

**EVANGELISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT DURING JESUS'S MINISTRY**  
*So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. –Mark 6:12*

**THE POINT:**

The fact that Jesus was the greatest example of one who was sent to share God's redemptive message should motivate us to do the same.

**GOALS:**

- Examine how the genealogy of Jesus is tied to evangelism
- Assess several examples of God's concern over the lostness of Jews and Gentiles
- Study the different ways Jesus expressed the Great Commission

**KEY THOUGHTS:**

- Jesus not only fulfilled the redemptive promises prophesied in the Old Testament, but he also modeled how we should proclaim them to those who do not know God.
- The Gospels provide clear evidence for God's love and care for Jews and Gentiles alike.
- After Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave, he repeatedly told his disciples to evangelize to the world and make disciples out of all nations and peoples.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

Ask students to keep the following questions in mind throughout the lesson...

- What indications do we find in the life of Jesus that display to us God's burden and desire for the Jews and Gentiles to be saved?
- What are some examples of Jesus participating in and training his disciples to do evangelism?
- In Acts 1:8, what areas did Jesus tell his disciples to be His witnesses?

**INTRODUCTION:**

The famous question "What Would Jesus Do? (WWJD)" has been printed on wristbands and shirt for many years now. The problem is that there are many opinions out there about what people think Jesus would do. A better question would be, "What Did Jesus Do? (WDJD)" It is vital to be clear how Jesus specifically showed us and taught us to evangelize based on scripture.

Today we are looking into the New Testament to teach us how Jesus approached evangelism during his ministry. Jesus was the master evangelist, so it is crucial to learn how to imitate the way Jesus did evangelism himself and how he trained his disciples to do it. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul said to *"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."* We should have that same attitude concerning evangelism.

In New Testament times, a disciple would imitate their Rabbi's theology, character, and cause. They were supposed to "copy and paste" their Rabbi's teachings into their own life. Will you follow in the footsteps of Jesus and make his mission your own and present the Gospel to the lost as he did?

**BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY:**

**Watch:** "Follow in the Shadow of the Savior" (3:09)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVwSrJdQpVY>

**Discuss:** If you have ever been on a long hike in the wilderness, you probably discovered that it is intimidating to do it on your own, especially if it is in an unfamiliar place. A guide makes all the difference. Especially a guide that cares deeply for you. In this video, you saw a young child being led through the wilderness by her Father. If she tried to do it on her own, she would never make it. Though challenging at times, the young girl followed in her Father's footsteps, and together they made it to their destination.

Evangelism can be daunting and scary at times. If we go it alone in our way, it will undoubtedly leave us feeling isolated and off the path. Thank God that he has modeled how we are to evangelize and teach others to do the same. We need to follow in the footsteps of his Son Jesus. The road we walk is one Jesus paved ahead of us. Our job is to follow him.

#### **THE LESSON:**

The New Testament starts with a description of evangelism throughout the generations by looking at an important genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17). Through this genealogy, we can see the connection between the Old and New Testaments. It doesn't take long to see familiar characters and how they all point to a grand story of redemption that started back in the book of Genesis.

There were many promises made to Old Testament believers. The most significant promise, the coming Messiah, would not be fulfilled until the New Testament. The genealogy shows a family tree of people who received the love and grace of God in remarkable ways. God didn't cut off the bad branches of the family based on their performance. Many were involved in sexual sin and other types of extreme rebellion. The foreign women included in the genealogy shows that God uses both male and female and that his grace was extended outside the people of Israel. The genealogy shows us that God has always had a heart for evangelism in the Old Testament, but also that he is up to something new in the New Testament.

After the genealogy, Matthew leads into the most important piece of the story so far, the birth of the Messiah, Jesus. His account includes the coming of the Magi after Jesus' birth. Many know them as "wise men" because they were thought to be astrologers and scholars. These men were from a pagan nation, showing that God cares about every people group so much that he allowed non-Jews to be among the first group of people to know and worship Jesus.

Matthew gives another example of God's love for the lost a few chapters later with Jesus' interaction with the Roman centurion (Matthew 8:5-13). The centurion approached Jesus and requested that he heal his servant. Jesus admired his faith and granted his request. Jesus said there was none in all of Israel that had as much faith as that Roman. The reason this story shows God's love for the lost among all nations was because the Jews despised the Romans. This story is one of many where Jesus indicates his concern for all people, not just the Jews. A non-Jew is called a Gentile, which is translated "ethnos" in the Greek language. From this, we get the word "ethnic." Though God indicated his concern for all nations, there is a new expression of his love for the Gentiles.

The Gospels are full of Jesus talking about and participating in evangelism. He said that evangelism was the purpose of why he came into this world (Luke 19:10). A few other notable examples of Jesus engaging in evangelism are the woman at the well (John 4), the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22), and Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21). There are also many accounts of Jesus teaching about the importance of evangelism, such as Matthew 5:15-16, Matthew 9:37-38, and John 14:6. Jesus also sent out his disciples to do evangelism during his ministry. Mark 6:12 says, *"So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent."* See also Matthew 4:19, Matthew 10, Luke 10:1-23. Jesus' master plan for evangelism was to reach far beyond his ministry during his short physical presence on the earth.

After Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave, he gave his followers the Great Commission. It was the same command over and over again. He worded it differently each time but was essentially describing the same thing in each of these four passages.

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

– Matthew 28:18-20

*and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."*

– Luke 24:46-47

*Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.*

*– John 20:21*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

*– Acts 1:8*

The Great Commission set in motion a chain of events that has led to billions of people knowing and receiving the Gospel. That commission was all about evangelism. Jesus showed us what evangelism is, why we should do it, how to do it, and when to do it, which is now! It couldn't be clearer. Jesus has all authority, and he has commanded us to share the Gospel and make disciples of all nations and all peoples. It isn't a suggestion. It is a royal command. It truly fulfills what God had been communicating in the Old Testament and the life of Jesus.

#### **RELEVANCE:**

How does Jesus' ministry in the four Gospels provide the foundation for us to engage in evangelism today?

#### **DISCUSSION:**

*Instruct students to answer the following questions about evangelism in the Old Testament in their groups.*

- What examples do we see in the Gospels of Jesus displaying a burden to show and share the Gospel with Gentiles?
- What are the four main verses found in the Gospels where Jesus gave the Great Commission to his disciples? In what ways are they the same, and in what ways are they different?
- What does each of those verses reveal about the church's responsibility for evangelism/missions?

#### **HOMEWORK:**

"Storying" is a great way to have conversations about the message of the Bible in a way many describe a news event, book, or movie in talk. Using this strategy, you can help someone understand the critical elements of the Bible and explain to them how Jesus is the main point of the whole story.

In your own words, briefly describe how God's mission of evangelism is woven throughout the New Testament during Jesus's ministry in the following three sections.

1. Jesus' birth and life
2. Jesus' death and resurrection
3. Jesus' commission