

Four Lies Of Evangelism

Introduction. Jesus stated that the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9). The devil has always been a liar, slanderer, and accuser of Christians — from the beginning when he lied to Eve, to his constant work against Christians now.

When it comes to the kingdom, Satan wants to see it destroyed. He will try his best to get Christians to quit working for the Almighty God. The devil has many lies, but some of the most dangerous ones are those relating to evangelism.

I. "Times Have Changed"

- A. Perhaps this is Satan's most used and most believable lie. This lie has caused many people to give up planting the seed in men's hearts.
 - 1. Some brethren think back to the "good old days" to when "times were better." They will say, "We have too much to compete with now — TV, sports, work, school, and family events." "People are just busier than they have ever been," we are told.
 - 2. But when has there ever been a time that leisure, entertainment, recreation, family, work, and education have never existed?
- B. One problem that has not changed is sin. Romans 1:26-32 almost sounds as if we turned on the evening news in 21st century America! Are times really all that different? Sin is still prevalent in the lives of mankind and it will continue to condemn people eternally (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8).
- C. The reality is that Christians have changed. Too many have been swept away by TV, sports, work, school, and family. Zeal that once ignited churches to influence a community has been extinguished (Acts 8:4; 13:1-2). The message of change and repentance still needs to be taken to the lost world.

II. "Gospel Meetings Will Not Work"

- A. There is a growing attitude that gospel meetings are antiquated and ineffective. Often in times of despair, brethren will think back to the days when people would attend gospel meetings, and several baptisms would occur as a result.
- B. A big indication that this is a lie of the devil is that it uses his favorite three letter word: "not." Just as the devil told Eve a lie and added the word "not" to tempt her to sin (Genesis 3:4), the devil wants us to accept this lie. If you take out the word "not," then the truth is revealed: gospel meetings will work!
- C. Gospel meetings remain a wonderful time to teach someone (John 1:44-45). It is through the instruction from God's word that faith is

formed in the hearts of sinners (Romans 10:17). Do not believe Satan's lie and do not lose confidence in preaching. Gospel meetings can still be effective today, but we need Christians to make a commitment to this opportunity. The problem is not in the meetings — the problem may lie in us and our attitude.

III. "They Will Never Obey The Gospel"

- A. When we meet people who are not Christians we quickly realize just how unsatisfied their lives are without the blessing of salvation. Sometimes people's lives are in such a bad state that we begin to think they would never take the time to listen to us, much less actually repent and obey.
- B. But the scriptures are full of examples of people who were in dire situations who repented of sin.
 - 1. The woman at the well had been married a number of times, yet she believed Christ (John 4:16-18, 28-30).
 - 2. Cornelius was a centurion and a Gentile, yet he obeyed the gospel of Christ (Acts 10:47-48).
 - 3. One of the greatest antagonists against the church was Paul (1 Timothy 1:13). Yet, even he changed his life!
- C. Imagine the great effect of just these examples. The woman at the well went and immediately told others of her conversation with Christ. Cornelius' household also was converted to the Lord. The effect the apostle Paul had in his preaching and travels phenomenally changed the early church.
- D. Maybe if we speak to that person we are just so certain "will never obey the gospel," we would be surprised (Romans 1:16). If that person did obey the gospel, then just imagine how zealous might they be to teach others (Mark 5:19).

IV. "You Must Be Their Friend First"

- A. This is a lie that has existed for a long time. "Friendship evangelism" suggests that a person will not be interested in the gospel until you make a personal connection with them.
 - 1. The conversion of the Thessalonians was due to the power of the gospel, not the power of friendship, which grabbed their attention and saved their souls (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Paul was only in Thessalonica for a short time. While there, Paul filled his time with teaching about Christ, sin, and salvation, not "cultivating friendships" so people could be reached with the gospel.
 - 2. Paul also went to Athens, noting their idolatry, and began preaching a message of repentance (Acts 17:16-30). Paul did not attend every assembly for an idol. Neither do we have to attend any

denominational meetings to try and get others to come to our assemblies. Paul did not befriend the religious leaders in Athens to be accepted in the community. He proclaimed the message and was successful (Acts 17:34).

- B. I am not suggesting being unfriendly or a poor neighbor. I am not against friendships, but they are not a prerequisite to saving people. The gospel convicts the lost when their hearts are willing to believe it.
- C. The New Testament will interest those with good and honest hearts (Luke 8:15). We should give up on any man-made tactic to try to disguise the preaching of the gospel. Trust its power to save!

Conclusion. We can become effective teachers in the service of the kingdom once we are no longer handicapped by these lies. Just think about how effective the church might be in Lufkin if we all commit ourselves to zealous teaching!