

Gospel Bridges & Access

Romans 15:17-24

How did Paul get to a point where he could say that he no longer had any room for work in those regions?

- Paul understood his **IDENTITY** in the task.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 – The believer’s identity as a “new creation in Christ” cannot be separated from our identity as an “ambassador on Christ’s behalf”.
- Paul understood the **URGENCY** of the task.
 - Romans 1:16 – The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes it.
 - Since the gospel is this important, then he did everything in his power to prioritize sharing it.
- Paul understood that **EQUIPPING & EMPOWERING OTHERS** was required.
 - 2 Tim. 2:2, what you heard from me, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
 - Paul -> Timothy -> Others -> Others still
 - Whether you read 2 Timothy 2:2 or Matthew 28:18-20 there is a model that discipleship should be multiplicative. Disciples of Jesus should make disciples of Jesus.

Whose burden should it be to cross the bridge of access to the gospel?

- The lost or the church?

3 Types of Gospel Access:

1. **No access to the gospel**
2. **Access to the gospel**
3. **Meaningful access to the gospel**

No access to the gospel means that there are no healthy churches in an area and even if a lost person walked through the doors, they would not hear the gospel preached.

Access to the gospel means that there is at least one church in an area, where, if a lost person were to come to service on a Sunday, they will hear the gospel clearly proclaimed.

The burden to cross the bridge of gospel access is on the lost person.

Meaningful access to the gospel means that there is a church in the area that not only preaches the gospel from the pulpit, but the people bring the gospel with them into their towns, neighborhoods and workplaces.

The burden to cross the bridge of gospel access is on the church.

Scripture models disciples (the Church) taking on the burden to cross the bridge of access to the gospel:

- Luke 10 – Disciples sent: Enter towns & houses, offering peace & help, proclaiming the kingdom of God.
- Acts 16 – outside the city, by the river, in a jail cell.
- Acts 17 – Paul proclaims in the synagogue & at the Areopagus in Athens.
- Acts 18 – Paul reasoned in the synagogue and then went next door in Corinth.
- Acts 19 – Paul reasoned in the synagogue and taught in a school in Ephesus.

2 Entry Tools that Help Bridge to the Gospel:

- Care Through Prayer
- One Question Survey

Two Methods Entry for Engaging in Gospel Conversations

Care Through Prayer – Zeth Hill, London, UK

Setting: Door to Door

The world that we live in is completely broken and because we know that we also know that people are hurting. One engagement strategy we use to meet people where they are and to combat that feeling of brokenness and hurt is by caring for people through offering to listen and to pray for them. We believe that prayer is a powerful tool we can use to start conversations with people and to go deep with them quickly. Below is an example of a typical “script” we might use:

Hello, my name is Zeth, and this is my friend Rob. We are out caring for our community today with our local church by asking people if there are any ways we can pray for them. Is there any way we could pray for you or your household today?

If people say yes, then we listen to their requests and then tell them that we would like to pray right then and there for their needs, and we pray. After we’ve prayed, we may ask a follow up question, like, “Is prayer an important part of your life?” or, “Would you consider that you’re currently near or far from God?” However, if someone says they do not need prayer, then we will move directly to a question to try to keep the conversation going. We will ask, “Oh, is prayer not an important part of your life?” Or “Would you consider yourself to be living far from God at this point in your life?”

Finally, in either case, we will ask a very directed question to have the opportunity to share the gospel. We could ask, “Could I share with you how I drew near to God in my life?” Or we could ask, “Could I share how the Bible says anyone can draw near to God?” Either way, the aim is to have the opportunity to share our personal testimony or to share God’s plan for salvation.

One Question Survey – Drew Moss, London, UK

Setting: Street, Parks, Door to Door

By and large, the hardest part of sharing the gospel is getting into conversations that lead to the gospel. We may start conversations about the weather, dogs, or music, but then we try to shift to spirituality, it can seem less than caring and even not genuine. We have seen that being upfront and asking simple but direct questions that are spiritual in nature are good avenues for getting into a conversation about the gospel.

Below is one of five survey questions or statements, with the follow up questions we use, that we have had success in getting into meaningful gospel conversations. The key to any of these conversations is to ask the questions, listen, respond appropriately and GENUINELY care as you step the conversation toward the gospel.

Hope is powerful. Agree/Disagree

- Why do you agree/disagree with that?
- Have you ever put your hope in something that let you down?
- Can I share something I put my hope in that has never failed me?
- Share the Gospel

Using this method, we typically have between a 70-80% rate of engagement vs. having the opportunity to share the gospel and giving them a chance to respond. In other words, typically if 20 people answer the survey question, we have averaged getting to share with 15 of them.