

## REACHING HEARTS AND CHANGING LIVES FOR CHRIST

### LESSON 2: MESSAGE

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Believing that the message is ineffective can be discouraging and unmotivating.
  - a) **2 CORINTHIANS 4.13:** *“And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak.”*
  - b) This is in a context of great suffering. Yet Paul continued to preach. (2 Cor. 4.7-12)
  - c) What motivated him to preach a message that was largely rejected? (2 Cor. 4.14)
2. **AMOS 8.11,12:** *“They shall run to and fro seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it.”*
  - a) The biggest hinderance in reaching the lost is a lack of personal Bible study.
  - b) To effectively reach hearts and change lives, we need to emphasize the message.

#### I. EVANGELISM REQUIRES THE RIGHT MESSAGE

- A. The Lord’s church as a whole has gotten away from the Bible.
  1. Preaching has become more about personal stories and current events. (1 Cor. 2.1,2)
  2. Brethren are not reading and studying their Bibles at home. (2 Tim. 2.15)
  3. Many congregations are growing by luring potential members with food and fun.
- B. The central purpose of the church is to preach the gospel.
  1. **EPHESIANS 3.10:** *“the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church”*
  2. **2 TIMOTHY 2.2:** *“commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*
- C. Evangelism is not about winning arguments. It is about winning souls!
  1. There is a time and place to *“contend earnestly for the faith”* (Jude 3,4)
  2. Sometimes brethren engaged in disputes about the Bible. (Acts 6.9,10; 15.2; 18.27,28)
  3. When was the last time you sat down with someone with an open Bible?

#### II. THREE PRINCIPLES TO STAY ON MESSAGE

- A. Defer questions rather than debate.
  1. Why should we not answer questions?
    - a) They are not ready for the answer. (John 16.12)
    - b) They are asking questions for the wrong reason. (Heb. 5.11)
  2. Jesus rarely answered questions and debated with the authorities.
    - a) **LUKE 10.25,26:** *“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*
    - b) **MATTHEW 21.23-27:** *“By what authority are you doing these things”*
- B. Show the Bible rather than tell them about the Bible.
  1. Convert a religious discussion into a Bible study.
    - a) *“That’s a great point. Can I show you what the Bible says?”*
    - b) The power is not in our words, but in His word. (Rom. 1.16)
  2. Jesus frequently took His discussions to the Bible. (Luke 10.25,26)
  3. **PSALM 119.104:** *“Through Your precepts I get understanding”*
- C. Plant the word rather than pick the soil.
  1. We do not have the right to pick and choose who to approach with the gospel. We need to give the gospel a chance to work in their hearts. (Acts 13.46)
  2. The sower scattered seed without regarding the condition of the ground. (Luke 8.5-8)
  3. Who would have thought that Paul was a good prospect? (Acts 9.1,2,11-16,26)
  4. Jesus taught even those who were unreceptive. (Luke 10.25,29)
  5. Put your trust in the power of the gospel. (Rom. 1.16)