**SERIES TITLE:** **Being Gospel-Ready (1 of 4)**

**SERIES OBJECTIVE:** To motivate members to reach out, while equipping them with a clear knowledge of what the gospel is and how to share it.

**INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO PREACHERS:** The gospel message us usually shared in the context of a conversation. This series focus’ on the gospel communication part of this equation. Other sermon-series on conversational skills are available.

**TITLE: The only thing that can move us** (Motivational Message)

**TEXT**: Matthew 9:35 – 10:1

**OBJECTIVE**: To encourage Christians to see the world as Jesus does, because this is the #1 key to motivation for Christian outreach.

**Introduction**: At school were you one of those people who left all their assignments the night before they were due? Perspective affects motivation.

We need to be motivated to make the most of every opportunity to encourage faith in Christ - so today we are discussing our perspective of the world.

**1. Matthew 9:35 – 10:1**

v35 – the message we carry is amazing! God does exist. God does love us. God is going to fix earth. God can heal sickness – and will give all who believe perfect bodies in the future. It is truly good news!

**2. v36 – How does scripture say Jesus saw people as being?**

‘Without God – without hope’ – is this true? If the Bible is true, this is true!

Did you know many people in the world are hurting? Many struggle with depression. Many are in difficult physical circumstances. Many suffer injustice. And this is not to mention all the relationship problems that are found in families everywhere!

The hurt, pain and needs found in this world are overwhelming!

[Preacher: You could summarise William Booths vision as on the next page]

How can joy, hope, peace, love, life be found? Can you see the need for Jesus?

**3. v37 The harvest is plentiful**

Are people open to spirituality today? Absolutely! Statistics:

* NZ UMR Poll 2008 – 46% believe in a God, 36 in a ‘higher power’[[1]](#footnote-1), and 19 in neither.
* 31% of Americans and 67% of the British believe in astrology (horoscopes)[[2]](#footnote-2).
* 67% of the British also believe in the power of psychics[[3]](#footnote-3).
* I have heard it said that 70% claim to have had a ‘spiritual experience’ of some kind. There is a deep spiritual hunger around us. What is missing is the next verse!

**4. v38 The need is workers!**

Two responses: 1. Pray for workers (v38). 2. Become workers (10:1)

**Question:**

What is the greatest hindrance to evangelism? Fear of what others think? Lack of equipping? What about a lack of love? OR a lack of belief in the gospel? A parent will jump in front of a car to save a child. Love overcomes fear. Belief motivates love (e.g. love for a child who precious, combined with belief that a coming car will kill the child, motivates a courageous rescue-act) Our motivation is a question of belief combined with love.

**What can we do?**

We can all learn to engage conversations

* to tell our story, and God’s story
* We can all invite, give and pray (1 Cor 3:6)!

These things are achievable for most of us - while very few of us will ever preach!

**Vision**

[Note to preacher: Take some time to cast vision for the opportunities your members have(1) in their daily lives as well as (2) in partnership with your various church outreach programs].

**Conclusion:**

God was so moved with compassion for our greatest needs that He left His throne in heaven and came to earth in Christ to get His hands really dirty, and to die! He calls us to love as He loves! The gospel does need communicating. What will you do?

**RESOURCE: William Booths vision summarised**

[as summarised in *That Leaders Might Last,* by Dave Mann (Imprint Media, 2010)].

Salvation Army founder, William Booth, had a vision of a great stormy ocean in which the world’s multitudes were drowning. In this vision he saw a great rock, representing the Church. Many had climbed onto it, escaping the peril of the ocean. Some were at the water’s edges helping rescue the drowning, and a few were even diving back into the waters to save the drowning. But many on the rock had no concern for the drowning - they were consumed in their various pursuits and pleasures. He commented on the incomprehensibility of these saved ones having no compassion for those who were drowning before their very eyes. He also commented on how some gazed toward the 'mainland' from where they believed their Saviour would one day come to rescue them from this rock, when all the while their Saviour was in the stormy ocean behind them and calling to them to come help Him help the people! He said *"Look for yourselves. The surging sea of perishing souls rolls up to the very spot on which you stand."*

**- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION -**

**SERIES: Being Gospel-Ready**

**The only thing that can move us**

**Week one.**

**Leaders note: The goals of this session are to**

(a) Encourage members to be honest about their feelings and weaknesses in this area of evangelism. Many feel like failures in the area. We don’t need to make them feel worse. Empathise with fears. Thank them for honesty.

(b) This particular small group session will highlight how a lack of love (on a foundation of what is believed) is the greatest hindrance to evangelism. While there are other hindrances - like fear of what others might think, love can move us beyond fears. The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart!

(c) You will make a list of some who you want to encourage to consider faith. Future sessions will come back to these lists.

**INTRODUCTION (15 minutes)**

* What is something you feel passionate about? (E.g. a cause…). How passionate would you rate yourselves to be on a scale of 1-10?
* On that same scale of 1-10, how passionate would you say you feel about the gospel, and the need for others to hear that message?
* On the same scale, how strong do you feel you are as a witness for Jesus to those around you? *(Compliment honesty. Empathise with struggles.)*

**DISCUSSION**

**Two more introductory questions:**

1. (Briefly list items). What do you think are the main hindrances stopping us Christians from being more active in encouraging others toward faith? What do you think is the MAIN hindrance? Would you agree it could be a lack of love (love can motivate us to overcome fears; love can motivate us to get equipped, etc.)?

2. Now, the honest question, what do you think hinders *you*?

*(Giving members time to reflect, please ensure you create an environment of understanding and acceptance, so people will feel able to share honestly - rather than giving what they perceive the ‘right’ answer to be).*

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:10-6:2 (15 minutes)**

3. What do you think Paul means in v11, when he says that the reason he tries to persuade men is because he knows what it is to fear the Lord? Can anyone put that in different words so it makes sense to us all?

*(Note the context of v10. Recognition of eternal realities motivates action in evangelism).*

4. Would you say he was motivated, then, by the fear of people going to hell, or was it by love?

*(If hell is a reality - which the Bible affirms, then these are one and the same thing. Paul says explicitly in verse 14 that it is love that motivated him – as does John 3:16 say of God’s actions on our behalf).*

5. What do you think Paul means in v16 when he says he regards no one from a worldly point of view? He then says he once regarded Christ that way. What do you think he means by this?

*(At one time he thought Jesus was a just like any other man. He views all people as they are to God – just as Jesus did when looking on the crowds in Matthew 9:35f, seeing them as ‘harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.’)*

6. How would you summarise Paul’s application as found in v20 through to 6:2?

*Note: If helpful, there is a paraphrase of this passage below, plus a one-sentence summary of its message. You could read these in summary of your discussion on the text.*

7. Are there any questions at this point?

**8. Exercise: (10 minutes)**

We are going to do a small exercise now. This will bring direction to our prayer time.

i. Make a list of **a few people you would like to see come to faith.**

ii. Consider and list **possible hindrances**. What might be holding them back from coming to faith? *These are your prayer items, and possible conversation-topics to discuss with them one day!*

iii. Then list their **interests**, and any **practical needs** you know them to have. *These are the ‘bridges’ across which you could get to know them better so as to show love.*

**Name Possible hindrances Interests**

(For prayer and conversation) (for ‘bridge building’)

9. While we cannot make any person come to faith, we can encourage and pray. Take turns to share about one of the people you would like to see come to faith (maybe using first names only).

* What do you think might hinder their journey toward faith in Christ?
* What might open a door to a stronger connection with them, and maybe a conversation or two?

**APPLICATION (10 minutes)**

1. Do you love these people enough to do something for them? If so, what coudl you do? How will you create opportunities?

2. As a group, spend time praying for (1) these people, and (2) that God would stir His love in your heart, so you would have the will and courage to act.

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**EXTRA [FOR GROUP LEADER]**

**2 Corinthians 5:10 – 6:2**

Passage Paraphrase and Summary

V10 We recognise we will all stand before God at the final judgment

V11 Because of this, we are giving our *lives* to persuading people of the truth of what Christ said and did.

V12-13 Be assured, we are not so passionate, and do not try to influence you and lead you, because of pride. We aren’t doing this for our own benefit!

V14 We are trying to persuade all to follow Christ – including you - because love compels us!

We are convinced of the reality of who Christ was, and that He died for all, and that all people therefore *need* to come to know Him.

V16 So we don’t look at people with the eyes of the flesh anymore – we try to see them as they really are, as if through in eyes of God.

V17-19 A person who has become a Christian is a new Creation, reconciled to God and forgiven for their sins. (While those who are not reconciled to Christ are lost, and in great need!)

V20 So we see our entire life-mission as being Christ’s ambassadors to all who do not know Him.

We encourage you with all your hearts to turn to God.

Christ has died for our sin – please don’t take this lightly. Please don’t take it for granted. Please don’t receive the grace of God in vain.

V2 Give your lives to Him, and to making Him known! Now is the time to do this. Today is the day to begin!

**A note – in its context…** Paul was explaining to the believers a Corinth that his perspective of the need for Christ, and deep feelings of compassion for those without Christ, were the reasons he was so passionate and forthright in his dealings with them. This needed saying because he was more than a bit direct with them at times!

**Summary of a message applicable to all believers from this passage**

If we see people as they really are, the love of Christ will compel us to action.

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1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrology> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.eauk.org/resources/info/statistics/orthodox-and-unorthodox-belief.cfm> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.eauk.org/resources/info/statistics/orthodox-and-unorthodox-belief.cfm> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)