

9 • WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT SHARING THE GOSPEL

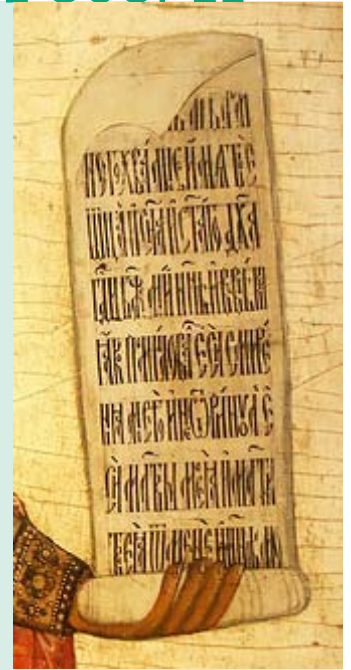
Sharing the Gospel – in a word, “evangelism” – is the very heart of our faith and lives as Christians. The word “Gospel” literally means “Good News” – the Good News of God’s love for His people, to whom He offers the gift of eternal life in His Kingdom.

What instructions did Jesus Christ give His disciples on **witnessing** to this “pearl of great price?” How did He Himself go about talking with those who **opened themselves** to God’s presence and grace? How did He **proclaim the Good News** to Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, and Zacchaeus the tax collector, and to those to whom He preached, taught, and healed?

There is **no one, specific “formula”** for proclaiming the Gospel. Jesus revealed it in **many different ways**. The **one principle** that shines through in every instance is simple: **He addressed everyone at his or her deepest level**, appealing not just to their **minds**, but to their **hearts**.

In worldly terms, Jesus was not always “successful.” As far as we know, the rich young man never became a disciple, and Jesus was surely disappointed by the fact that he “went away, sad.” But Jesus was not a salesman striving to meet a “quota.” He never used **pressure or fear**. In proclaiming the Good News, He helped each one to see himself or herself as he or she really is and as he or she relates to the Creator.

This is the mission and ministry entrusted to us – to “teach all nations” by proclaiming the Good News to all who would receive it, each of us in our own way by employing the gifts and talents with which we have been blessed.



Look up each of the following passages and write down what Jesus Christ says about sharing the Gospel.

MATTHEW 4:19; MARK 1:17; LUKE 5:4-10

MATTHEW 9:37-38

MATTHEW 10:5-33

LUKE 10:2-20

MATTHEW 13:3-9,18-23; MARK 4:3-20; LUKE 8:5-15

MATTHEW 28:18-20

JOHN 3:3,5-8,10-15

JOHN 4:32-38

JOHN 4:7-26

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS TODAY

There are those who may feel that evangelism is something “foreign” to Orthodox Christian Tradition. Read the following quote from Saint Athanasius. Would he agree? How can we, as individuals and parishes, continue the apostolic ministry Saint Athanasius describes today?

Let us note that the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Church which the Lord gave us, from the beginning, was preached by the apostles and preserved by the Fathers. On this the Church was founded.... The Lord sent out the apostles and commanded them to make this the foundation of the Church by saying, “Go out and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”