2026-03-21: Preaching & Evangelism II

In the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. One God. Amen.

Who is the Evangelist?

Evangelizing to Non-Believers

From George B. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkAmEY2cfD0 around 40min

How do we know what we know? Epistemology...

1. Senses (Material)
2. Mind (Concepts)
3. Heart (People)

How do we know God?

1. Senses? No
2. Mind (Reason)
3. Heart (Faith)

Evangelizing to Non-Believers, which eye do we use? Only the 2nd.

"Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there." (Acts 17)

He cannot be seen by the 1st, and the Atheist does not know Him with the 3rd. But we must know Him by the 3rd in order to effectively talk about Him with the 2nd.

People must see Christ in your life before they hear about Him from your mouth.

Sharing our faith is like music. The words of the Gospel are like the lyrics, but your lifestyle is like the melody of the song. The melody enhances the words just as our lives enhance the message of the gospel.

Development of the Evangelist

1. Be a Good Christian
2. Be Merciful

3. Be Ready to Answer
4. Be a Wise Evangelist

These are steps in order… none of them is ever complete, but unless I first show progress in the first one, I can't go to the second one. Unless I show progress in the second one, I can't go to the third one. Unless I show progress in the third one, I can't go to the fourth one. Sometimes I am jumping to the third or fourth one and completely neglecting the first or second.

- First step is to work on myself…
  - "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify Your Father in heaven…" - but my light is extinguished. If my light is off, then I have nothing to offer. If my cup is empty, I cannot fill others. If the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?
  - Personal Experience with God
    - The Apostles when they went out to preach, they were preaching from their personal experience. See what St John says at the beginning of his first epistle:
      - That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." (1 John 1:1-4)
    - Have I heard, seen, looked upon, handled, tasted, the Word of Life? Do I have a Personal Experience with God? Do I walk with God? Do I KNOW Him as a Person? Or I only know "of him" from reading books and hearing sermons?
    - Imagine…
      - T-Mobile Salesman who has AT&T
      - Honda Salesman who drives a Toyota
      - Someone who has depression trying to convince you to be happy
      - Someone who is single trying to tell you how amazing marriage is
    - 



    - The fact of the matter is that no one likes a salesman, because of how much that role has been abused… no one likes being manipulated or coerced or pressured. No one likes to be approached and trying to be forced to buy something that they don't want or need… salespeople that do a good job say "I'm not here to push something on someone that they don't need… I'm here to expose them to an opportunity they may not have been aware of. And if it makes sense, then great!"
- Seeking Virtue
    - Being good, honest, humble, happy, loving, serving, pure, self-controlled
    - Turning away from money, lust, pride and worldly pleasures
    - "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness." (1 Timothy 6:11)
    - "… that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." (Philippians 2:15)
- Suffering for Righteousness' Sake
    - "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:10)
- Trusting in God
    - Behold, God *is* my salvation,
      I will trust and not be afraid;
      'For Yah, the Lord, *is* my strength and song;
      He also has become my salvation.' (Isaiah 12:2)
    - We sing this in Pascha all the time, and it's easy to say, but do I do it?
    - Do I trust God with my finances, with my health, with speaking a word, with my problems?
    - If I do not trust God, then I will be afraid… and if I am afraid, how will I evangelize?
- Led by the Spirit
    - Being Spirit-led means I know my mission. Every activity in my life is guided by the Holy Spirit. Is Spiritual first.
    - At the level of the parish church
        - Every activity in the Church is subservient to the Sacramental Life. Every event, activity, meeting, outing, lecture, zoom meeting, etc. is subservient to the Sacramental Life.

        - So every action in my life is subservient to the Kingdom of Heaven
        - “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25)
        - And I will bear the fruit of the Spirit
    - Holy
        - Set-apart to God
        - Separate, Different from the world
    - Profound Sense of Forgiveness
        - Confident in the Sacrament of Repentance & Confession
        - I know that I am forgiven
        - If I do not have the sense of my forgiveness, then I will be loaded with anxiety, fear, guilt.
        - *“There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1)
- That is the most important step
    - The Evangelism to the circle CANNOT happen or be effective unless I am doing this step
- Second Step is to be merciful
    - Now I will take my “be good” and apply it relationally… to start to have mercy with others and show love to others.
    - Again, if I am not already in the love of God, overflowing with God’s love… then I will struggle to show love to others (especially to the stranger, the enemy, the different one, the difficult personality, etc.)
    - Treat People Decently
        - Good manners
        - Listen
        - Sensitivity to others and to their feelings
            - If there’s no sensitivity, then I am just imposing my agenda on someone
            - If I speak without listening first, I am talking to someone who isn’t willing to listen
    - Understand the Human Condition
        - Human Condition is good, bad and ugly… sometimes all at the same time!
            - People can be loving and devious, noble and petty…
        - Be wise as serpents, gentle as doves… trust, but verify
            - Don’t assume the worst about someone… but also don’t assume that everyone is a saint.
        - Be involved in the joys and sorrows and frustrations of real people in a real world
            - Visited someone who is working in a restaurant 60-75 hours per week… he gets one day off per week and it’s usually on Monday, when we don’t have liturgy. Him and his wife have a young son who finishes school at 2pm. His wife can’t find a job because she has to find one that is 9am-1pm. She’s willing to do anything… But she needs to be able to take her son to school, then go to work, then get off, pick her son up, and take him home. And if she finds a job, she’ll get a car so she can do that. But without a job, she won’t be able to afford a car, nor will she need one. And the guy wants to study and get back to his career that he had in

Egypt… imagine that I go to this family and my response to them is “you have to attend Vespers.” - it will be as if I didn’t hear a single word that they said.
        - People in the real world are a single mom trying to raise and support her children
        - A veteran with PTSD trying to drink his memories away at a bar
        - The elderly woman who goes and walks around Publix because she doesn’t have anything else to do during the day
    - Joy… Lighten Up
        - Relate to someone with a smile
        - Sense of humor - we don’t have to train to be stand up comics, but we should be able to see the humor in a situation and the humor in the human condition
        - Sometimes we are very solemn and off-putting when speaking of God
            - NOTE: We do not make light of the Holy Things, or be irreverent
        - “A merry heart does good, *like* medicine,
          But a broken spirit dries the bones.” (Proverbs 17:22)
    - Honesty
        - I need to be honest about my experience with God and how God has worked in my life - with discernment
        - And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.“ (1 Timothy 1:12-14)
        - I need to be discerning about what I share, and with who - for example, it may not be okay to share with my child in Sunday School about my personal sins.
        - But we have all dealt with failure, pain, and loss, as well as joy and gain. These are common factors among us. If we are honest about our own needs and how God deals with them, that is enough to relate to anyone.
- Third Step is “be ready”
    - “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15)
    - Many times, we skip to this step. I want to be ready. I want to know the Apologetics frameworks and concepts and ideas. I want to learn how to defend the faith, and then I want to go out and do it! But this is not the first step… and all we have to do to see that is to read the next verse.
        - “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.” (1 Peter 3:15-17)
        - So before be ready, comes
            - A hope that is in you
            - Meekness and fear
            - Good Conscience

        - Revile in good conduct in Christ
        - Suffer for doing good
    - The commandment to “always be ready” is the one we are excited about. It’s the one where I read books and intellectually convince myself and I can help people overcome barriers to faith, etc.
    - But we already saw…
        - Unless you are LIVING the faith, you will not be effective in PREACHING the faith.
        - Unless you have a HOPE in you, no one will ask you a reason for the hope that is in you
        - Unless you are preaching with meekness and fear, with mercy and love to your neighbor, you will not be effective
    - Apologetics
        - Arguments for the Existence of God
        - Answers to “Science” questions about Evolution, Cosmology
        - The Problem of Evil and Suffering
        - Reconciling God’s Foreknowledge and my Free Will
        - History of the Church
        - Reliability of the Bible
        - Evidence of the Resurrection
        - Uniqueness of Christ
        - Truth Claims
        - Comparative Religions
        - Good understanding of modern issues and politics around them
            - Sanctity of Life
            - Marriage, Sexuality, Gender
            - Immigration
- Fourth Step is “the wise evangelist”
    - So far, in the first three steps was the passive evangelism. I am living out my Christian life and calling, I am a light in the world. If someone sees me, they are directed to God. If someone asks me or debates me, I answer. Now, the fourth step is the one who goes out - the active evangelism.
    - ”The fruit of the righteous *is a* tree of life,
      And he who wins souls *is* wise.” (Proverbs 11:30)
    - ”Those who are wise shall shine
      Like the brightness of the firmament,
      And those who turn many to righteousness
      Like the stars forever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3)
    - “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.“ (James 5:20)
    - We CANNOT go to the first four steps without the first three.
    - The fourth step requires WISDOM
    - Wisdom of Self-Awareness
        - Someone who struggled with alcohol may not be the best person to go preach in the Nightclub

    - Someone who is struggling with lust should not go and evangelize to the harlot
    - Someone who is not well-versed in Islamic Apologetics, should not go and preach in an Islamic country, or go debate the Muslim Student Association
    - St Peter did not know his limitations, and so he fell
  - Wisdom of Timing - know when to speak
    - “To everything *there is* a season,
      A time for every purpose under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3)
    - If someone is grieving or mourning, that’s not the time for theological debate or philosophical discourse
    - If someone is angry, that’s not the time to correct him
  - Wisdom of Context - know the situation
    - Doesn’t make sense to go preach in a prison and tell them to abstain from food until 3pm… their schedule has them waking up at 6am for breakfast, work, exercise, etc. then lunch at 11am, then free time. Maybe dinner is at 5pm. So what is he supposed to do? He doesn’t have the freedom to eat at 3pm…
    - Does it make sense to preach about fasting and abstaining from food and how that leads to Christ? What about to a Muslim during Ramadan? Context matters.
  - Wisdom of Moral Boundaries - don’t compromise
    - If someone is not wise and he reads “to the Jews I became as a Jew” - maybe he takes it too literally… “I should try vaping to show them that I can be like them and then I can minister to them.” Of course not… I have forsaken the Law of Christ, and the result is that they will think I became like them - not the other way around.
    - Wisdom means to be able to say to someone “this is okay, but this needs adjustment.”
  - Wisdom of Discernment in Growth - don’t overload someone
    - “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.” (John 16:12)
    - Milk before solid food
    - Christ and the love of Christ and relationship with Christ - before Theological Minutiae
  - Wisdom of Knowing the Audience - deal with different people differently
    - Samaritan Woman - Relational
    - Nicodemus - Philosophical/Theological
    - Rich Young Ruler - Confrontational

Resources

- St Habib Girgis
  - Preaching: Its History and Importance in the Christian Church Generally, and in the Coptic Orthodox Church Specifically
- Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty
  - Evangelism and the School of Alexandria
  - Preaching in the Post-Apostolic Era
  - Evangelism: 1 Corinthians
  - Evangelism: 2 Corinthians

- Michael Keiser
  - Spread the Word
- Fr Daoud Lamei
  - The Harvest is Plentiful
- HG Bishop Antonios Marcos
  - Theology of Mission
- When you fast
  - Page 29
- Alexander Schmemann
  - Church, World, Mission
- Eugene Gotwalt, PhD
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFVQIN1uQ-s - Why Orthodoxy does not recruit - and why that matters
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFrgS81Dlog - Convert Burnout

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