

THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

Paul told Timothy to *“Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry...”* (2 Tim. 4:5). The word *“evangelist”* means *“a messenger of good”* *“Denotes a preacher of the gospel”* *W. E. Vine*. I sometimes think that the work of an evangelist is the most misunderstood work in the church of our Lord. In this article we hope to give you a better understanding of the evangelist and his work.

The work of an evangelist is a work designed and planned by God to be carried on in the kingdom of Christ. God planned to save lost men through the preaching of the gospel. Paul said, *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”* (I Cor. 1:21). Jesus said, *“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mk. 16: 15, 16). I think we can see from these verses that preaching the gospel to the lost is the **most essential work in the world**. It is the only work that a man can do that will reach into eternity and abide throughout the ceaseless ages! Why anyone would want to despise this work and look upon it as not being very important is more than I can understand!

From Satan’s standpoint I can understand why he would defame the work of an evangelist. If he can cause God’s people to look upon this great work as not being very important and make them believe it should be only a part-time job, then he will be able to stop the growth of the kingdom of Christ. Satan rejoices when he can persuade an able young preacher to believe it is more important to become rich in this world’s goods than it is to *“endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ”* (2 Tim. 2:3). Satan (through his agents) says to the young preacher, *“You can make three or four times the money you are now making if you will enter the business world. Don’t let your family suffer”*. What the young preacher needs to realize is that while he is making all that money he is letting souls go to hell that he could be saving! While he is making all that money he is not able to study as he should, thus he is not feeding God’s people the word of God as they should be fed. He should realize that God will take care of him and his family if he is faithful in doing the work of God. He needs to think on the words of David, *“I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”* (Psalms 37:25).

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN EVANGELIST

Someone says, *“I didn’t know that the evangelist had any qualifications”*. Yes, the New Testament lays down many principles of truth that are to govern the lives of men who give their lives to preaching the gospel. A man who is going to preach needs to study these things carefully and prayerfully to see if his life measures up before he sets out to do this great work.

A man who is going to preach the gospel is to **be a Christian in the fullest sense of the word**. He must be an example of the believers (I Tim. 4:12); He must be a man who takes heed unto himself (I Tim. 4: 16; I Cor. 9:27); He must be a man who behaves himself at all times (I Tim. 3:15; I Thess. 2:10); He must strive at all times to flee youthful lusts (2 Tim. 2:22); He must know how to treat the women in the church (treat the older women as mothers and the younger women as sisters, with all purity ó I Tim. 5:2); He must be a man who flees the love of money (I Tim. 6: 6 ó 12; Acts 20:33); And he must be a man

who follows after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, and peace (I Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22).

A man who is going to preach must **be a careful student of the word of God**. He must *give attendance to reading* (I Tim. 4:13; He must study (2 Tim. 2:15); He must meditate (I Tim. 4:15). A man who does not like to study had better find something else to do. This work cannot be done with any kind of success by a man who will not study. It is a shame when a man stays at one place two or three years and has run out of anything to preach ó so he starts his ðre-runsö.

A man who is going to preach must be **“apt to teach”** or **“skilled in teaching”** (2 Tim. 2: 24 ó 25; Acts 20:20; I Tim. 2: 7). A man who has no aptitude to teach had better find him something else to do. Many a man has wanted to preach but has not had ability as a teacher and fails to do very much good because of his inability. Brethren are constantly asking this kind of man to find him some other place to labor. This brings frustration to him and to the local church where he tries to labor. This kind of man would have been much happier working with his hands and doing something else in the kingdom of God.

A man who is going to preach must **be impartial** in his dealings with the brethren (I Tim. 5:21). When a preacher is in the pulpit he must have no friends. He must deal with the sins of each person alike.

A preacher **must not seek the glory of men** in his preaching (I Thess. 2:6). He must at all times seek to please God (Gal. 1:10).

A preacher of the gospel must **be bold** in his preaching (Eph. 6: 18 ó 19). The pulpit is no place for a coward or compromiser. One who preaches boldly will have enemies (Gal. 4:16).

The preacher must **speak with all authority** (Tit. 2:15). That is, he must preach the gospel not as if it were advice or counsel but as it is in truth the requirements of God. Too much preaching today sounds like good advice instead of God's requirements.

ATTITUDES CHRISTIANS MUST HAVE TOWARD THE EVANGELIST

The preacher is to be among Christians *ðwithout fear* (I Cor. 16: 10). The evangelist is to have a friendly reception in the midst of Christians. He has a right to expect kindly cooperation from the people of God. When the preacher is forced to struggle against unfriendly discrimination, jealous opposition and antagonism his success as a preacher is minimized. When the preacher's work is hindered the salvation of men is hindered (I Cor. 1:21). The brethren who hinder his work will someday stand before Christ and give an account of their ungodly deeds (2 Cor. 5:10).

The brethren are to realize that the preacher *ðworketh the work of the Lord* (I Cor. 16:10). This is not the work of man but the work of God (I Cor. 15: 58). This is **the most important work on earth !**

The brethren are not to *ðdespise* the evangelist (I Cor. 16:11). To despise means *ðto set at naught; treat with contempt*. Being guilty of a lack of respect toward a preacher and his work is shabby business for people who call themselves God's people! If the devil can break down respect for the preacher who is

engaged in the work of warning against him, then his work will be much easier. Brother or sister, when you despise a faithful preacher you are doing the work of the devil, and there are too many brethren engaged in the devil's work today!

The man who has forsaken all to give himself to preaching the gospel to the perishing of the earth deserves to be respected and to have his hands held up (Phil. 2:29; I Cor. 16:18). Brother or sister, if you have had the wrong attitude toward the preacher and his work, won't you repent while you have the time and opportunity?

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