

Lesson 9

Importance of Prayer in Evangelism

Thesis: This lesson is designed to teach the believer the importance of prayer to the work of evangelizing the lost.

Memory Verses:

† **Matthew 9:37–38 — 37;** *Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;* **38;** *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

⇒ **How important do you believe prayer is to evangelism?**

⇒ **How often do you pray for a lost soul to be saved?**

⇒ **Who are you praying for or could start praying for that needs to be saved?**

⇒ Charles Spurgeon, known as the “Prince of Preachers”, had a great God-given gift of preaching. God used him to shake England with the Gospel in the 19th Century. But Spurgeon knew where the power came from as the following story reveals.

- *“Five young college students were spending a Sunday in London, so they went to hear the famed C.H. Spurgeon preach. While waiting for the doors to open, the students were greeted by a man who asked, “Gentlemen, let me show you around. Would you like to see the heating plant of this church?” They were not particularly interested, for it was a hot day in July. But they didn't want to offend the stranger, so they consented. The young men were taken down a stairway, a door was quietly opened, and their guide whispered, “This is our heating plant.” Surprised, the students saw 700 people bowed in prayer, seeking a blessing on the service that was soon to begin in the auditorium above. Softly closing the door, the gentleman then introduced himself. It was none other than Charles Spurgeon.”*

(Our Daily Bread, April 24.)

- **Charles Spurgeon** – *“I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach.”*

1. Pray for laborers

† **Matthew 9:36–38 — 36;** *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.* **37;** *Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;* **38;** *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.* (Luke 10:1-2; John 4:34-42)

A. When Jesus saw the crowds, how did it affect Him? Jesus saw the lost as a great harvest field ready to be reaped

1) How do you look upon crowds of people today?

2) Do you have compassion or judgment? Do you see lost people deserving God’s judgment or needing God’s salvation? Some Christians have turned the world into the enemy, but they are not the enemy, they are the mission field!

B. What did Jesus say we should do to reach the world? pray God would send laborers into the harvest field.

1) Read Acts 13:1-4, how did prayer play a part in Paul being sent into the mission field? _____

† **Acts 13:1–4 — 1;** *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2; As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3; And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4; So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*

↳ It was during a time of fasting and prayer that the Holy Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas for the ministry

- C. How much have you prayed for laborers to go into the world to preach the Gospel?
- D. How important do you believe your commitment to praying for laborers is to evangelizing your community and ultimately the world?

2. Pray for the Lost

A. Jesus prayed for the Lost – Luke 23:34

† **Luke 23:34 — 34;** *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

- 1) Jesus was being cursed, rejected, hated, and crucified by the lost, and yet how does He respond? _____
- 2) When you face trials by the lost, even perhaps because of your faith, how should you respond? _____

B. Paul prayed for the lost – Romans 10:1, 9:1-3

† **Romans 10:1 — 1;** *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

- 1) How much did Paul want them to be saved according to Romans 9:1-4a? _____

† **Romans 9:1–3 — 1;** *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, 2; That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3; For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

- 2) How does your prayer life reflect your burden for lost souls?

C. The rich man in hell pleaded for the lost – Luke 16:27-28

† **Luke 16:27–28 — 27;** *Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28; For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

D. God's Commands us to pray for the lost - 1 Timothy 2:1-4

† **1 Timothy 2:1–4 — 1;** *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3; For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

- 1) Here Paul is writing to the young preacher Timothy who is pastoring the Church at Ephesus. What does Paul say the Church should do “first of all”, or literally as the “most important of all” thing to do? Pray for all men
- 2) Here Paul lists 4 types of prayers to make for the lost.
 - a) **“Supplications”** is praying for a specific need. What is the need? The condition of those who are lost! It is there need of salvation and believers should always be asking God to meet that need.

- b) **“Prayers”** speaks of general prayers for all kinds of needs.
- c) **“Intercessions”** is praying to God on behalf of someone else. Jesus intercedes to the Father on our behalf (Heb. 7:25). Here Christians are called to pray on behalf of the lost.
 - a. John MacArthur – *“Paul’s desire is for the Ephesian Christians to have compassion for the lost, to understand the depths of their pain and misery, and to come intimately to God pleading for their salvation.”* (The MacArthur Study Bible)
 - b. Lee Thomas - *“All of us who are saved are priests, all of us have the responsibility to intercede for the lost and if we don’t, they will spend forever in a lake of fire.”* (pg. 6, praying effectively for the lost)
- d) **“Giving of thanks”** is praising God through prayer.

3) What is God’s desire in verse 4? For all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth

E. Samuel said it was a sin not to pray for others

† **1 Samuel 12:23 — 23**; *Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:*

3. Pray for boldness - Ephesians 6:18-20

† **Ephesians 6:18–20 — 18**; *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20; For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

- A. What does Paul tell the believers at Ephesus should always be doing? Praying
- B. What does Paul ask them to pray for him about? That he would preach the Gospel with boldness
- C. If Paul needed boldness to share the Gospel, do you think we should pray for boldness?

4. Prayer allows believers to “stand in the gap” for the lost

† **Ezekiel 22:30–31 — 30**; *And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. 31; Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.*

- A. When the nation of Israel was in great sin and God’s judgment was going to come, what did God seek after? A man to stand in the gap; to lead the people to repentance and Gods mercy
- B. Did God find any man who would lead the people to repentance and faith in God? no
- C. In the Old Testament you find both Abraham interceding to God on behalf of the souls of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:23-32), and Moses interceding to God on behalf of the nation of Israel (Exodus 32:8-14). As God’s judgment will come upon every lost soul, are you willing to “stand in the gap” as a messenger of God’s truth to the lost? How can you plead with God for the souls of lost men and women? _____

† Arthur Matthew describes prayer as *“the end of the divine search for a man to stand in the gap and to intercede for a people doomed to destruction by their own sin and headstrong rejection of God’s authority in their natural life.”* (Born for Battle, 104)

† **Psalm 106:19–23 — 19**; *They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. 20; Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. 21; They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; 22; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and*

*terrible things by the Red sea. 23; Therefore he said that he would destroy them, **had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach**, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.*

5. God answers _____ prayer

- † **Jeremiah 33:3 — 3**; *Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.*
- † **John 15:7 — 7**; *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*
- † **John 14:13–14 — 13**; *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14; If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. (1 John 5:14)*
- † **James 4:2 — 2**; *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

A. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) was a famous missionary in China. He was founder of the China Inland Mission which, at his death, included 205 mission stations with over 800 missionaries, and 125,000 Chinese Christians. He spent 51 years in China.

↳ "Eighteen-year-old Hudson Taylor wandered into his father's library and read a gospel tract. He couldn't shake off its message. Finally, falling to his knees, he accepted Christ as his Savior. Later, his mother, who had been away, returned home. When Hudson told her the good news, she said, "I already know. Ten days ago, the very date on which you tell me you read that tract; I spent the entire afternoon in prayer for you until the Lord assured me that my wayward son had been brought into the fold." Our Daily Bread, July 19, 1989

B. John “praying” Hyde – Missionary to India gave his life praying for souls to be saved

↳ “In 1908 he prayed for God to give him a soul every day. That year he won over 400 souls to Christ. The next year he prayed for two souls a day (not just to pray a prayer, but to also be baptized and set apart to Christ); he won over 800 souls to Christ. Then in 1910, he prayed for four souls a day and God granted his request. But during this year as his health was failing, a friend persuaded him to visit a doctor. For us to understand the tremendous toll of travail for souls, let’s listen to what the doctor tells him: *“The heart is in an awful condition. I have never come across such a bad case as this. It has been shifted out of its natural position on the left side to a place over on the right side. Through stress and strain it is in such a bad condition that it will require months and months of strictly quiet life to bring it back again to anything like it’s normal state. What have you been doing with yourself? Unless you change your whole life and give up the strain you will have to pay the supreme penalty within 6 months.”* (Carre, 44).

C. Prior to the Day of Pentecost, what was the early group of believers doing in Acts 1:14?

† **Acts 1:14 — 14**; *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

1) The early Church was constantly praying (Acts 2:42, 3:1, 4:23-30) and as a result they saw great numbers of souls saved!

⇒ How important have you made prayer in reaching the lost?

⇒ How often do you pray for the lost to be saved?

⇒ Will you commit to praying for the laborers? Will you commit to praying for the lost? Will you commit to praying for boldness?

⇒ God has called us to pray for the lost and He responds to prayer. Will you stand in the gap and pray for souls to be saved?

S.D. Gordon - *“I cannot resist the conviction, I greatly dislike to say this, I would much rather not if I regarded either my own feelings or yours. But I cannot resist the conviction that there are people in that lower lost world who are there because someone failed to put his life in touch with God, and pray”* (Gordon, 194-195).