LESSON 13

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

JUNE272026

Scripture Story: Matthew 16:18; Revelation 7:9-17; Ephesians 2:19-22.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapter 58.

like light



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"Christ has given to the church a sacred charge. Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that the Savior desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Savior's love. All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the power of Christianity" (*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 600).

keytext

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

(Ephesians 2:19-21)

what do you think?

Write down every adjective that first comes to mind when you hear the word "evangelist":

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List the positive traits that come to mind when you think of an evangelist:

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did you know?

The church is not a build-ing. It is not a worship service. The church is not a foundation with bricks. The church is a force tasked with the calling to shine light in a dark world. Simply put, the church is you and I. When we are serving, loving, giving, encouraging, helping others, and shining light—then we *are* the church! This means we are the only evangelists that Jesus has for His church.

In the first few centuries people understood Christ's vision for the church. Onlookers were amazed by the radical faith and grace that Christians showed toward all people—the sick, the poor, the marginalized. Thus, this radical group of believers had no name. They were simply called *ecclesia*. It means "assembly," because that is the church—it's an assembly of ordinary folk committed to shining the light of Jesus wherever they go.

INTO THE STORY

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!'

"Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?'

"I answered, 'Sir, you know.'

"And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. "Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them," nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.' "

(Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:19-22; Revelation 7:9-17, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the passages in the *Into the Story* section.

Underline key words that you think capture the main ideas.

Circle any words or phrases that give you a sense of hope.

Put a star next to every word that refers to Jesus Christ.

What is the one big idea in each text?

Matthew 16:18 _____

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Revelation 7:9-17 _____

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Ephesians 2:19-22 _____

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What is the one major theme that emerges from the three texts?

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Is there one message in the readings that relates to your life today? What is it?

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How does the thought that we are being "built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" change your view of "church"?

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How can you be light in a dark world this week?

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punch lines

"You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven" **(Matthew 5:14-16, *The Message*).**

"For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" **(Hosea 6:6).**

"Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples" **(1 Chronicles 16:8).**

"You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" **(1 Peter 2:5).**

"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" **(1 Corinthians 11:1).**

further insight

"There is nothing that the Savior desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 600

Sabbath

Read Hosea 6:6.

Review your ideas about evangelists in the *What Do You Think?* section. The Bible calls all of us to be evangelists.

To discover your unique witnessing style, answer the following questions. Then look for opportunities this week to witness in your own community.

Sunday

Read 1 Chronicles 16:8.

Take the following quiz to determine your evangelistic style.

1. You're on the bus when a woman next to you starts asking about your church. Which approach are you most likely to take?
   a. Share a number of Bible texts to substantiate your beliefs.
   b. Invite the person to an evangelistic series that your home church is hosting.
   c. Confront the woman with truth.
   d. Offer to carry her heavy bags as you both get off the bus.
   e. Tell her how you became a Christian.

2. Your dad has never been a believer. What do you think the best approach would be to interest him in spiritual matters?
   a. Appeal to his intellect.
   b. Invite him to church.
   c. Explain to him that each of us have to decide whether we accept God's gift of salvation and ask him to make a decision.
   d. Introduce him to Jesus by the way you live.
   e. Share your personal testimony with him.

3. If you were teaching a class on how to be a contagious Christian, what approach would you emphasize?
   a. Knowing Bible texts to defend your beliefs.
   b. Building relationships with unbelievers so you feel comfortable inviting friends to an evangelistic series.
   c. Speaking the truth with conviction whenever the opportunity arises.
   d. Volunteering to serve the poor so that people see an evangelistic sermon in you.
   e. Knowing your own testimony so you can share it every chance you get.

Scoring: If you had mostly A's: You prefer "the intellectual style." You appeal to a person's reason. An example of this style is Paul (see Acts 17:17).

If you had mostly B's: You prefer "the invitational style." You invite others to hear an evangelist preach. An example of this style is the woman at the well (see John 4:28-30, 39).

If you had mostly C's: You prefer "the confrontational style." You confront people with the truth. An example of this style is Peter (see Acts 2:14).

If you had mostly D's: You prefer "the service style." You help others. An example of this style is Dorcas (see Acts 9:36).

If you had mostly E's: You prefer "the testimonial style." You simply tell others what Jesus has done for you. An example of this style is the demon-possessed man (see Mark 5:18, 19).

Depending on the situation, you might use all of these methods to reach out to people with God's message of love.

Monday

Read Ephesians 2:19-22.

Review the *Key Text* and then consider this commentary on the passage from the *Life Application Bible:*

A church building is sometimes called God's house. In reality, God's household is not a building, but a group of people. He lives in us and shows Himself to a watching world through us.[1]

Tuesday

Read 1 Peter 2:5.

Compare and contrast Ellen White's statement in the *Flashlight* section with this quotation:

"It is not merely the duty of the minister, but of every member of the church, to represent Christ to the world. They are to catch the rays of light from Jesus, and reflect them upon souls blinded by error and infatuated with false doctrines" (Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 153).

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* for this week and circle the one that speaks most directly to you. Why is that text most meaningful to you right now?

Thursday

Read 1 Corinthians 11:1.

Read chapter 58 in *The Acts of the Apostles* and pray that God will show you how to continue to build on the rich heritage of church leaders that have gone before you.

Friday

Read Matthew 5:14-16.

Pray over this question: "God, how can I be the light of the world today?"

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[1] *Life Application Bible,* New International Version (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), p. 2134.

this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapter 58.

**Unlikely Leaders* is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.