tonight is about evangelism. I consider this a divine purpose because last Sunday’s theme was: The Goal of Sensitivity to the Needy. In Tagalog, “Ang Hangarin na Maging Maunawain sa Mga Nangangailangan.” Nangangailangan ba kayo? I heard that you are blessed, but some of you are doubtful.

Why are we called Christians? This is because we are Christ’s fanatic; we are Christ-likeness. In the movie world, if you like Nora Aunor, you are called a Noranian. If you like Vilma, you are a Vilmanian. If you are a Christian, you are called one because you are of Christ. This means that what you do and what you say comes from Christ.

Looking into the word Christian, when you separate the syllables - Christ and ian, ‘ian’ means that without Christ, “**I Am Nothing.**” With Christ, “**I Am New.**” In 2Corinthians 5:17, it says, “*The old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*” If Christ is in us, it means that we are always new.

What is the meaning of evangelism? Evangelism means the spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness. Public preaching is through homily or preaching the Word of God in Bible Studies and gatherings. As a testimony, one time, I rode the LRT from Pasay Rotonda to Monumento. When I reached San Andres, I began to preach the Word of God inside the LRT which was filled with people. I said, “If you need Christ, then say this prayer...” My voice was so loud that all the people can hear it until the far end of the train, and I saw that all the people were in prayer. When I said, “Let us give a clap offering to the Lord,” everybody clapped their hands and many shouted, “Hallelujah! Glory to God!”

Public preaching is also defined as announcements, proclamation, and/or preaching of the Gospel – the Good News and about Jesus Christ. Why is it Good News? Because it is not bad news. This means that it is Jesus Christ alone and nothing else. It is not our pride, not our wealth, not our education, not gossip, not lying, but being honest and being truthful. When we are evangelizing, hindi tayo nangbobola, hindi tayo nanloloko, hindi natin hinihikayat ang mga tao sa maganda nating pananalita, kung hindi, ipinagmamalaki natin ay si HesuKristo.

Addressing the young people, during Bibles Studies or when we are in a group, many are ashamed or are shy in sharing the Word. What happened? We speak only of Jesus Christ and the truth, and when we speak the truth, the truth shall set us free. Kadalasan sa buhay nating mga Kristiyano, ang yayabang natin. Aminin natin o hindi, mayayabang tayo; pero pagdating kay HesuKristo na dapat nating ibahagi, nawawala ang ating kayabangan. Bakit kaya? And yet, we say that we are Christians. Christ is in us! Christ dwells in us! Christ lives in us! Ngunit pagdating na natin sa mundo, talo tayo ng mundo dahil kayabangan ang nasa atin. Kung wala ang kayabangan at ipinagmamalaki natin si Kristo, ito ang tunay; ito ang sadya; ito ang buhay.

We have this song, “Ang buhay ng Kristiyano ay masayang tunay.” Masayang tunay because we keep on sharing Jesus Christ. Kaya tayo nalulungkot dahil hindi tayo marunong magbahagi ng salita ng Diyos. Kapag tayo ay nasa grupo, nobody shares. Kapag pinauna ang isang youth, ang sasabihin, “Siya na lang ang mauna,” o di kaya, “Ay, wala pa. Mamaya na lang, po.” Kailangan pala na dumadating ito, ngunit dapat ay out of the heart flows rivers of living water. Habang hindi kayo nagsasalita, if you are not proclaiming God, God will never use you. You are not proclaiming God through your word and by the life that you live. How will people be encouraged by your word and by your life? Sino ang sasama sa inyo? This may be the reason we are not growing in numbers. We have a lot of neighbors here that we can bring to our Church, and yet we are not doing nothing. Kailangan natin magbahagi ng salita ng Diyos, hindi ang kayabangan. As Christians, hindi pwede na pinipilit tayo. Nararapat lamang na gawin ng isang Kristiyano ang ibahagi si Kristo.

The Gospel is communicated message. Gospel or Good News in Greek is *euangelion*. In Greek, the verb is *euaggelizesthai* which is to announce or to bring good news. It also means to preach. A witness is one who has personal knowledge of something; public affirmation by word or example usually of faith or conviction. Each one of us has personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. It doesn't mean that if you memorize the Holy Bible, this is the time to evangelize and this is time to witness.

When I started as a Christian, what I only knew was John 3:16 and Psalm 37:4. From these verses, I grew in my Christian faith. Today, what we would like in our lives is to memorize all the Scriptures in the Bible before we share Christ. The best testimony is that our lives changed. Christ changed us; therefore, we can proclaim who He is in our lives.

Noong araw, talamak ako kung uminom. Payat na payat ako. Huwag lang dumilim, iinom ako. I accepted Christ on August 16, 1986 and I was invited to join Christian Life Fellowship. When I accepted Christ in my life, nakipagbargain pa ako kay Kristo that I would drink only until my birthday. I invited my college friend to be my guest on my birthday and I had four cases of beer on my door. When my friends asked me, “Bakit mo naman sinabi sa Diyos mo na hanggang birthday mo na lang ikaw iinom? Hindi mo ba alam na may Pasko at may Bagong Taon pa?” Pagtalikod ko, sinabi ko, “Oo nga, Lord, may Christmas pa at New Year. Pwede ba, sa New Year na lang ako hindi iinom?” Uminom pa ako hanggang Christmas. When New Year Eve's came, my college friend invited me to his house and I went at one o'clock in the morning. He told me, “Sevial, ang daming beer diyan. Kumuha ka na lang diyan kung ano ang gusto mo.” I opened one bottle and when I drank the cold beer, my taste buds couldn't accept it and when I finished it, I felt so drunk. I told my friend, “Uuwi na ako.” He said, “Bakit ka uuwi? Noong Pasko, uminom tayo ng isang case at kalahati. Eh ngayon, isang bote lang, uuwian mo na?” I told him, “Inaantok na ako.” I got drunk with one bottle of beer as compared to the one and a half case of beer that I drank last Christmas. I tried to walk straight, and when I reached the church at Malibay, I raised both of my hands and I said, “Lord, do what You want me to do. Say what You want me to be. Now, I am offering my life as a holy and living sacrifice to You. Use me, Lord.” This is the starting point when God used me. On January 1987, I joined the Street Ministry of the Youth Ministry.

In Acts 1:8, it says, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*” When we say power, there is strength. The Greek word of power is *dunamis*. It means dynamite, dynamo or dynamic. It also refers to strength, power, or ability. God's ability is in us, so there is no excuse for us not to proclaim His word.

Philippians 4:7 says, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* Power is strength, but why can’t we have the strength to share God’s word? The power that resides in us is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Power has ability and strength. Scriptures doesn’t say, “I can do what I can do through Christ who strengthens me.” What it says is, “I can do ALL.” All is in all! All is all of us!

Power also refers to miraculous power. When we lay hands on the sick, they will recover and that is miraculous power. The only power that we know is *dunamis*, which is strength. Now, we know that it includes miraculous power. This is the power that Christ had to heal the sick, to preach the Word, and to live the life of God. We do not live the Christian life in our own power but in God’s power. When we trust in our own power, we lose it. When we trust in the power that God gave us, kailan man, hindi ito magbro-brownout. It is in God’s ability that makes us able to accomplish anything of value. Apart from God, we can do nothing. If Christ is in us, we can do everything.

It is in God’s strength that makes us overcome and there is power in the word that we speak. The word we speak is either life or death. When we visit those who are grieving, we must be a source of strength. In 2Peter 1:3, it says, *“His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”* The power that we are living is a godly life. Romans 8:11 says that the power that is residing in you and me is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. What more can we ask from God? He gave us everything; so now, it is time for us to share it.

One Monday, I met the father of my friend who is an OFW and whose life is a leader of an underground Church. I went to their house and his daughter was very sick. I asked him, “Do you believe that Christ will heal her?” He said, “Yes.” I started laying hands on her daughter and while I was praying, her daughter was slain by the Spirit. The father cried and he said, “I have been working in an underground Church, but I have never experienced this. Now, I have experienced it through my daughter and in my house.”

After this, we went to Pampanga to preach to their family. While we were on the road, I told them, “If I start preaching the Word of God in this bus, and when I call your name, you should stand up and share Jesus Christ to the rest of the passengers.” When I was preaching, I saw a couple seated at the back who were not listening; so I said, “Hindi tayo nakikinig sa salita ng Diyos subalit kung may nangyari sa buhay natin at malaking problema ang dadanasin natin, doon pa lamang ba tayo tatawag sa Diyos.” I saw then the couple listening to me and when I said, “Let us pray the Sinner’s Prayer,” their voices surpassed all the voices of the other passengers.

Why did this happen? There is power and authority that God has given us and this power in us makes us overcomers. If we believe in Christ, we should always be sharing the Word of God wherever we are. Our lives should be helping one another to lessen the load. It is giving aide to the sick people and being the joint that supplies.

I can boldly say: the Church should be the primary example of being a witness. The Church is you and me! One time, I invited a friend to our Sunday service. I was standing near the door and I greeted her when she arrived. She ignored me; but after the Mass, while I was chatting with her, she said, “Dcn. Ben, the reason I did not talk to you when I entered the Cathedral was because the very presence of God was so awesome. I could not handle myself and I wanted to cry.”

What is evangelism or witnessing? When people enter our Church and they see the Altar, they would say, “Para palang ako nasa langit kapag nasa simbahan ninyo.” The Church, including the Altar and the people in the Church, are all witnesses of Christ. Be a witness even if you have a problem. If you have a problem, look for another person who has a problem and minister to them. God will be the One to solve your problem.

Going back to the story about my trip to Pampanga with my friend, back to Manila, there was this news about the “three days of darkness” and it was said that if you don’t have the mark of 666, you cannot go to the supermarket and buy food. It was said too that if your candle is not blessed, it will not lit, thus, your house will be dark. When we were eating at a fast-food chain, people were talking about the “three days of darkness.” What I did was to stand in the middle of the restaurant and I preached the Word of God, and then I noticed that everybody had joy in their hearts.

We have opportunities, but when we ignore it or we take it for granted, it will never come again into our life. When we share the Word of God, it must be the truth. We must not be ashamed to pray especially in public places. In Mark 8:38, Jesus said, *“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”* Kapag ikinihiya mo si Kristo, ikahihiya ka rin Niya. So my question is: are you ashamed of Christ?

One afternoon, the Lord spoke to me and He said, “You are good outside, but how about inside?” I understood what the Lord said to me so what I did was to change my clothes and I went to my siblings in Las Piñas. I should say that when they always see me, they would see the dollar sign in my face for they would always ask money from me. One time, my brother asked, “Kamusta na? Ano ang ibibigay mo sa amin?” I said, “Wala. Alam mo ba na mahal ka ni Kristo?” He said, “Oo.” I asked, “Nagsisimba ka ba?” He said, “Hindi. Nagdadasal naman ako.” I shared, “Alam mo bang sinasabi sa Bible na, ‘Not everyone who called Me, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God?’ Hindi lahat ng tumatawag sa Kanya, kilala Niya. Iyon lamang gumagawa ng Kanyang kalooban o kagustuhan Niya.” He said, “Ay, ganoon ba?” I said, “Gusto mo, magpray tayo ngayon.”

My brother got born-again and he took the initiative to go to our sister. I shared the Word of God to her and my brother said, “Tanggapin mo na si Kristo. Gagaan ang pakiramdam mo.” My brother was the one who encouraged my sister and she got born-again. This event happened after the Lord spoke to me saying, “You are good outside, but how about inside?”

In Matthew 10:33, Jesus said, *“Whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”* Kapag iyong idineny si Kristo, idideny rin Niya ikaw. One time, I was playing badminton and a man, who knew that I was a Deacon said, “Sir, saan sa Bible sinasabi na dapat ka mag-sign of the Cross?” I replied, “Saan din sa Bible sinasabi na hindi ka dapat magsign of the Cross?” Wala siyang sagot, wala rin akong sagot, so hindi na siya nagtanong.

In sharing, there should also be wisdom and knowledge. Hindi tayo nakikipagtalo, pero ang maganda ay we share the Word of God in love. Kahit hate na hate na tayo ng tao, ngumingiti pa rin tayo. We share the Word of God in love because God is love. He loves the sinners, but He hates the sin.

Evangelism and witnessing is not only of the work of our Bishop, our Priests and our Deacons. This is the work of every Christian. We should be proud of our God proclaiming His greatness and Christians should be doing this 24/7.

In Proverbs 28:1, *“The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”* Are you righteous? If you are righteous, you are bold as a lion. We are not timid or ashamed. We don’t deny Christ. Evangelism is a lifestyle and the best example of this is the life we live in Christ, and this is the way it is in the kingdom of God.

I will end this teaching by saying, “Kung hindi tayo kikilos, sino? Kung hindi ngayon, kalian? Kung hindi para sa Diyos, bakit pa?” It is now the time. It is not later, not tomorrow, not next week, not next month or not next year. Now is the time!

Mahal kayo ng Diyos, siyempre, ako rin!