

**“Expecting Good Results when Sharing Good News”  
Psalm 126:5, 6**

**Big Idea – I must learn to trust the promises of God in giving out God’s good news aka the Gospel.**

Psalm 126:5 Those who sow in tears SHALL reap in joy.

6 He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, SHALL DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

In other words we need to believe that God will honor His Word so that we do not feel like our witnessing/sowing is in vain. Otherwise we will lose heart and quit.

Zig Ziegler might call this "stinkin' thinkin'."

Right perspectives to remember in order to stay positive while I witness:

**1. The providence of God is at work.**

Another way to say it is “God moments” – no coincidences with God.

In nearly every example of conversion found in the Book of Acts, God worked in some way to create the opportunity for the person to hear the gospel. Turn to Acts 8 with me

God sent Philip to Gaza where he would meet the Ethiopian Secretary of the Treasury (Acts 8:5, 26).

The Lord put the terrorist Saul and Ananias together (Acts 9:10-17)

He gave the household of Cornelius a chance to hear the gospel from Peter (Acts 10:5, 6, ).

The evangelization of Europe started with the conversion of Lydia and the Philippian Jailor occurred after the "Macedonian Call" led Paul and his companions in that direction (Acts 16:6-10)

These illustrate a principle that is just as valid for us today. That principle is this:

2 Chronicles 16:9 says the Lord knows the hearts of all men and seeks those who are seeking Him and will make sure that those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" will somehow be "filled" (Matthew 5:6).

This is where the "providence of God" comes in. When the Lord knows there are people who would be receptive to the gospel (like those in Corinth, Ac 18:9-11), He will "open doors" to give those who are seeking the truth the opportunity to be reached by those who are prepared to do the teaching.

It may not happen immediately, but I am persuaded that if there is someone who is "asking, seeking, and knocking" for the truth, the Lord will see to it that at some point in that person's life they will have an opportunity to hear the gospel.

It encourages me to know that we are not alone in our efforts to lead the lost to Christ. God will see that every soul who has an honest, good, and seeking heart will one day come across someone who is prepared to explain the Gospel to him or her.

This explains what it means to be "God's fellow workers"

1 Corinthians 3:9 "For we are God's fellow workers..."

Of course, how useful we can be to the Lord leads us to the second perspective for success in evangelism...

## **2. God "opens doors" for prepared workers.**

The Scriptures often speak of the Lord "opening doors" for His servants who are ready to serve Him.

1 Corinthians 16:8 "But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost.

9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, although there are many who oppose me."

Here Paul wrote about an "open door" of opportunity that prompted him to remain longer at Ephesus.

From the Lord's remarks to the church in Philadelphia, we learn that the Lord opens doors for those people He can use

Revelation 3:8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name."

The implication regarding evangelism is this: If we desire to be used by the Lord in His providence to reach those who are seeking the truth, then we must prepare ourselves to be useful

2 Timothy 2:19 "But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The LORD knows those who are his," and "All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil."

21 If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work."

This principle of preparation applies to both individuals and churches. Individuals must prepare themselves to be able to teach, or to lead souls to those ready to teach. But church congregations must also be ready to assimilate new converts into the family of God where they can be nurtured and protected during a vital stage of their newfound life.

Sadly many congregations do not find "open doors" to reach others because they have not prepared themselves to be a place where "babes in Christ" will be cared for properly. Do we really believe that the Lord through His "providence" would "open doors" for a congregation filled with "carnal Christians" who would only devour the new Christian? I would not be surprised if the Lord often waits a long time before providentially working to see that a truth seeker has an opportunity to

hear the gospel, only if there are people ready to teach and receive him or her into the family of God.

An important part of preparation involves another "perspective"...

### **3. Prayer is the “catalyst” in evangelism.**

If the providence of God is at work and it involves the lives of those who are prepared to be used as well as those who are seeking the truth, it should be easy to see that prayer would play an important role.

Remember Cornelius - it was his prayers that prompted God to take notice (Acts 10:1-4), and it was a man given to prayer that the Lord chose to use in order to reach him (Acts 10:9).

Often I think people feel like much preparation for evangelism is not too different from preparing to make a sales pitch. It is almost as though people think that if you follow the right procedure with anyone, the desired results must necessarily follow.

Often prayer is not often stressed in many books on "how to do evangelism." In contrast, we find Paul teaching the Colossians to pray that God would open a door for the Word

Colossians 4:2 “Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.

3 Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his wonderful plan concerning Christ.”

I like to think of prayer as a "catalyst," one that starts the process of God's providence in bringing together the lost but seeking soul with the prepared and seeking servant of the Lord. When we have prepared ourselves to be useful to the Lord we then should diligently pray "Lord, lead me to some soul today"

Do you have a heart to pray for the lost like Jesus did?

Do you have the passion that inspired John Knox to plead, "Give me Scotland or I die"?

Is your attitude that of George Whitefield, who prayed, "O Lord, give me souls or take my soul"?

Do you, like Henry Martyn, mourn when you see others trapped in false religion and cry out, "I cannot endure existence if Jesus is to be so dishonored"?

God used those faithful men as powerful tools to bring salvation to dying people.

Each of them had a clear and vivid understanding of what is at stake in the gospel--it's an issue of life or death, an eternity in heaven or hell. Do you realize that your unbelieving family members, your co-workers, and your neighbors will spend forever suffering in torment away from the presence of God if they don't embrace Christ? That realization should drive you to your knees to plead, not only with them to believe the gospel, but with God to save their souls.

It is one thing to pray for family and friends, those for whom you have natural affections. But God wants you to pray for all people.

Paul writes, "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Kings and people in authority in Paul's day weren't bound by civil rights and were often unjust, self-serving, and cruel.

Do you pray for the salvation of people like that--those who disagree with you politically, those who advocate ungodly agendas, those who openly embrace sin and reject the Scripture?

The Bible has several examples of radical evangelistic prayer, and for the worst of sinners.

Here are a few examples:

Moses interceded for Israel after catching them in an orgy of idolatry at the foot of Mount Sinai. After he confronted and dealt with their sin, he turned to the Lord and prayed, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if You will, forgive their sin--and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!"

Moses was willing to forfeit his life for his people, even though they were guilty of wicked rebellion!

While being stoned to death, Stephen followed the Lord's example by praying for the salvation of his executioners: "And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them!' And having said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:59-60).

Standing among those who killed Stephen was a young man named Saul of Tarsus. His salvation was an answer to Stephen's prayer.

Years later, the apostle Paul communicated the depth of his concern for his people Israel, and in Romans 9 he sounds very much like Moses:

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. (Romans 9:1-3; 10:1)

God honored those men's prayers for the souls of the lost; He'll honor yours too. Whether friend or foe; whether moral or immoral; whether you know them or not--pray for the lost.

For those God brings your way, open your mouth in love and compassion to tell them the truth.

Warn them of God's judgment for their personal offenses against his holiness, but then tell them the good news.

There is salvation in Jesus Christ from God's eternal wrath if they will only repent and believe. Once you've told them the truth, keep praying for them and trust God for the results.

#### **4. Perseverance is another very important principle.**

Those who persist in sowing the seed eventually bear fruit.

Psalm 126:5 Those who sow in tears SHALL reap in joy.

6 He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, SHALL DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

1. Broken heart – “weeping” compassion
2. Busy feet – “continually goes forth”
3. Bible message – bearing seed for sowing – the Gospel good news
4. Blessed results – doubtless come rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him

2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, we never give up.

4 Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

5 You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said, “Let there be light in the darkness,” has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

8 We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair.

9 We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.

10 Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.

11 Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies.

12 So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.

13 But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the

psalmist had when he said, "I believed in God, so I spoke."

16 That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.

17 For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

18 We set our eyes not on what we see but on what we cannot see. What we see will last only a short time, but what we cannot see will last forever.