

Union Bethel AME Church (dial-in and Facebook™ Live)
Bible Study Dial-in Number: (425) 436-6260 Access Code: 141997#
Tuesday, April 7, 2020, 6:30-7:30 PM

Ephesians 6:10-20



These “Whole Armor of God” scripture verses are widely quoted and serve as a sermon topic frequently. In the next 6 weeks we will cover the Whole Armor of God and dive into the work of evangelism. We will use the Bible and 2 books *Tell Someone*¹ and *Becoming a Disciple-Maker*². I encourage you to purchase copies of these books to follow along with this series.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (March 3)

14 Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. (March 10)

15 As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. (March 17)

¹ Greg Laurie, *Tell Someone: You Can Share The Good News* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2016).

² Hanks Jr., Billie and Randy Craig, *Becoming a Disciple-Maker* (Salado: International Evangelism Association, 2013).

16 With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (March 24)

17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (March 31)

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. (April 7)

19 Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

Ephesians 6:18-20

Paul concludes with emphasis on the need for prayer. When we pray we must engage the Holy Spirit to lead us in our communication with God. The Holy Spirit will present to us what requests we should make and on whose behalf.

Paul distinguishes these prayers in Ephesians 6 as supplication for all of the saints. This was not a mean discriminatory practice. Paul did care about those who had not received salvation. However, Paul understood the difficulties faced by those preaching and teaching the gospel and their need for uplifting prayers.

We pray to support people in ministry and missionary work. When we pray in the Holy Spirit our prayers are stronger and are targeted toward needs both spoken and unspoken. The Holy Spirit sees what we do not see. There are issues, stumbling blocks, fear, confusion, and fighting that may not be within our vision, but God sees all.

Pray in the Spirit. Pray as the Holy Spirit gives us the words. Pray whenever and wherever you are.

In what ways and at what times has the Holy Spirit directed you to pray?

Week 6

Excerpted from *Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News*

Close the Deal

Our focus should be on proclaiming the Word of God and not on manipulating people into accepting the Word of God. Still we want to close the deal. We want the person(s) to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Philip is an example of proclaiming and not manipulating when presenting salvation through Jesus. Philip used tact to approach the Ethiopian.

“Tact is saying the right thing at the right time in the right way.”³

“Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy.”⁴

We have to approach gently and request permission to have a discussion. Evangelism should never feel like coercion. We are not intruders.

This past week, in your social distancing connections with family and friends, did you have an opportunity to share the gospel?

This past week have you encouraged another Christian, especially someone new to faith in Christ Jesus, to continue to grow?

“Remember we are not all Paul, but we can be an encourager like Barnabas.”

When we ask someone if they are saved, and then we present salvation through Christ Jesus, we have to ask the question that closes the deal. Does the person want to accept Christ Jesus right now?

To continue the conversation consider inviting the person to do one or any of the following in no particular order:

1. Visit your home church
2. Come to your small gathering for Bible discussion
3. Socialize with you and your Christian friends
4. Attend a Christian event such as revival or group meeting

³ Greg Laurie, *Tell Someone: You Can Share The Good News* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2016) p101

⁴ Ibid., page102

5. Read a Christian book (pick one that is easy to read)
6. Suggest Christian musicians for them to download and listen to the music
7. Any other suggestion that you have

Create 3x5 cards with the following information as part of your invitation:

1. Name of the church
2. Address of the church
3. Time of worship
4. Date and time for Bible Study
5. Website
6. Social media pages

Be ready to give the card to anyone who expresses an interest in joining you at church.

As encouragers, reach out to someone who recently accepted Christ. Send a text message, email, or make a phone call. Let the person know that in these times where humanity is uncertain, the Triune God is still in command of it all. Share with the person what your steps were like when you finally really accepted Christ and focused on living as God wants.

Consider these suggestions to support new Christians:

1. Provide the place, date, and time for Bible Study groups or classes
2. Recommend Bible (easy to read) and Bible apps
3. Share favorite Christian authors, books, podcasts, and YouTube sermons

Do you recall who invited you to church? How old were you when you gave your life to Christ? At your current church who invited you to attend? Who invited you to join?

Excerpted from *Becoming A Disciple-Maker*

In these 2 final lessons, we will move toward understanding Christian church history and the impact on disciple-making today. We will also examine spiritual multiplication.

The early church understood the relational nature of evangelism and disciple making. Over time, the church became more structured and formal becoming “institutionalized”. Spiritual multiplication waned. Three influences contributed to this decline: a) depersonalization, b) civil religion, and c) professionalism.

- a) Depersonalization is the minimization of the priesthood of the believer where everyone functions in evangelism.
 - a. Depersonalization places more focus on institutions, rituals, and the structure of the church.
 - b. The church is not the building. The church is personal; it is the people.
- b) Emperor Constantine created a state religion for the Roman Empire when he converted to Christianity.
 - a. Many people stated they were Christians but had not really converted. They were still spiritually lost.
 - b. People began to believe that works, church attendance, and giving, but not faith was the key to salvation.
 - c. The connection of faith in Christ Jesus and saving grace was not emphasized. There was an appearance of religion with no inward spiritual change. The message about salvation was being diluted.
- c) The church gradually moved from every Christian participating in making disciples to only ordained clergy having that task
 - a. Laity placed disciple making at the feet of clergy
 - b. Spiritual growth was not seen as directed by the laity but only led by the clergy
 - c. Caring for new believers became a work for clergy with no input from the laity

How does the laity partner with the clergy for evangelism?

Remember the story of the tortoise and the hare. The rabbit thought he would win the race by being fast. The slow and steady turtle kept moving in the correct direction with all deliberation. The turtle won the race.

We have an obligation to make disciples not just new converts. We can race to make as many new converts as possible, but someone has to spend quality time with those individuals to mentor them in the Christian walk. Since this process is slow and deliberate, the person will observe and absorb more information that is useful for witnessing for Christ.

We have to build relationships. Our mandate has not changed. We must still make disciples. This is not a focus on increasing church membership rolls. The goal is to gain disciples who will live and work toward “koinonia (Greek for Christian fellowship with God and fellow Christians).

We should also want a Sankofa relationship. Sankofa is a word from the Twi tribe in Ghana meaning “go back and get”. The Carter G. Woodson Center at Berea College translates the word to mean “not being afraid to go back and get what is at risk of being lost” <https://www.berea.edu/cgwc/the-power-of-sankofa/>. We are compelled to go back and bring those who are lost to a relationship with Christ Jesus in a way that produces fruit: spiritual growth and discipleship.

Spiritual growth comes from practicing spiritual disciplines, expressing Christian love, dedicating time for relationship building, and devoting attention to encouraging new Christians to become equipped for the work. We are working toward multiplication and not addition. One well-equipped person is available to bring many to salvation through Christ Jesus.

In what ways can you equip a new convert to evangelize?

How can you organize your day to spend more time with God?
