

Excuses

Ryan Goodwin

Jesus put it best when commenting on the spiritual condition of the world, saying, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few”* (Matthew 9:37). The issue with evangelism will never be about opportunity or need – rather, it is the willingness of workers to go out into the field and make a dent in the job at hand. While most Christians acknowledge the *need* for evangelism, a plethora of excuses often get in the way. Let’s consider a few of them.

“I’m just too afraid”

In some ways, this is a legitimate concern – approaching people with the Gospel is a very stressful activity for some, especially those who are younger in the faith and might not have easy access to quick answers. But fear should not stop us, no matter how paralyzing we might think it is. Just ignore the possibility that somebody might say “no” because they are not rejecting you. You are not the one who needs to feel frustrated when nobody listens to the Gospel. You are not the one being offended. It is God. People reject the Bible, not the people offering it, unless you give them a reason to reject you (rudeness, haughtiness, impatience, etc.). We need to consider some of the examples of rejection in the Bible and realize that we are in good company when unbelievers turn us away.

- Paul was rejected to the point of being stoned in Acts 14:19. Surely none of us has ever been stoned in somebody’s front yard!
- Jesus Christ Himself was rejected by his own friends in Nazareth (Luke 4:28-31).
- It must have been terribly discouraging for Paul to work with Felix for two years and make little progress (Acts 24:24-27).
- The disciples were warned of rejection (Matthew 10:14, 22-23), as if that is just a part of being a believer.
- We are not failures when we teach the Gospel – rather, it is a victory against Satan every time we speak a word on God’s behalf, regardless of what the outcome is.
- You do not know if somebody will accept the Gospel or not, so do not decide for them. What a shame that so many Christians let their fragile egos be the reason they refuse to go out and get their hands dirty with the work of the Gospel!

“Sorry, too busy”

If we feel like we have too much going on in our lives to preach the Gospel, then perhaps it should be secular activities that are sacrificed, not God. Missing worship, skipping Bible class, never attending house singings, and being too busy for personal work every now and then are all shameful. Even valid reasons for our absence, such as poor health, can become opportunities to serve in some way (that hospital staff member needs the gospel, too), so we need to be careful about where we are placing God in our

list of priorities. After all, He puts us first in His work (John 3:16), so why can we not do the same? *“But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...”* (Matthew 6:33).

“I don’t know anybody who is interested”

Maybe that is only because many of us do not even try to offer the Gospel to those we know. Do not forget what Christ states, *“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest”* (John 4:35). All we need to do is lift up our eyes and see a world that is lost. The opportunities for evangelism are abundant, if we just show a willingness to lift up rocks every now and then and look.

“People these days just don’t want the Gospel”

This argument is assuming that the needs of mankind have changed somehow since the first century when Christ commanded His followers to *“Go into all the world”* with the Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). It does not matter if our society rejects the Gospel, because an unbeliever’s response does not change the fact that we must preach. Why does it matter if our postmodern world, in general, has failed to live by the Bible? We are commanded to teach, and let God do the rest. If we fail to teach, then the souls of every person we ignore will be held to our account (Ezekiel 3:18).

Notice the parable of the soil in Luke 8:5-15. The one who sows does not judge the soil upon which he throws the seed. He offers the seed to everybody, without deciding for them what they will do. In the same way, have you just unilaterally made the decision over salvation for everybody in the world?