

## 2. Understanding Barriers to Evangelism

In Acts 1:8 we are told, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” In this verse, we see four areas where we are told to be witnesses. However, they also give us four common barriers to evangelism. In future topics, we will be looking at Biblical principles for crossing these barriers. For right now, we would just like to identify those barriers. When we share the Gospel, we face these four barriers:

Jerusalem (sharing the Gospel with people we know from our own culture) - the barrier of fear

Judea (sharing the Gospel with people we do not know from our own culture) –

the barrier of making contacts

Samaria - the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group

uttermost - the barrier of language

A summary of the Gospel can be found in 1 Corinthians 15:1-6.

Many people say that they do not share the Gospel because they do not have the gift of evangelism. However, Scripture never mentions the gift of evangelism but rather commands us to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). What Scripture does mention is the fact that Christ gave the church evangelists in Ephesians 4:11-12, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” In these verses, we see that Christ gave evangelists “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry”. Evangelists are to equip the saints for evangelism so that all Christians are prepared to carry out the command of Christ to preach the Gospel.

Christ also demonstrated how evangelists are to carry out their ministry of equipping the saints to preach the Gospel. In Matthew 4:19, Christ said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Christ taught the disciples how to share the Gospel by taking them with Him as He shared the Gospel. In the same way, evangelists are to equip the saints to share the Gospel by taking people with them as they share the Gospel. Paul said, in Acts 20:20-21, “how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” In these verses, we see how Paul taught the leaders in the church at Ephesus to do evangelism:

- Paul kept back nothing that was helpful
- Paul proclaimed or showed the leaders how to share the Gospel
- Paul did this publicly
- Paul did this from house to house
- Paul shared the Gospel with both Jews and Greeks
- Paul showed them how to teach repentance toward God
- Paul showed them how to teach faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

The reason many Christians do not know how to share the Gospel is due to the fact that they have never gone along with an evangelist as he shared the Gospel publicly and from house-to-house to

be shown how to become fishers of men. If we do not know how to share the Gospel clearly, we need to begin going along on a regular basis with someone who can show us how to share the Gospel. If we are regularly sharing the Gospel with others, we need to start taking other Christians with us to show them how to begin sharing the Gospel. All Christians are commanded to share the Gospel. The question we need to ask ourselves is, “Am I an obedient Christian who is either a trainee, learning how to share the Gospel, or a trainer, teaching others how to share the Gospel?” The question is obedience.