



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

THE CONTENT OF THE EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE

Jonah 3:2-4

The Church has been given an evangelistic message. In Jonah's case, he was given a prophetic message of warning and judgment on Nineveh. The whole city repented and turned unto God. Two things account for the city's massive response to Jonah's message. First, Jonah preached unto it the preaching that God asked him to preach (verse 2). If we can find out from the pages of the scriptures the preaching that we have been commanded to preach to our world, the same result will follow. Secondly, Jonah "went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord." If we can go, preach and do everything in our evangelistic outreach according to the word of the Lord, we will experience similar result as Jonah had. In delivering an evangelistic message, three parties are involved: (1), God, the source of the evangelistic message; (2), the lost or sinners, the target or receiver of the evangelistic message; (3), the soulwinner or the evangelist, the channel through which or whom the message is sent.

Three things are important namely (1), faith (2), love and (3), hope. First, we need to have faith in God. If He has sent you to preach the gospel, there is need to believe that He has control and authority over the hearts of men He has sent you to preach. Second, we need to have love toward our audience. This should be evident in our tenderness, tone, approach or manner with which we deliver the message. Thirdly, we should hope for positive response to our message. Don't think that your listeners are beyond conversion. In Jonah's case, although he did not have all the qualities or requirements expected of a preacher, yet God overruled the prevailing circumstance to bring to pass His will for Nineveh. Mistrust and unbelief can affect our message and our ministration if we preach the evangelistic message to sinners in the attitude of Jonah.

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE

Jonah 3:2; 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24; John 3:16; Romans 10:9,10; Ephesians 2:1-10.

The message we present should be simple enough as to make our audience understand what salvation is all about and come to the Lord for it. What is the content of the evangelistic message? How should we preach to sinners? The New Testament gives us a clear answer. We preach Christ unto the sinners. We preach that part of Christ's mission, ministry, message that relates to the forgiveness of their sin and salvation through faith in His atoning blood. As God's saving plan, the gospel revolves around the sacrifice of the Saviour Jesus Christ, the Incarnate, crucified, risen, reigning, returning Lord. Jesus Christ lived a perfect, holy life but He died so that we can be saved. Everything that has to do with the preaching of the gospel revolves around Christ.

When some people go out to preach, they spend all their time painting the picture of the fall and the fault of man. By all means, we need to do that. But then just knowing that does not mean the people we are preaching to have understood the means, the source and the way to salvation. Until we show them the solution to their sins and the way of salvation, we have not really preached the gospel. We can describe their sins. We can paint an awful picture of their sins. We can show them how bad and rotten they are. They can even become sorry for their sins. They can mourn for their sins. They can shed tears. But that cannot save them. Until we mention the love of God, the mercy of God and the grace of God, we have not really presented the total gospel. We don't tell them to turn over a new leaf and do some good works or live a better life. They cannot do that by themselves. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Christ tasted death and paid the penalty for sin for everyone. He was our sin-Bearer on the cross. A sinner therefore can only be saved as he repents of his sin and believes in His atoning death on the cross at Calvary. Proper response to the message of the gospel will bring forgiveness and salvation.

SALVATION THROUGH THE EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE

Jonah 3:10; Romans 8:1, 2; Acts 8:5, 12, 35-39; 17:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5,9; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

The goal of preaching is to see the people come to the Lord, to see them turn away from sin and turn to the Saviour. It is to make them turn away from their darkness and helplessness and turn unto Christ, the Light of the world and the hope of redemption. In the case of the Ninevites, repentance made them to pass from condemnation unto life. Likewise, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. When we accept Christ's atonement and suffering for us, we are forgiven, accepted, justified and adopted into the family of God. Our sins are forgiven. We have peace with God. Christ comes to live in our heart, changing us inwardly by His very presence and power. He gives us grace to live in newness of life. When we faithfully present Christ as the only way of salvation, then sinners are able to believe in Him and have life eternal. We must not just talk about their sins. We must point sinners to the hope they have in God. Like Philip, we must "preach Christ" unto them. Whatever text we choose must be approached from the angle of Jesus being the solution to the problem of sin, the only Son of God that has come to make a final sacrifice for our sins. Salvation is through the preaching of the evangelistic message. When we preach the evangelistic message, we must make sure that everything centres on the Lord Jesus Christ. We must make sure that we do not only reflect the fact that He came, He was born of virgin Mary and that He lived a sinless life. But more importantly, that He is the One approved to be the Saviour of the world. Proper presentation of the gospel should lead sinners to have faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross. As evidence that they have come into Christ, there is a change, a transformation of life. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

THE SUMMARY OF THE EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE

Jonah 3:4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:15, 16; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Ephesians 2:8.

Salvation is a gift. It is not something we work or labour for. Christ has accomplished it on the cross at Calvary. All that we need is to receive and accept it by faith. We preach:

- . Not acceptance of Christianity as religion but the atonement of Christ for sinners.
- . Not baptism as a means of salvation but the new birth through repentance and faith in Christ.
- . Not conformity to Christian conduct but conversion to Christ by the power of Christ.
- . Not denominations in Christendom but the death of Christ for our salvation.
- . Not experience but the evangel.
- . Not the fault, fall and failure of man but faith in Christ.
- . Not good works but the gospel of grace; not a message of two letters "do" but of four letters "done"; not try but trust, not attempt but accept.
- . Not happiness in life but hope in Christ; that without Christ we are helpless and hopeless and when we come into Christ we have holiness through Christ.
- . Not the ideas and ideologies of men but the incarnation of Christ.
- . Not judgment but justification by faith in Christ.
- . Not knowledge of scriptures but knowledge of the Saviour and of salvation through Him.
- . Not liberty in carnality but the Lordship of Christ.
- . Not modernity but the Messiah as the Mediator.
- . Not the need of turning over a new leaf but the necessity of accepting Christ as Saviour.
- . Not the opinions of men concerning Christ but the offering of Christ once and for all.
- . Not prosperity but pardon through Christ and peace with God.
- . Not resolutions but righteousness through redemption in Christ.
- . Not success in life but salvation and eternal life. Not the theology of liberalism but the truth of life.
- . Not uniformity with the church but union and unity with Christ.
- . Not visions and revelations but the victory of Christ and His vicarious suffering for us.
- . Not the words of men but the Word of God.

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