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TEACHING THE MEMBERS OF TWELVE OAKS BAPTIST
CHURCH IN PADUCAH, KENTUCKY, TO DEPEND ON
THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH PRAYER
FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

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To my wife, Lisa.

Apart from your enduring love and encouragement I could not have completed this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose	1
Goals	1
Context	2
Rationale	4
Definitions and Limitations	5
Research Methodology	6
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF DEPENDENCE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH PRAYER FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM	8
Ezekiel 36:22-27	8
John 6:61-65	13
Second Corinthians 4:1-6	16
First Timothy 2:1-8	21
Acts 4:23-31	27
Conclusion	32
3. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL BASIS FOR AN EMPHASIS OF DEPENDENCE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH PRAYER AND ITS EFFECTS ON EVANGELISM	34
Theological Basis	34
The Necessity of Dependence on the Holy Spirit through Prayer	40

Chapter	Page
The Importance of Prayer for Effective Evangelism	53
Conclusion	57
4. PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT	59
Preparation: Weeks 1 and 2	59
Preaching the Series: Weeks 3-8	61
Evaluation: Weeks 9-10	74
Conclusion	74
5. PROJECT EVALUATION	75
Evaluation of the Purpose and Goals of the Project	75
Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project	82
What I Would Do Differently	85
Theological Reflections	87
Personal Reflections	89
Conclusion	91
Appendix	
1. PRAYER AND EVANGELISM ASSESSMENT SURVEY	92
2. SERMON SERIES EVALUATION	96
BIBLIOGRAPHY	97

PREFACE

This project was long overdue, and I am thankful to all those who believed in me and encouraged me along the way. It is true that many things that we accomplish in life are due to hard work and effort, but they still could not be done without the people who surround us and help along the way

I would like to begin by thanking my church, Twelve Oaks Baptist Church. I came into this church with them accepting my need to complete this project and encouraging me to do so. They have been patient with me during the times that I needed to get away and work. They were also patient when it took a while to get it done.

It is also important that I acknowledge Dr. Adam Greenway. He started out as a professor who was teaching and leading my cohort, but he ended up a friend. Dr. Greenway never failed to ask me two things: He asked about how my wife, Lisa, was doing, and he asked me how my project was coming. Each time he did so was terrifying, but it was also encouraging. I did not always like the answer I had to his second question, but he patiently spurred me on to continue and finish.

Dr. Russell Fuller has also been a constant encouragement to me as my adviser. There were times when I was completely overwhelmed with the work that would lie ahead. In those times, Dr. Fuller reoriented me to the work that was due and showed me how it was completely doable. More than just an encourager, he always reminded me that I could do this if I would simply put on the “full-court press.”

I would like to thank my God, who is the reason for my work, my hope, and my salvation.

Last I want to thank my family. Our sons, Fletcher, Parker, and Jacob, always believed in me. They watched me struggle to complete my work, and they kept life fun

and easy while I did it. Our boys have been a great source of inspiration, but the one who was the greatest encouragement and inspiration was my wife, Lisa. She pushed me when I did not think I had anything left to give. She told me she loved me when I thought I was not going to make it. She is the reason I could never quit. My greatest love and gratitude, aside from my love for Christ, is for you, Lisa.

Brandt Lyon

Paducah, Kentucky

December 2017

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to teach the members of Twelve Oaks Baptist Church in Paducah, Kentucky, to depend on the Holy Spirit through prayer for evangelism.

Goals

Three goals guided the implementation and assessment of this project. The first goal was to assess the understanding of the need for dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism within the membership of the church. This goal was measured through the use of a survey designed to assess the understanding and frequency of evangelistic prayer in the personal lives of fifty members. It also assessed the social proximity of those for whom they pray. This survey aided in understanding whether the evangelistic prayers were for children and close family members or a practice that involved others within their work and social circles. The goal was considered successfully met when fifty church members completed the survey and the results were analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the use of evangelistic prayer among Twelve Oaks Baptist Church members.

The second goal was to develop a six-week sermon series to teach about the necessity and implementation of dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism. This goal was accomplished by studying the relevant biblical passages and contemporary writing about evangelistic prayer and producing a sermon series on the subject. It was measured by an assessment of spiritually mature leaders in the church. This assessment was done by the use of a rubric given to the leaders by which they evaluated

the study. The goal was accomplished when the study was evaluated by the leaders and at least 70 percent of the assessments were deemed satisfactory or above.

The third goal was to preach the six-week sermon series on the subject of dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism. The series helped people to see their dependence on the Holy Spirit due to the integral part that He plays in effective evangelistic efforts and the importance of prayer in their evangelistic strategy. I measured the goal by the use of a survey at the conclusion to determine the effectiveness of the series as evaluated by the participants. The goal was met when 70 percent of the participants or more evaluated the sermon series as acceptable.

Context

Twelve Oaks Baptist Church maintains a very strong presence within the community and is known as a friendly and loving church. Significant growth has occurred over the past twelve years since moving to a more visible location within the city of Paducah. While the annual church profile shows a significant number of baptisms during that time period, there seems to be very little lay evangelism or concern for the lost within the laity. Most of the additions to the fellowship have been from transfer growth, not evangelistic growth. Most of the evangelistic growth that has occurred over the past several years at Twelve Oaks has been through the ministerial staff.

Since the beginning of my ministry at the church in March 2012, the prayer list during the Wednesday night meeting has remained virtually unchanged. The list is comprised primarily of names of church members along with friends and loved ones of members with health issues. Two evangelistic items that have been on the list for several years are for “the family members of” a particular person in the church and “the lost and our relationship with them.” Other than this prayer list, the church has only a small amount of emphasis on prayer for, and very little concern for, the lost in the community. The prayer meeting generally opens with a quick time of praise reports and prayer requests. Since the

beginning of my ministry very few people have requested prayer for the lost, and there has rarely been a praise report brought about by evangelistic encounter.

One eye-opening example of the attitude for the lost in the church came in the fall of 2012. The teacher of one Sunday school class was looking for a study that would allow the class a little more depth in study. I suggested that they study “The Way of the Master” evangelistic training.¹ The class, which had previously averaged 30 to 40 people, quickly plummeted to an average of 10 or less in attendance. The drop in attendance coincided with what seemed to be a fear of evangelistic training stemming from a lack of concern for the lost.

The church has a weekly visitation program, which serves to make contact with recent visitors to the church. The visitation program has little to no evangelistic emphasis except for an occasional prayer for the lost before leaving the church. Even during this prayer, there is no mention of specific people, just a general request to be used in evangelism. The church also has no intentional evangelistic training program to teach members how to share the gospel.

Twelve Oaks is a very stable, independent group of Christians who tend to see ministry through the lens of their own abilities rather than what God can do through them. The church is primarily upper-middle class. In 2002, the church took out a loan of just over one million dollars to build the present structure. This loan was paid off by 2007. Another loan of 1.6 million dollars was secured in 2010 for the building of a family life center. This loan was completely paid off by November of 2013. The church has a very strong leadership base who has worked very hard over the past ten years to bring the church from a low average attendance of 120 to the present average attendance of approximately 350.

¹Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron, *The Way of the Master Basic Training Course* (Bartlesville, OK: Genesis, 2006).

While the members will attribute the growth to the work of the Holy Spirit, they also have a great deal of pride in their accomplishments. There is also a hesitancy to step out on faith in financial matters and areas outside their comfort zone. They seem to see evangelism in the same light. Most concentrate heavily on what can be measured in a concrete way; getting people through the door with less emphasis on trusting the Holy Spirit to do the work of salvation.

On the positive side, the church does believe in the inerrancy and the authority of the Bible. They believe in the power of the Holy Spirit in all points of ministry and prayer has been emphasized in their personal lives. They believe themselves to be gospel oriented, despite the lack of intentional effort in this area. The teaching of evangelistic prayer in the church will be met favorably, and it will be welcomed in the life of the church. Twelve Oaks is in a good position to emphasize the need for evangelism and teaching the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelistic efforts.

This project was an effort to teach the congregation to depend upon the Holy Spirit in evangelism and place less emphasis on their own efforts of church growth.

Rationale

Twelve Oaks Baptist Church had a need to teach that true evangelism does not happen in the power of the evangelist, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. It was necessary to produce a sermon series to help clarify this point. This series taught the biblical and theological foundations of dependence of the Holy Spirit through prayer for evangelism.

Several key benefits came about through this project. First, this project led to an increased understanding and awareness of how the Holy Spirit works through the evangelistic efforts of the believer. It led the evangelist to understand that it is not through the person's efforts that a lost person is saved, but through the work of the Holy Spirit. Second, the congregants involved in the project have come away with a deeper understanding of the biblical texts about evangelism and the Holy Spirit's work in it. Third, the congregants are more discerning about the lost around them and more aware of

their need to share the hope of the gospel with others. Fourth, the church will be more inclined to implement intentional prayer strategies in order to be more effective in carrying out the great commission. This project has ultimately led Twelve Oaks to a more solid spiritual foundation in evangelism.

Definitions and Limitations

Definitions

Evangelism. The term in its most basic form comes from the Greek word, εὐαγγέλιον, which means “good news.”² Evangelism itself is not the form or methodology of sharing faith, nor is it the intended result. Evangelism is simply the proclamation of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. It is based on faith in Jesus Christ who died for sins, offers forgiveness to sinners by his grace, and gives his Holy Spirit, who liberates the sinner from sin.³

Prayer. J. I. Packer explains prayer:

This is the fundamental philosophy of Christian prayer. The prayer of a Christian is not an attempt to force God’s hand, but a humble acknowledgement of helplessness and dependence. When we are on our knees, we know that it is not we who control the world; it is not in our power, therefore, to supply our needs by our own independent efforts; every good thing that we desire for ourselves and for others must be sought from God, and will come, if it comes at all, as a gift from His hands.⁴

It is the hope of the evangelist that God will work in the heart of those with whom he or she shares. In reference to evangelism, the evangelist should pray for the lost, that God will do a divine work within the unbeliever to bring them to salvation.

²W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 275.

³D. J. Tidball, “Evangelism,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson, J. I. Packer, and David F. Wright (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 241.

⁴J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1961), 11.

Prayers are not nullified by God's sovereignty, but rather prayer acknowledges God's sovereignty over the lost and His power to redeem.⁵

Limitations

The primary limitation of this project was the further implementation necessary to continue the work in the church. It would be possible to implement a fourth goal in the project that would involve implementation, but the project is limited to ten weeks.

Delimitations

The primary delimitation of the project was the sample size. The future application of the project will involve a much larger sample of the congregation than was allowable in this context. For the purpose of this project, the number of those involved was limited to fifty for the initial assessment of the congregation's understanding of the need for dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism.

Research Methodology

The primary purpose of this project was to teach the necessity of dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism. The project taught church members the biblical and theological foundations and implementation of prayer as it relates to evangelism. I sought the participation of twenty to thirty members of the church. I included at least five spiritually mature leaders, who were either deacons or Sunday school teachers, in order to evaluate the sermon series for effectiveness.

The first goal was to assess the members' understanding of prayer as it relates to evangelism. This assessment was achieved through a survey. The survey included questions such as how often the person prays for lost people, what their relationship to them is, and the participant's understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelism.

⁵Edmund P. Clowney, "Prayer," in Ferguson, Packer, and Wright, *New Dictionary of Theology*, 526.

This survey was given to fifty members of the congregation during a Wednesday night prayer meeting. This assessment was tabulated to find out the basic knowledge of evangelism as it related to human abilities and the work of the Holy Spirit. It was also helpful in ascertaining the amount of evangelism being done and finding the social proximity of those to whom they are witnessing.

To achieve the second goal, I developed a six-week sermon series to teach the congregation. The series provided the biblical and theological foundations of the necessity of prayer in evangelism, as well as discussing ways to implement prayer for more effective evangelism. The emphasis was on dependence on the Holy Spirit to convert the heart. The series took two weeks to develop. Once the series was completed and ready to be preached, it was evaluated by a panel of five mature leaders, using both deacons and teachers, in the church. They evaluated the sermons based on faithfulness to the biblical text, functionality, and applicability to the church and community context, and thoroughness of the material.

The final goal was to preach the series to the congregation. The sermons were preached at Twelve Oaks Baptist Church over a six-week period. As stated, the series was evaluated by twenty to thirty participants, which included at least five mature leaders, including deacons and Sunday school teachers, who assessed the series. At the conclusion, these leaders were asked to fill out an evaluation of the series to determine if it was effective. The evaluation instruments included questions about the effectiveness of the series, the organization of the material, and whether I made an effective case for dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism. These goals have determine the effectiveness of the project as a whole.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF DEPENDENCE
ON THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH PRAYER
FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

Salvation is presented in Scripture as a work of great power upon the human heart that transforms the heart from its bondage to sin into the likeness of Christ. In American Christianity, there is a tendency to see the gospel as a set of propositional truths to be accepted and followed in order to gain admission into heaven, but the Bible describes something much more profound. The gospel is the power of God freeing the sinner to live in the righteousness of Christ. The Bible is clear that under the new covenant the Holy Spirit will enact a transaction whereby he will exchange the old heart for a new one and place His Spirit within the convert.

This chapter shows the biblical basis for the supernatural transformation of the heart and gives examples from Jesus, Paul, and the New Testament church showing their reliance on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism.

Ezekiel 36:22-27

The Bible teaches an absolute truth about the nature of man. Man is fallen in regard to sin. One can see this in reference to Old Testament Israel and their tendency toward sin and idolatry. Even though the law and the temple cult with its rituals and practices were given directly to the people of Israel, it does not seem as though they could maintain the holiness prescribed by God for their nation. By the time of Ezekiel's writing, the nation of Judah was under exile, which God explains is due to their sin.

This problem is common in the heart of man. Sin has corrupted the image of God. In this corrupted, sinful nature, the mind of man is not able to properly inform and

direct his conduct. This state requires a renewal of the heart and of the mind.¹

For a nation called to show the glory of God to the world, this is a difficult predicament. The people of God's own choosing turned away from him to the point that God must bring judgment upon them. This situation set the context for the proclamation of the new covenant by Ezekiel. Yahweh speaks to the people explaining the restoration of His people is based not upon their need, but upon His holiness. They have profaned the name of Yahweh among the nations. Their righteousness was supposed to be a direct proclamation of the greatness and holiness of the God who had gathered them as His people. On the contrary, their continuous pattern of sin has profaned His name among the nations, as Ezekiel 36:23 explains. God intends to act because of His holy name, which the people have profaned by their sin and idolatry.²

In order to vindicate of the name of Yahweh, a holy people must be living in devotion to Him without the mixture of idolatry and open and unconfessed sin. The problem is simply calling them to holiness, once again, results in the repeated actions of the past. At best, they proclaim their devotion with their mouths, but inevitably, their sinful actions will return, as they always did. What they need in this case is not a rededication of the people of Israel, but a change of heart and spirit. They need to be made new as a people whose hearts are inclined toward God and not sin. Ultimately, the most important work of the Spirit, seen through this new covenant, is redemption. In this case, by God putting His Spirit in His people He will be making something new out of them and they will be become His righteousness³

¹Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 189.

²Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 17 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 315.

³Boyd Hunt, *Redeemed! Eschatological Redemption and the Kingdom of God* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1993), 33.

It is the natural inclination of the sinful heart to want to procure one's own righteousness by means of works. Even today, though Christians are not bound to the same Old Testament law, they long to do something that will show a righteous standing before God. Just as the law was a mirror to the Israelite of the Old Testament to show them their sinfulness, so a man's sin should be evidence that there is no righteousness in him, either. A man's desire to develop his own righteousness stems from the desire to glorify oneself instead of glorifying God, as is the purpose of the gospel of grace.⁴

God's answer to the problem is a new covenant with His people. Ezekiel 36:16-36 uses covenantal language to establish the plan of God to reassemble His people in the land, reestablish a relationship with His people based on their holiness, and to bless the land with abundance. Jeremiah 31:31-40 also speaks of a restoration of the people of Judah when God will reassemble them, place His Spirit within them, and restore them to the land. This passage refers to the restoration as a "new covenant." Therefore, this entire action of God would seem to point to a significant action on the part of God to create a covenant based on His remaking of the whole man, rather than another covenant of law to be simply obeyed.⁵

In this new covenant, their actions are controlled by a new nature, which is an example of God's own Spirit. He remakes their human nature in such a way that they desire the covenant terms, instead of reluctantly following laws that their sin nature rejects.⁶

Looking back at the passage in Ezekiel 36, some significant elements of this new covenant must be explored about what God is doing with the human heart. Again,

⁴Lewis S. Chafer, *True Evangelism: Winning Souls by Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1919), 55.

⁵Cooper, *Ezekiel*, 316.

⁶Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 29 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 179.

the intention of God is to vindicate His holy name by establishing the righteousness of His people. Since this was obviously not something they could do by their own righteousness, it would be something God would do within them.

Block refers to this process as the wholesale transformation of the nations. This transformation is manifested in three dimensions. The first is the purifying of Israel from its defilement caused by sin. This purification is denoted in Ezekiel 36:24 by the sprinkling of clean water and cleansing from all uncleanness. Purification from sin is a necessary condition to reestablish the relationship between God and His people.⁷

The second dimension is the replacing of the dead heart of stone with heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 describes this transformation of heart, which helps to explain the reason why the people had never followed in the holiness of God as prescribed by the original covenant. This is the second time in the book of Ezekiel that he states the need for a change of heart, the first being in Ezekiel 11:19. The words, לב and לִיב are both used in verse 26 to denote a person's center of the will, thought, and emotion. By changing the heart, God would replace the center of a person's will. This change of heart would produce a new desire in the people of God that would bring about a new desire to serve Yahweh and to be devoted to him.⁸

The third dimension Block mentions is that Yahweh will cause people to be obedient to himself as they have previously demonstrated they will not do it by their own will. He declares the people will only be holy in the case of divine intervention and God is willing to bring about this circumstance to see it through.

Jesus points back to this promise of a new covenant when he converses with Nicodemus in John 3. During this interchange, Nicodemus simply declares faith in the fact that Jesus is someone special and is "from God" as His signs would indicate. Jesus

⁷Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 20-48*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 29 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 354.

⁸Ibid., 355.

then launches into the specifics of salvation and their supernatural aspects. Specifically, He tells Nicodemus that a person must be “born again” to see the kingdom of God. When Nicodemus is unable to see the spiritual implications of this statement, he asks whether a man must enter in to his mother’s womb a second time. Jesus then points back to Ezekiel 36:25-26, when he declares that a man must be “born of water and the and the Spirit.” This is a direct reference to the promise that God will vindicate His holiness, in part, by “sprinkling clean water” on them, as well as placing within them a new heart and a new spirit. More specifically, Ezekiel 36:27 say that God will put His Spirit within them.⁹

Does God remaking the will of the people bring up a problem of free will? Certainly, God is giving them the will to turn and follow His commands gladly, but, of course, apart from this change the outcome was consistently sinful. The people were regularly called to holiness and purity of devotion to Yahweh, but the trajectory of the holiness of these people was always aimed at idolatry and legalism. This problem led to the difficult circumstances of exile and destruction of the nation. The free will of a nation of sinful people easily led to these outcomes. While the text does not specifically speak of holding the will captive, the change of the nature in the hearts of the people will inevitably lead the people to a more devoted following of Yahweh.¹⁰

If divine intervention is the intention of God in the new covenant, it has very interesting implications for evangelism today. It is important to note that just before the death of Jesus, while he and the disciples are observing the last supper in the upper room, he makes note of a new covenant, which he is enacting. Matthew 26:27-28 states, “And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness

⁹James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 131.

¹⁰Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 180.

of sins.” Seemingly, Jesus is pointing back to the covenant, which was spoken of by both Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

Shortly after this scene in the upper room, another development toward the new covenant is seen. Jesus stated in Acts 1:8 that the Holy Spirit would come upon the disciples with great power, and this is exactly what occurred in Acts 2 when the disciples are transformed from fearful rejects of Jerusalem society to fearless proponents of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Something about their nature has changed.

John 6:61-65

Much of what is seen in the ministry of Jesus is predicated on the idea of new life given by God through the Holy Spirit, thus dependence on the Holy Spirit becomes obvious. In John 6, Jesus is having an extended conversation with those who at the time would have considered themselves to be His disciples. They are certainly following him with a desire for something more from him. The group appears to come from the crowd of five-thousand whom Jesus fed. They followed him across the sea to Capernaum which would have seemed, by most, to be a display of their devotion, but Jesus sees a different motive. John 6:26-27 shows that Jesus sees their motives to be less than spiritual in their wanting more bread and to see more miracles. The implication is they are present to be fed and to see “the show.” His advice is to seek the bread that continues to eternal life. This group seems to ignore His admonition.

In the conversation leading up to this passage, Jesus’ words are completely unpalatable to a first-century Jewish crowd. In the first place, in verse 40 Jesus says he is the bearer of eternal life. Second, Jesus links himself to a new covenant prophecy by quoting Isaiah 54:13, “And they will all be taught by God.” In the same passage, he goes on to explain that those who learn from the Father will come to him. In other words, Jesus is saying he is not simply a rabbi pointing people to God, but that God is pointing people to him. Third, and most repulsive to the people, was the pronouncement, “Unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink His blood you have no life in you.” The very idea

of eating flesh and drinking blood went beyond the sensibilities of the obedient Israelite because any such action would result in defilement under the Old Testament law.¹¹ Verse 60 makes it clear that the disciples understood this to be a “hard saying.” The saying is not hard to understand, but it is hard to accept. The word used for “hard” in this passage is σκληρός, which has the idea of something offensive.¹²

Because of this context, the masses begin to depart from the presence of Jesus and cannot get past the words he has spoken to get to the heart of the message he was giving. As of verse 60, only the twelve disciples remain by His side. While seemingly confused by His words, they cannot deny the truth of who He is. Nonetheless, the murmuring began as they question the difficulty of His speech. Perceiving their difficulty with His sayings, Jesus asks, “Do you take offense at this?” In this passage the Greek word for offense is “σκανδαλίζει,” which is often used for something construed as a stumbling block. In this case, the word would mean to set a trap or ensnaring someone. The believer is to be careful not to be ensnared by the difficulty of what Jesus is saying.¹³ The word could also mean something that would cause one to stop believing.¹⁴ Jesus is asking if they are able to continue in faith with Him or if the words would cause them to fall away from the truth as the others had done.

In illustration of His coming point, Jesus asks, “What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?” This question is designed to make them think more deeply about who he is and where he is from. The question is directly related

¹¹Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 499.

¹²Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 218.

¹³A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1930), 1:46.

¹⁴J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 375.

to the idea that the only means to ascend in this way is through the cross. What they have heard thus far pales in comparison to what they will see. It will be all the more unpalatable to them as His followers when they see the one they believe to be the very son of God executed by a gruesome crucifixion. If they find the metaphorical sayings of Jesus in John 6 hard to bear, the cross will be worse.¹⁵

At this point Jesus reveals the truth about who can hear him and understand the truths he brings. As he makes clear, life is given only by the Spirit. The eternal life He has spoken of will come by life in the Spirit. The flesh alone does not give life, but the crowd had been seeking life strictly through the flesh as they wanted more bread and more earthly miracles. This desire leads them, as a crowd, before Jesus, but it will never lead them to true life. He then identifies the words He has spoken as Spirit and life. Even after hearing the words, some did not believe because they still lacked the spiritual life necessary to hear them. It is necessary to be granted life by the Father in order to hear them.

A rather cryptic element to this dialogue prevents some from ever hearing it. Jesus is demanding that something spiritual must happen in order for one to see the glory of the body as food or the blood as drink. What is gruesome and grotesque in the material world is glorious and full of life when seen through the lens of the spiritual.¹⁶ It is abundantly clear that a throng of people heard in the physical sense but they could not hear Jesus in the spiritual sense.

Within the context of evangelism, this paradox is still true. People must give up their own lives for the sake of the gospel and die to themselves in order to come to new life in Jesus. While Christians rarely evangelize in the modern context by speaking

¹⁵D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans, 2004), 300-301.

¹⁶J. Ramsey Michaels, *John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 409.

of eating flesh and drinking blood, references to the death of self is required in order to come to Jesus. It is also difficult for sinful man to see or, more importantly, confess that he is a sinner in need of a savior. Most importantly, it is difficult for many to see the hope found in the cross as Jesus died as a sacrificial atonement for those same sins. Nonetheless, these necessary elements must be understood in order for the person to receive salvation. These difficult ideas are, in fact, spiritually discerned.

The very idea of being filled with the Holy Spirit is that one is given the Spirit of Christ, the one who said these words. He is the one who is also “one” with the Father who draws people to Him. It is important to remember that the Spirit-filled Christian is the one sharing the message of the gospel. Within him is the one who has the power to change hearts and draw them to the Savior.¹⁷

In order for the hearer to understand these spiritual ideas and accept them, it is incumbent upon the witness to depend upon the Holy Spirit through prayer in order for the evangelism to be effective. It is not simply the words themselves, but the movement of the Holy Spirit applies the terms of salvation to the heart of the recipient in a way they can understand and believe.

Second Corinthians 4:1-6

Paul, in his epistles, says a lot about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, who has been given a new heart and a new spirit. Romans 8 is a clear explanation of the work of the Spirit and how he empowers the believer to live in accordance with the will of God. Galatians 5 speaks of the fruit of the Spirit and how it is different from the works of the flesh. In 1 Corinthians, Paul speaks of the wisdom revealed by the Spirit that enables a person to hear and understand the hope of the gospel and see

¹⁷Bill Bright, “Our Source of Revival,” in *Unleashing the Power of Prayer*, ed. Vonette Bright and Ben A. Jennings (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 47.

its wisdom. These, and many other scriptures written by Paul, show the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in converting the non-believer.

In 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, Paul reveals some of the spiritual mechanics involved in the gospel and what the Spirit's role is in giving a person such wisdom. In this passage he uses an analogy of the veil that was placed over the face of Moses when he would return from the presence of the Lord so the Israelites could not see the residual glory of God. In 2 Corinthians 3:14, he explains this veil "remains unlifted." Accordingly, for the Christian, the veil is lifted, "beholding the glory of the Lord." This lifting of the veil is the basis of his argument in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 begins with Paul saying that the courage he has in his ministry is based upon the mercy of God. Paul had seen the supernatural unveiling first hand. He had been one who read the scriptures through the veil and could not conceive of the ultimate glory of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Acts 9 shows the conversion of Paul and the amazing transformation, which comes about through this encounter. As a Pharisee, and moreover as a student of Gamaliel, Paul would have known the scriptures with an amazing depth and clarity.¹⁸ He would have been one who had deep foundations in the Jewish faith and would not have been easily converted. According to this passage, Saul was on his way to Damascus to arrest believers and bring them back to Jerusalem. Instead, this well trained and learned Jewish scholar is converted and becomes an apostle of Jesus Christ.

While it must first be understood that the non-regenerate person is held in their sinful state by their own sin, the state of spiritual death is not something caused by Satan but the person is placed in a deeper and darker estate by his efforts. Verse 4 states that Satan simply blinds the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see, and thus escape, the

¹⁸John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 30.

spiritual state they are in.¹⁹ In fact, it was Paul's own sin that caused his misunderstanding of the gospel of grace and thus caused his spiritual death. It was thus only necessary to keep him blinded so that the truth of salvation by grace could not capture his attention.

How does such a conversion take place? Paul's epistles indicates he believes something supernatural happened, which allowed him to see what he was unable to see before. He was suddenly allowed to understand the glory of Christ, whom he did not believe in until this point. Second Corinthians 4:1 says that this conversion was the mercy of God giving him a new and true ministry, which is the basis of his courage. Ultimately, God has given him a ministry akin to that of Moses. While Moses gave a written law, Paul brought a law that would, through the New Covenant, be written on men's hearts.²⁰ Because of this truth, he felt no need to be overly cunning or underhanded in his proclamation of the truth of the gospel.

In Paul's soteriology, one major impediment to the gospel is taking root in a person's heart: the blindness of the unregenerate heart. Spiritual blindness is a strategic stumbling block intentionally put in place by Satan. The stumbling block of spiritual blindness keeps the unbeliever from seeing the truth of who Jesus really is.

A difference is indicated between the one who is veiled by Satan and the one who is not. The difference lies in whether or not the person is "perishing." The same type of analogy is seen in Ephesians 2:1 when Paul states, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sin in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience." The analogy is one which indicates the pre-regenerate person as dead, yet alive. They are dead on a spiritual level, which keeps them from living in accordance

¹⁹Charles E. Lawless, "Spiritual Warfare and Evangelism," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 32.

²⁰David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 29 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 203-4.

with the will of God. It is hard to deny they are alive physically as they are living and breathing and going on with physical life. They are the people who are spiritually unable to see who Christ is and find salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Deadness implies the person is unable to move, in a spiritual sense, toward Christ and righteousness. If this is true, a supernatural intervention must quicken the spiritual side of a person so they can see the light. This analogy of death is coupled with the analogy of being blinded by Satan. While several commentaries on 2 Corinthians seem to see blindness as a metonymy for the hardness of a person's heart, Paul keeps the initiative of the action on Satan.²¹

The unbeliever is not guiltless. Satan also has a very important purpose in keeping the veil over the faces of unbelievers: it keeps them from seeing “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” As long as the veil is in place and the person is blind, they cannot simply look at Christ and clearly see He is the image of God and put their faith in Him. Though, any work of Satan is ultimately subordinate to the sovereign, saving power of God.²²

Satan is successful in keeping the lost from seeing the light by employing several techniques. He often holds them in darkness through deceit, by making them think they are in no need of spiritual life or that they are not good enough to receive it. He will also use sin to draw the heart of the unbeliever away from spiritual things, convincing them that coming to Christ would mean a loss of pleasure that they might seek. For the person who may be seeking something spiritual, Satan need only redirect their thoughts to false

²¹This view is held by Garland, *2 Corinthians*, as well as Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan). This view would put the responsibility of the blinding on the person being blinded, and not on Satan, whom Paul makes responsible. Putting the responsibility on the man instead of Satan diminishes the supernatural element of what Paul saying.

²²Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 177.

teaching or a watered-down version of the gospel that would teach a salvation by works or a universal salvation where true repentance and faith are not necessary.²³

Both of these analogies for the lostness of a pre-regenerate person are ones which, in a physical sense, would be permanent. Something supernatural must happen to awaken a dead or perishing person or to bring sight to a blind person. Paul finds the answer to this problem through his own experience. In verse 6 he speaks of the creation power of God who spoke light into existence in Genesis 1:3. This same power will bring life to a dead heart, like the one he had when he began his trip toward Damascus. He shows the personal nature of this regeneration by showing that God had shown his light in Paul's heart, specifically. With this light came the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This is the exact knowledge prohibited by the veil Satan placed on the perishing to blind them.

This passage helps a person to see the mechanics of the spiritual side of salvation in illustrative terms. If a person is, in fact, dead or blind, a change must be given by the Holy Spirit, which brings life and sight. In this passage both the physical and the spiritual are welded together in a fuller picture of the work of the gospel. Paul does his part by speaking the truth of the gospel. He even goes so far as to say he commends himself to everyone's conscience implying a true effort to speak to the mind and heart by the witness. At the same time, he acknowledges the spiritual need of light only available through the Spirit. To put it all together, Paul is sharing the gospel on the intellectual level while leaving the spiritual level to the enlightenment of God. God ultimately brings about salvation in the heart of perishing persons by allowing them to "see" who Jesus is.²⁴

If God brings salvation, the contemporary witness must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to do His part in the regeneration of the perishing and the enlightenment of

²³Lawless, "Spiritual Warfare and Evangelism," 32.

²⁴Ibid.

the blind. Believers must bathe their evangelistic efforts in prayer in dependence upon the Holy Spirit to do His part in salvation. Prayer is the opportunity to show absolute reliance on the Spirit to touch the heart of the lost.

First Timothy 2:1-8

Prayer plays a pivotal role in the life of the true believer and witness. Through the previously explored passages, it is clear the gospel has a very real supernatural element that effects the physical. The gospel takes the sinful man, who acts from a sinful heart in a sinful world, and changes him, making him into a man who longs for righteousness, has a new heavenly citizenship, and gives him a new purpose in life. This kind of change can come only through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. The witness needs divine help in making a difference in this world as a supernatural change is needed in man. It is prayer that delivers the divine truth to the blinded heart of the unbeliever.²⁵

Paul reiterates this need for divine change within himself as a precursor to this passage. In 1 Timothy 1:12-17 Paul sets the stage for his appeal to prayer in dealing with the world and his ministry. Paul mentions his strength was given to him by Christ to do the ministry he was called to do. This strength was necessary because Paul was formerly a “blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent.” Something must change Paul’s heart to make him long for something different. Paul attributes the change to Christ and makes it the basis of his charge to Timothy to “wage the good warfare.” This charge is given shape in chapter 2 where Paul begins with the necessity of prayer.

Three major areas of concern are recognized by Paul in reference to prayer. First is for the culture and leaders who might make things physically difficult for the believers to evangelize. Second was for the believers, that they might live a “peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Tim 2:2). The last area is a concern

²⁵Chafer, *True Evangelism*, 89.

for the people whom God wants to save. Paul encourages prayer in the life of the witness on the basis of these three things.

In urging prayer, Paul gives four different words. The first word he uses is *δεήσεις*, which is translated as supplication in the ESV. The meaning of this word is to appeal for a special need or benefit. It is an entreaty. This word is only used in the New Testament in reference to making a request of God, but not to man.²⁶

The second word is *προσευχὰς*, which is a more general word for prayer. This word holds the idea of coming before God to speak or to bring someone to the recognition of God. It is more than simply having a request for God, but desiring His general blessing and concern.²⁷

The third word is *ἐντεύξεις*, which is a basic appeal before God. It has an element of urgency and boldness of access in coming before the Lord. It has the idea of one coming before a king with an urgent appeal for help.²⁸

The last word is *εὐχαριστίας*, which refers to thanksgiving. It is being thankful for a “good gift” given by God. This is a reminder that all prayer must be made with the acknowledgment of the grace of God, from whom the person is requesting action or blessing and all good things that happen for the glory of God are by His provision and under His power.²⁹

Paul is using these four words for a particular reason. Seemingly, each of these four words has a distinct meaning and place in the prayer life of the believer. The believer certainly needs to be before God in prayer acknowledging specific needs, coming boldly before God, and enjoying the access which Christ has bought, lifting those in need

²⁶George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 114.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., 114-15.

²⁹Ibid., 115.

before the Lord. Each word has its place in this list. At the same time it would be pointless to try and distinguish too great a difference between these words. Paul is simply speaking of the fullness of prayer and expounding about the great need of prayer in the propagation of the gospel and in working toward the fruition of the kingdom of God in a worldly kingdom. These are acts of insurmountable odds apart from the supernatural work of God.³⁰

The object of his prayer is “all people.” In this case it would seem Paul is being very literal in using the phrase. He is suggesting prayer for the open doors to the gospel as well as for the lost who will be the beneficiaries of God’s grace. When people pray they are constantly reminded that they are subservient to the work of God in bringing about His kingdom through the gospel. It is also a reminder of a very direct need for His mediation in the world to enact His covenant, as it does entail a change of the heart.

Paul here states that God does want all men to be saved, which proposes a problem because historic Christianity does not hold that all men will be saved. An obvious question arises under these circumstances as to what Paul means. His assertion is most likely an answer to the spiritual elitism often pervasive in religious circles, and certainly was taught by the Gnostics. This thought was also held by Jews who thought that only the righteous would attain salvation while the sinful would be destroyed.³¹

John Piper deals with this matter and explains that God does have a will in which he wants all men to be saved. At the same time, not all men are saved. He deals with this contradiction by asserting, “There is something else that God wills more, which would be lost if he exerted his sovereign power to save all.”³² In the end, while God’s

³⁰Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 166.

³¹J. N. D. Kelley, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: A & C Black, 1963), 63.

³²John Piper, “Are There Two Wills in God?” accessed October 15, 2017,

will is that all men be saved, He wants His glory to be shown in the “full range of God’s glory in wrath and mercy (Romans 9:23) and the humbling of man so that he enjoys giving credit to God for his salvation (1 Corinthians 1:29).”³³

Certainly, one of the greatest impediments to the propagation of the gospel in Paul’s life was the government. So much of his time was spent writing his epistles from the setting of a jail cell and he seems to understand he is not incarcerated in vain. Paul’s chains and imprisonment are part of God’s sovereign plan and therefore should be bathed in prayer, which is best seen in Ephesians 6:18-20:

Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

For Paul, being in chains was part of the call of God, but one that required God’s sovereign and bold movement in order to continue in this call. Accordingly, in 1 Timothy 2:2 he acknowledges that in order for the Christians to be faithful to their call and fulfill their evangelistic duties a clear path would need to be set by God in order to do so peacefully. This path could never be cleared by a first-century church under their circumstances and needed divine intervention. For this reason, prayer was absolutely necessary because they were absolutely dependent on the work of the Spirit.

This passage also reveals he has a concern for the believers under Timothy’s ministry considering the persecution which Paul and others like him are undergoing, that they live peaceful and quiet lives. At the same time, he desires them to be godly and dignified in every way. In order for them to have an evangelistic impact for the kingdom of God they are going to have to have the freedom to share without fear, or often courage

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/are-there-two-wills-in-god>.

³³Piper, “Are There Two Wills in God?”

in the face of fear. Being as this is a small band of believers in the face of a world power, they will need an even greater power imparted to them, by which they will stand.³⁴

Paul's call for prayer also encompasses a certain heart in the believer. If a believer is to be godly and dignified in every way, as the text states, the person must not operate out of a sinful heart, the kind often attributed to the lost. Instead of the heart that is not righteous and does not seek for God, as Romans 3:10-11 states, they would desire God and His kingdom. Instead of the flesh, which longs for the sin of Galatians 5:19-21, they would be filled with the fruit of the Spirit found in the next two verses. Paul always sees the salvation of redeemed people through the lens of the New Covenant changed heart. Again, this difference requires the power of the Holy Spirit to not only change the heart, but to keep it centered on him.

It is interesting to note the connection Paul makes between the state and the peace of the believer. If the church is to be the evangelistic mechanism it is supposed to be, it will be up to the state to allow for evangelism. While the authority of the state is above the authority of the church in material terms, God is always above all governments or governors. Therefore, prayer on behalf of the church is imperative. God alone can change the heart and circumstances of governments in favor of His people and their evangelistic efforts. If they govern correctly, the spread of the gospel is made easier, as well as the lives of those sharing the gospel. The church must pray to that end.³⁵

The last point of Paul's desire for prayer involves the lost who need to be saved. After stating the need for prayer for those in authority, he then states the beneficiary of the prayer is "all people." His assertion is that God "desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Whether this statement literally means "all men" or men of all types has been debated, *ad infinitum*. What he is truly saying, either way, is that it

³⁴Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 117.

³⁵R. B. Kuiper, *God-Centered Evangelism: A Presentation of the Scriptural Theology of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961), 177.

should be acknowledged that God is glorified as people are saved and all people are to be seen as objects of His grace.

Paul uses the oneness of God and the exclusivity of the crucifixion as the illustration of the need to pray for all people. He begins with an obvious, monotheistic understanding of the world. If only one God exists, then it would logically mean He is the God of all people, being as no other gods exist to save them. It would also be logical to assume He is the creator of all people. If this be true, prayer must be lifted up on behalf of these people in order that the Holy Spirit might do His new covenant work upon their hearts.³⁶

The same holds true of the illustration of Jesus as mediator. Again, if the only true and living God sent His Son as a ransom for all, and is a mediator between God and all men, then He is the only way of salvation. This point is obviously rejected and is one of the greatest impediments to the acceptance of the gospel. Even today, many men reject the gospel as the only way and choose to try and find their own righteousness by living good lives. Others seek salvation through other, non-existent gods. Either way, they are unknowingly being led down a false path to salvation.³⁷

From 2 Corinthians 4:1-7, it is evident that this is a result of the supernatural blindness Satan has caused by placing a veil over their hearts so “they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” In this case, it will take the light being shone on the heart by the Holy Spirit in order for them to come to the same understanding Paul and Timothy have been given, which should be the prayer of every believer. Prayer is pivotal in order for the gospel to take hold in the hearts and minds of “all men.”

Paul rounds out this appeal to prayer with one final admonition in verse 8. He desires that men should pray in every place. Again, Paul uses the word “every.” If it holds

³⁶Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 90.

³⁷*Ibid.*

true that he should pray for all men because of the need in all men, then prayer should also happen in “every place.” As the gospel was continuously spread throughout the known world by Paul and other witnesses, it would have become abundantly clear that the gospel is universal and necessary in every place.

Second Timothy 2:1-7 is a great reminder to Timothy and all believers that prayer is a vital part of winning the world to Christ. Paul acknowledges there are things which stand in the way of the gospel; things much greater than the individual Christian. With the persecution by the state and a world that does not believe, it is important that a power is available from which one can draw strength and from which one can overcome this world. The power needed is found in the Holy Spirit and His power is called upon through prayer.

Acts 4:23-31

Dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer has always been needed, as evidenced by the early church in Acts. Even then, a desperation in the church was felt due to the power of the synagogue and the Roman state over them. In Jerusalem this new church was gaining momentum in an unfriendly social climate. They were already seeing persecution and difficulties in their desire to follow Christ. After all, it had only been a short time before that Christ, himself, was crucified by the Roman authorities at the request of the Jews. To continue to appeal to Jesus as messiah and king flew in the face of the authority and wishes of both groups.

Nonetheless, the early church continued to proclaim faith in Jesus as messiah and king and appealed to His resurrection as their validation. It was this claim and appeal, which led to the arrest of Peter and John in Acts 4. They continued to proclaim faith in Christ in Solomon’s Portico of the temple compound. These men were fearless and continued to go to the cultural center of the conflict.

In front of the Jewish council the two are asked, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Acts 4:8 states, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to

them” as he continued to explain his reasoning for preaching and healing in Jesus’ name. This passage is clear that Peter is not preaching in his own power or authority, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. This power was a necessity for Peter, the disciples, and the entire church if they were to make headway in sharing the gospel because of the opposition they faced. It was a power which was obviously not available to Peter when he denied Jesus three times. Something had changed. A new empowerment by the Holy Spirit was given to the church and this power would propel the gospel throughout the world in the coming decades.

This council concluded this encounter with a command to speak no more in the name of Jesus. Peter and John simply reply, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” After this exchange they were released.

This setting was the scene of the church praying for boldness. Upon Peter and John’s return to their friends and reporting what had happened, they began to pray. The prayer begins as a spontaneous prayer of praise for the safe return of their cohorts and reveals a great deal of their understanding and need of Holy Spirit empowerment to continue, especially in realization of what could happen to them after the persecution of Peter and John.

The prayer opens with an overarching, theological understanding of who was in absolute control of everything happening around them. In calling out to the sovereign Lord they show a deep faith in God’s plan for them, even as they undergo persecution for their faith. It will be this same God who will watch over and guide them as they continue to speak. It also clearly shows who their authority is. They have the responsibility to follow the greater authority over their lives. For them, it is not the Jewish authorities, but the sovereign Lord.

So, why do they pray to a sovereign Lord? One could argue that to do so would be illogical as, in His sovereignty, He has already determined what is to happen and

how it will be done. Nonetheless, it was the practice of the early church to accept His sovereignty while praying for His empowerment and provision. The answer is only illogical in the mind of the finite man. To express need is to understand that, in His sovereignty, He has the power to enact that which one asks, if He so chooses. Thus, this prayer is given in great humility by the powerless placing their faith in the one who is all-powerful.³⁸

After recognizing the authority of God over and above earthly powers, they then turn their thoughts toward the power of this sovereign Lord. It is the power of the creator going before them and living within them. If God is the one who created the earth and the sea and everything in them, then he is also the one who has power over His creatures, including those in political and religious power over them. It is this same power which will protect and guide them as they continue in their evangelistic pursuit, deliver this early church from many perils, heal the lame and the blind, empower the use of foreign tongues, and deliver Paul from shipwreck. Apart from this power they have none at all. This small group has little to no power in and of themselves. However, in God they had infinite power.

Then, what can they say to those in earthly authority? For that matter, what can they say to convince the world that the hope of each individual rests in a messiah who was rejected by His own people and executed by the Romans through crucifixion? Convincing people of this message is certainly a tall order. Accepting this truth will take a power which will have to sustain them against many powerful men who will want to stop and even exterminate them. Even more importantly, it will take a power which will adhere the message to the hearts of those who will be saved and show the truth of the gospel to the heart of the listener. A quote from David serves to strengthen their faith.

³⁸William Philip, *Why We Pray* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 64-65.

The quote is from Psalm 2:1-2 and is presented as prophetic. They see the quote as something given by David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ The Psalm originally dealt with the dominance of Israel over other world powers. This dominance was a direct result of the empowerment of God, who established Israel, appointed its king, and gave it wealth, blessings, and prosperity.⁴⁰ Under the new covenant, this fledgling church saw themselves as establishing the new kingdom of Christ and would have the same success, only now in the spiritual realm. God will empower the church to expand the kingdom through the propagation of the gospel.

However, a meaning was also seen in the physical realm as well. In a very real sense, the entire world was against them. Certainly the Jews and Romans who dominated their area were against them, but also all of the different nations who would see the gospel as a direct threat to their autonomy and beliefs. It would take an indwelling power in the early church to spread the gospel throughout the known world. It was a power which would allow them to do the impossible as many people throughout the world would come to Christ.

The passage goes on to point out the historical manifestation of this Davidic prophesy in verses 27-28. They make specific application by showing that it is, in fact, Herod and Pontius Pilot who are the Gentile kings who gather together, and they do so against “your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.” If it were only in the material world, these forces which stood against Jesus would have prevailed, and certainly already had. They had killed Jesus and had the earthly power to do away with all of His disciples. However, it was not just the physical realm. In the spiritual realm, God anointed Jesus and appointed Herod and Pontius Pilot; they were acting as a part of the plan of God.

³⁹John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 149.

⁴⁰F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 99.

Also, it was a predestined plan of God, they were never in control to begin with, and they were unwitting servants of the God who is sovereign. It was under the authority of this supremely sovereign God, which the disciples found their power and authority.⁴¹

The members of this prayer group then invoked God to look upon the threats and grant them to continue speaking, which they certainly will do. It is the power of God through the indwelling Holy Spirit, which emboldens and gives them success in their evangelism. It is also this same power that does mighty works to validate their ministry and call. Through a Spirit-filled John and Peter, God will heal and do miraculous signs and wonders in the name of Jesus.

Their desire was to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to continue building God's kingdom through the gospel. They were not doing so out of obligation or fear, but out of an overflow of the work of the Spirit within them.⁴²

As a final validation of their call and commission, the place where they were gathered was shaken. It would seem as though God was giving them a tangible evidence in order to show he had heard their prayer with every intention of answering it.⁴³ The scene was reminiscent of Pentecost as the shaking was followed by a further filling of the Holy Spirit which was evidenced by their continued boldness in evangelism.⁴⁴

A wonder and an awe seems to drive this fledgling church. Nothing about them should allow them to stand against a Roman government or a Jewish temple. They are without any kind of physical power and standing, but what they do have is a very powerful Holy Spirit who indwells and emboldens them to speak. By His power they

⁴¹Polhill, *Acts*, 149.

⁴²Will McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 63.

⁴³Polhill, *Acts*, 150.

⁴⁴Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 100.

spread the gospel throughout the known world. It is why they gather when they should be in hiding, and instead, pray for more power.

This passion for prayer should be the stance of the contemporary church. In much the same way governments around the world stand staunchly opposed to the spread of the gospel. Prevailing secular worldviews and different religions around the globe further stifle the spread of the gospel, and yet the commission is the same as the first-century church. Redeemed and Spirit-filled people are to go into all the world. The modern church will stand against these secular and satanic forces only by a power, which is outside themselves. They will stand only in the power of the Holy Spirit and this power comes only by prayer.

Conclusion

Many American Christians today apparently believe salvation to be something contractual. The person does their part by asking for forgiveness and confessing faith in Jesus, and God must do His part by letting that person into heaven when he gets there. However, this idea of salvation would leave a person thinking no real change is happening and no real change is needed because the real goal of salvation is admittance to heaven. Surely salvation is much more than simple admittance to heaven considering this “good news” that the apostles proclaimed turned the world upside down.

Salvation is something much greater. Most importantly, salvation is the inner transformation of a man, which makes him into a new creation to live in Christ’s righteousness. This kind of transformation must be something supernatural. In order for the very nature of a man to be transformed a regenerative work of the Holy Spirit must take place. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit and transformation of hearts are the hope of salvation suggested by the New Covenant and is one only done by the Holy Spirit.

The true witness proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in accordance with the new covenant must be completely reliant upon the power of the Holy Spirit. While the witness must be faithful to the Great Commission, he is dependent upon the Holy Spirit to

do the actual work within the heart of the convert. This regeneration will never occur by convincing the mind. Until the sin nature is dealt with and a new heart is given, the person remains in their sin. As these passages have shown, the hope of salvation was, from the beginning, about God doing a work of regeneration, which would give the convert a heart of flesh and giving the true believer His Spirit.

These passages show convincingly that the work of true salvation is one of spiritual transformation and can only be done by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus certainly understands the work to be something which is not done by the flesh and cannot be brought about simply by the will of sinful man. Dependence upon the one who can bring such change is necessary. It is seen in the theological writings of Paul and exhibited by the first-century church as they pour out their hearts in prayer in order for God to use them. Prayer is vital in the work of the witness because it places him in a place of dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL BASIS FOR AN EMPHASIS OF DEPENDENCE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH PRAYER AND ITS EFFECTS ON EVANGELISM

The thrust of this project was to instill in the membership of the church a basic theology of the supernatural basis of evangelism. Dozens of evangelistic outlines and programs have been marketed throughout the last few decades to teach the ill-equipped witness how to share his or her faith. While they most generally have a section on the Holy Spirit or on prayer, they rarely, if ever, center on the idea of the necessity of supernatural work in evangelism. The purpose of this chapter is to show the theological basis of Holy Spirit-empowered evangelism and how it might be applied in the local church.

Theological Basis

The Bible's main theme from beginning to end is the idea of the redemption of fallen man. The main problem the Bible deals with is supplied in Genesis 3—man is sinful and separated from God. Revelation 21 and 22 show the final redemption and restoration of the people of God to His presence in a place where there is no sin, pain, or death. The perfection found before the fall is to be restored in the new Jerusalem. The good news of the gospel is that God, through the cross of Jesus, is dealing with the problem of sin so that sinners who put their faith in Jesus can dwell with Him in this restored and perfected kingdom. Between these two bookends of Genesis and Revelation God reveals His plan for dealing with the problem of sin.¹

¹Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL:

The Old Testament shows the mounting evidence of the inability of men to keep the righteous commands of God.² While there is a desire for righteousness, the ability to carry it out is missing. The flood narratives show how early sinfulness, which deserves the wrathful penalty of God, is already in the existence of humanity. The patriarchs, who are called and given a covenant by God, find themselves constantly returning to sin. Even after the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt by extremely miraculous means, the people find themselves turning away from God. From their grumbling in the desert to their creation of the golden calf at Sinai, the people of Israel gravitate away from the Holiness of God rather than being drawn to it.

After several centuries of progressive sin, the nation is divided and ultimately Judah is exiled. This exile due to sin is happening to a people who are given perfect clarity of the righteousness of God through the law, but cannot maintain it.

When the nation is brought to its lowest point because of their sin, God gives a greater solution than their own good works and self-righteousness. Through the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God speaks of a new and greater covenant for the people of God, which will give them a new heart and a new spirit and will cause them to walk in His statutes. This covenant could not be understood nor desired apart from its necessity. In other words, the people had to be shown their inability to keep His commands before they could appreciate His desire to put His righteousness within them.

The new covenant provides a solution for the problem of sin, which would otherwise keep the sinner in his guilt and shame. It is the sin nature which will always lure the person back into sin, no matter how much they long to be devoted to God. The new covenant is the basis of the gospel, which will be proclaimed by Christ and the first-century church. It is the basis of a penal substitutionary atonement, which prepares the

InterVarsity, 2002), 146-47.

²Oswald Chambers, *Biblical Ethics* (Hants, UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1947), 2.

person for the indwelling Holy Spirit who will give the sinner a new nature. In answer to this problem, God speaks through the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel to offer a real hope for His people through a change of heart and will.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 specifically proposes how God will bring about a “new covenant.” This new covenant is different from the first because the people broke the first one. F. B. Huey explains that the new covenant will be different insofar as God will put his law within the people by writing it upon their hearts, thus causing an internal transformation.³ God will also forgive their iniquity, remembering their sin no more. This forgiveness is a foreshadowing of the grace that will come when this covenant is enacted by the blood of Christ.

Ezekiel gives a similar rendition of this New Covenant in Ezekiel 36:24-31. In his prophecy of this covenant he describes cleansing the people from unrighteousness and idolatry. He will give the people a new heart and place his own spirit within them, causing them to be obedient. These two Scriptures paint a picture of what happens in the New Testament.

During the Last Supper, Jesus refers to the new covenant and implies that the forthcoming crucifixion will be the enactment of this covenant. In Matthew 26:27-28 Jesus says, “And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” There would be no reason for Jesus to make a reference linking his blood and the covenant unless his blood will be the blood of a perfect sacrifice and a new covenant in which sin is dealt with and righteousness will begin to reign. This comment by Jesus is an obvious reference to the new covenant spoken of in Jeremiah 31:31-34.⁴

³F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, The New American Commentary, vol. 16 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 280-81.

⁴D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 573.

It is interesting to note how changes begin in his followers very shortly after the crucifixion. Before the coming of the Holy Spirit lapses arise with the faith of some of the apostles. Specifically, Peter has denied Jesus three times, just as Jesus said he would. Also, Thomas has difficulty believing in the resurrection of Jesus until he can physically see and touch the wounds of the resurrected savior. When Jesus first comes to the disciples in John 20:19, they were gathered behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They were terrorized by the fear of the crucifixion, which had ultimately immobilized them as an evangelistic force. However, their fear quickly diminished.

In Acts 1:4-5 Jesus says,

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

They are to stay in Jerusalem, the place they would fear the most, for the Holy Spirit would come upon them, just as the new covenant stated.

This promise is fulfilled in Acts 2 when these cowardly misfits begin to preach in the streets they once feared, and they do so boldly. Bock explains that the power of the Holy Spirit comes “like the rush of a mighty winds” and shows this supernatural event to be an enactment of the promise of the Spirit.⁵ The power of the Spirit will be evident upon these men as they begin the church in the streets of Jerusalem and in the sight of the Romans and Jews with thousands coming to the crucified Christ of their gospel message.

This empowerment is seen throughout the New Testament and is a driving factor in evangelism. It is seen when Jesus visits Paul on the road to Damascus. A great power is displayed when the leading opponent of Christianity is immediately converted and he is then governed by a new authority. It is likewise seen in Philip and his interaction with the Ethiopian eunuch. He is led to the exact place of a man looking for illumination

⁵Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 96.

while he searches the Scriptures. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, this man is given understanding and places his faith in Christ.

Peter preaches to a group of Gentiles in Acts 10:34-43 where he simply shares the truth of who Jesus is. This conversation would seem to be nothing more than an exchange of information concerning a religious philosophy, but Luke makes sure to show the supernatural power at work. Verse 44 says, “While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.” The people do not appear to be accepting the ideas of Peter based on debate and reasoning, but the power of the Holy Spirit who falls on them, even while Peter is still talking. While this event shows the opening of the gospel to the Gentiles, the thrust of the passage is to show that it is God’s great work and not Peter’s. This conversion is the New Covenant power that comes upon the one whom God is saving.⁶

Peter even takes this episode to the council at Jerusalem as they were debating the admittance of Gentiles in the faith. The argument Peter uses is that the power of the Holy Spirit has come upon Gentiles in the same way it came upon them. In relaying the story from the previous chapter, Acts 11:15 says, “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning.”

Paul continuously points to a new covenant, Holy Spirit empowerment in salvation throughout his theological writings. It is seen in Romans 8:9-11 as Paul is explaining the Holy Spirit-filled life. Here he explains how the believer will have the indwelling Holy Spirit and the Spirit “is life because of righteousness.” According to Paul, the Spirit brings a life of righteousness into the believer.

Galatians 5:16-24 explains the change brought about by the Spirit. In this passage, Paul speaks of the difference between one living by the flesh and one living by the Spirit. In his list of the works of the flesh, he notes all the sin that enslaves and

⁶John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 264.

entraps the lost person. To be exact, this same list of sins is the direct cause of the sinner not having the attributes of the Spirit. However, in verses 22-23 Paul explains that the fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness, and self-control.” In contrasting these two lists he points directly to the new covenant and the element of being filled with His Spirit.⁷

Interestingly, many of the sins of the flesh are done to obtain what is given in the Spirit. The very first sin named is sexual immorality. This sin is rarely committed for the sake of the sin. The desired outcome is most often acceptance and love from the one with whom another is sinning—but the very first fruit of the Spirit is love. The same could be said of drunkenness because the main goal of many drinkers is not drunkenness itself—many people drink to find a moment of peace from their troubles—but the third fruit of the Spirit is peace. In these examples, the result is being searched for in sin (and yet is never obtained from sin) is found directly in the Spirit and the Spirit is the power that indwells the believer.

More examples are available, but the point is that Paul and the other New Testament writers believed in the power of the Holy Spirit to change the heart of the believer. They were not looking to intellectually convince people to come to Christ. Paul makes this argument in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, when he says,

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

The power of God makes the difference.

This change within the disciples says something very real about the power of evangelism for both the person witnessing and the one being evangelized. Apart from

⁷James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1993), 296.

this power nothing can happen in the exchange. While evangelism is very much the exchange of ideas between two people of opposing views, there also exists an exchange of power through the Holy Spirit. Salvation means much more than simply coming to an understanding of the gospel and choosing to accept it. It is much deeper. The power of the Holy Spirit gives life to a dead person. The power of the Holy Spirit gives sight to the blind. The power of the Holy Spirit allows the deaf to hear. This supernatural change is an element often overlooked in contemporary evangelistic methods.

The Necessity of Dependence on the Holy Spirit through Prayer

The work of evangelism is essentially a spiritual endeavor. It is a process by which the Holy Spirit works through the language and efforts of the witness. At the same time, the Holy Spirit is also working in the listener making the gospel effective in the heart of the person. It is the work of the Holy Spirit working both sides of the interaction to make evangelism effective. This section intends to show how the Holy Spirit works on each side of the evangelistic encounter to show His necessity if the interaction is to be successful.

The Biblical Illustrations of Sin

As discussed, the law showed the effects of sin on the people of God. The law became a mirror showing the truth about the sinfulness of man. The hope found in the new covenant lies, not just in the coming forgiveness, but the hope of change in the heart. God promises in the new covenant to overcome the problem of the heart by bringing life to it and placing his Spirit in the believer.⁸

There is still a major impediment to the lost person obtaining righteousness or even to act within a framework of righteousness. Several times in the book of John,

⁸Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, eds., "Covenant, The New," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 538.

when Jesus would predict his death, he spoke of the Spirit to be sent after he is gone, who would do the work promised in the new covenant. The following verses illustrate this point:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (John 14:26)

But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27)

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. (John 16:8)

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:13–14)

The Holy Spirit's power is necessary to break through the problems of the sin nature. The New Testament identifies three specific problems of the sin nature that inhibit the righteousness of the lost: they are dead, they are blind, and they are bound.

The first of these is the deadness of the person before the regeneration of the Spirit. The most common verse speaking of this is Ephesians 2:1: "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins." Paul here is not talking about some specifically sinful group or nation; he is speaking of all people who have not experienced regeneration through the Spirit.⁹ This type of death is a spiritual one and is best described as a separation between the lost and God. Its place within this passage shows how Paul intends for his readers to relate to this state as each of them experienced it before their regeneration. The apostle John also uses this imagery in 1 John 5:12 when he says, "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." Obviously, to be deprived of life leaves only death.

⁹Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 156.

In Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus in John 3 He gives the cure for this spiritual death when He declares he must be born again. Jesus says, "Truly, truly I say to you unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). This new birth is a direct reference to the work of the Spirit found in the new covenant. Ezekiel 36:25-27 says,

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

This new birth is given to overcome the spiritual death of sin by giving the cleansing of water promised in the new covenant, as well as the spirit who transforms the heart from the hardness of death to the living heart of flesh.¹⁰

The second illustration of the problem of sin in the lost is blindness. The unregenerate person cannot see the spiritual things present around him. He cannot see the depth of his lostness nor the seriousness of sin. This condition inhibits the ability to see God's full revelation.¹¹

Second Corinthians 4:3-4 says, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Here Paul is pointing out those dying in their sin and that they continue to do so rather than turning to Christ for his salvation, because they cannot see the truth. According to verse 6, Paul attributes this work to Satan and then declares what makes the believer different from the lost is the fact that God "has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus." He is

¹⁰Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, The New American Commentary, vol. 25A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 173.

¹¹Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 195.

pointing directly to the work of the Spirit that brings illumination to the regenerate person so the hope of the gospel makes sense and is, therefore, believable.¹² If there is a supernatural blinding as Paul indicates, there would be a need for a supernatural cure found only in the work of the Holy Spirit.¹³

John Calvin refers to the illumination of the Spirit as the spectacles of faith. Just as a person often needs spectacles to see more clearly, so the Spirit becomes the one who clarifies the image of salvation. It is only by looking through the lens of the Spirit that a person sees spiritual truths, in particular, the truth of salvation by grace through faith. Once a person is given life in the Spirit and receives a new heart he is able to see his hope is in Christ.¹⁴

A new believer does not instantly have all understanding, but he then can trust Christ and see spiritual truths in the Word that will make sense to him as a believer. As Jeremiah 31:34 says about the new covenant, “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah’s declaration does not mean there will be no need for pastors and teachers, but they will have a level of spiritual discernment that will allow them to grow and understand the Scriptures through the lens of the Spirit. The lens through which they see the world by the Spirit allows them to see things correctly and correctly interpret the world in light of the gospel.¹⁵

¹²It is interesting to note that Paul uses the illustration of light being shown in their hearts to illuminate that he has received some sort of enlightenment. In Paul’s case, it was a great light that shone upon him at conversion in Acts 9. In that case, the light brought physical blindness, but here he speaks of spiritual illumination. David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 29 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 217.

¹³Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 99.

¹⁴Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 196.

¹⁵Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1996), 121.

The last description of the spiritual condition of the lost is bondage. Even in the earliest days of the church, the changed heart of the new covenant was evident to the people around them; there was something different and transformed. They no longer acted the way they once did. They were concerned with the lives and souls of those outside their group, and they exhibited new characteristics understood to be the fruit of the Spirit.

This change was a detachment from their previous enslavement to sin and death. Jesus spoke of this bondage to sin in John 8. In this scene, there is a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees where Jesus makes a distinction between himself and his father, and the Pharisees and their father. The main impediment keeping the Pharisees from knowing God is their unbelief in Jesus, himself, whom God has sent. In verse 31, Jesus pushes the envelope with them as he claims to the believers in the crowd, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

The Pharisees immediately recognize the implications of what Jesus is saying. They understand it to mean they are enslaved apart from Jesus, stating how they, as descendants of Abraham, have never been enslaved. Their denial is one of both spiritual and historical truth. They had been enslaved by many nations, most notably by Egypt. Even at the time of the conversation it could be argued they are, in fact, enslaved by Rome, who have control over their homeland and to whom they are subservient.

Jesus clarifies the point in verse 34: “Truly, Truly I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. . . . So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” Judaism taught that the study of the law would set a man free. Of course it was abundantly clear the law had not changed the hearts of the Jewish people—they were still hard-hearted and rejecting their own messianic hope, in Jesus. Jesus was pointing to his enactment of a new kingdom, in accordance with the new covenant, in which they would truly be made free. They would be free from the law and its consequences through the fulfillment of the law found in Jesus. They would find freedom to live in the righteousness of Christ by the

indwelling of the promised Spirit. In Jesus, they would find freedom as he is the truth which they had been looking for as they hoped in a deliverance from the effects and consequences of sin. They had been slaves to sin, but by faith in Jesus and his fulfillment of the law, would find freedom from the judgement the law brought upon them.¹⁶

Dependence on the Holy Spirit

As the previous section points out, a sinner has spiritual barriers to the gospel. As physical beings, they cannot work on the spiritual level. They can reason and debate, but cannot change the human sin condition, and they certainly cannot bring one who is spiritually dead to life or give sight to one who is spiritually blind. Therefore, the person is dependent on the one who can bring such miraculous change on the spiritual level. A spiritual change of heart is the job of the Holy Spirit. The Great Commission makes it clear that the Holy Spirit works through the efforts of his people, but it is, in fact, his work and not theirs. A person is dependent on the Holy Spirit for effectual work in the spiritual realm. In 1 Corinthians 12:3, Paul says, “Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says ‘Jesus is accursed!’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.”

The disciples were primarily uneducated “blue-collared” men. They would have had a typical education through the synagogues, but the theology Jesus taught, based upon the new kingdom under the new covenant, would have been new ideas to them. There would be a concern for them as they were sent out to proclaim a new revelation, that they would have a lack of clarity and understanding. There would be a fear of specific questions posed to them and how they would answer in the moment. To add to the weight of their call, Jesus is asking them to make disciples of all nations, which is a tall order. To achieve this call they must call upon empowerment, which would be outside

¹⁶D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity; Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 349.

of themselves. They will have to remember it is Christ who has overcome the world (John 16:33). Paul will declare he can do all things “through Christ who strengthens him” (Phil 4:13), and it will be through Christ that his labor will not be in vain (1 Cor 15:58).¹⁷

In addressing this concern, Jesus makes clear in Matthew 10:19-20 that, in time, they are not to be anxious about what they are to say, but they are to rely on the Holy Spirit to speak through them. They had come to understand the presence of the Holy Spirit resident in Jesus, but this would have been the first time Jesus would proclaim the Spirit to be with them as well.¹⁸ The same is true of every witness since then.

In speaking with Nicodemus in John 3, Jesus gives an illustration for the work of the Spirit in salvation. He said the Spirit is like the wind. One sees the effects of the wind, but cannot know where it comes from or where it goes. In saying this, Jesus shows that an unseen reality is in the Christian. There would be an unseen nature in the believer not shared by those who were beholden to the paganism of Rome or even the orthodox Jew. He makes clear that there is a work which is not of natural origin and, thus, must be moved in the person only by the supernatural work of the Spirit.¹⁹

The work of evangelism can be seen from two sides: the work of evangelism through the gospel call, and the work of the Spirit in the effective call. The gospel call can be described in three parts: an explanation of the facts concerning salvation, the invitation to respond personally in repentance and faith, and the promise of forgiveness and eternal life.

¹⁷Rienk B. Kuiper, *God-Centered Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961), 58-59.

¹⁸John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Paternoster, 2005), 425.

¹⁹Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 127.

The explanation of salvation is simply telling the sinner the basic facts of the gospel. The first fact is people have sinned. The second is the penalty for their sin is death. Third is that Jesus paid the penalty of sin on the cross. These truths must be explained to the person in need of salvation because these facts are not immediately evident to all men.²⁰ This truth is why Paul asked in Romans 10:15, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”

Once the message of the gospel has been given, the witness invites the person to respond by placing their faith in Jesus and, as an evidence of this faith, repent of their sin. From a purely human standpoint, this is the basic transaction of the gospel and the invitation to respond is the natural progression after the message is given.

Ultimately, when a person receives the message and has responded affirmatively to it, they are promised a hope of eternal life with Christ and a present forgiveness of sin. This hope continues to be a contributing factor in the sanctification process and the final reward from their faith. While these factors are normally considered the normal progression in the person coming to Christ, much more is going on in the spiritual realm that helps the person see and apply these spiritual truths and begin to live them out.

When one comes to faith and repentance, it is a decision based upon the gospel message presented by the witness. At the same time, the call is made effective by the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the sinner. Wayne Grudem defines effectual calling as “an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith.”²¹ The biblical idea of effective calling is best seen in Romans 8:29-30, where Paul

²⁰Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 694-95.

²¹*Ibid.*, 693.

explains how those whom he called he also justified, continuing until they are glorified. It is a work commenced and completed by God.²²

The church is empowered by the Holy Spirit and all of its work requires this power. It is a very real power unknown to the people of other religions in the first century. Jews were known for their idea of conversion, but there was little in the way of transformation among its adherents. Pagans regularly prayed to their gods and offered sacrifice, but their faith was notoriously weak. Pagans new little of hope and held little true faith in the gods they professed faith in. They would preach, but their lives were not transformed by the ideas they conveyed.

Christians, on the other hand, were known for their complete transformation. They became a people of true hope and faith. They believed in the reality of heaven and their salvation to such a degree that many would die joyfully as martyrs for their faith. Most all of them became true followers of the doctrines of their faith and saw themselves as slaves of Jesus, their master. Christians were willing to give up everything, including their lives, in order to find hope in Christ. There was a stark difference between Christianity and all other faiths and it was best seen in the way Christians faithfully lived out their faith as followers of Christ.²³

Without a divine empowerment, the work of beginning the church would have been impossible. For the church to ignore this same power in the present would be to become ineffective. When the church seeks to see transformation of lives from the heart outward apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, it will find its members lethargic and ineffective in their evangelism. As Charles Spurgeon so eloquently put it,

You might as well think of a day without light, life without breath, or heaven without God as of Christian service without the Holy Spirit. Nothing can supply His

²²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 693.

²³Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 203-6.

place if He is absent; the pastures are a desert, the fruitful fields are a wilderness, Sharon languishes, and Carmel is burned with fire.²⁴

The works of the Spirit, which are integral to evangelism, are things such as bringing the heart to life, illuminating the heart to understand its truths, preserving His saints, and consoling and comforting, as well as perfecting those whom he loves. He does all of these things in the person's imperfect nature. It is impossible to shed the sin nature and come into spiritual life apart from his work.²⁵

The problem for the church is that it is impossible to see anything but a person's physical efforts. The power of the Holy Spirit works in a way that is imperceptible to the human senses. Therefore, the witness tends to overemphasize the small human part in evangelism.²⁶ Often the message or delivery of the message becomes the focus of the methodology. In recent decades, many new evangelistic techniques have been marketed. Evangelism curricula such as *Evangelism Explosion* taught evangelistic techniques based on rote memory of long outlines. The student would learn the material and then be able to share it with a lost person, and by the memorization of the outline share the entire gospel. While *Evangelism Explosion*²⁷ does make mention of the Holy Spirit, it is up to the witness to make sure dependence on the Holy Spirit, during the transaction, is not downplayed while concentrating on the recitation of the material.

Other presentations, such as the Romans road to salvation, was a model emphasizing a series of verses from the book of Romans. Each verse shows a further element of the gospel from the sinfulness of all men, to the penalty of sin and the free gift

²⁴Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Your Available Power* (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group, 2000), 106, Logos Bible Software.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 108.

²⁶Lewis Sperry Chafer, *True Evangelism: Winning Souls by Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 4.

²⁷D. James Kennedy and T. M. Moore, *Evangelism Explosion* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1983).

of salvation, and the personal response. The witness need only have a properly marked Bible and then suddenly there was no need to trouble the Holy Spirit at all.

These types of presentations allowed for the witness to simply do the work of learning the presentation, muster the courage to speak, and present the technique with passion and excellence and they would win the lost to Christ. The whole enterprise was based on winning the intelligence of the lost to Jesus and having them make a conscious decision for Christ, but the lost do not need a good decision, but an awakening. They need a new heart that is not drawn toward sin, but instead toward the likeness of Christ. They need a transformation not obtainable by mere mental assent. Too often the church has relied, instead, on methods allowing for an immediate response in order to have some tangible evidence of the conversion. The presenter hopes a decision can be invoked so a clear work can be pointed to as evidence of salvation, and to prove their efforts have been effective.²⁸

On the other side of the equation, there have often been expectations of the person being evangelized to make certain moves to prove their piety and conviction. Charles Finney was well known for employing the use of his “anxious seat.” Finney believed a person must submit to the will of God and fully respond to the gospel call by stepping forward and moving to the anxious seat. The failure to move was seen as rebellion against God. While this response did allow for some visible signs of the movement of God upon a person, often they would confuse the movement itself as the sign of salvation rather than the faith and repentance of the person.²⁹

It is hard to perceive where the work of the Spirit ends and the ability of man begins. Some, such as Jonathan Edwards, believe the Spirit makes the first move in the

²⁸Paul Harrison Chitwood, “The Sinner’s Prayer: An Historical and Theological Analysis” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 30.

²⁹Ibid., 33.

conversion of a believer, one which is unmovable apart from the Spirit. If a person is truly dead or blinded spiritually before conversion, it would seem impossible for them to find their way to salvation on their own.³⁰ Others, like Finney, believe the Spirit is certainly active in the process, but only insofar as guiding the person and bringing illumination to their understanding of the truths.³¹ Wherever the work of the Spirit ends and the person's decision and repentance begins, the new covenant and the New Testament say the Spirit is integral in the process. You cannot separate the conversion of a soul from the work of the Spirit.

The work which must be done in the human heart to convert it from death and sin is vast and supernatural. Sinclair Ferguson states,

The purpose for which the Spirit is given is, therefore, nothing less than the reproduction of the image of God, which is the transformation in to the likeness of Christ who is Himself the image of God. To receive the Spirit is to be inaugurated into the effects of this ongoing ministry.³²

The Effects of the Holy Spirit on the Convert

Believers often depend upon the Holy Spirit to work in their own lives and through their efforts of evangelism, because the Spirit provides very specific biblical functions in the work. If the unbeliever is unable to come to a deep and moving knowledge of the gospel apart from the move of the Holy Spirit, then there are obviously certain things only He can do to bring about the regeneration and repentance of a sinner.

Often, when the witness seeks to share with an individual, they find the person already being softened to the gospel and the Holy Spirit is working ahead of the witness to prepare them for the encounter. The Spirit often precedes the witness in the work

³⁰Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 2:12.

³¹G. M. Rosell, "Finney, Charles Grandison," in *Who's Who in Christian History*, ed. J. D. Douglas and Philip W. Comfort (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992), 248.

³²Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 92

clearing a path to effective evangelism. This work is seen in the preparation of Cornelius, in Acts 10:1-23, to hear the specifics of the gospel and to be willing to repent of His sins and put his faith in Jesus. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, men sent by Cornelius end up on the doorstep of Peter and take him to Cornelius to hear the good news. It is important that the witness understand how the Holy Spirit often goes ahead of the message to prepare the heart to hear the gospel and respond.³³

The Spirit is also responsible to bring conviction of sin upon the heart of the unbeliever, apart from which there is no understanding of the depth of sin and the desire to turn from sin. Jesus makes clear in John 16:7-11 that the Holy Spirit will convict of sin, righteousness and judgment. The Greek word for “convict” in this passage is the word *ἐλέγξει*. The usage in earlier Greek writings was to bring shame or scorn upon a person, but throughout the New Testament the word means to point out sin and call to repentance.³⁴

This conviction breaks down the hubris of the lost who rarely see themselves as sinners. The lost person often uses the lives of those around them as the standard of right and wrong. Even then they often downplay and justify their own sin in order to appease the conscience. Ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit who brings about the right understanding of sin and the depths of their sinfulness so they can see the need for repentance and faith in the one who makes them righteous. In the same way, the Holy Spirit convicts as he places in the lost person the desire for true righteousness and a desire to escape the judgment he did not previously have concern about. Without the conviction of the Holy Spirit, the unbeliever lacks the knowledge and desire to come to Christ

The Spirit’s third function in the unbeliever is to regenerate the lost and bring them to real spiritual life. Ephesians 2:1 makes it clear the lost person is “dead in your

³³Alvin Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 159-60.

³⁴Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21*, The New American Commentary, vol. 25B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 165.

trespasses and sins.” This deadness of heart is why Jesus uses terms of new life found in John 3 when Jesus is explaining this spiritual truth to Nicodemus. Jesus uses the language of a new birth to explain spiritual life must be given at the onset for the person to be reborn.

This basic idea of new birth, or rebirth, implies a natural growth and development, which is not sufficient for the spiritual life of a believer in Christ. The new life is something unobtainable in the physical realm because of the sin nature. In order to truly be in this covenantal relationship with God, one must be brought to a new life, which is on par with the righteousness of Christ and must change the basic nature from sinner to sanctified.³⁵

One final attribute of the Spirit in the conversion of the unbeliever is he brings illumination and understanding to the mind and heart. He makes plain the meaning of spiritual things where Satan has previously blinded the minds. Jesus gives the disciples an understanding of what is to come in the Holy Spirit when in John 14:26 he tells them, “the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things.” The function of the Holy Spirit is helping the mind of the person in understanding spiritual things.³⁶

Paul speaks of illumination in Ephesians 1:17-18. In this passage, Paul prays that God may give “the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.” Paul implies the prayer is for a certain awakening to the truths of the gospel and a depth of understanding the person could fully perceive the glory and wonder of salvation.

The Importance of Prayer for Effective Evangelism

The case being made shows a great deal of supernatural work happening in evangelism. It is important for the witness to have both the words and the power behind

³⁵W. L. Kynes, “New Birth,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 576.

³⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 644-45.

those words. It is equally as important for the Holy Spirit to be working in the heart of the hearer in order for the death, blindness, and enslavement to sin to be overcome. Such power is only brought by the Holy Spirit and thus, it is important the work of evangelism to be steeped in prayer. The witness needs to pray for open opportunities, soft hearts, and receptive ears. The witness must ask the Spirit for the boldness to speak and the words to be spoken. In its simplest form, evangelism is the work of the Holy Spirit with the witness acting as little more than a willing conduit of the power of salvation. Charles Spurgeon said,

We cannot succeed in supplication unless the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities, for true prayer is “praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 1:20). The Spirit makes an atmosphere around every living prayer; within that circle, prayer lives and prevails; outside of it, prayer is a dead formality. As to ourselves, then, in our study, in prayer, in thought, in word, and in deed, we must depend on the Holy Spirit.³⁷

Prayer must be at the heart of the evangelistic effort. E. M. Bounds beautifully articulated the essence of prayer in spiritual work when he wrote,

What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.³⁸

The new covenant is the basis of what God is doing in salvation since Christ. This covenant is the making of a new, spiritual nation with Christ as King. As hearts are transformed and lives changed, the believers begin to bring into the world a new kingdom. This idea is most beautifully seen as Jesus teaches his disciples to pray in Matthew 6. After beginning the prayer by acknowledging the holiness of his heavenly father, Jesus moves quickly to the idea of the kingdom. His prayer is for the immanence of the kingdom coming. For Jesus, this kingdom is not eschatological and it is not territorial. Jesus has opened his ministry in Matthew 4:17, declaring the kingdom of God is at hand. Now, in

³⁷Spurgeon, *Your Available Power*, 103.

³⁸E. M. Bounds, *Power through Prayer* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 10.

the Lord's Prayer, he is calling on God to bring this kingdom, which will be a dynamic kingdom, being composed of people in whom Christ is king.³⁹ Jesus commands all of his disciples to likewise be in prayer for the coming of this kingdom and his kingdom is made manifest in each life transformed by the gospel and made to experience His goodness through the fruit of the Spirit.

As a person acknowledges the nature of evangelism and the impossibility of its work apart from the Holy Spirit, they must also acknowledge the importance of prayer in this work. They are first awakened from their own dead state and then empowered and employed to go and make new disciples in the same way. In John 15, Jesus speaks of himself as the vine and his disciples as the branches. This passage beautifully illustrates how apart from the vine the branch has no life. In verse 4, Jesus makes the declaration that one has no fruit unless one abides in Christ. This passage certainly implies if a believer is to have spiritual fruit, specifically in evangelism, he has to abide in Christ, from whom the power of the gospel resides. Jesus goes on to say in verse 5, "Apart from me you can do nothing."

Speaking of the Holy Spirit who is to come, Jesus declares in John 16:13-14, "He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you." A definite connection exists between the authority of Christ and his authority being bestowed in power upon His representatives through the Holy Spirit. For this reason, prayer must be a vital instrument in the toolbox of any witness. The witness has no power in himself, but works from the power of Christ given through the Holy Spirit.

There is also an admonition to pray for evangelism given by Jesus in Matthew 9:36-38. Jesus looks at the lostness of those around him compassionately stating they are like "sheep without a shepherd." It is here that Jesus states, "The harvest is plentiful, but

³⁹L. J. Kreitzer, "Kingdom of God I: Gospels," in *The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2004), 644.

the workers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send our laborers into his harvest.” Jesus encourages dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for the workers to be sent into the harvest. The emphasis is on God’s power to work and not the witness’s.

As stated, the first church took this type of prayer seriously. They acknowledged the spiritual need in their work and they prayed fervently for effectiveness. The prayer found in Acts 4:29-31 shows they are less concerned with the opposition, but their prayer is for their own effectiveness. They pray for courage to speak, freedom to continue speaking in the face of the threats made against them, boldness, and power. Even the request for power points beyond the works of the witness themselves and to the power found in the message of the gospel.⁴⁰

There are three specific biblical reasons to employ prayer as the basis of evangelistic activity. The first is love. If a person truly loves, as Christ first loved, then the person should desire to see the lost become saved. If a person truly understands the torments of a literal hell, they should pray for the lost to come to know and understand this truth. When Jesus gives the parable of the rich man and Lazarus found in Luke 16:19-31, the rich man, having discovered this torment and anguish found in the flame, begs Abraham to send someone to his father’s house to warn his brothers of the impending doom. This desire seems to have its origin in the familial love of the rich man toward his family. If a person knows about this torment to come and, as this parable shows, death is too late to tell of it, they must have a sense of urgency. They must pray for the lost and their salvation before reaching the same end.

The second reason to employ prayer as the basis of evangelistic activity is faith. Prayer is important because all things are possible for those who believe. These are the words of Jesus to the father of a boy with an unclean spirit found in Mark 9. The

⁴⁰Polhill, *Acts*, 150.

man is required to have faith in order to see the exorcism Jesus is to perform. What is interesting is the man's reply. He states to Jesus, "I believe. Help my unbelief." In the same way, a believer should pray because they believe the Holy Spirit can bring understanding and regeneration into the heart of the lost person. They also pray for the Holy Spirit to help their unbelief when their faith is weak, as well as the faith of those who do not yet believe.

The third biblical reason to pray is for power. The believer is powerless in the spiritual realm as are those who are dead in their sin. Witnesses require supernatural power to work through them as the gospel is shared, and the person to whom the gospel is given needs supernatural power to believe and receive life. James 5:16 states, "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." When man prays, God works. This idea is vital to the understanding of evangelism and prayer.⁴¹

The results of prayer are effective. To be exact, studies show churches who are effective in evangelism are committed to prayer in the church.⁴² While previous studies show only about 5 percent of churches have effective prayer ministries, among evangelistically effective churches, over three-fourths had effective prayer ministries. This study shows a stark contrast between churches who pray and those who do not.⁴³

Conclusion

The gospel shows the plan of God given in the new covenant. In this covenant, God promised to do a work in the heart that would bring it from death to life while giving His Spirit. Through the death of Christ as an atonement for sin, one sees God preparing His people for an indwelling presence of the Spirit. Now, the life a believer is given when he is born-again is supernatural. It is more than a simple decision to trust Christ

⁴¹Lee E. Thomas, *Praying Effectively for the Lost* (Milford, OH: John the Baptist, 2003), 4-5.

⁴²Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 69.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 71.

and begin to act right. It is the changing of a person from the natural, sinful self, to the very likeness of Christ.

Since this change is necessary, it is important to recognize aspects of salvation that are spiritual and not natural. In those spiritual areas, a person is dependent on the Holy Spirit to move in both the witness and the lost person for the work to be effective. It is imperative for the church to teach this spiritual nature of evangelism. It must be connected to the understanding of any evangelistic program or technique. While it is possible to come up with presentations and acrostics to help people remember the basics of the gospel message, it is also important to realize the actual work being done is by the Spirit. Therefore, believers must be active and faithful in their prayer life. They must pray for boldness and wisdom when they speak, opportunities to share with receptive hearts, and the Holy Spirit to take the message and apply it to the hearts of the listener by bringing them to spiritual life and illuminating the heart. They must pray for God to act through His people and in those to whom they speak.

CHAPTER 4

PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

In an effort to teach dependence on the Holy Spirit, through prayer, for effective evangelism to the members of Twelve Oaks Baptist Church, a nine-week project was implemented. The project was composed of three separate phases: the preparation period of two weeks, implementation period of six weeks, and a follow-up and assessment phase of one week. The preparation period involved assessing the knowledge base of the test group and preparing the basic outlines of the sermons to be preached. The second phase consisted of preparing and teaching the subject matter through a six-week sermon series. The third phase reassessed the test group to see how their view of evangelism and dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer had changed after the series.

Preparation: Weeks 1 and 2

The first phase of this project assessed the test group on their knowledge of the subject matter before the series, which began the preparation of the sermon series direction, outlines, and key ideas.

A prayer and evangelism assessment survey was used as the primary instrument to assess the test groups knowledge and practice of the subject matter. The survey employed a multiple-choice questionnaire and a six-point Likert scale (see appendix 1). The multiple-choice section of the survey was assessed the spiritual depth and practice of the individual to be able, later, to distinguish the differences between spiritual levels of the test subjects and their understanding of the biblical concepts. The other portion of the survey, utilizing the six-point Likert scale, assessed the understanding of the biblical concepts. These questions focused on issues dealing with the person's understanding of

the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelism, knowledge of supernatural elements of evangelism, importance and necessity of prayer in evangelism, and the person's own proficiency and practice in prayer and evangelism.

This survey was distributed to fifty-three regular attenders and members of Twelve Oaks Baptist church to complete before the beginning of the sermon series. This group included a range of people from varying age, levels of spiritual maturity, and biblical knowledge. The surveys were completed on paper and then manually entered into an account on the Survey Monkey website in order to use its analysis features.¹

Weeks 1 and 2 were also used to prepare the sermon series to teach the material. The subject matter at hand could have been broad and extensive in its application, so narrowing the subject and selecting applicable texts was difficult. With six weeks to preach through the series, it was important to cover as much of the material as possible without being so detailed or deep that it would be difficult for the general population of the congregation to understand and apply to their own lives.

Six sermons were used to lead the members to more effective evangelism by the power of the Holy Spirit. The series began with the problem of the sinful human heart, explaining the illustrations of spiritual enslavement, blindness, and death and the need to overcome these difficulties to see the problem of sin and the need for forgiveness. The second sermon established the New Covenant, as recorded in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:24-32, as God's plan to deal with the spiritual problem of the sinful heart. The third sermon explained how the Holy Spirit, as an action of the new covenant, quickens a dead heart and brings it to life, lifting the veil from the hearts of the perishing, using 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. Sermon 4 explained that the power of the Holy Spirit is accessible to the believer as he or she shares the gospel with a non-believer. This sermon utilized Jesus' teaching to the disciples before the crucifixion in which he stated He would send them a

¹The results of the survey are discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Helper in John 16:4-15. Prayer in the life of the Christian who is dependent on the Holy Spirit was the subject of the fifth sermon. This sermon encouraged the evangelist to pray both for the lost and for specific encounters in order for their evangelism to be effective. The last sermon in the series was about the importance of corporate prayer in the evangelistic life of the church and encouraged the entire congregation to pray intentionally and evangelistically using Acts 4:23-31 as an example.

The last part of this phase involved promoting the series. The series was well known in the church by the survey distribution. Also, an article in the church newsletter was used to describe the series and its purpose. Lastly, social media was used to promote the series and to encourage regular attendance throughout the series.

Preaching the Series: Weeks 3-8

The most important part of the project was to ensure the members of Twelve Oaks Baptist Church learned to be more dependent on the Holy Spirit, through prayer, to become more effective evangelists. For this reason, it was important for the preparation and presentation of each of the sermons to lead to teaching the biblical basis for this idea and apply this biblical knowledge to their daily lives. Each sermon focused on exegeting the passages and giving application for each one so that members could apply it to their own lives. The purpose of each application was to help the members recognize the power of the Holy Spirit and depend on Him to empower them to more successful evangelistic practice. The following is a breakdown of each week's sermon and how it was applied to promote the intended outcome.

Week 3, Sermon 1: Teaching the Need for Supernatural Intervention

The first sermon in this series was designed to set up the evangelistic problem. The problem was presented in two ways: the evangelist does not have the power to change the human heart; and the lost person does not have the ability, apart from the Holy Spirit, to receive the gospel and apply it.

The sermon was an exposition on 1 Corinthians 1:17-25. The text was broken into three main points to explain the problem of sin and how it permeates the entire evangelistic process. In this passage, Paul explains his own lack of power based on eloquence of speech. To try and reason a person into faith would be to empty the cross of Christ of its power. The person must rely on the supernatural power of the cross to win others to Christ. This first element was important in order to teach the congregation to reverse the impact of many modern evangelistic approaches. These approaches often teach outlines and techniques that guide the evangelist to rely on methods. Paul teaches that the evangelist must rely on the true power in the cross.

This passage also made clear the difference between the way the believer and the unbeliever see the hope found in the cross. To the unbeliever it is foolishness, and to the believer it is the power of God. This difference between the believer and the unbeliever is an important spiritual aspect of evangelism that must be understood to fully rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in the process.

First Corinthians 1:17-25 brings out an essential element that was relied upon throughout the sermon series: the spiritual deadness of the unbeliever. Verse 18 refers to unbelievers as “those who are perishing.” This phrase became a springboard to teach the spiritual blockades that inhibit the full understanding of the gospel. These obstacles are the three biblical illustrations of spiritual enslavement, blindness, and death. John 8:31-34 was applied to show that, in Jesus’ words, all who practice sin are a slave to sin. Second Corinthians 4:4 was applied to show that Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers and keeps them from seeing the glory found in the gospel. The last passage used was Ephesians 2:1, which says people are dead in their trespasses and sins. Through these three passages, the case was made that spiritual obstacles around the heart of the unbeliever can only be met by spiritual means. Spiritual means can only be supplied by the spiritual, thus the need of the power of the Holy Spirit in every evangelistic interaction.

Week 4, Sermon 2: Teaching the New Covenant as God's plan for Salvation

Sermon 2 concentrated on the new covenant as God's plan to deal with the problems of the heart. The point was made that David should have understood the blessings of God as well as anyone. He was chosen and given great wealth and authority. He knew the grace and love of God, and yet, 2 Samuel 12 tells the story of David committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband. This opening illustration made the point that even people who ought to be enjoying and living in the righteousness of God still long for sin and reject the righteousness of God. Ezekiel 36:24-30 was the focal passage to explain that God would fix this problem through a new covenant and that the new covenant is the basis of salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ.

The biggest part of this sermon was an explanation of the promises of the new covenant. The first promise of the new covenant was that the people of God would be gathered. This promise would certainly touch the hearts of those who had been exiled and longed to return to Jerusalem, which many would eventually have the privilege of doing. Of course, for those under the new covenant of Christ, this does not seem to be the same benefit. The gathering has two applications. One would be that Christ has come to establish a kingdom, not of locality, but of kingship. This kingdom would be made up of those whose faith is in Christ as king. As Philippians 3:20 states, the people of God become citizens of heaven. It also shows an understanding of the restored kingdom revealed in Revelation 21 and 22. Both are an example of a gathering of the people of the new covenant as it is seen in the salvation of Christ.

The next benefit of the new covenant is the cleansing seen in Ezekiel 36:25. This cleansing is applied by Jesus in John 3:5 when He tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and the Spirit. It is a cleansing from sin provided by the sacrificial atonement of Jesus. Because of His death, the believer is forgiven and made clean.

Ezekiel 36:26 speaks of the replacement of a heart of stone with a heart of flesh. The obvious illustration is that a heart of stone is unable to beat and thus signifies

death. The new covenant promises a heart of flesh that can take on life that was previously dead, spiritually. The point was made that the Bible refers to lost people as spiritually dead and thus the need for new life or being born-again. It is also the basis of Paul's explanation of believers becoming new creations in 2 Corinthians 5:17. The new covenant is the promise that those who were previously dead will receive new life in Christ.

The next promise was about the redemption of lost, sinful people who are unable to keep God's commandments being caused to walk in His statutes. For a people previously unable to keep the law, the new covenant gives hope that God will deal with the sinful heart and, after placing His Spirit within them, will cause them to be righteous. He will, in effect, take sinners and make saints out of them by changing their nature from sin and cause them to long for His righteousness.

The last benefit explored in this passage was the blessing of God. Through Ezekiel, God is once again promising a land where the crops will grow and famine will not harm them. He will deliver them from the calamitous effects of sin and bring about the shalom peace that He had promised and that they longed for. This promise shows that in the new covenant the believer experiences the peace of God through the fruit of the Spirit in the immediate. At the same time, there is coming a restored kingdom in which the people of God will again experience His peace in the way it was prescribed for the Garden of Eden and for Israel, as the land flowing with milk and honey.

The rest of this sermon showed that this new covenant is applied in the death and resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. As new believers find redemption and forgiveness in Christ and begin to live out the fruit of the Spirit, they will be living out the benefits of the new covenant. The points of the sermon were applied to show that evangelism needs to be the fulfillment of many great promises of God, and that salvation is more than just a contractual agreement whereby people ask Jesus for salvation and God is forced to let them in to heaven. Salvation is a very real transaction that changes the person into the righteousness of Christ and allows them to experience the

joy and peace of that righteousness. This sermon also explained the supernatural nature of the gospel. It is God's promise and requires supernatural help to fulfill it.

Week 5, Sermon 3: Teaching How the Holy Spirit Works in the Heart of the Lost

Sermon 3 was utilized to prepare and preach the sermon on the Holy Spirit's role in salvation from the lost person's perspective. This sermon concentrated on the need of supernatural intervention for a person to respond to the gospel. Second Corinthians 4:1-6 was the text exposed to teach this point.

This sermon began with an illustration of one whose life showed no hope of change or salvation. Brian Welch, guitarist for the alternative metal band, Korn, was one whose life was characterized by drugs, alcohol, and sex, but was converted by Christ.² In such a case it would be assumed that one was too far gone to be saved, but the truth is that a lost person simply cannot see the gospel. He is blinded by Satan and are unable to perceive the biblical truth and the hope found in Christ. This illustration set the stage for understanding the need for the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Second Corinthians 4:1-6 begins with Paul explaining that the power of the gospel is not found in his eloquence of speech, but is found in the message. This point is vital in teaching people about dependence on the Holy Spirit. As previously mentioned, many of the current evangelistic programs are based on rote memorization of an outline or a list of things to say and verses to recite. Often the evangelist depends upon himself and his own words to convert the heart. Paul explains, "We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's Word" (2 Cor 4:2). For Paul, the message is enough and has the power to save the lost apart from anything that he could do to motivate or manipulate a decision. This first point shows how the conversion of a heart depends on the work of the

²"Brian Welch—White Chair Film—I Am Second," accessed August 2, 2017, <http://www.iamsecond.com/seconds/brian-welch?>

Holy Spirit, through the gospel, and is not dependent on one's words or abilities. The lost person's salvation is a result of the Holy Spirit's work, not the evangelist's work.

The next point made in this sermon was based on Paul's explanation of the "veil" that is over those who are perishing. It was explained that this is a reference to 2 Corinthians 3:12-16 where Paul's explains how Moses had to place a veil over his face, after returning from Sinai, and the presence of God, because his face would be aglow from the experience. He explains, "But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away" (1 Cor 3:14). Paul continues with this imagery comparing this veiling to the way that Satan (the god of this world) "has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor 4:4).

This scripture explains that there is a real spiritual blinding taking place in the unbeliever. He cannot simply see the gospel and respond, but must be given spiritual sight, thus the need of the Holy Spirit to do that which is spiritually necessary. The problem for the lost person is more than simply decisional and that there is a very real obstacle which must be overcome for a person to believe.

After explaining this problem, Paul shows from his personal experience how he came to see this light. He reveals in verse 6 how God "has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus." Apart from this supernatural intervention by Christ on the road to Damascus, seen in Acts 9, Paul would continue to be in rebellion to Christ and the gospel. This divine intervention and revelation was necessary in the transformation and conversion of Paul because apart from it he could not see who Christ was. He is using his own experience as an illustration of the necessity of a lost heart to have the truth revealed to them.

The purpose of this sermon was to teach that one must be dependent on the Holy Spirit in evangelism because of the spiritual blindness of the lost person. This sermon aided in understanding the supernatural nature of evangelism and propel them to

prayer in dependence on the Holy Spirit to share the gospel. It will also help the listener see the necessity of the intervention of the Holy Spirit in bringing light to the lost person so that he or she may see and understand the truth of the gospel.

Week 6, Sermon 4: Teaching the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Evangelist

The fourth sermon of the series concentrated on the role of the Holy Spirit in the work of the evangelist. The last sermon touched on the idea that Paul did not speak with eloquence and needed only the gospel. While Paul was known as a great rhetorician and explained the gospel well, he was convinced that his power in evangelism was not from him, but from his message. This sermon continued with that idea to show that the evangelist is not trying to win the lost in his or her own power, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. The intention of this sermon was to help the evangelist trust in the power of the Holy Spirit and His work that is done through the evangelist.

Interestingly, this sermon was preached the Sunday following the racial uprising in Charlottesville, Virginia. To lay down the need for the Holy Spirit's help, this situation was posed for an opening illustration. After explaining the deep divide between people over race in culture, the question was posed, do you think that if you were there you could share the gospel, explain the need for reconciliation through Christ, and convince people, in and of yourself, to change their mind. The obvious answer is that in most cases this would not be possible. It was then explained that the same is true in talking people out of their sin and trusting in Christ.

This sermon taught three main points coming from John 16:4-15. The first was that a helper would come. This idea comes from Jesus stating that He must go away for a helper to come. Jesus, here, is reorienting the hearts of his disciples who are more concerned about the sorrow of Jesus leaving them than about the plan after He is gone. It is Jesus' desire that they see the death as part of the plan of God and that there is more to follow for His disciples. He intends to send a helper, or comforter, to come alongside

them in building His kingdom. They fear being left without His wisdom and His power to make a difference, but He reassures them that the helper will be by their side to do the things they saw from Him.

This point was applied to the church by explaining the same helper, the Holy Spirit, is available to them in the work that God has called them to. This work includes the work of evangelism.

Jesus continues to explain, in this passage, the benefit of the Helper. This Helper will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgement. It was important to show how these are three things the world needs conviction about as they tend to be things lost people diminish in importance. They do not see their own sin as horribly sinful, though every sin is an unholy offense before God. Of course, as Jesus states, knowledge of Him will bring with it the knowledge of sin. Apart from Christ as the supreme illustration of righteousness still physically in front of the world, people will tend to compare themselves to one another and conclude that they are righteous. Therefore, the Holy Spirit will need to convict the world concerning righteousness. Last, the Spirit will convict the world concerning judgement because people are following the ruler of this world in to judgement. Conviction of these three things necessitates a move of the Holy Spirit upon a dead heart, as such, conviction will not take place in human power.

The last point of this sermon was that the Holy Spirit will conduct. The idea of using the word “conduct” was that the Holy Spirit leads and guides His people. Jesus concludes this statement in John 16:12-15 by explaining there is still more to say, but His disciples are not yet ready for all of it. The problem is that after His ascension He will not be there to speak to them; therefore, the Holy Spirit will be their guide in the physical absence of Christ.

This statement by Jesus does not mean that there would be more revelation after His ministry, but that he would guide in the application of their faith as they work to

spread the gospel. Phillip following the guidance of the Holy Spirit in sharing with the Ethiopian eunuch, and Peter preaching at Pentecost, would be two appropriate examples. The Holy Spirit guides them to apply the teaching of Jesus in those moment. In the same way, the Holy Spirit guides the church in building the kingdom of Christ through evangelistic efforts.

John 16:4-15 makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is at work in believers as they carry out His will. The Holy Spirit is present with the believer as he or she follows Christ. He is active in convicting the hearts of the people to whom one speaks. He leads and guides believers to do His will. Because of these things, promised in the coming of the Holy Spirit, followers of Christ can have confidence that there is power behind their evangelistic efforts. They can share knowing that the Holy Spirit will work through their efforts to draw hearts to Himself.

Week 7, Sermon 5: Teaching the Power of Prayer in the Spirit-Filled Life

Sermon 5 was devoted to teaching the importance of prayer in the life of believers as they pursue an evangelistic mission, using 1 Timothy 2:1-8. In this passage, Paul encourages Timothy to pray for the mission before them and shows how prayer makes a difference and opens the way for more evangelistic power. While this passage is not intended to be a theological treatise on the matter of prayer, it does show, in very real terms, Paul's dependence on the Holy Spirit in prayer in continuing to proclaim the gospel.

The teaching in this sermon was broken down into four basic points. The first was that the church should pray for peace. Overcoming world powers who opposed the church would require spiritual power that was greater than themselves. This passage would have been written in a time when the powers of Rome and the temple would have far exceeded the political power of a small church. For the early church, the task of carrying the gospel to the world would have seemed quite daunting. Because of this, Paul encourages prayer in all forms be lifted up for those in authority. His reasoning is so that

they “may lead a peaceful and quiet life leading to a simpler path to living godly and dignified in every way” (1 Tim 2:2).

In the same way, the church today should be praying for peace. The cultural climate is against the church in much the same way as it was in the first century. With such an antagonistic society, prayer becomes an important part of the church’s mission as prayers are lifted up. Paul’s missionary fervor reveals that the end of such prayers is not that they have peace by not engaging lost people. To the contrary, the prayers are specifically for the purpose of peace as they oppose the sin in the culture around them. The church today has the call of sharing a gospel through which the Holy Spirit brings conviction of the very sin so often celebrated, leading to a great deal of anger and hatred toward the church. For this reason, prayer for peace should be an integral part of every evangelistic church.

The second point was that the church should lift up prayer for the mission. Paul points out in 1 Timothy 2:3-4 that prayer for peace is good because God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” In this one statement Paul gives the driving force behind his missional lifestyle. His life is driven by his love for God and fulfilling God’s call. If it is God’s desire that all men be saved, then it is also Paul’s desire. For this reason, it should also be the desire of the church; this desire should drive the church. The force behind Paul’s request is the evangelistic mission.

As recipients of the same Great Commission, it should be the church’s prayer as well, that the church continues to desire the same mission as God; the salvation of all men. The salvation of all men is the greatest mission of the church, and dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer should be an integral part of the church if they are to achieve the mission. This point showed the need of the church to be in prayer, both for evangelistic zeal on the local level, but also for all lost people around the world. The teaching of 1 Timothy 2:3-4 should also cause the church to be in prayer for missionaries

and evangelists throughout the world that they too would have the same peace to continue to pursue godly, evangelistic lives.

Next, Paul turns to the theology of salvation found in the mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus. Verses 5 and 6 explain the theology of salvation that is the backbone of his evangelism. As the one mediator between God and man, Jesus is the only way of salvation. It was pointed out in the teaching of week 4 that it is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Apart from the Holy Spirit it would be impossible for someone to see Christ as such a mediator. Paul includes this theology of salvation in this request for prayer because of its importance in the message and in spiritual warfare.

The church should also be prayerful about the message of salvation. If Jesus is the only way of salvation, then the message about Jesus must be correct and it must be exclusive. This point was used to teach about the exclusivity of the gospel. The church must pray that the message that it carries remains true to Scripture. The gospel preached must be the true gospel to make a difference.

The last point was a reminder to pray for all people. In verses 7 and 8, Paul reiterates his call as a preacher and an apostle, a calling that takes Paul to many lands to spread the gospel to the gentiles. Part of this call for prayer is for Paul to share the gospel to the effect that people in “every place” become believers and worshipers. Paul shares a vision of people in all places who are praying and lifting up holy hands in unity with one another. Paul has not yet been to every place so Paul is not talking about people already established in their faith, but those who are to come. It is a prayer for the mission of God placed on Paul. These verses are a reminder to Timothy of the need to pray for those who would become believers.

The intention of this sermon was to teach the members to be in prayer for the evangelistic mission of the church. This passage sees the difficulty of powerless people in the face of world-sized problems that only the Holy Spirit could achieve. Being as it is

the call of God upon the church to evangelize the nations, this prayer is integral to the task at hand. Believers should be in prayer for peace as they share, praying for the mission, the plan of salvation, and the people to whom the church should go and seek to reach.

Week 8, Sermon 6: Teaching the Evangelistic Power of a Praying Church

The final week of the series used Acts 4:23-31 as a realistic illustration of the power of the praying church. The sermon began with an explanation of the context of this passage to set the stage for what occurs. It was explained that this passage was shortly after Pentecost and Peter and John had just done a great sign and wonder through the power of the Holy Spirit by healing the lame beggar at the gate of the temple. After healing the man and preaching a strong sermon, they are confronted by the Jewish authorities. After being reprimanded by the authorities, they were warned not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus, to which they replied, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20).

They were released and immediately went back to their friends to tell them what happened. It was at this point that a spontaneous prayer meeting broke out among the people of the church, which led directly into the first point of the sermon—prayer unified them. They knew that all the things which had taken place were the work of the Holy Spirit, with whom they had recently been filled. Together they lifted their voices in prayer and praise for what took place and prayed that God would do even more.

The heart and soul of their prayer was that they were the agents of the God of all creation. They prayed Psalm 2:1-2, which was a prayer of David when he was opposed by other nations. The question at hand is, who can oppose the Lord and His anointed. In the present context, the question is just as relevant as it would have been for David. In each case, these people, both David and the fledgling church of Acts, were the agents of God’s work and therefore they could not be thwarted. This prayer was a reminder of the

power that was behind all they were doing. This passage was used to teach that people in the church today, who are just as called to evangelize, have the same power and authority of God behind their efforts. The church can go out against the world and know they have the same power as the first century church.

This prayer of the early church goes on to reveal their understanding that the world can enact their plans, and even feel that they have succeeded, but God is still triumphant. Their proof was in the fact that Herod and Pontius Pilate were used of God, unwittingly. They had been victorious over Christ in executing Him, and yet, God used the crucifixion as the greatest act of love and salvation the world has ever known. This truth was a strong indicator that even while the church was persecuted and opposed by the Jews with great strength, God was still using them to bring the world to Christ. In the same way, the church today can trust that as they are faithful to the Great Commission of Christ they will be victorious as God is still working through His church. This passage served to teach how prayer realigns the church to see God's hand in their work.

Last, prayer emboldened the church. The prayer in verse 29 calls upon God to hear the threats placed upon them and to embolden them in the face of such threats. Facing such difficulty, this young church could have given up and stayed quiet, but this would not have served the cause and call of Christ. It was imperative that they continue to speak to remain obedient to Christ and to spread the gospel. As confirmation of the prayer being heard and answered, verse 31 says, "The place in which they were gathered was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." This sign served to further embolden the church to continue without fear.

In the same way, the church must pray for boldness to confront the world today. In the face of a moral revolution that is so prevalent and with so many turning away from faith and the church, the church needs a supernatural work of God emboldening it to continue His work and to continue to speak truth.

This sermon was applied by teaching that the church must pray together and their prayer must be more than just prayers for sickness and financial difficulty. The church must corporately pray for the mission of the church and for an evangelistic zeal and boldness. The church was encouraged to take seriously corporate prayer opportunities and to use them to gather the people of God, pray for the lost, and pray for boldness.

Evaluation: Weeks 9-10

At the conclusion of the sermon series, the same surveys were redistributed to the fifty of the congregants who had been in regular attendance throughout the sermon series. The results of the surveys were entered in to Survey Monkey for analysis, which is discussed in the concluding chapter. The survey was passed out in the church sanctuary during the Sunday of the last sermon and the following Wednesday night. Fifty surveys were returned and evaluated.

In order to fulfill the final goal of the project, an evaluation form was filled out by thirty key members and leaders. This evaluation was utilized to determine how well the subject matter was organized, preached, and applied. This evaluation is discussed in the concluding chapter as well.

Conclusion

Twelve Oaks Baptist Church is a congregation that seeks to be biblical and evangelistic. Like many churches, Twelve Oaks tends to be lethargic in its evangelistic efforts and does not frequently rely on the Holy Spirit to conduct evangelistic efforts. This sermon series taught the members of Twelve Oaks the supernatural nature of evangelism and the need for Holy Spirit intervention in the process. It was believed that the surveys would show that the church has grown in understanding and application of these important principles and would begin to engage the Holy Spirit in prayer to that end.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the different aspects of the project and its effectiveness, examining each of the stated goals of the project. Each of the three goals had a specific end in mind, as well as a way to measure them. The measurements included a pre-project survey and a post-project survey, as well as a sermon series evaluation. The data yielded by these instruments were used to determine if each goal was reached as well as to offer other information to be used to better understand the implications and effectiveness of this study. The project was also evaluated as to the strengths and weaknesses and how the study might be done differently or more effectively if the project were repeated. In the end, this chapter offers thoughts on the theological and personal implications of this study.

Evaluation of the Purpose and Goals of the Project

The purpose of this project was to teach the members of Twelve Oaks Baptist Church dependence on the Holy Spirit, through prayer, for effective evangelism. Like many churches, Twelve Oaks tends to agree with the concept of being an evangelistic church, but there are not many conversions to the faith through the evangelistic efforts of the members of the church. This project was an effort to teach that the nature of evangelism is spiritual and that it takes spiritual power available only through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the members need to depend on the Holy Spirit in prayer to see evangelistic success. The intended outcome was that the church see evangelism in these spiritual terms and become more confident to share.

A few of the statements on the survey helped identify the church's knowledge of the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelism. There were some unexpected, yet positive responses to these questions which indicated that the church already had some understanding of this purpose. The survey contained the statement, "I believe that the Holy Spirit will intervene in the life of a lost person based upon the prayers of saved people." All but two participants responded "agree somewhat" to "strongly agree." These responses would indicate that most of the people had a basic belief in the power of the Holy Spirit in their personal evangelism. The statement, "I believe that prayer is necessary for effective evangelism," received only "agree" and "strongly agree" responses, which was extremely encouraging. Another statement, "I have experienced what I believe to be the intervention of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of a lost person," had 39.22 percent of those surveyed responding "strongly agree," which was more than any other response. Overall, it looked like an encouraging start to the project.

Goal 1

The first goal of the project was to assess the members' understanding of prayer as it relates to evangelism. This goal was considered successful after fifty surveys were completed and evaluated. These surveys revealed a great deal about the theological understanding of the church and the amount of prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit involved in their evangelistic efforts.

In analyzing the results of the surveys, it was interesting to find the evangelistic practice of the participants. In the initial survey 82.69 percent responded "strongly agree," that the primary mission of the church is to reach the lost. On the other hand, only 30.77 percent responded "strongly agree" that the church has an urgency for reaching the lost. The strongest response to that statement was "agree somewhat," with a 40.38 percent response. It would seem the members of Twelve Oaks understand the urgency of evangelism, but do not feel as though the church is practicing it to its fullest potential.

In analyzing the surveys, I frequently refer to the weighted averages. The weighted averages are calculated by putting a value to each possible response with “strongly disagree” receiving a value of 1 and “strongly agree” receiving a value of 6. With these values, it is possible to see the overall average of the respondents to a question.

The completion of the second survey showed some differences, albeit slight. Some were higher, but some were unexpectedly lower. Using the weighted averages of the respondents, there was only a .03 increase in the post-series survey response to the statement, “The primary mission of the church is to reach lost people.” The good news is that the response of those who strongly agree went from 80.43 percent to 84.31 percent, and none disagreed with the statement in either the pre- or post-series surveys.

Other responses showed a slight downward trend in the area of evangelism. Of course, the whole sermon series aimed at making more effective evangelists, but in the end, there was a drop in the responses to two of the major statements. “Evangelism is the responsibility of every Christian,” and “God expects me to share the gospel with the lost” both showed overall declines in their responses with weighted average differences of -.03 and -.07, respectively. While these responses are somewhat disappointing, they are very slight decreases and both showed a slight increase in the “strongly agree” category. It is also encouraging that the statistics show on both of the surveys that the church tends to see the worth and importance of evangelism.

Another disappointing result was in the area of evangelistic prayer. After the preaching of the sermon series, the statement, “Evangelism is made more effective through intercessory prayer,” was met with a .21 decrease in the weighted average of the response.

The series of survey statements about the evangelistic prayer practice of the participants began by simply asking if the person prays regularly for the lost; however, the following statements specifically ask if the participant prays for the lost in their direct

family, extended family, neighborhood, workplace, and then for the lost that they do not know. One hundred percent of the respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that prayer was necessary for effective evangelism. Using the weighted averages of the respondents, they indicated that they prayed mostly for their family at an average of 4.84 and their extended family at 4.75. For the others, it dropped to under 4. There was a steep decline in the evangelistic prayer for those outside of family with almost half admitting that they, in some way, disagree with the statement that they pray for the lost in their workplace. To be exact, fewer disagreed with the statement that they pray for the lost that they do not know.

Another interesting point from this series of statements became clear when comparing those who placed their faith in Christ between zero to ten years ago with those who placed their faith in Christ ten or more years ago. In the series of seven statements about evangelistic prayer, the weighted average of each question was .73 lower on average for those who have been saved over ten years. In fact, newer believers all responded with “strongly agree” on the statement, “I believe that prayer is necessary for effective evangelism.” These results revealed a statistical difference that shows that newer believers are considerably more agreeable to praying for the lost in every aspect. It is important to note that only six respondents were newer believers compared to forty-six who have been saved ten years or more.

When the same analysis is applied to compare those who pray daily and those who pray multiple times per week, it renders similar results. The weighted average between the seven statements for those who pray daily is 4.77. For those who pray multiple times per week the average was only 3.95 yielding a .82 average difference. It is apparent that those who are more serious about their daily prayer life are also much more serious about praying for the lost.

These results remain fairly consistent when compared to the post-sermon series surveys. They are statistically similar when considering the length of salvation and the

amount of prayer. When considering the overall survey, not taking in to account the length of time as a believer or amount the believer prays per week, the average of the seven statements about praying for the lost show a slight increase of .18 after the sermon series. While not a huge increase, it does show some improvement, which is the hope of any sermon series. Since one of the main parts of the purpose is to teach the congregation to pray, even this small increase is welcome.

Overall, the differences in the weighted average of the statements were disappointing, with a sizable percentage of them trending slightly downward across the board. For most, the variance was so slight as to be statistically even, showing little to no real change.

What was encouraging was to see the vast majority of these statements being answered affirmatively, overall. The truth is, most of the members of Twelve Oaks strongly agree that they pray regularly for the lost in general, especially when it comes to their families. While they are not as strong when it comes to the evangelistic prayers for their neighbors and coworkers, it was still overwhelmingly agreed to.

Another encouraging revelation of the survey was in the fact that 65.38 percent responded that they “strongly agree” that the Holy Spirit was as important in their evangelism as their words. This response shows a strong belief in the Holy Spirit’s role and importance in evangelism, even prior to the sermon series. In this area the series may have made an even bigger impact as post-series survey revealed that 77.55 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

This same trend was seen in the in the statement, “I believe that a person’s decision to follow Jesus is dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit.” In the pre-series survey, none responded on the side of disagreement and 59.62 percent responded “strongly agree.” The post-series survey revealed that 68.83 percent strongly agreed with the same statement, although one responded that they slightly disagreed. Of the respondents, 96.08 percent disagreed with the statement, “I believe I can convince a

person to follow Jesus if I give him or her a convincing argument, without the intervention of the Holy Spirit,” with only two respondents answering on the side of agreement. In the end, it is still a gain to see the understanding of the integral role of the Holy Spirit going up.

Goal 1 was completed by the completion of the surveys and by analyzing the differences. While the surveys did not show amazing differences in any of the statements, it did show that the church has a basic understanding of the importance of evangelistic prayer and the role of the Holy Spirit in effective evangelism. The results of the surveys also show that many people who already had some basic theological understanding of these issues became stronger in their agreement and, hopefully, stronger in their application in their evangelistic life.

Goal 2

The second goal of the project was to develop a six-week sermon series to teach about the necessity and implementation of dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism. This goal was discussed extensively in chapter 4. The first two weeks of the project were used prepare the specific texts and determine the direction of the sermon series. The series first taught why the role of the Holy Spirit is integral to effective evangelism, using 1 Corinthians 1:17-25. It was established that true evangelism is not simply bringing the lost person to pray a prayer of salvation, but it is helping a lost person see their sin, and thus their need for Christ. The purpose of the first sermon was to show how simply talking a person into salvation is impossible because they cannot see their spiritual need nor see how Christ can change their condition.

The second sermon, utilizing Ezekiel 36:24-30, focused on the supernatural elements contained in the new covenant and how God intended to fix the sin nature of the lost person, making them righteous by giving them a new heart and by placing a new Spirit within them, causing them to walk in His statutes.

The third sermon explained 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 and revealed the need of the lost person in coming to Christ. The passage talks about how the lost are “veiled” and “cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” This sermon taught the need for the evangelist to depend on the Holy Spirit to take away the veil and allow the lost person to see these facts.

Next, the series taught that the evangelist was also inept at breaking through the spiritual blindness of the lost person. Therefore, the evangelist needed the spiritual help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. This sermon used John 16:4-15 to show that it was Jesus’ intention to send the Holy Spirit for the guidance of His people after His physical departure. It also showed how the Holy Spirit, promised in the new covenant, would be the power and wisdom of the believer under that covenant. It is therefore important that the evangelist draw upon this wisdom and guidance to be effective in spiritual endeavors, such as evangelism.

The last two sermons in the series were designated to teach the importance of prayer in the life of the evangelist and the church. The fifth sermon utilized Paul’s request for prayer from 1 Timothy 2:1-8. The significance of this passage was that it showed the need of the Holy Spirit’s intervention in the world at large to allow for the peace necessary to continue the spread of the gospel. This passage also emphasized prayer because of God’s desire that all men be saved. This passage was used to apply the need for prayer in the life of the evangelist.

The last passage was Acts 4:23-31, and showed that the church was dependent on the Holy Spirit for power in evangelistic efforts, to see God’s hand in their difficulties, and to embolden them in their evangelistic zeal. This passage was chosen to apply the need for corporate prayer for the lost.

After choosing the major points and the course of the sermon series, each sermon was studied and organized into preaching outlines. The sermons were delivered to the entire congregation over the course of six Sundays, thus completing the second goal.

Goal 3

Third goal of the project was to effectively preach the sermon series. Effectiveness was evaluated by surveying thirty members of the congregation who had attended a majority of the sermons. The series was considered effective when 70 percent of those surveyed evaluated the course as effective.

This survey consisted of seven questions to evaluate the organization, content, and effectiveness of the series. After evaluating the surveys, it was determined that every question was answered as agreeable and that all evaluated the sermon as effective.

All three of the goals that were introduced have been met.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project

Strengths

Part of learning from a project such as this is the opportunity to evaluate it on the basis of its strengths and weaknesses. This project had certain strengths that will be of great benefit in the future of Twelve Oaks Baptist church and to me, personally, as a pastor. The first strength is that this project covered a subject that needed to be addressed. As evidenced by the survey, many people in the church today believe in the concept and importance of evangelism, but are not practicing it. There is a disconnect between the theology and practice that needed to be addressed. This series afforded me, as a pastor, the opportunity to encourage the congregation to take the great commission seriously.

It also allowed me the opportunity to speak to the congregation about the spiritual nature of evangelism, an aspect often missed in evangelistic training, today. There is often a separation between the spiritual and the practical aspects of evangelism. Church members are taught what to say, but are not taught about the spiritual warfare going on around them. This project taught the biblical understanding of the spiritual side of evangelism that is often missed.

The project addressed many of the fears people have concerning their inability and lack of knowledge, and encouraged them to rely on the Holy Spirit. In the end, it is

my hope that this project will begin a culture change at Twelve Oaks to become more evangelistic as the members realize that they are not alone—the power of God is behind them and within them. This knowledge will add a new layer of understanding from which to encourage the church to fulfill the great commission.

Another strength of the project was teaching prayer as spiritual warfare, which is something already beginning to have an effect on the congregation. There is a tendency to pray only about the physical needs of people, but not the spiritual. Again, the hope is that there will be a culture change in the church as to how they view prayer and its effects on the lost. In the Wednesday night prayer meeting following the sermon series there was a new element added when the congregation acknowledged the lost around them that they would like to pray for. A new list was comprised of the lost people and the church began praying over them, along with the other prayer needs. Twelve Oaks is beginning to pray evangelistically.

Similarly, prayer was taught as an integral part of the life of the evangelist. It is not simply a spiritual discipline or an addendum to the Christian life, but intrinsic to the life of the person who is faithful to the great commission. This series was a way of teaching the active nature of prayer in the course of evangelism in order to be faithful to and dependent on the Holy Spirit.

One last strength of this project was it allowed for the assessment of the congregation in the areas of evangelism and prayer. This assessment allowed me to see the areas that the church needs to work on so that future sermons and discipleship curriculum may be more specific to those needs. It is abundantly clear that there is a need for more evangelism training and encouragement. The assessment also revealed that many in the church are ready and prepared for the church to expand its evangelism and prayer ministries, as many strongly agreed that they would be willing to participate in these types of ministries. Prior to the surveys I was not aware of how many would be

willing to participate. These groups may not be large at first, but there are definitely willing participants.

Weaknesses

It is important to note that the project also had some weaknesses. One weakness had to do with the nature of this particular subject. The project dealt with the spiritual side of evangelism. While the series taught a great deal about the subject of evangelism and each sermon had an application, it did not say much about the mechanics of evangelism. In other words, the person who felt unprepared to evangelize may come away from this series with a better understanding of the Holy Spirit's role, and they may even feel more secure in walking up to someone and beginning an evangelistic conversation, but they still may not know exactly what to say. It would be good to couple this sermon series with an evangelism training that reinforces the major elements of the gospel and systematizes the outline to make sure that they speak of the need for salvation, the application of the cross, and turning to Christ in faith and repentance for true heart conversion.

Another weakness identified in the process was the fact that this study may have been better presented in a discipleship class setting than in a sermon series. Preachers often assume that anything can be dealt with during a sermon, but the classroom setting offers more opportunity for interaction and discussion. The students are more able to get feedback in the classroom setting. In this type of setting, it would have been easier to hand out illustrative notes and materials to make the subject matter more memorable. It would have also allowed for a longer series, which could have been more in-depth. Weekly sermons over a lifetime make a difference in the maturing and teaching of a believer, but in a deeper, more theological subject, such as this, it may be better taught than preached.

The questionnaire could have been stronger. It was written early on in the process of the project and was drawn up quickly by simply thinking through the main

teaching points of the project. In the end, it seemed that there were too many questions and they were disjointed in their order. A more ordered and direct questionnaire would have been valuable. Of course, it would also have been nice to have had someone who was well-versed in statistics and research to help in that area, which is generally not a strong point for the average pastor.

One last weakness was in applying the idea of dependence on the Holy Spirit. Dependence is, by its nature, passive. Dependence is recognizing the weakness of oneself and allowing another to work on the person's behalf. While this dependence on the Holy Spirit was facilitated by prayer, it is still a hard concept to apply. How does a person become more dependent, especially when, in most teaching curriculum, one is trying to teach a person to become more independent? It would have been valuable to teach different ways to depend on the Holy Spirit. Another sermon or two illustrating a biblical character who displayed the characteristic of dependence on the Holy Spirit would have been beneficial. Stories such as Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch would have made for another sermon to show how it is applied. Even still, due to the subject matter's spiritual nature, teaching the material would have been difficult.

What I Would Do Differently

While much was beneficial about this study, I would do several things differently if given the chance to do it again. The first thing I would do would be to clarify the questions on the survey. Being a pastor, and not a researcher, I tried to come up with questions that were pertinent to what I was studying; however, in evaluating the questions, I feel that I could have been more precise in what I was asking and in the order that I was asking the questions.

One question that I heard several times from people taking the survey was, "What is intercessory prayer?" While I thought that this would be a normal term for a church-going crowd, I found that, for many, this question was asked in a way that was difficult for them to understand. I would normally respond, "Do you pray on other

people's behalf?" Phrasing it that way in the survey would have brought clarity and less confusion for those taking the survey. It would have been good to have spent more time reviewing the questions and making sure that they made sense to the general population.

Originally, this study was going to be completed through a lesson plan, teaching the congregation as a Wednesday night prayer meeting study. I tried to figure out how to get it before a major segment of the congregation in more of a teaching style. In the end, I chose to do the project as a sermon series, which made it possible to reach many more people. At the same time, it did not allow for the discussion and interaction that would have been beneficial for the congregation to truly understand and internalize the concepts taught.

In the setting that I chose, many people sat and listened but did not truly engage the material. I would love to have the opportunity to teach this series in a classroom setting to see if it made more of an impact on the participants. In that setting, there could be more time spent on applying the concepts. There could be a session where the participants could develop a prayer list and begin to pray together for the lost for which they are concerned. The class could include a session where the participants would go out to evangelize and then return to discuss and reflect on where they saw the Spirit move. In the classroom setting, there would have been many more opportunities, like these, to apply the learning.

Since the project was done as a sermon series, and not a class curriculum, there could have been a parallel Sunday school series where the application could have been brought forward. Developing some basic handouts and Sunday school class outlines could have guided the Sunday school teachers to discuss what was being said in the sermons in a way that would have forced engagement with the material. While preaching is a vehicle in discipling the people of the congregation, it does tend to lose the element of engagement and allows those in the congregation to listen passively.

Theological Reflections

This project afforded many opportunities for both the preacher and the congregants to grow in their theological understanding. A great deal of this subject matter was theological in nature and there was much more to deal with than the six-week sermon series could fully flesh out.

The first thing that this project taught me was that there is a disconnect between the knowledge of the need for evangelism and the practical application of that knowledge. It was interesting to note that the surveys bare out the fact that the majority of the people of Twelve Oaks understand the need for evangelism, understand that it is the major purpose of the church, understand that evangelism is the responsibility of every believer, and believe that a person needs a movement of the Holy Spirit in order to come to Christ.

The problem is that the questions in the survey about their personal practical application of evangelism revealed that that they were not strong in these areas. They often answered much more positively to general questions about evangelism than they did on questions of application. In other words, they knew the importance of evangelism, but they were not as quick to practice it. A much larger percentage of people did not agree with the statements about praying for the lost. Many also could not agree with the statement that they consistently share their faith with the lost.

Overall, knowing that the congregation understands what they should be doing is a great place to start. It is not an issue of teaching the need for prayer and evangelism at Twelve Oaks Baptist church, but simply applying it. Practical evangelism could be encouraged through more practical ministries. The church has just begun an evangelism ministry that will focus on intentional evangelistic opportunities. While the group willing to participate is small, several are willing to step out in faith. A new prayer ministry in the church will also be devoting some of its time to evangelistic prayer. In the next few years, these ministries could allow for solid growth in the application of these principles.

Another area of theological growth in this study was the new covenant. While many may have heard of the new covenant, it is not an area of biblical theology that is frequently taught. This sermon series allowed the opportunity to teach a whole sermon about the new covenant prophesied in Ezekiel 36, by showing how this covenant is enacted in the cleansing of the cross of Jesus, thus making holy the believer and making them a suitable dwelling for the Holy Spirit. This exciting biblical concept helps the message of salvation spring to life. When Jesus picked up the cup in Matthew 26:27-28, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins,” he is saying that the new covenant begins when His blood was shed.

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit in John 16:7 and Acts 1:8. When the coming of the Spirit is seen in Acts 2, it signals that this new salvation in Jesus Christ is the enacting of the new covenant. Understanding the new covenant shed light on the basis and origin of salvation and helps to see the benefits of salvation in a deeper way. The entire series continuously pointed back to the new covenant as the basis for understanding the supernatural elements of salvation.

That understanding leads to another area of theological reflection. The supernatural nature behind the gospel transaction is often understated in modern discussions of evangelism. Evangelistic training often teaches the discourse necessary to have the conversation, but these trainings rarely talk about the spiritual death of the lost or the inability to speak to the spiritually blinded heart in purely physical terms. Effectively sharing the gospel requires the willingness of the evangelist to speak, the knowledge to share the important elements of the gospel, but also the supernatural enlightenment of the Holy Spirit to apply the truth to heart. It takes the quickening of the lost person’s heart to hear and apply the gospel message. This sermon series taught these elements of evangelism in a way that would cause the evangelist to see himself as dependent on the Holy Spirit and drive him to prayer.

Twelve Oak needs a basic culture change and through this teaching the church is headed more in that direction. The church needs to have a culture of evangelism and prayer. Since the major beliefs are in place, leading them to apply those beliefs should begin the changes necessary to create this culture.

Personal Reflections

This project has been invaluable to me as a pastor and a theologian. It forced me to think through the process of sermon writing and how best to help the congregation apply the material. It was interesting to see, through the surveys, that many understand biblical truth and yet do not seem to “get it” when it comes to the importance of applying these biblical truths. They seem to understand what they ought to do, but understanding does not insure that they are, in fact, doing it. I am learning that the Holy Spirit must play a role in what I am doing as a pastor. I must realize that some are not being moved by the weekly sermon, but some are. It is not my responsibility to make sure that every person in the congregation is being moved by every sermon, but to identify those in whom the Holy Spirit is working and engage them. While many will never be moved to a true Holy Spirit dependence in evangelism through prayer, many will. It will be through these people that the Holy Spirit will move and the culture change will take place. It will be through organizing these people and allowing them opportunities to practice these concepts that change will begin to occur in the life and practice of Twelve Oaks.

Sermons do not always show the immediate change that pastors would like to believe occurs. Pastors hope that every sermon would cause a movement of people flooding the altar with tears of repentance. While there is certainly the occasional movement as such, this is not the norm. Over time, sermons move the congregation closer to Christ and to living out their faith. They have the value of nourishing the congregation, but pastors should not expect that people will always immediately respond. In the case of the present sermon series, I did not have the immediate change that I would have like to have seen in the surveys. However, at the same time, it is my hope and desire that the

people have a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit and His work and that understanding, when applied over time, will make a lifelong change in their hearts and evangelistic efforts.

This study also helped me see the need for real spiritual transformation in the people of the church over decisional faith and rule-following. It seems in this Bible-belt culture that many people are a part of the church because of cultural reasons. Their faith is based on nothing more than the fact that they said a sinner's prayer as a child and they always went to church. This misunderstanding would be the cause of so many who knew the importance of prayer and evangelism, yet did not apply these principles. The heart and soul of this sermon series was to teach about real spiritual transformation, and to teach how real conversion was a matter of awakening the heart, not just stirring the mind. It is my desire to see more real spiritual transformation in the people of the church brought about by the Holy Spirit. I would like to see more real spiritual power in the church and less formality. I would like to see people sharing the gospel because the gospel transformed them, and not because they feel they must.

While evaluating the second set of surveys, I came across one where the respondent had apparently chosen to answer only certain questions with many left blank. I could not understand the reason for choosing to skip so many of the questions. A few days later I had an interaction with one of the respondents who told me that she did not like the survey because it was "too personal." I tried to explain that there were questions on the survey about their personal prayer and evangelistic lives so I could assess if they were practicing their beliefs. While I have no way of knowing if this was the same person, it became clear that this was probably the reason that the survey came back with so many unanswered questions. Many Christians today often feel uneasy about sharing this information because of the difference between their belief and practice.

The last area of personal reflection is about the congregation and their willingness to walk through this process with me. When I came to Twelve Oaks five

years ago, they knew that I was working towards a D.Min. degree. The transition to a new church, among other factors, certainly slowed the progress and has been a factor in this process taking so long. It has been wonderful to see that throughout the five years the people of this congregation have supported and encouraged me to finish this degree. During project phase, they remained loving and encouraging and were willing to do whatever it took to help me complete the project. This process has drawn me closer to the people to whom God has called me to minister.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to teach the members of Twelve Oaks Baptist Church dependence on the Holy Spirit, through prayer, for effective evangelism. I believe that this purpose has been accomplished. The project has taken a great deal of time and effort, but it has paid off in learning more about the subject and teaching it to my congregation. While the immediate changes were not seen through the surveys, it was discovered that a biblical and theological foundation was laid and many are willing to apply the teaching to make our church more effective in evangelism.

Ultimately, the project was a time of intense study and growth for me as a pastor. The entire project has been beneficial to me and the congregation. My ministry at Twelve Oaks has grown stronger through this study and it has allowed me to grow deeper with my congregation in fulfilling the great commission together. It is my hope and prayer that we will continue to grow together in dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit and become a more effective evangelistic church as we pray together for the lost.

APPENDIX 1

PRAYER AND EVANGELISM ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding and beliefs about biblical principles of evangelism and prayer. This research is being conducted by Brandt T. Lyon for the purpose of implementing his Doctor of Ministry project. In this research, you will be asked to answer this questionnaire. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this questionnaire, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Directions: Answer the following questions by placing a check by the multiple-choice questions.

1. How long have you been a member of Twelve Oaks Baptist Church?
 A. Less than 1 year D. 10-20 years
 B. 1-5 years E. More than 20 years
 C. 5-10 years

2. What best describes your present church attendance?
 A. Seldom D. Three Sundays per month
 B. One Sunday per month E. Every Sunday
 C. Two Sundays per month

3. Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?
 Yes
 No

4. When did you place your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?
 A. I am not a Christian D. 5-10 years ago
 B. Less than 1 year ago E. 10-20 years ago
 C. 1-5 years ago F. More than 20 years ago

5. How often do you pray?
 A. I do not pray D. I pray multiple times per week
 B. I rarely pray E. I pray everyday
 C. I pray once per week

Please turn the page

Directions: Respond the following statements by circling the answer that most accurately depicts your opinion using the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree		
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA		
1.	The primary mission of the church is to reach the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2.	Our church has a sense of urgency for reaching the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3.	Our church has a burden for the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4.	I believe our church needs a prayer ministry that focuses on the salvation of lost people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5.	Our church needs to provide more training in the area of praying for the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6.	The church should have a dedicated ministry for praying for the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7.	Evangelism is the responsibility of the pastor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8.	Evangelism is the responsibility of the Christian.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9.	God expects me to share the gospel with the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10.	Intercessory prayer is a priority in my life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11.	I consistently share my faith with the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12.	I feel adequately prepared to share my faith with a lost person.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13.	I believe that prayer will help me identify lost people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14.	I have witnessing opportunities on a daily basis.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15.	I have set aside time for daily prayer.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

Please turn the page

16.	I would like training on how to pray more effectively.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17.	I would actively participate in an evangelistic prayer ministry if one were offered in our church.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18.	Evangelism is made more effective through intercessory prayer.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19.	The Bible teaches that God responds to the prayers of His people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20.	My intercessory prayers are primarily for the salvation of people, rather than for health or other needs	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21.	I believe that the Holy Spirit responds to the prayers of saved people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22.	God has answered some of my specific prayers.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23.	I believe that the Holy Spirit will intervene in the life of a lost person based upon the prayers of saved people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24.	I believe that prayer is necessary for effective evangelism.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25.	I pray regularly for the salvation of lost people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
26.	I pray regularly for the salvation of lost people in my direct family.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27.	I pray regularly for the salvation of lost people in my extended family.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28.	I pray regularly for the salvation of lost people in my neighborhood.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29.	I pray regularly for the salvation of lost people in my workplace.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30.	I pray regularly for the salvation of lost people that I do not personally know.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
31.	I have experienced what I believe to be the intervention of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of a lost person.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

Please turn the page

32.	I believe that the Holy Spirit has responded to my prayer for a lost person.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
33.	I believe prayer will give our church a sense of urgency to reach the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
34.	I believe prayer will help our church fulfill the great commission.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
35.	I believe God is satisfied with my prayer life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
36.	I believe that I should pray regularly for the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
37.	I believe participating in an evangelistic prayer ministry will make me more aware of the lost around me.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
38.	I believe that the Holy Spirit is as important as my words in evangelism.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
39.	I believe that a person can place his or her faith in Jesus apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
40.	I believe that a person can place his or her faith in Jesus on the basis of my witness apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
41.	I believe that a person's decision to follow Jesus is dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
42.	I believe that I can convince a person to follow Jesus if I give him or her a convincing argument, without the intervention of the Holy Spirit	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
43.	I believe that I am good a sharing my faith with lost people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
44.	I am confident of my ability to share my faith with lost people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
45.	I regularly lead people to faith in Jesus.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 2

SERMON SERIES EVALUATION

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding and beliefs about biblical principles of evangelism and prayer. This research is being conducted by Brandt T. Lyon for the purpose of implementing his Doctor of Ministry project. In this research, you will be asked to answer this questionnaire. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this questionnaire you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Directions: Answer the following questions by circling the answer that most accurately depicts your opinion using the following scale:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
	SD	D	DS	A	AS	SA
1. The series taught the material that was proposed.	SD	D	DS	A	AS	SA
2. The preacher taught the biblical and theological background of dependence on the Holy Spirit in prayer for effective evangelism.	SD	D	DS	A	AS	SA
3. The preacher taught how to apply the principles of prayer for effective evangelism.	SD	D	DS	A	AS	SA
4. The instructor's material was well organized.	SD	D	DS	A	AS	SA
5. The instructor's presentation was effective.	SD	D	DS	A	AS	SA
6. The preacher led you to understand the need for dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism.	SD	D	DS	A	AS	SA
7. Your knowledge of the subject matter increase as a result of the sermon series.	SD	D	DS	A	AS	SA

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING THE MEMBERS OF TWELVE OAKS BAPTIST CHURCH IN PADUCAH, KENTUCKY, TO DEPEND ON THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH PRAYER FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

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Chapter 1 proposes the goals, context, and rationale of the project. It explains the three goals: assess the need for the teaching of the project, develop a sermon series to teach dependence on the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective evangelism, and preach the series and reassess the knowledge of the members concerning the material.

Chapter 2 explains the biblical and theological basis for the project. This chapter explored five biblical texts that relate to the issue of the Holy Spirit's role in evangelism and the need for the evangelist to pray for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be effective. It also explores the need for prayer on behalf of the one evangelized for the Holy Spirit to apply the gospel and bring the spiritual heart to life.

Chapter 3 deals with the theoretical and practical basis for the project. This chapter offers the foundational principle of the New Covenant and how God now interacts through the evangelist and in the heart of the one being evangelized to bring about spiritual life. Through research of evangelistic materials, this chapter shows the need for the work of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of evangelism and why the evangelist must engage the Spirit in prayer if the evangelism is to be effective. This chapter also explains the different biblical illustrations for sin and shows why each is supernatural, and therefore, must be dealt with on a supernatural level through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 4 explains the process of completing the project. As a sermon series, the project is designed to assess the participants on the front end of the project. The sermon series was prepared and taught over the course of eight weeks. After the series, the participants were again assessed as to their knowledge of the subject material to determine the effectiveness of the series.

Chapter 5 gives an evaluation of the project. It assesses the effectiveness of the project, including strengths and weaknesses as well as things that worked and things that would have made the project more effective. It also includes a personal assessment of what I learned about myself in the course of the project.

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