

Bringing Good News, 2: "Our Confidence"

Various Scriptures

Pastor John Eom

Personal Introduction

At this time, we're going to hear God's Word together. But before we begin, let me just share a couple important notes.

- First, the sermon notes and manuscript are available on our website to help you follow along.
- Second and lastly, let's put aside any distractions as best as we can, so that we can give our hearts and our attention to God's Word.

Sermon Series & Scripture Introduction

We usually preach expositional sermons where the sermon is based on one passage of scripture. But currently, we are in the middle of a brief topical sermon series where we look at one important topic through various passages from the Bible. This sermon series called, Bringing Good News, on the topic of evangelism.

Last week we looked at what Our Motivation is in evangelism. Our motivations for evangelism is our personal experience of the gospel, our delight in obeying Christ, our love for the lost that comes from Christ, and ultimately our worship of God.

Today we will cover the second part called, Our Confidence.

Sermon Introduction

- So, motivation is important as it gets us started in doing the good things we want to do. We understand the why and we have the desire to follow through. But confidence is also important, because confidence is what helps us not give up or back out when we face difficulties in the task.
- With confidence, we feel strong, we sense joy and purpose and in what we do and in our responsibilities. But, when we lack confidence, it seems like all strength leaves us. Our joy is taken away and we even lose the sense of purpose in the good things we should do. For me, when I lack confidence in being a father, the joy becomes such a burden to me. In my work as a pastor, when I lose confidence, suddenly I feel paralyzed in making decisions, in writing sermons, and speaking in front of people. But when we lack confidence, it exposes what we have placed our hope and trust in.
- In our own efforts, we can try to muster up confidence from our own abilities or our past accomplishments. But this is just the world's way of building up self-confidence that just doesn't work. It's an approach called, "fake it till you make it", and it's just a way to look like we are confident, only asserting ourselves to act like we are confident. But we need a confidence that is real and lasting, especially in our evangelism.
- This is why it is important to talk about confidence in our approach and efforts as we try to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to others. The source of our confidence as believers in Christ must not be from ourselves. It must not be in our own abilities or in the results of our efforts. We must not try to assert self-confidence but rather seek the source of our confidence in God alone. All the more, when we lack confidence in our personal evangelism, we must look to God. Because our true confidence is from God who desires to save people, who is mighty to save many, and who will powerfully use us, even in our inadequacies, to save them through our faithful evangelism.

The One Thing

So, the One Thing for us today is this:

Bring the good news of Christ confidently, trusting that our God will save many.

Overview

We'll look at the three ways Christians might lose confidence in our evangelism. And then we'll address them with encouraging, confidence-building truths in God's Word:

1. Insecurity: "I'm not sure what to say."

2. Risk: "I might lose this relationship."
3. Failure: "I might mess up their salvation."

Prayer for the Preaching of the Word

We confess that in our evangelism, we often feel insecure, we worry about the risk and we fear failure. And we are left unconfident in the glorious good news of Jesus Christ. So we ask that you will humble us, lead us to depend upon you. Direct our hearts to seek confidence in you alone.

Speak to us through your Word to our need and make us confident in you as we carry out our responsibility to live for you and make you know.

Sermon Outline

I. Insecurity: "I'm not sure what to say."

- We gain confidence in the gospel itself, which is God's powerful, life-giving Word that we use in evangelism.
- Our insecurities can quickly make us lose confidence as we share the gospel. But, we gain confidence in the gospel itself, which is God's powerful, life-giving Word that we use in evangelism.
- To understand this source of confidence, we have to first revisit our definition of evangelism to make sure we understand why "speaking" is important. Remember that the word "evangel" in evangelism refers to "good news." And the nature of "good news" is that it is shared to others, so that's where we have the concept of evangelism. If we're talking about any kind of "good news", people naturally "evangelize" about good things they have experienced in their lives. But biblical evangelism refers to the best "good news" we could ever know from the bible—it's the gospel of Jesus Christ. So what is evangelism? It is proclaiming the gospel to persuade others to put their trust in Jesus Christ.

What is evangelism?

Evangelism is proclaiming the gospel to persuade others to put their trust in Jesus Christ.

- So the activity of evangelism is communication. Words are absolutely necessary to proclaim the gospel, but it's not just about presenting the good news of Jesus. The goal in evangelism is to convince people to not reject the gospel but respond to the gospel with repentance and faith. So even more words are absolutely necessary to persuade people to put their trust in Jesus. We have to be convinced that evangelism requires words, lots of them, and often over multiple conversations and multiple meetings to proclaim the gospel and persuade others. So we have to make sure our lack of confidence here doesn't make us excuse ourselves from speaking the gospel or turning evangelism into something else.
- You may have heard a popular quote about evangelism that suggests the opposite of what evangelism really is. It goes like this: "Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary."¹

<<The following on one slide>>

What is evangelism?

Evangelism is proclaiming the gospel to persuade others to put their trust in Jesus Christ.

Wrong view of evangelism:

"Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary."

¹ This is a misquote/misunderstanding from St. Francis of Assisi:
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/factchecker-misquoting-francis-of-assisi/>

- This is a wrong understanding of evangelism because it suggests that somehow, the gospel can be communicated by the good works that we do, rather than the good news we speak. It's tempting to think this way because we lack confidence in speaking the gospel to others. But I never experienced or heard how people came to believe in Jesus only by someone being nice to them. I've helped people in need, I've served them with my time and energy, but they usually respond with, "Thank you." No one has ever responded to my good works saying that they now have a clearer understanding of who Jesus is and what he did.
 - Please don't misunderstand me, there is a proper place for good works in our witness among other people. I'm not saying that we could somehow speak the gospel and then be rude and arrogant in our interactions with people. Scripture says our good works "adorn the gospel" as we "show people our faith" (Titus 2:10). In this way, our good works will be a visible demonstration of the gospel as we live out our faith through good works. But the reality remains that we must speak in order to proclaim. So, we should never replace our evangelism with good works but understand that they do go together in our Christian witness. Evangelism clearly requires communication and words are absolutely necessary. So, this quote should rather say, "Preach the Gospel at all times. Always use words."
- With a proper understanding of evangelism, we can now address why we feel insecure about what to say. A perfect example of such insecurity when speaking to others about God is Moses. Ironically, Moses was the greatest prophet in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 34:10–12). God spoke with Moses face-to-face, as one would speak with his friend (Exodus 33:11). And then, Moses would speak those words from God to the people. But look at Moses' response when God first called him to the task of speaking God's words, the good news of Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. This is what he said in...

Exodus 4:10–13 (ESV)

¹⁰ But Moses said to the Lord, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue." ¹¹ Then the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." ¹³ But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else."

- In his insecurity, he was overwhelmed by his own inabilities. He couldn't get over the fact that he was not eloquent or a good enough speaker to do what God was telling him to do. God was making a very compelling case to help Moses be confident but in this moment, Moses could not take his eyes off of himself to fix his eyes on the Lord.
 - In the same way, we find ourselves lacking confidence in our evangelism, even when we have the right desire. We know what we say when we proclaim the gospel is important. We want to be sure that what we say is true and what we say is clear. We definitely don't want to say things that are wrong and lead people further away from the truth. We don't want to say things that would make people more confused about who Jesus is and what he has done for us.
 - But this is how we end up feeling the pressure when we communicate the gospel. But, when we get caught up thinking, "I'm not sure what to say," we are taking our eyes off our Creator God, who created our mouths and redeemed our mouths to speak for him.
 - So, to gain confidence in evangelism when we are not sure what to say, we must remember that the words we use in evangelism are not our own words, but God's Word he has given to us. And we can acknowledge our insecurities with confidence in God.
- We see in scripture how the Apostle Paul was able to remain supernaturally confident in his efforts of evangelism. Even when people were not putting their trust in Jesus, even in the face of persecution, with tears and with trials, he did not shrink back from proclaiming the gospel and teaching people about God (Acts 20:20, 27). Where else could his confidence come from if not from himself, or the results of evangelism or the situations he faced? He says it in two ways. First, in...

Romans 1:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 Corinthians 2:1–5 (ESV)

¹ And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- We need to make sure we see this. On one hand, Paul declares he is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God. But, just because Paul was this confident in the gospel, doesn't mean that he was invincible. Though he was an Apostle and a prolific evangelist, he preached the gospel in weakness, fear and much trembling. But he trusted in God's power and in the gospel. So he accepted his insecurities so that all the more God's power could be demonstrated in speaking the message of the gospel. He even asked for prayer, so that words would be given to him to preach the gospel boldly (Ephesians 6:19-20). This is how he was confident in the power of God and in the gospel itself, even in the midst of his insecurities.
- So how can we be confident in our personal evangelism? We acknowledge our insecurities as we trust in the power of God to save. In those moments when we feel our throat tightening and a nervous sweat coming on, we remind ourselves that when we speak the gospel, we are speaking the most powerful words that will ever come out of our weak and trembling mouths.
 - Personally, no matter how many times I preach a sermon on Sundays or try to share the gospel in personal evangelism, my insecurities make me lose confidence. So I'll share with you what I do: It's a regular practice for me that just before I speak, I confess my insecurities and my lack of faith that God can use me. I try my best to put aside the temptation to proclaim God's word with lofty speech or human wisdom. I fight the temptation to not please man when I speak, but to please God who sees my heart (1 Thessalonians 2:4). I pray and I ask God to remind me that I am speaking God's powerful, life-giving Word. And I am resolved to know nothing but Christ and him crucified and I find confidence in the gospel again, even in my weakness.
 - As parents, we are evangelizing our children because they are unbelievers that we live with. And I need to learn from my daughter, Abby, how to be confident in what we learn from God's Word. As we are teaching Abby and reading the bible with her, one truth seems to stand out for her. We talked about how Jesus takes away our punishment for the wrong things we do as he died on the cross. And it seems that this truth really speaks to her. Because she hates doing wrong things and she doesn't want to be punished. But once she grasps this truth, even though it may be just a glimpse of understanding, she just needs to confidently declare it. She finds the highest point she can stand on, on top of the chair or table and she sings, "Jesus takes away our punishment!" And she tells her how she wants to tell others that Jesus takes away our punishment. And we are praying she grows up to be a confident disciple and evangelist for Christ.
 - As each believer in this room goes out in God's power in evangelism, remember, we are speaking God's life-giving words. So, when there is an opportunity to speak the gospel, be ready. Be ready knowing that your insecurities will quickly rise up. But also be confident in the power of God in the gospel you are about to speak. And may we confidently proclaim the gospel to those who have yet to experience God's saving power for themselves.
- Practically, I encourage you to practice speaking the gospel, preaching it to yourself daily. As you wake up in the morning, remember why God has given you another day to live, full of his new mercies, and preach the gospel to yourself. As you go through your busy day, and come across a problem, remember your weaknesses. As you come across a conflict, remember your sinfulness, and preach the gospel to yourself. And as you end your day, thank God for providing you with the

strength and love to live for him, and preach the gospel to yourself. I realized for myself, preaching the gospel to myself constantly prepares me to preach the gospel to someone else: As I am reminding myself of the hope I have in Christ for the forgiveness of my sins, I am more confident in the gospel that is speaking powerfully to me throughout the day (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

- So the first way we lose confidence is in our insecurities but we gain confidence to speak in the gospel and the life-giving power of God's Word. The next way we lose confidence is...

II. Risk: "I might lose this relationship."

- We gain confidence in the reality that the gospel can deepen our relationships as we hope that they become fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
- We lose confidence in evangelism when we think about how it might disrupt a relationship that we already have. But we gain confidence in the reality that the gospel can deepen our relationships as we hope that they become fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Our relationships are important to us so the potential of losing a relationship makes us worry. We understand relationships can be fragile and so we fear doing something others don't like in our various relationships. And because we live in a very religious context here, the thought of trying to have spiritual conversations with people from different religions seems like it's one of those things we should not do. And so we decide to wait until our friends and family, classmates and coworkers ask us first, and then we can have a spiritual conversation if they want. After all, we don't want the unbelievers we know to lose the opportunity of having a Christian in their lives. So, we might feel that it is not a risk worth taking.
- But in order to address this worry, we need to realize what the gospel can do in a relationship. As the gospel has the power to save us from our sins, the gospel also brings people together with true peace, like nothing else in the world can. See what it says in...

Ephesians 2:13–14, 17–19 (ESV)

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility,

¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

- Before we conclude that having spiritual conversations can worsen relationships, we need to remember the hope we have in Jesus who brings peace to us in the place of our hostility. Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of the world, spilling his blood for us, he removed the hostility that we had with a holy God and the hostility we had with one another. Now, through the gospel he preached to us, we now both have access to God. We are no longer strangers, even if we were friends apart from Christ. And our relationship with one another was redeemed in Christ to be fellow citizens, and unified together as fellow brothers and sisters in God's family.
- And how we grow in our relationships with one another in the church, in this spiritual unity we have in Christ, is by speaking the truth to one another. In love for one another, we speak the truth of the gospel, the truth of our sins, the truth of our salvation, to one another (Ephesians 4:15). I know we still have room to work on this as we are trying to make membership meaningful in our church. But we must believe that the gospel is true and that only the power of God can bring sinners together.

- And so it is our hope that we can have such true, unified relationships with unbelievers in our lives that we care for and love. We want to evangelize, and proclaim the truths of the gospel, knowing that the truth of Jesus Christ can set them free from their sin (John 8:32), free from God's wrath and free from living in darkness. The worry that we might risk our relationship fades when we realize with hope that spiritual conversations can make our current relationships that much more personal and meaningful.
- So, how can we practically approach our relationships with the gospel? Let's first consider the timing as this is something that I often think about in my various relationships: when should I direct the conversation from the surface to the serious and to the spiritual?
 - On one hand, spending time to build a friendship is not wrong. It does take time for our friends to truly feel like our friends as we love them, serve them, and care for them when they are in need. It is true that their ears will be open to listen to what we have to say to them when their hearts are touched by our love, which we know is the love of Christ in us.
 - But on the other hand, there is such a thing as taking too long. Taking too long, waiting for the perfect timing, that we never get to share. To be honest, we have a lot of good enough opportunities that we pass on while waiting for a perfect opportunity.² Realistically, no opportunity will be ideal and we will be able to find some way to convince ourselves that the situation is not ideal. In such moments, our worry, our sin, and even the Devil will whisper to us, "Not now."
 - I heard one pastor share a story about how he finally was able to share the gospel to his friend. He was waiting to build greater trust in their friendship, waiting to talk about more serious matters, until a year or so passed by. But when he shared the gospel with him, how important it was for him to know that Jesus died in his place for his sins that he could believe and be saved, this is how the friend responded: "Thank you for sharing, but if this was so important, why did you wait so long to tell me?"³
 - I'm not able to say if 3 months is too short or 1 year is too long for you and your friend. You will know the condition of your friendship better than anyone else. But in wisdom, consider the urgency of the matter. Yes, Jesus is patient in returning again in glory on that day of judgment: he is patient not wanting anyone to perish but that everyone comes to him in repentance. But salvation is also an urgent matter, because we don't know when that day will be. See what it says in...

2 Peter 3:9-10 (NIV)

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

- It is urgent that we see people in our lives whom we love and care for, that they hear the gospel, understand how they deserve God's wrath for their sins, believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and live as his disciples until Jesus returns. So as we think about the appropriate timing, our family and friends will better understand the urgency of the matter as we make sure not to wait too long.
- One final note here while we are on the issue of timing: Remember that as we are motivated by our love for those who are still lost, that we evangelize lovingly. Just because their salvation is an urgent matter, does not mean that we are manipulative. We should not argue or force them in making a decision to put their trust in Jesus. It's an urgency marked with love, marked with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). May we be urgent to share in the joy of heaven when one sinner repents and believes (Luke 15:7).

² Adapted from Matt Smethurst, *Before You Share Your Faith: Five Ways to Be Evangelism Ready* (10 Publishing, 2022), 42.

³ Adapted from John Piper's personal experience.

- Another practical issue is identification. What I mean by this is that it is important to identify ourselves as Christians, as disciples of Jesus Christ in the context of various relationships in our lives. It is important to realize before that not identifying ourselves while we do good works can actually hinder people from the gospel too. One author shares a story about a man who became a Christian and shared it with his boss who never talked about Christianity:⁴

Show this quote:

“When he told his boss about it, his employer responded with, “That’s great! I am a Christian and have been praying for you for years!” But the new believer was [disappointed]. “Why didn’t you ever tell me you were a Christian? You were the very reason I have not been interested in [Christianity] all these years.”

“How can that be?” the boss wondered. “I have done my very best to live the Christian life around you.” “That’s the point,” explained the employee. “You lived such a model life without telling me that it was Christ who made the difference, I convinced myself that if you could live such a good and happy life without Christ, then I could too.”

- End quote: Obviously, we are reminded again that we must live out the gospel in our lives. Our faith in the gospel must be visible in how we treat other people, how we forgive those who have hurt us, how we use our time, money and abilities generously and joyfully for the benefit of others. But, there’s a reality that when we wait too long to proclaim the gospel and persuade them to trust in Jesus, we are really putting them at a greater risk of having no hope for salvation and for the forgiveness of their sins. And this is not a risk worth taking.
- I wanted to make an important point here as we talk about relationships and how our time is limited: It is possible to speak to strangers about the gospel as well. While building a friendship with a nonbeliever upon love and trust will usually be preferable, the reality of life is that it’s simply not possible to befriend all the nonbelievers that we meet.⁵ We see this in scripture: Jesus had a spiritual conversation with a stranger, the woman at the well (John 4). The Apostle Paul also had spiritual conversations with people as he was looking for a place to sit and pray (Acts 16:13), as well as in the public marketplaces with whoever happened to be there (Acts 17:17).
 - This is often called “cold or contact evangelism” but I don’t prefer labeling it this way. Because it isn’t a cold, emotionless strategy or method, but having spiritual conversations with strangers is a real way of life for any believer, disciple of Jesus Christ. So as we go about our regular days, we can ask God and be aware of opportunities that He provides us to have spiritual conversations with. And we know from the examples of Jesus and others in the bible, that it is possible to start new friendships based on a shared desire for spiritual truth.
 - More recently, I had opportunities and experiences from playing sports with people. And some of the people I play with, I have had the opportunity to discuss serious to spiritual matters from early on. For me it’s because they would ask me what I do for a living and I would have to answer that I’m a pastor. Some are not interested but when I share why I am pastor as I share my personal testimony, we’ve become closer together, beyond our shared interest for sports. Especially here in Indonesia, I have heard and experienced for myself that most people are interested in spiritual matters and real relationships can start with that shared interest.
 - I’m also encouraged by church members who have tried to start meaningful conversations with strangers to lead them to talk about spiritual matters. They have tried to talk with security guards, drivers, restaurant owners as they go throughout their day. Some have even shared while they’re on their holiday trips, which really challenges me that evangelism never stops. We must be ready and willing to evangelize until Jesus returns, even to people whom we have just met, as God leads us to proclaim and to persuade in love and in urgency.
- As you approach evangelism with confidence in the gospel that it can make any relationship much more meaningful, a helpful tool you can use to direct the conversation is asking questions. This isn’t just a technique but it’s a practice of listening to learn about what matters to them. Author Rebecca

⁴ Don Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Tyndale, 2014).

⁵ Matt Smethurst, *Before You Share Your Faith: Five Ways to Be Evangelism Ready* (10 Publishing, 2022), 54.

Pippert in her book, *Stay Salt*, provides a helpful way to approach questions in our conversations beyond just yes-or-no questions. I don't have time to dive deeply into this but this is a book I do recommend for learning more about how we can engage people with the gospel in our conversations:

Show “Stay Salt.jpg” side-by-side with this text:

Ask questions as we learn to listen to others in our conversations:

- Interest Questions
- Opinion to Issue Questions
- “God” Questions

- First, ask Interest Questions: As we talk with people, we can ask interest questions. Is it politics, health, education, music, traveling, etc? We are trying to discover what activities bring them happiness and how they find satisfaction in these things.
- Second, ask Opinion Questions and then Issue Questions. This might be the hardest part when we are moving from the surface to the serious in our conversations but opinion questions are helpful because everyone has beliefs, whether it's about politics, relationships, family or even the meaning of life. As we genuinely ask to learn about their opinions, we can ask an issue question. Issue Questions pinpoint the deeper problems of society and how we can deal with them: issues like conflict, justice, and death.
- Third, once we are already in such a conversation, a God question gets people to consider how God and his truth makes a difference in the topic. While there may be many views on God in Indonesia, a personal testimony of how the gospel impacts us in our real issues will help our listeners preview the gospel before we share it with them.
 - So this is where preparation is also helpful. We can write down a person's name that we want to reach. If we know the person's particular interest, we can also write it down. Then, we can write three questions, an “interest” question, to discover peoples' interests and why they find them so enjoyable, an issue question that genuinely relates to their interests, and finally a God question.⁶
- So the second way we lose confidence is in our worry of risking our relationships, but we gain confidence in the promise that the gospel unites people together. The next way we lose confidence is...

III. Failure: “I might mess up their salvation.”

- We gain confidence in God's sovereignty as we trust that our mistakes in evangelism cannot hinder God's desire and will to save others through us.
- This is another way we lose confidence in evangelism, when we are afraid of failure and making mistakes. We have a great responsibility to teach others about the gospel and speak about matters of sin and salvation. But in this fear, we forget that God is sovereign in saving those he has chosen to save. We gain confidence in God's sovereignty as we trust that our mistakes in evangelism cannot hinder God's desire and will to save others through us.
- To understand the reality of God's sovereignty in our evangelism, we first have to acknowledge that God alone has accomplished the impossible for us (Luke 18:25–27). All of us have fallen short of God's glory and we were destined to destruction and separation from God, heading to an eternity in hell (Romans 3:23). But while we were still sinners, still dead in our sins, Jesus Christ died for us and rose again. This is how God made us alive together with Christ (Ephesians 2:4–5). We were saved by God's grace alone, not by our works, so that we don't boast about anything in ourselves. So, even in our efforts in evangelism, we don't boast in our abilities, or lack of abilities, and we

⁶ Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Stay Salt: The World Has Changed: Our Message Must Not* (The Good Book Company, 2020), 211.

cannot think we could do anything to ever stop or hinder God from carrying out his will. See what it says in...

Ephesians 1:3-5 (ESV)

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

- The fact that we were predestined to be God's children is an amazing and humbling reality. To wonder about God's decision to save me; that he chose to save me even before God created the world. We thank him that he created us and he saved us, and that he redeemed us according to his sovereign plan. And nothing could get in his way, not even my hardened, sinful heart could stop him. In his power, God is also sovereign and he made a way for us to be in a relationship with him and live for his purposes. And we praise God because God has done for us what we could never do for ourselves.
 - For unbelievers here, I'm glad you're here. I hope you see that the Christian faith is not about coming to God in our strength and abilities. We don't come trusting in our performance of religious rules. Because we are weak, our God is strong. We are unable to save, God is mighty and powerful. We are not in control, but God is sovereign.
 - All the more we can be confident in God's sovereignty, for he had always planned our salvation through Jesus Christ.

- So, if we trust in the sovereignty of God in our salvation, we all the more cannot think that the results of our evangelism is up to us. We must understand that evangelism does not equal conversion, because the work of changing hearts is God's work. Our work is to simply tell others what He has done. So if we think that failure in evangelism is people not responding in faith, we are giving ourselves too much power that we do not have in saving people. In other words, we could only mess up someone's salvation if we ourselves were sovereign. But we are not.

- But there may be a lingering question here: "If God already predestined people to be saved, why should I try to share the gospel?" You may have wondered about this before. But we have to realize that God's sovereignty doesn't excuse us from the responsibility to share. God, in his sovereignty, gave us the responsibility to proclaim the gospel and persuade others to put their trust in Jesus Christ. In other words, God has ordained that our evangelism will be the very means that he uses to save people in our lives. And God is mighty to save those he has chosen to save.
 - So the logic of God's sovereignty in our evangelism works this way: We can trust that everyone who hears the gospel and everyone who believes will be saved by God's sovereign hand. But for them to hear the gospel, someone must preach it to them. And for someone to preach it to them, God must send them to preach (Romans 10:13-15). And the ones God has sent out to preach are the very ones whom he has already saved.
 - So, God's sovereignty should not excuse us from our responsibility. But all the more, God's sovereignty empowers us in our evangelism. God's sovereignty in saving people is the only hope we have that our evangelism will bear the fruit of salvation in their lives as we trust in God's power. If God were not sovereign, then we should lose all confidence in evangelism and give up on our efforts. Only because God is sovereign do we gain confidence that our efforts in evangelism and anything that we do for God's glory is not in vain.

- God's sovereignty was the source of confidence for the Apostle Paul when he was afraid, when felt that being silent was better than speaking the gospel. That is when the Lord spoke his encouragement to him. We see in...

Acts 18:9-11 (ESV)

⁹ And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” ¹¹ And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

- Paul found strength in God’s sovereignty and in his presence, trusting that the Lord was with him as he was using Paul to preach the gospel and trusting that the Lord already had many in the city who he had chosen as his people.
- I am thankful for God’s sovereignty in my evangelism. I am thankful that ultimately, people’s salvation does not depend on me. I am thankful to see people who have come into relationships with people in our church, to hear the gospel, believe and be saved. I always remember one testimony from a brother in our church. He shared how inadequate my evangelism was but he only remembers how I just kept telling him that he’s a sinner. That was my immature, unwise efforts in evangelism. But somehow God led him to believe that he is a sinner, and as he learned more about the gospel, he came to believe and be saved.
- So when we feel afraid that we might mess up people’s salvation, may we trust that God has many he will save. plan to save will be accomplished through and even despite our inadequate efforts
- I suggest one way we can exercise our faith in God’s sovereignty and trusting in him. We can exercise this confidence in God’s sovereignty in prayer, as we wait in expectation for God’s glory to be known. We can understand prayer, not only as a conversation with God, but also as: “Calling on God to come through on his promises”. And we can wait, wait with hope and confidence. Let’s continue praying for the unbelievers in our lives.

Conclusion:

When we feel inadequate, we should. So that we can wholly depend on God to make our evangelism fruitful and effective. God will save many!

Life Application:

- 1) Reflect: Which of these ways do I lack confidence in my personal evangelism?
 - Maybe we still need to be motivated to start.
- 2) Repent: Have I put my confidence in anything apart from the gospel that is powerful to save me?
 - Do I love for any other purpose than for God?
- 3) Recommit: Who will I have a spiritual conversation with as I try to proclaim and persuade?
 - Approach evangelism as a spiritual discipline that God has give you to grow in his grace. To grow in dependence and trust in his sovereignty.
 - As you gain confidence in the power of the gospel, will you go and preach the gospel?
 - As you gain confidence in the reality that relationships can grow deeper in the gospel, will you go and engage in spiritual conversations?
 - As you gain confidence in God’s sovereignty, will you joyfully persevere is sharing with friends and family, classmates and coworkers, neighbors and even strangers?
 - I encourage you to prayerfully consider who you can intentionally share with this week.

As we strive to apply God’s Word to our lives this week in our evangelism, remember the one thing:

The One Thing:

Bring the good news of Christ confidently, trusting that our God will save many.

For TGR: Can we all stand together as we close?

For JKT: I'll close us out in prayer before P.Eric comes up to lead us in response.