

Title: STYLES OF EVANGELISM, MARK 5:18-20.
(Chatham, NJ; 03/14/07, AM) [D – Topical]

Theme: The New Testament reflects many different ways that evangelism takes place.

Purpose: To explain different styles of evangelism and to encourage everyone to adopt the style that best suits them.

Introduction:

1. Keep praying for the people on your impact list.
2. As we think about several ways of approaching evangelism, make sure that you find one that suits your own style and make sure you use it with the people on your list.
3. The styles we'll talk about today aren't more right than any other.
4. Each has its strengths and weaknesses, but the point we want to make today is that we should find the one that we can do and pursue it.
5. Here are the styles. (Listed in the book we are using for Life Groups.)

I. Confrontational, Acts 2:37-40.

A. Essence and strength of this style.

1. Direct appeal.
2. Preach to large numbers.
3. Gets the basic information out.
4. Could include mass media in this category.

B. Weaknesses.

1. Appealing to large numbers doesn't always provide the personal appeal.
2. Not suitable everywhere—notice that the Holy Spirit had set this up and that the Temple was an appropriate environment to preach and teach.
3. Very little personal interaction involved.

II. Intellectual, Acts 17:16-34.

A. Strength and substance.

1. The Gospel is intellectually substantive; although you don't need to be a scholar to believe it, there are good reasons to believe it and challenging reasons to demonstrate that it is true.
2. Paul appeals to an audience of elite thinkers and philosophers, people who spend their time discussing all the current ideas.
3. It is legitimate to appeal to the mind.

B. Weaknesses.

1. Although this has an element of the confrontational, notice that Paul first spent his time talking to people in the marketplace—during their everyday pursuits.
2. He had to be invited to this elite group.
3. These intellectual elites were still blind.
4. Appeals to reason can be empty until a person can get beyond his own pre-conceived notions of reality.

III. Testimonial, John 9:13-34.

A. Strength and substance.

1. A man healed of his blindness testifies to what he experienced.
2. Although his family and acquaintances distanced themselves from him, they could not deny what had happened.
3. People cannot deny it when a person changes dramatically.

B. Weaknesses.

1. Experiences are personal and don't necessarily reflect what is common for all conversions—note the jailor from Philippi.
2. People can say, "That was good for you, but it doesn't mean anything to me."
3. Your witness is still valid but it might not be persuasive.

IV. Relational, Mark 5:18-20.

A. Strength and substance.

1. Similar to the testimonial—you tell what God has done for you.
2. In the case of the demoniac there was no denying what had happened.
3. This is a powerful testimony to what God can do and has done.

B. Weakness.

1. Also similar to testimonial – not common for all, might not be persuasive, etc.
2. However, it is still valid and provides the listener with an experience he might not get but must still think about.

V. Invitational, John 4 – Samaritan Woman.

A. Substance and strength.

1. Jesus guided the conversation to spiritual matters and invited her to participate in them.
2. This is a direct appeal to a smaller audience. It is what some call friendship evangelism.
3. You can deal with the person in a more personal way, and it puts a friendly face on evangelism.
4. Conversation over lunch can move people to respond, and it can break down barriers to resistance.
5. Once she was convinced, she recruited her friends.

B. Weaknesses.

1. Smaller audience.
2. Not all conversations move in such a positive direction.
3. Jesus' own disciples didn't understand what he was doing.

VI. Service-Oriented, Acts 9:36-42.

A. Substance and strengths.

1. Tabitha made clothes for widows; she lived the love and service of Christ on behalf of the poor.
2. This is a witness of demonstration and lifestyle; it shines the light of Christ.
3. People can see the genuineness of this faith.

B. Weaknesses.

1. Sometimes the verbal witness and the invitation are lacking.
2. People don't always know the reason you are doing good things.

Conclusion:

1. Evangelism styles vary but all rely on the Holy Spirit; God gives the growth.
2. We must be willing to adjust our style. (Advice from Jack Nicklaus to Sergio Garcia.)
3. Making adjustments is a good rule of thumb in all our church endeavors.
4. How will you handle the people on your impact list?
5. Let's talk about it today in Life Groups.