

“What must I do to be saved?” – What do you say?

“Killing people off” (Rom 7:9-10)

An overlooked aspect of evangelism?

Banging my head against the wall...

The assuming: God-believing/open, praying, perhaps church background, complacent, unregenerate

- Who are the ‘assuming’ in your outreach?
- How much of London do you think are avowedly atheist; and how much are ‘assuming’?

Our Assumptions

- Millions in London are desperately wrong (Eph 2:3)
- We are seeking conversions (Matt. 28:19) as the Holy Spirit works through us (John 3, 1 Pet. 1:23) by preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sin (Luke 24:47)
- We should seek to grow in our evangelism (Prov. 11:30, 1 Tim. 4:15)

“Killing people off”

An often overlooked aspect of evangelism (?) - people need to be driven towards repentance.

- Awareness of God’s glory, sin, helplessness, and lostness from God is often (/usually?) the stepping stone to repentance and faith in Jesus

“In the beginning, the preacher’s business is not to convert men, but the very reverse. It is idle to attempt to heal those who are not wounded, to attempt to clothe those who have never been stripped, and to make those rich who have never realised their poverty.”

Charles Spurgeon

“It is made perfectly clear in the pages of the New Testament that no man can be saved until, at some time or another, he has felt desperate about himself... The way to obtain salvation is to seek it, and what makes one seek for it is that one realises one’s need of it. That is, in reality, the great theme of the New Testament.”

Martin Lloyd-Jones

Jesus’ loving evangelism

Mark 10:13-27

- How do people enter the kingdom of heaven? (v15)
- What are, or is behind, the man’s assumptions? (v17-18, v20)
- What is Jesus’ attitude to him, and how does Jesus evangelise him? (V21)
- What is the man’s response to Jesus’ loving evangelism? (v22)

“Present-day preaching does not even annoy men, but leaves them precisely where they were, without a ruffle or the slightest disturbance... The church is regarded as a sort of dispensary where drugs and soothing mixtures are distributed and in which everyone should be eased and comforted. And the one theme of the church must be “the love of God” ... If anyone knew the love of God, if ever the love of God was understood by anyone, it was Jesus Christ. Yet what was the effect He produced on his congregations? Did all go home from the service smiling and happy, and feeling very self-satisfied and complacent? Was His perfect ministry one in which no one was offended and at which no one took umbrage?”

Martin Lloyd-Jones

Evangelism in Acts - *tell 'em something they don't know!*

Discuss:

What do the 'assuming' but unregenerate in your outreach **rightly** assume about...

- God – His works, character and attributes
- Prayer
- Ourselves

- **Acts 2:14-41 (or 2:22-24, 2:36-38)**
 - What could Peter have affirmed about the beliefs of these Jews? (cf. 2:5)
 - Instead – what's the **driving force** of his message? What is the result for his hearers?

- **Acts 3:12-23**
 - What could Peter have affirmed that they get right about their bible?
 - But what's the **driving force** of what Peter wants them to know and do?

- **Acts 17:22-31**
 - What are the Athenian audience like in their beliefs? What could have been affirmed?
 - What is the **driving force** of what Paul wants them to know and do?

- See also Acts 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 14, 24
- NB this isn't every evangelistic opportunity in Acts! Ethiopian Eunuch, ch8; Cornelius, ch10; Lydia, ch16; jailer, ch16

'Tell 'em something they don't know!' Discussion:

- What sort of things might we want to teach that people in our ministries don't know/aren't already in on?
- What might the **driving forces** of our teachings be?

So... How does the bible lovingly 'kill people off'?

Or – how does God in his word lovingly pull the rug of complacent faulty assumptions from under 'the assuming's feet, that they might turn and come like little children to Jesus as gracious Saviour?

1. Show the 'assuming' the law, that they might know their sin

Romans 7:6-8 or Luke 10:25-37

- What did the self-righteous previously assume? How was their rug pulled away?

- Where do people you minister to assume they're good enough?
- How could you draw them in to show God's standards, that they've fallen short of?

"What Paul is saying here [in Romans 7] is, "I did not know I was a sinner; I thought I would come out all right, because I was keeping these outward things and was getting along all right in comparison with other people." ... When he opened the 10 Commandments and read that the last commandment was not to covet, he saw he was a sinner. When did this take place? He does not tell us, but personally I feel that God was inwardly working in him and making him feel this lack even before the experience on the Damascus road - that already he had seen he was a sinner and had been troubled in the light of the Tenth Commandment - and then Christ spoke to him."
Francis Schaefer, 'True Spirituality'

'Hearers must be won by entering into the chambers of their conscience and telling them of that sin which is their ruin and of that Saviour who can alone hush the alarms of nature.'

Thomas Chalmers

2. Show the 'assuming' their lostness and helplessness, and need for God's miraculous grace?

John 3:1-3 or John 8:31-36

- What do Jesus' audience get right? But... How does he pull the rug / 'kill them off'?
 - To what extent do people you're doing outreach to know such truths as John 3 and 8?
 - What might showing this look like for us?

3. Show the 'assuming' the reality of the coming judgement

Luke 13:1-5 (cf. John 5:14)

- What are the assumptions of the questioners? What is the 'driving force' of Jesus' message?
 - To what extent is this ever the 'driving force' of our evangelism?

4. Surprise the 'assuming' with the radical cost

Luke 9:57-62 or 14:25-33

- How does Jesus shock those professing to be on his side?
 - Do you encounter much 'easy-believism'?
 - What might Jesus' approach look like in our encounters with the 'assuming'?

5. Show 'the assuming' that a huge, specific (non-vague!) life change is needed

Luke 3:7-14

- How are John's hearers complacent? How does John seek their good?
 - What are obvious areas where the 'assuming' in your outreach might not be showing fruit? What might JtB say to them?
 - How could we go **wrongly** about this? How could we do it rightly?

6. Surprise the 'assuming' with how they might be 'out'

Luke 18:9-15, Luke 13:22-30, Luke 12:13-21, Luke 7:36-50 (also John 3:1-3)

- How is the 'assuming' shown they are actually the ones on the outside here?
- Why might parables or stories be better at doing this? (cf. 2 Samuel 12:1-7a)
 - What might this look like in your outreach? How could you use parable or story?

7. **Do** show the lavish, free, gracious welcome and salvation of Jesus!

With all this 'harder stuff' we've seen in Jesus' evangelism – what is his heart for people?

- Luke 13:34, Mark 10:21, Matthew 12:20
- What might this look like, as we evangelise the 'assuming'?

Back and discuss

Tips and pointers

- Personal e.g.'s
- Learn 'shock' sentences or questions
- Learn 'go-to' bible stories
 - Can you tell Nicodemus and Jesus, John 3? Pharisee and Tax-collector, Luke 18?

Questions

'The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off captivity. The prophecies they gave you were false and misleading.'

Jeremiah 2:14

'There is a great deal of difference between making known the gospel to people who have never heard of Christ and preaching that same gospel to those whose parents or grandparents were true members of the church. The responsibility of the latter group is greater and the word can therefore be brought with greater claim and power. They may be addressed on the basis of the covenant and admonished to return to God, on whom they have turned their backs. One may note that Paul, in his preaching to the heathen, for example, in Athens, is milder, more entreating, and more sympathetic than when he confronts the children of the covenant'

J.H. Bavinck

"Men will never come to Jesus, and stay with Jesus, and live for Jesus, unless they really know why they are to come, and what is their need. Those whom the Spirit draws to Jesus are those whom the Spirit has convinced of sin. Without thorough conviction of sin, men may seem to come to Jesus and follow him for a season; but they will soon fall away and return to the world."

J.C. Ryle

"We would never have felt His love if we had not felt His anger. We laid hold on His mercy because of necessity. No soul will accept Christ Jesus until it must. It is not driven to faith until it is driven to self-despair. God's angry face makes Christ's loving face dear to us; we would never look at the Christ of God, unless first of all the God of Christ had looked at us through the tempest, and made us afraid! "I will praise You, that You did let me feel Your anger, in order that I might be driven to discover how that anger could be turned away."

Charles Spurgeon

'The first need in evangelistic preaching is to awaken conscience so that it 'bites' and 'sendeth thee to seek a remedy''

Robert Bruce