
**CAMINO: WALK IN THE WAY
PART TWO: EVANGELISM**

*1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Luke 14:21-23; Acts 1:4-9, 2:1-15, 2:36-41;
Matthew 28:18-19*

1. People Sensed the Presence of God

- Ezekiel 36:27; Acts 2:6; 1 John 4:16; 1 Corinthians 14:25;
John 20:21-22; Luke 19:10

**2. People Understood the Message of
Good News**

- Acts 2:7-12

*** Words**

- Romans 10:13-15

*** Actions**

- John 13:34-35; Matthew 25:34-40

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Camino: Walk in the Way Part Two: Evangelism

The Camino is the most famous 'pilgrimage' trek in the world.¹ The full name for it is the "Camino de Santiago," or "The Way of Saint James." At its least, it is a 500-mile hiking trail through the Pyrenees Mountains and along the northern portion of Spain. At the most, it is a spiritual pilgrimage that people have trekked for over a thousand years. In this sermon series, we are using the Camino as a metaphor for our spiritual journey.

All of us who have become Christians have stepped onto the path of following Jesus. The word "camino" in Spanish means way, or path, or journey.

This four part sermon series is giving an overview of what it takes to be on this journey, walking the way of Jesus. Last week we talked about how important *discipleship* is for us on the journey – that we begin the journey by accepting what God has done for us through Jesus Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, and that we make progress by keeping in step with the path that we've created for spiritual growth here at our church with "Starting Point," the four Core Classes, other classes and Bible Studies, Small Groups, Outreach Events, and Outreach Teams.

I began the service last Sunday sharing about how our middle son, Ryan, trekked the Camino right after he graduated from college with three of his roommates. Two of them dropped out within a couple of weeks, but he and his good friend finished the 500 mile hike in about a month. It was an incredibly moving experience for him. What I didn't tell you was that he and his friends were inspired to walk the Camino after two men spoke at a chapel service at Northwest Nazarene University where my son attended. These two men were NNU alumni, and they had taken the Camino together. But their story is far more inspirational than just two guys walking the Camino. I'll let them tell their story:

Video: "I'll Push you: A 500 Mile Journey Between Two Best Friends"
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rKwu4bCttM>)

This is a powerful story that helps to make the point of what we are talking about today. You see, God never intended for this journey to be something that we take alone; he has always intended for us to invite and take with us as many people as we possibly can on this journey.

¹ Hiking Spain's Oldest Trail: Camino De Santiago
Sam Burbank - <https://gearjunkie.com/hiking-spain-camino-de-santiago>

There is an essential part of the Camino or the Christian way that is expected of every single one of us; it is something called “evangelism.”

“Evangelism” is a word that means “the announcement, proclamation, and/or preaching of the *gospel*, the *good news* of and about Jesus Christ.”² The Apostle Paul wrote this in the Bible to the followers of the Way in the city of Corinth:

“Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the *Good News* I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this *Good News* that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you...I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, nlt, *italics added*)

Where you saw the phrase “Good News” is the Greek word for “evangelism.” The English word “evangelism” comes from the Greek word *euangelion*. Most literally translated, the word means: “gospel” or “good news.” The Greek word in its various forms appears *fifty-five times* in the New Testament.³ Evangelism is a very important word to us as followers of the Way; it was because of evangelism that we were able to even be on the way to begin with, and evangelism is what we are supposed to be doing on the way: inviting others to join us.

Jesus was very clear about this to his disciples and to us. In one of his many parables that he told to teach us this point, he told the story of a man who prepared a great feast and invited everyone. And he told his servant:

“‘Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ After the servant had done this, he reported, ‘There is still room for more.’ So his master said, ‘Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full.’” (Luke 14:21-23, nlt)

But Jesus didn’t just *tell* us to do evangelism; in order to make sure we do, he actually gave us the power to do it. After he had been crucified, died and was buried, and then rose from the dead, he spent several days with his disciples before he ascended into heaven, where he will be until that day when he comes back again. And right before he ascended, he had some final words for the disciples and us. He was saying, “This is what I want you to know and to do until I come back!” This is what the Bible tells us:

“Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, ‘Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized

² B777. "Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry." B777. June 30, 2017. Accessed October 02, 2017. <https://carm.org/what-is-evangelism>.

³ B777. "Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry." B777. June 30, 2017. Accessed October 02, 2017. <https://carm.org/what-is-evangelism>.

with the Holy Spirit.’ So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, ‘Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?’ He replied, ‘The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him.” (Acts 1:4-9, nlt)

Jesus said we would be given the Holy Spirit – the Third person of the Trinity – to carry out our work until Jesus comes back. The Holy Spirit would give us what? *Power*. Power to do what? *Be his witnesses*. The purpose of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to give us power to tell other people the Good News so that while we walk along the way, we will invite as many people as possible to join us on the journey.

Here’s what’s really interesting: Jesus was referring to the day that the Holy Spirit would be given to the disciples that would set the pattern for all of Jesus’ followers until Jesus comes back – it happened on the Jewish holiday of Pentecost, when Jews from all over the world were gathered in Jerusalem. This is how it all went down (stand with me please):

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’ Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’

Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning!’” (Acts 2:1-15, niv)

(keep standing please) Then Peter went into a powerful evangelistic message about Jesus, and how he was nailed to the cross, died, and then rose from the dead for us. Finally, Peter concluded his message by saying:

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.’ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’

Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.’ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” (Acts 2:36-41, niv)

Okay – thanks for standing. So when the Holy Spirit filled the disciples, what did they do? They spoke in languages they had never learned, but that the crowds in attendance that day all spoke and would understand. God translated the Good News into people’s own languages, so that the message would be heard by everyone. And we are told that over 3000 people joined the church that very day! Why were they given the Holy Spirit? To have power to share the Good News. Is every Christian given the Holy Spirit – even today? Yes. Has the purpose of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian changed since the Bible was written? No. And yet for some reason, in these days we have come to believe that we are given the Holy Spirit for our own benefit; so that we can be holy, so that we can feel more peace, so that our lives can go better, or even so that we can be more blessed. We think the Holy Spirit is given to us so that we can be smugly sanctified and self-satisfied with our spiritual lives. But the *primary* reason the Holy Spirit is given to Christians is *not* for our own comfort and benefit. Christians are given the Holy Spirit so that we can have power to share the Good News! And by the way – how many of the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost – all, or some, of them? *All of them* – just like all of us are to be filled with the Spirit.

And then we are told that all the disciples sat in their pews in nice rows while Pastor Peter preached the message, right? No! ALL the disciples were sharing the Gospel. Peter addressed the entire crowd, but the disciples all spoke it as well to the people around them – and the people around them who spoke a different language were able to understand. So even today, some of us *do* preach, but *all* of us are supposed to share the message in ways that the people around us can understand.

By filling us with the Holy Spirit, Jesus was giving us the power to do what he commanded and commissioned us to do. This is what he said to the disciples and to us:

“Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: ‘God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.’” (Matthew 28:18-19, tmt)

The reason God gives us the Holy Spirit is for the power to live like God’s people so we can present God’s Good News to people. (repeat) The reason we are made holy is not

so we can sit back and feel good about ourselves – that’s called self-righteousness. God gives us the Holy Spirit so that we live what we believe and our actions back up our words; so that we have credibility with people who want to see if Christianity is real.

The Camino is not supposed to be some sort of scenic stroll through the countryside. The Camino for the Christian is a challenging course through all climates and terrains, for the sake of others who are not yet on the journey. We are given the Holy Spirit and the Church to empower and equip us to continue the course in our own lives and to invite others to make the journey along with us, communicating in ways that they can understand.

Imagine that you are hiking along a trail and you come to a section where the path goes in several directions, and so you look to the signs to tell you which way to go, and this is what you see: That wouldn’t help you much, would it? It is important that we communicate the Good News to people in ways that our culture can understand.



So what can we learn from the example of Acts chapter two about evangelism? One of the things we see is that as the unbelievers were with the believers in that setting...

1. People *Sensed* the *Presence* of God

When the Holy Spirit is in our lives, people can sense something different in us. Why? Because we love and accept people. And because we can back up our words with our actions – like I said earlier, we have credibility. Through the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, God said:

“I will put my Spirit in you and move you to keep my laws and decrees.”
(Ezekiel 36:27, niv)

People can sense God’s presence by the way we live. In that account in Acts 2, God’s presence was so evident in the gathering of disciples that it attracted the attention of people from all over the city – verse 6 says that “a crowd came together” (Acts 2:6). That had to be a large crowd, because 3000 people became Christians, and that wasn’t even everyone. More people will come to know Christ through our love for each other and our love for them than any religious or philosophical debate, because the Bible says “God is love.” (1 John 4:16, niv) The Bible does not say, “God is theological debate.” When, by the power of the Spirit, we love people, God is present.

Research tells us that in Western Culture today (which is North America and Western Europe), our culture has never been less Christian but at the same time it has never been more spiritual. People are very hungry to experience God, and yet they reject what they see as organized religion.

But they *will* encounter the presence of God when we gather together and when we love others, and especially when we come together to worship. The Bible says that when we worship God authentically and an unbeliever joins us,

“The unbeliever...will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’” (1 Corinthians 14:25, niv)

God gives us his Spirit for this. The Apostle John records an incredible encounter. Jesus met the disciples after his resurrection, while they were gathered together in a room, praying:

“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (John 20:21-22, niv)

Notice – Jesus sends them – and us – out to do the same thing that the Father sent Jesus to do, and he breaths the Holy Spirit into them so that they have the power to do it. What is it that Jesus – and we – are sent by the Father to do?

“To seek and save the lost.” (Luke 19:10, ceb)

That is the presence of God, by the Holy Spirit, that is to be present in the life of every believer, empowering her and him to carry out the work of Jesus and be the presence of God in the world, so that we can invite people to join us on the journey.

The other thing we see in that story from Acts chapter two, and which we’ve already mentioned a few times, is that...

2. People *Understood* the *Message* of Good News

Remember in that passage in Acts two, it said that the disciples were all speaking *one* language, but people of 16 different nationalities were all hearing it in their own mother tongue.

It is important that we make sure to share the Good News with our...

* *Words*

We must communicate in ways that our culture can understand. If we use our own terminology or our own cultural language, we run the risk of people not understanding us.

Some corporations have learned this lesson the hard way. For example, the beer company Coors decided to translate their slogan, “turn it loose!” into Spanish, but something got lost in translation, because their translation became, “Suffer from diarrhea!”

When Gerber baby food started selling baby food in Africa, they used the same packaging that they use in America – a label that has a picture of a beautiful baby on it, right? But sales just wouldn’t take off, and they finally found out why: in that part

of Africa, since many people couldn't read, local companies would usually put a picture on the label of what's inside the jar.

Another company, Clairol, maker of beauty products, made a curling iron called the "Mist Stick." When they tried to market it in Germany, they found out that the German word for "Mist" means "manure." It seems not too many people wanted to buy a "manure stick."

Pepsi's "Come alive with the Pepsi Generation" in China translated into "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave!"

I remember years ago, Pope John Paul II visited the US. At that time, a company made printed t-shirts that were sold to promote the Pope's visit. Instead of saying, "I saw the Pope!" (el papa), the shirts read "la papa," which means "I saw the potato!"

It is possible that even more important messages than product slogans can get lost in translation; we can't afford to let one word of the *most* important message to get lost, which is the Good News of God's love through Jesus Christ. We've got to clearly translate it for this generation.

The Bible gives us a progression of what it takes for people to hear the message:

"'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:13-15, niv)

For someone to hear the invitation to join us on the journey – which is evangelism, or what we call "introducing people to Jesus Christ" – for someone to respond they've got to hear it, and they won't hear it if we don't speak it, and we aren't speaking it if we don't obey God's call to go to them.

That means it takes us sharing the Good News in both words and in...

*** Actions**

Jesus said that there was a way that people would recognize us as his followers:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35, niv)

This is a love that is evident to unbelievers by both word and action. Remember that Jesus very clearly told us what this love looks like in the way we treat others, especially those who are weak, poor, oppressed, and marginalized. Jesus said that when we are gathered before his throne in heaven he will say:

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:34-40. niv)

Evangelism is about our seeking to be more fully filled by the Holy Spirit so that we have the power and presence of God to clearly communicate the Good News of God’s love through Christ in both our words and our actions, so that we can introduce others to join us on the Way.

Does this make sense?

I’ve had people ask why we do what we do as a church; why we have Trunk or Treat, why we have Breakfast with Santa, why we open our facility to outside groups in our community, why we spend so much effort on Upward Soccer, why we do so many things for Wide Hollow Elementary School, and why now we are reaching out further to partner with Mountainview Elementary School. They ask why we do Homework Club and First Friday Coffee and Backpacks and supplies and why we volunteer in the school. Listen: what we are talking about today is *exactly* why: by welcoming people through those outreach events and opportunities, we have the chance to love them with our actions and expose them to the loving presence of God *in us* (that is, if the Holy Spirit is in you). And then we get to *tell* them the Gospel with our *words* – as we build relationship, as they join us for Wednesday Night Dinner, for Caravan, for a small group or for worship. Some people might say that Halloween is the devil’s holiday, and they are probably right; which is exactly why we are taking it from the enemy by putting Jesus into it. Every volunteer that we have at that event – all 150 plus of us – are the presence of Jesus. Every time we smile at every unchurched person they are seeing Jesus.

All these things that we do – we don’t advertise. We only advertise through the school, our website, and those whom you personally invite. Do you know why we do it that way? We usually have 2,000 people at Trunk or Treat, and I’m sure if we advertised we could have over 4,000. We could draw people from all over the valley. But it’s not about numbers: it is about being the presence of God to *our neighborhood*, so that week in and week out they can hear and see the Good News in us, and as they come to each of our events and activities and work alongside us in the school, not just once in some highly advertised event.

Everything we do at our church is intentional – to built relationships with our neighbors, to demonstrate the presence of Jesus in our words and actions, so that they might join us on this journey.

Do you know that we have folks who attend our church in worship and have accepted Christ because their children came to Homework Club and Summer Science Camps, through Science Night on Tuesdays and through Upward Soccer and through Caravan, and because *you* have invited them to worship with you? Do you know that? It is true.

Evangelism is an essential part of being on the Camino – walking in the way of Christ. If you are a Christian, you *are* the presence of Jesus to your friends and family in both word and action. When you participate with us on these events at West Valley Church, you are the presence of Jesus in both word and action. Make the most of the opportunities we have together: invite others to join us on the Camino.

Prayer