

LESSON EIGHT

The Practice of the Gospel— Going Out to Contact People and Opening Homes to Invite Them In for Meals

- I. To preach the gospel is to bring Christ to people, to dispense Christ into people, and to exhort people to be reconciled to God through Christ; so to preach the gospel, we must go to people and be among them—2 Cor. 5:16-20; Eph. 2:12-19; Acts 13:2; 22:22.**
- II. The steps to lead people to the Lord:**
 - A. Pray for people.
 - B. Find a companion to pray for people together.
 - C. Go out.
 - D. Find and contact people.
 - E. Speak to people.
 - F. Lead people to call on the Lord, pray, and receive the Lord.
 - G. Baptize people.
 - H. Set up the next appointment and build up a long-term relationship.
- III. The most effective way to preach the gospel is opening our homes to invite people for meals—Luke 16:9:**
 - A. The Lord Jesus teaches us to make friends for ourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they may receive us into the eternal tabernacles—Luke 16:9.
 - B. The book of Acts recorded that the early believers had their church life in the homes:
 1. Breaking bread—Acts 2:46
 2. Partaking of food—Acts 2:46
 3. Praying—12:12; 2:42
 4. Announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ—5:42
 5. The Lord added together day by day those who were being saved—2:47.
 - C. No place can open people's heart more than the home.
 1. The gospel friends would feel warmth, comfort, love, and care in our homes, and spontaneously they would open themselves to us.
 2. Inviting people to our homes for a cup of tea or for a meal is our opening to the gospel friend, through which they may open to us.

3. On the dining table we can talk about many topics to know each other, to infuse the truth, to read the Bible and pray, and to ask questions and give answers to overthrow the stronghold.
4. If the gospel friends are open, we can set up the next appointment with them, and invite them for a time to pray and read the Bible together.
5. If the gospel friends are willing, we can visit them and even meet in their homes to help them open their homes.

IV. Things to take heed in opening homes:

- A. Do not invite too many people each time, and to have one to three gospel friends is ideal; the number of the saints should not be less than that of the gospel friends, but neither should there be too many saints.
- B. The meals should not be too complicated; it's sufficient to have enough food for everyone.
- C. The children should be taken care of so that the gospel friends can be at peace.
- D. The saints who come should actively cooperate.
- E. Take heed to time and do not drag on too long unless the gospel friends want.
- F. Avoid sensitive topics that can cause arguments easily, like politics or social systems.

Ministry Excerpts:

PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN EVERY HOME BEING THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

Whenever we talked about preaching the gospel in the past, we thought of putting on gospel vests, handing out gospel tracts, and holding a gospel meeting. In the meeting some brothers would lead the singing of hymns and give a message. At the end, there would be a “drawing in of the nets” and a collection of names. There is a degree of effectiveness in this kind of gospel preaching, but our recent practice and leading has shown us that this may not be the most effective way. The most effective way is to preach the gospel in every home every other week. If everyone preaches in this way, we will realize that everyone truly can preach the gospel. Our preaching of the gospel should be continual. The most effective way to preach the gospel is in every home continually. This kind of gospel preaching will not result in something great in an outward way, but with every member speaking in a continual way throughout the year, there will be an effective move of the Lord in the gospel.

We truly worship the Lord that He has unveiled this way to us and has enabled us to see this effective way. I hope that through such a fellowship, we would rise up and no longer speak of not being eloquent or of not having the gift to preach the gospel. If someone is too “gifted,” he can actually hinder the preaching of the gospel in the homes. For example, if someone is so strong that he sounds like thunder and lightning, it may be difficult for people to receive the gospel. The gospel can be preached in this way in a big meeting, but intense speaking in a small group often scares people off.

In one small group gathering in the past, a brother preached the gospel for over an hour, and then he even wanted to “draw in the net” in a formal way. There were only about ten brothers and sisters in the small group and two gospel friends, so his attempt to “draw in the net” was awkward. With a sense of desperation, the brother even asked the two gospel friends to kneel down to pray in front of everyone. The gospel friends knelt down but only out of a sense of courtesy. After this experience, they were unwilling to come to another small group gathering. When we preach the gospel in the small groups, we do not need to be too aggressive or pushy. Otherwise, it will be very easy to make our gospel friends uncomfortable. We truly need the economical Spirit in order to preach the gospel, but the power of the economical Spirit may not always manifest itself as a roaring lion; it can also manifest itself as a gentle lamb.

Encouraging Every Brother and Sister to Open Their Homes for the Preaching of the Gospel

We should encourage the brothers and sisters in the small groups to open their homes for the preaching of the gospel. This is a very crucial point. Preaching the gospel by opening our homes is different from preaching the gospel in the meeting halls because there is no place for show or façade; it only requires everyone to exercise his or her spirit. Preaching in this way attracts people, and it warms and comforts them. We should encourage all the saints in the small groups to open their homes to preach the gospel. Even a weak saint has something precious to offer. Many so-called weak brothers and sisters become strong when they preach the gospel. Brothers and sisters who do not speak much in a big meeting all speak in a small group gathering. When they go to a church meeting and see older saints who have been following the Lord a long time, they often do not speak. However, in a small group gathering when they see that their gospel friends are unclear about the gospel and do not know the Lord Jesus, they become bold and are burdened to preach the gospel.

We should encourage every brother and sister in the small group gatherings to open their homes for gospel preaching, whether they are strong or weak. Sometimes the so-called weak brothers

and sisters actually have more gospel friends than we do, because those who have been in the church for a long time may have fewer friends in the world. If these so-called weak brothers and sisters opened their homes to preach the gospel, they could easily invite ten or twenty relatives, friends, and neighbors to come. This is the best way to preach the gospel.

Leading the Saints to Preach the Gospel in Their Homes

We also need to lead the brothers and sisters to preach the gospel by themselves in their own homes. This requires constant encouragement. The members of the small groups should pick up a burden to encourage each other to preach the gospel by themselves in their homes. Although this preaching may not be flawless, it will have a much better flavor. When we eat at a good restaurant, we may eat the best delicacies, but we do not have much of an intimate and warm feeling. When we eat at home, however, we eat more ordinary food, but we feel quite intimate and warm. When we preach the gospel ourselves, the taste will be unique and enjoyable. In some groups there are brothers and sisters who are not very strong and who do not often come to other meetings. But when it is time to preach the gospel in their home, they will start seeking and preparing. Perhaps the husband will suggest that the family read John 3:16 about how God loves the world. As the time approaches, he may lack confidence in his ability to speak so he may ask his wife to listen to what he is going to speak. After speaking in this way, he may realize that his words need to be supported with some verses, so he will look up some related references. Those who preach the gospel in their homes will not only bring unbelievers to salvation but will also be blessed themselves. Preaching the gospel will not be a heavy burden but an enjoyment. The more we preach, the more we will enjoy. (*Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 4: The Increase and Spread of the Church*, ch. 12)