

The Evangelist – Christ's Gift

In **1 Corinthians 12:28** the *evangelist* is not mentioned. Here he is distinguished from the *Apostle* and the *prophet* and named as the third in the order of Christ's gifts to the Church. The **εὐαγγελιστής** is mentioned only twice again in the NT, viz., in **Acts 21:8**, where Philip, one of the seven deacons is so designated; and **2 Timothy 4:5**, where Timothy is charged to "do the work of an evangelist".

Like the *prophets* the *evangelists* were generally itinerant preachers or missionaries, though sometimes they had a stated place of abode or ministry. The term seems, therefore, to belong to the Pauline vocabulary. These *evangelists* were inferior to the Apostles, assisting them or delegated by them, but without their authority. They had the gift (**χάρισμα**) of the Spirit, as in the case of Timothy (**1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6**); but, if we may judge by Philip's case (**Acts 8:5-18**), they could not impart the Holy Ghost. Nor do they seem to have had the special revelations which were given to the prophets.^[1]

The evangelist has three different angles to his presentation of the Father. First is the Father's purity and His inflexible holy standard. Second is the Father's love for the sinner reflected in an insatiable desire that all men be saved. Third is the perfection of the plan that God conceived and implemented in order to bridge the gap between His hatred of sin and His love of sinners. When evangelists start focusing on the Father and not the sinner, we just might get a lot of people saved from their sins instead of being saved from their pain. It will be a refreshing thing to see.^[2]

Moving beyond the individual skill sets, it is my opinion that each one of these five offices were designed primarily around a fathering role. Specifically, I do not believe the office of evangelist is to be occupied by the designated soul winner in the church. Rather, the office is to be occupied by someone who has a fathering anointing and can identify within the church those who have various kinds of evangelistic calls on their lives. The man in the office of evangelist then brings those emerging evangelists under him and fathers them. He nurtures their gifts and eventually releases them into the evangelistic work God has called them too.^[2]

An Evangelist is a person with a special Gift and calling from the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4:11) To announce the good news of the Gospel. We must remember that it is a Gift from God and not from ourselves. This will keep us from Pride – for we cannot take any credit for it. (John 3:27) and from Discouragement and the Temptation to give up because we know our calling is not from man but from God.^[3]

1 Corinthians 9:16; John 15:16

Remember that "The Gifts and Callings of God are without Repentance" (irrevocable) (Romans 11: 29).. Then we must understand that a man's gifts make room for him. (Proverbs 18:16). These verses rule out the fear of being threatened by others or the spirit of competition that is sometimes found in evangelistic circles.



Evangelist is a father in the body of Christ and should be honored because the work of an Evangelist requires special grace and usually involves suffering.^[3]

The evangelist has an office in the Church. Phillip in Acts 21:8 is called an evangelist and Timothy is charged by Paul to *“do the work of an Evangelist.”* In Ephesians, 4:11 it is listed alongside the gift and office of apostle, prophet, and teacher, not everyone who has the gift of an evangelist holds the office of the evangelist. There are many laymen and women who are never invited to conduct a large crusade but who are great soul winners, because they hold the gift of evangelism.^[3]

The role and function of the evangelist is the work of the ministry. The Greek word for *“evangelist”* means *“one who announces the Good News”*. The evangelist functions within the operation of the law of sowing and reaping. In 1 Corinthians 3: 6 the Lord of the harvest uses the ministry of sowing (pastors and teachers, but also the inpouring from all the gifts) and the ministry of reaping (the role of the evangelist). There are seasons of sowing and reaping within every Church. To sow but never harvest is a disaster, while to reap where there has been no sowing, gives poor harvest.^[3]

The work of the evangelist: The evangelist is one who announces (personally and publicly) the Good News. The term “Evangelism” encompasses every effort to declare the Good News of Jesus Christ, so that people may understand God’s offer of salvation and respond with repentance, faith and discipleship.^[3]

Perhaps the work of the evangelist is best defined as “Winning the lost to Christ, through the preaching of the word, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the building up the body of Christ”^[3]

Paul admonishes Timothy (2 Timothy 4:2) “Preach the Word, be ready in season and out of season”. This means preach at the appointed time (in season) but also be prepared to turn an “Out of Season” into an “In Season” opportunity. The Evangelist must always be prepared to give a reason for the hope within (2 Peter 3:15). He must, therefore, also be an apologist.^[3]

This is the supreme task of the evangelist – to win the lost. He is a “reaper” in a harvest field. This must be done for the following compelling reasons:

1. The compassion of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14). A compassionate concern for those in spiritual need, a concern that leads us to action.
2. The Compulsion of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:26, 17:6). Only the love of Christ will enable the evangelist to make the sacrifices, to take the risks, to love the unlovely.
3. Another motive is the approaching judgement. Paul said in II Corinthians 5:11, *“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men”*. There is a day of judgement approaching. There is a heaven and a hell in eternity. The secular world is talking more about Armageddon and the end of the world. This leaves us with no option or choice. We are ambassadors under authority; we have responded to a bugle call from which there is no retreat. May we *“never be disobedient to the heavenly vision”*. (Acts 26: 19). Paul also taught, out of his concern for the lost, that *“to the weak I become weak, that I may win the weak. I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some.”* (1 Corinthians 9:22)
4. Through the “preaching of the word”. Paul said, “Preach the Word” (II Timothy 4: 2). Remember, it is God’s word that will not return void (Isaiah 55:11). We must master the Word and the Word must master us.



5. The adequacy of the Word of God. Paul said he was not ashamed of the Gospel (Romans 1:16). We preach the Word because we believe that its truth is adequate to meet all our needs. The evangelist needs to make no apology for the Word he expounds.
6. The relevancy of the Word of God. The preaching of the Word is relevant to all people of all cultures and backgrounds. The task of the evangelist and the science of preaching (which is nothing less than truth through human personality) is to exegesis the scriptures, making the truth therein palatable to the audience.
7. The urgency of the Word of God. The evangelist comes with a sense of urgency. He believes in hell, eternity and judgement. He understands why the Word says *"today if you hear His voice harden not your heart"*. (Hebrews 3:7). *"Now is the day of salvation."* (II Corinthians 6:2)
8. The Power of the Holy Spirit. It was the power and the compulsion of the Holy Spirit that used Peter on the day of Pentecost; that led Phillip from the revival in Samaria to reach the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert; that sent William Carey to India to preach for 7 years before he won his first convert; that moved John Wesley to ride 5 - 7,000 miles per year on horseback, and that sent David Brainard to preach to the Indians in the USA for 5 years, until he eventually died as a young man in the arms of the girl he loved more than anyone on earth. It was the compulsion of the Holy Spirit that touched the heart of David Livingstone after he heard Robert Moffat say, *"I have often stood and watched the smoke rise from 1000 villages where no missionary has ever been,"* to which the young David, responded and said, *"I will go to those 1000 villages – and 10,000 more"*, and out he went, fighting savages and wild beasts and surviving 35 attacks of malaria fever. He died in a little grass hut on his knees in the heart of the Africa he loved for Christ.
9. For the Body of Christ. The evangelist sees himself as a servant of the church and all that he does is to build the Body of Christ. In fact, when we look again at Ephesians 4, where the ministry of the evangelist is listed, we note the point of it all in verse 12, *"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ"*. Apart from his soul-winning ministry, the evangelist needs to build the Body of Christ by inspiring and training soul winners and even encouraging new evangelists.

Bibliography

- [1] "Ephesians 4 Expositor's Greek Testament." <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/egt/ephesians/4.htm> (accessed Oct. 02, 2021).
- [2]. A. Burk, "Fathers in the Church by Arthur Burk – Agape Revolution." <https://agape-revolution.com/2012/12/03/fathers-in-the-church-by-arthur-burk/> (accessed Oct. 02, 2021).
- [3]. C. Peasley, "The office and calling of the evangelist - Facilitators Guide," p. 11.

