

Moody Bible Institute

CELEBRATING
30 Years

Today

in the Word

WORD™

February 1988



Dear Reader,

2018 is a special year for *Today in the Word*, and February is a special month. Thirty years ago, in February 1988, we offered the first issue of our devotional. What a journey it has been! We celebrate God's faithfulness to this ministry and the way He has used it to take our readers toward a deeper relationship with Him through the study of His Word.

The mission of *Today in the Word* has never changed: encouraging our readers to consistently read, study, and apply God's Word. And each step of the way you, our readers, were with us. Together, we have studied each book of the Bible at least twice, delved into various topical studies, and looked into the life and ministry of many Bible characters. You gave us your feedback, you prayed for us, and you supported this ministry financially. And today, we want to say, **Thank You!** This anniversary is your celebration. Without you, there would be no *Today in the Word!* Your friendship and partnership with us is the manifestation of God's wonderful provision for Moody over the years. We are grateful for the *Today in the Word* community—our friends who follow Jesus, love His Word, and study it faithfully.

We are excited about the ministry of *Today in the Word* and what God has in store for us in the future. This year, as we continue our journey through the Word of God, we'll study the books of Isaiah, Revelation, Hebrews, Matthew, and Minor Prophets. We'll also learn about the biblical view of forgiveness, the church and its ministries, and hearing God. Of course, *Today in the Word* will continue its online, email, and podcast editions, as well as its social media presence on Facebook and Twitter. As God has been faithful, let us also be faithful in studying His Word daily. We pray that every issue of our devotional helps you know and love Christ.

For Jesus,
Today in the Word team

FEBRUARY 2018

CELEBRATING
30 Years

TODAY IN THE WORD™



*Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

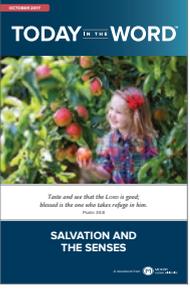
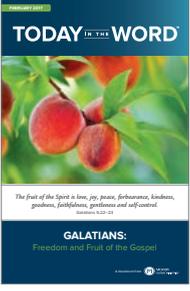
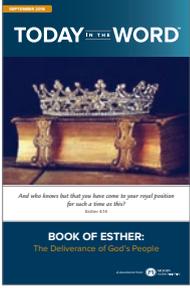
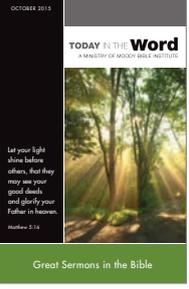
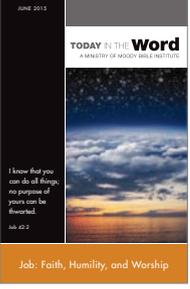
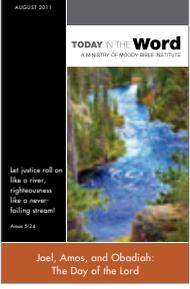
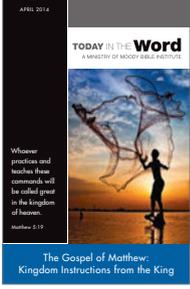
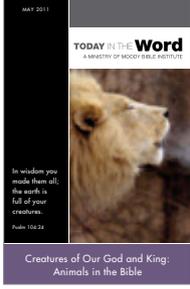
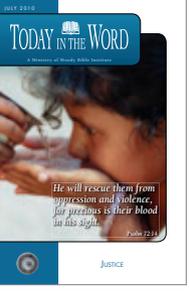
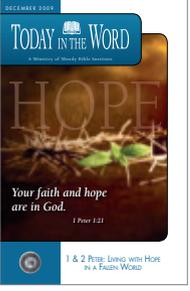
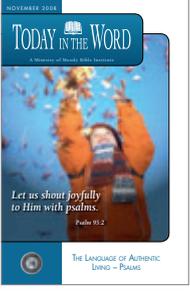
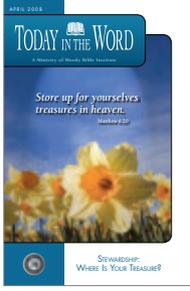
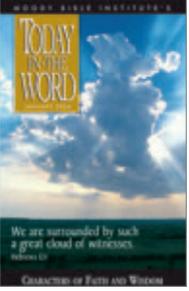
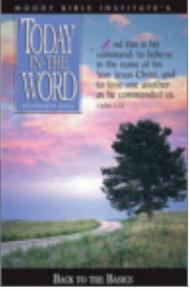
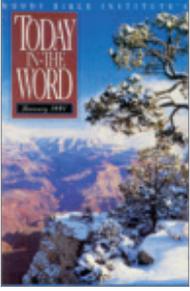
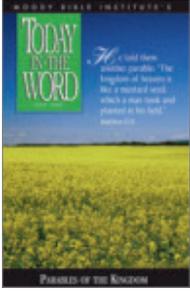
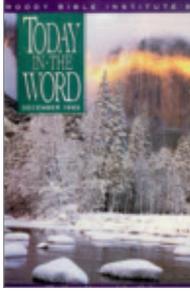
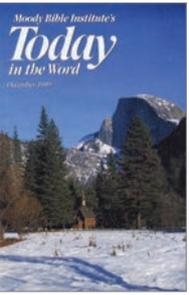
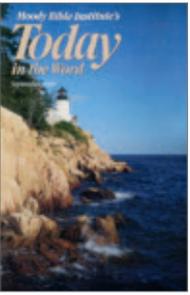
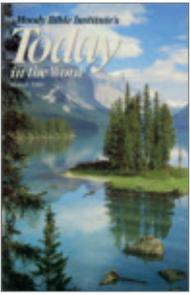
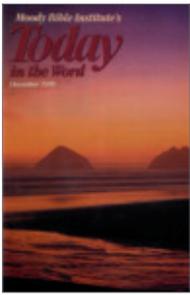
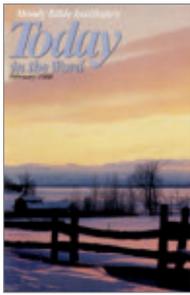
John 10:27

EVANGELISM: Sharing God's Word and God's Love

A devotional from



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GLOBAL MINISTRIES™



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DECEMBER 2014

Moody Bible Institute's
TODAY
IN THE WORD
A Ministry of Moody Bible Institute
Store up for yourselves
treasures in heaven.
Matthew 6:19

Moody Bible Institute's
TODAY
IN THE WORD
A Ministry of Moody Bible Institute
Striving together for
the faith of the gospel.
Philippians 1:27

Moody Bible Institute's
TODAY
IN THE WORD
A Ministry of Moody Bible Institute
Let us shout joyfully
to Him with psalms.
Psalm 150:2

Moody Bible Institute's
TODAY
IN THE WORD
A Ministry of Moody Bible Institute
Your faith and hope
are in God.
1 Peter 1:21

Moody Bible Institute's
TODAY
IN THE WORD
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He will rescue them from
oppression and violence,
for precious is their blood
in His sight.
Psalm 72:14

MAY 2011
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
In wisdom you
made them all,
the earth is
full of your
creatures.
Psalm 104:24

APRIL 2014
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
Whose
graces and
teaches these
commandments will
be called great
in the kingdom
of heaven.
Matthew 5:19

AUGUST 2011
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
Let your zeal roll on
like a river,
righteousness
like a stream;
letting strength
flow out.
Psalm 68:1

JUNE 2015
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
I know that you
can do all things,
no promise of
yours can be
thwarted.
Job 42:2

OCTOBER 2015
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
Let your light
shine before
others, that they
may see your
good deeds
and glorify your
Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16

JUNE 2016
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
See what great love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God!
1 John 3:1

SEPTEMBER 2016
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
And who knows that you have come to your royal position
for such a time as this?
Esther 4:17

JANUARY 2017
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
Galatians 5:22-23

NOVEMBER 2017
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
Taste and see that the Lord is good,
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
Psalm 34:8

SEPTEMBER 2018
TODAY IN THE Word
A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
Put on the new self, created with
righteousness and holiness,
and do not let the old self
become active.
Ephesians 4:24

CELEBRATING
30 Years

1988–2018

Rejoice With Us!

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Today in the Word*, we thank our readers for your commitment, friendship, and faithful support.

From your family at

TODAY IN THE **WORD**[™]

TODAY WITH DR. PAUL NYQUIST

President of Moody Global Ministries

Bearers of Good News



For some, the word *evangelist* brings to mind a man standing on a busy street corner, yelling into a megaphone to repent because the end is

near. But *evangelist*, which comes from the Greek, simply means “a messenger of good news.” Historically, the authors of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are referred to as the Four Evangelists. Angels are called evangelists, for they proclaimed, “I bring you good news of great joy” (Luke 2:10).

Are evangelists an exclusive group of those who address large crowds in football stadiums, such as Billy Graham, Luis Palau, or D. L. Moody? It’s true that the faithful efforts of those well-known evangelists have led millions to faith in Christ through their tireless efforts to share the good news of salvation.

Billy Graham preached the gospel to more people in live audiences than anyone else in history—an estimated 215 million people in more than 185 countries and territories. He himself was a product of the efforts of another evangelist, Mordecai Ham. Graham made a commitment to Christ as a teenager after hearing Ham speak at a revival meeting in Charlotte, North

Carolina. That message changed the direction of his life: “My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which I believe, comes through knowing Christ.”

While we are thankful for the spiritual fruit from the evangelistic efforts of Graham, Palau, Moody, and others, the truth is that each of us is called to evangelize, to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. We may never be asked to preach in a stadium, but Jesus Himself has commanded us to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

We are called to faithfully deliver the message. We are to “go” and to “preach.” D. L. Moody once said: “I do not know anything that would wake up Chicago better than for every man and woman here who loves Him to begin to talk about Him to their friends and just to tell them what He has done for you. You have got a circle of friends. Go and tell them of Him.”

Let’s talk about what God has done! It shouldn’t be that hard. We are bearers of wonderful, life-changing news that is meant to be shared with our children, our friends, our workmates, and our neighbors. We are all evangelists! ■

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by Dr. John Koessler

The Power of the Cross

All who have shared the gospel know what it feels like to be rejected. Not everyone who hears our message responds with faith. This is not necessarily due to any failure on our part. We may have preached the gospel clearly and even effectively when this happens. In 1 Corinthians 1:21–25, Paul explains that the gospel has a different effect on those who reject its message than it does on those who believe. For those who believe, it is a message about “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (v. 24). For those who do not accept the gospel’s promise, the same message is both foolishness and a stumbling block.

These verses describe a power that does not correlate with our own powers of persuasion, nor do they imply that the words of the gospel are a magical incantation. This power is the power of God to save through the surprising means of the cross. Christ’s humiliation, suffering, and death seemed entirely unexpected to the Jews; they expected their Messiah to appear as a conquering hero. The Savior’s suffering and subsequent resurrection seemed equally absurd to the Greeks; they considered the twin themes of human suffering and bodily resurrection too coarse and incompatible with what one would expect of God.

God chose not to accommodate either culture when shaping the plan of salvation, because He wanted everyone to know that the power was His. The unlikely events that we retell every time we share the gospel underscore the fundamental truth that salvation comes from the Lord. Only He has provided a satisfactory remedy for our sin. He alone has the authority to forgive and grant new life.

These verses also underscore the central place that the cross has in the church’s message and its mission. Although we are concerned about justice, we do not preach a gospel of social justice. We want to see people’s lives improved, but we do not preach a message of personal fulfillment. Any message that does not give first place to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the only remedy for our sin does not have the right to be called a Christian gospel. The gospel proclaims that the wisdom and power of God are displayed through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY

To learn more, read *The Heart of the Church: The Gospel’s History, Message, and Meaning* by Joe Thorn (Moody Publishers).

FROM THE EDITORS

by Jamie Janosz

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

Study of the Scripture is not new for me. When I was a little girl, I was blessed to have Sunday school teachers who faithfully told Bible stories with flannelgraph. I had AWANA leaders who encouraged me to memorize key Bible passages. In college, I became a student at Moody Bible Institute, where a key Bible study verse is engraved on the stone archway leading to campus: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15, KJV).

Now as an editor on the *Today in the Word* team, I consider it a privilege to play a small role in this Bible study that includes thousands of participating members, men and women in so many diverse locations, opening God’s Word and reading it together. *Today in the Word* has been a Moody ministry for 30 years, and I’ve been helping write and edit this devotional for many of those years! My job has included fine-tuning the devotional text (fixing the spelling and grammar, checking those fascinating introductory stories, and clearing up any inconsistent or confusing statements). I’ve written columns and even authored several issues, including “God’s Faithfulness” and studies of the Gospel of John and the book of Esther. I can see in my own life how my knowledge of Scripture has

grown and my love and appreciation for God and His Word have deepened.

Some things have changed over the years. When I first began, we didn’t have computers for word processing or layout. In fact, I purchased one of our first desktop Apple computers—a tiny box with a five-inch screen! Our research was done through books without the help of the internet, and proofs were reviewed on paper. The only method of distribution was by mailing printed copies.

Thirty years later, thousands of readers join us by email, podcast, social media, and our website—even reading on their smart phones, an unimaginable idea in 1988! And the most important things have stayed the same. We have retained our singular focus on the Word of God. Each day, we study Scripture to have our daily lives shaped by God’s perspective.

All of us at *Today in the Word*—editors, writers, graphic designers, production, and marketing—send our appreciation for you. Your gifts have sustained and grown this ministry for 30 years. May we continue to walk together in studying the Bible, seeking to deepen our love for the Lord, and rightly dividing the Word of truth. ■

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TODAY IN THE WORD™

Evangelism: Sharing God's Word and God's Love

Last year, the University of Chicago professor Richard Thaler won the Nobel Prize in economics. His research challenged the longstanding notion that individuals act rationally, without procrastination, about their future and their finances. This insight changed our understanding about investment and the ways people save for retirement. As a result, policies such as automatic enrollment in retirement saving plans and automatic increases in contributions to these plans have been developed to nudge people to save more for the future.

When our Christian witness meets rejection or ridicule, don't we wish sometimes we had automatic enrollments in God's saving plan? But there are no Richard Thalers in divine economics. The Lord gave us the Great Commission—we have the privilege and challenge of evangelism. As we study evangelism in *Today in the Word* this month, we'll look at the gospel as the story of God making friends out of His enemies. We'll see that this ministry of reconciliation is given to all believers and to the church, with a wonderful Helper and Counselor—the Holy Spirit—working in every heart.

In this year of celebrating our 30th anniversary, all of us at *Today in the Word* thank you for studying the Bible with us. We pray this month's study will encourage you to share the Word of God and His love with those around you. ■

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THURSDAY
FEBRUARY

1

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.

Matthew 28:19

Go!

If you've ever watched a track event or participated in a 5K or marathon, you know the building excitement at the start of a race. Runners shake their legs and arms in anticipation, line up at the start, and wait for the sound of the starter's pistol. On your mark . . . Get set . . . Go!

In today's passage, Jesus' words are like a starter's pistol for the church. Following His death and resurrection, He set His church on the evangelistic mission—more marathon than sprint—that will continue until He returns (vv. 18–20).

But before He tells them to “go” (v. 19), He invites them to come. Jesus beckons to the women at the tomb (v. 6) and then to the disciples in Jerusalem (v. 10), welcoming them to touch His resurrected body and to look into His resurrected face. Drawing them close, Jesus makes His followers witnesses and equips them to be evangelists.

The resurrection is a delight to Jesus' followers, but it is a horror to His enemies. With biblical irony, when Jesus is made alive, the guards immediately “became like dead men” (v. 4). The Roman soldiers and Jewish teachers knew a resurrected Christ would threaten their power and authority, and so they enacted a plan of bribery and lies to hide the truth (vv. 12–15). If a teaching and healing Jesus had been dangerous, a resurrected Jesus was a hundred times more so.

In this context, then, Jesus' followers hear His charge: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations” (v. 19). The disciples had certain knowledge of Christ crucified for sinners and made alive again, and in the face of lies, they were sent out to share the good news. We, too, receive Christ's mandate to go. While the world around us tries to hide God's love, we boldly proclaim what we know to be true.

APPLY THE WORD

We all receive God's call to evangelize. Jesus tells His disciples that as they are going, they should be telling others about the gospel. We too share God's love as we move through our days in the places where God has set us. And as we go, we do not go alone. Instead, we cling to Christ's promise: “Surely I am with you always” (v. 20).

PRAY WITH US

Samuel Choy, chief marketing officer, heads Moody's efforts nationally and internationally to tell more people about Moody and our ministries. Praise God today for providing a willing servant and trusted leader for this position.

Every tongue [will] acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:11

For the Glory of God

Many of our Christian testimonies have the same elements: Someone told us about Jesus, we saw the horror of our sin and understood our need for a Savior, we cried out to Him and were saved. And we have loved and followed Him ever since.

Those testimonies are true accounts of our conversion, but they are also told from our human perspective. In today's passage, Paul shifts camera lens to show us what our salvation looks like from God's perspective. Here, we see that even before we were born (v. 4), God was at work to make us His possession. According to "his pleasure and will" (v. 5), He chose us for holiness, predestined us for adoption, redeemed us by His blood, made Himself known to us, and marked us with the seal of His Holy Spirit.

Three times in this passage Paul lays out God's purpose in His saving work

through Christ. He saved us "to the praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6), "for the praise of his glory" (v. 12), and "to the praise of his glory" (v. 14). Jesus came to Earth to live and die for sinners so that God might be known and magnified. When one sinner repents, the heavenly angels rejoice because God receives all the glory (see Luke 15:10).

This means that our evangelistic efforts are not merely focused on the salvation of lost people—though that is important! Our evangelistic efforts aim for something even higher: the glory of God. We evangelize not only because we love people. We evangelize because we love God. As John Piper wrote: "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man."

APPLY THE WORD

The goal of evangelism is the glory of God. When sinners trust in Christ, He is honored and lifted high. As evangelists, we need to set our hearts on this ultimate goal. When you share the gospel with people, pray for God's glory to be magnified in their lives. When people repent and believe, give thanks to God for glorifying Himself.

PRAY WITH US

For the next several days, let's pray together for the faculty and staff of our Music department and thank the Lord for these talented musicians, professors, and artists. Your prayers mean so much for H. E. Singley, Brian Lee, Chris Wheeler, and David Gauger.

SATURDAY
FEBRUARY

3

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known.

Ephesians 3:10

The Church's Big Task

In recent years the “gig economy” or “sharing economy” has become so prevalent that, according to Pew research, 72 percent of American adults have used one of its sharing or on-demand services. Every day, companies like Uber, Thumbtack, and TaskRabbit match available workers with jobs.

As an apostle, Paul had been given a very specific task by God. Earlier in Paul's life, he had dedicated himself to persecuting the church. He used his energy to stop the spread of the good news of Christ.

But from the moment of his conversion on the Damascus road, Paul's life took an entirely different direction (see Acts 9:1–19). From that day, he was “set apart for the gospel of God” (v. 1) to “call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith” (v. 5). No longer would he squelch the gospel and stomp on the church. Instead, he would

lead the church to proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ to all nations.

The people to whom Paul wrote also had a calling. The church at Rome was made up of individuals who each, like Paul, belonged to Jesus Christ. They had been used in a variety of ways in the church, but they shared a common faith (see Rom. 16:1–16). Together with the Apostles, they could trace the promises of the Messiah throughout the Old Testament until His appearing (v. 2). They knew firsthand the love of God, and they worshiped Christ as Lord (vv. 4, 7). And as we see in Romans 1:8, their obvious and active faith had far-reaching, evangelistic effects.

Marked by the preaching of the gospel and the exercise of our faith, the church today receives its job from the Lord: “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known” (Eph. 3:10).

APPLY THE WORD

The important task of proclaiming the love of God in Christ to the world has been given to the church. As part of the church, each Christian joins this work by prayer, financial support, a life of godliness, and active participation in the ministry. How is your local church taking up the task of evangelism? How are you participating?

PRAY WITH US

Again, we bring before the Lord the Music department faculty: Elizabeth Naegele, Desiree Hassler, Jori Jennings, and Terry Strandt. We ask the Lord to guide them as they share God's gift of music with their students and concert audiences.

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

John 6:68

We Have the Words of Life

The famous nineteenth-century preacher Charles Spurgeon was once asked how he would defend the Bible against its critics. He responded, “Open the door and let the lion out; he will take care of himself.”

As we begin the work of evangelism, we often find ourselves already discouraged. We recognize our own shortcomings, and we worry that we are poor examples of the life of faith. We fear that we will have no answers to the objections of unbelievers. We doubt that our feeble words will have any effect on their hearts. Today’s passage is just the encouragement we need! We have the words of life (John 6:68).

First, Paul sets an example for us by his commitment to telling people about Christ. Three times in this passage (vv. 9, 13, 15), Paul expresses how eager he is to come to Rome and preach the gospel. Paul’s confidence

that this is exactly what the Romans need can encourage us in our own evangelistic work. What the people in our communities need most is to hear from us about Jesus.

Paul also tells us *why* he was so determined to preach the gospel and continue preaching it: because he knew it was the power of salvation (vv. 16–17). Every one of us who has been saved from sin knows this to be true. The message of Christ crucified for sinners reveals God’s righteousness to those who receive it by faith (see Rom. 3:21–26). And we cannot be ashamed of the precious truth that has brought us from death to life.

Our words to our unbelieving neighbors may sound inadequate to our ears, but God assures us that the message of the gospel comes from our lips with power—His power!—for the salvation of everyone who believes.

APPLY THE WORD

At times, the work of evangelism seems fruitless and hopeless. God encourages us to this difficult task by reminding us that the gospel is powerful, and we do not need to be either discouraged or ashamed. If you have not already done so, memorize Romans 1:16. Be encouraged by its promise. Then, open the door and let the lion out!

PRAY WITH US

Our hearts are full of gratitude to God for the wonderful ministry of our Music faculty! May the power of God’s love shine through the talent and service of professors Betty-Ann Lynerd, Jae Hyeok Jang, Un-Young Whang, and Xiangtang Hong.

MONDAY
FEBRUARY

5

*Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

Psalms 96:3

Wanted: Bold Evangelists

In the climactic scene of many crime dramas, a lone police officer confronts the villains in their hide-out. One good man against an armed and reckless gang might seem foolish, but, as the viewers know, the police officer seems confident for a good reason. He has a backup team in place, ready to help at the first sign of trouble.

Evangelism does not come without discomfort. To tell our coworkers, friends, and neighbors about the love of God in Christ may be to invite them to dismiss us, to ridicule us, or to end our relationship. For Christians in many times and places, evangelism has also come with danger. The church in Acts knew these risks firsthand. Peter and John had just been imprisoned (see Acts 4:1–22) for preaching the gospel, and a similar threat hung over the whole church.

As evangelists, we need boldness. Our confidence lies, as we saw yesterday, in the truth and power of the message we proclaim. It also comes from the Spirit who gives the Word its power (see 1 Thess. 1:5) and who speaks through us as we speak (Matt. 10:20). As we tell others about Jesus, we are not alone. Instead, we have the promised help of the Holy Spirit. Like the members of the early church, we can cast our anxieties on the Lord and ask Him to enable us to speak His word with great boldness (v. 29).

In answer to the believers' prayer, God poured out the Spirit on everyone there (v. 31). We read that the place where they were was shaken, and, in the words of the Early Church Father John Chrysostom, "that made them more unshaken." We can have confidence that He will do the same for us.

APPLY THE WORD

Evangelism can be a frightening task, and we need courage. Like the members of the early church, we can ask God for the help of His Spirit to do the work of confident gospel proclamation. Spend time in prayer today. Confess to the Lord your fears and discomfort with evangelism. Ask Him to give you boldness and to make you unshaken.

PRAY WITH US

Join us for Founder's Week conference at Moody in Chicago—its theme this year is One New People. Praise God for Moody's godly legacy of faithfulness to the Bible! As you pray, remember our president, Dr. Paul Nyquist, who opens the first session today.

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:18

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY

6

Reconciled and Reconciling

Louis Zamperini was a World War II veteran who survived a plane crash, several weeks adrift in the Pacific Ocean, and two years of torture in a Japanese POW camp. But years after those dramatic events, something even more significant happened: Zamperini became a Christian. In 1950, he traveled back to Japan and shared the gospel with many of the people who had once been his enemies.

In today's reading, we see that evangelism is the work of reconciling people to God. Paul begins his explanation by defending his work—probably against the accusations of his critics. Paul and his companions were not preaching out of selfish motives, they were preaching because “Christ's love compels us” (v. 14). We, too, speak of Christ to our neighbors and friends because we have experienced God's love in Christ and long for others to share in it.

This love for us was so great that it came to us “while we were still sinners” (Rom. 5:8) and “while we were God's enemies” (Rom. 5:10). Through Christ's perfect obedience, death on the cross, and resurrection to the right hand of the Father, He reconciled us to God. Where once we cursed God or denied His very existence, we now worship Him. Where once we hated God and His ways, we now delight in them. Where once we were far from God, we now call Him Father.

And, like Paul, we long for others to be reconciled to God. All around us are people who are God's enemies—whether they would acknowledge it or not. It is our privilege to take up “the ministry of reconciliation” (v. 18), telling people the message of Christ crucified for sinners, in the confidence that God delights to make His enemies His friends.

APPLY THE WORD

The gospel is the story of how God is making His enemies His friends through Christ. As you speak to others about Jesus, remember that you were once God's enemy too, and be encouraged that God has the power to work in even the most antagonistic people. Give thanks to God for the privilege of participating in His reconciling work.

PRAY WITH US

Today is Alumni Day at Founder's Week in Chicago. Nancy Hastings and Diane Janchenko of the Alumni Association request your prayers for participants at alumni events—the alumni breakfast and banquet, *Alumnus of the Year* ceremony, and alumni reunions.

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY

7

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23

All Have Sinned

Published in the late 1680s, *The New England Primer* was the standard textbook for schoolchildren in the American colonies during the eighteenth century. To teach the alphabet, the *Primer* used short, rhyming couplets. Perhaps the most famous of these was the verse for the letter A: “In Adam’s fall, we sinned all.”

For the next few days we will turn our attention to the content of our evangelism. What is the message we communicate to our unbelieving neighbors? As *The New England Primer* said, we must acknowledge that “we sinned all.”

Today’s passage makes it clear that every one of us has sin in our hearts. Sin is not only what we consider especially bad thoughts or actions, such as racism or murder. Nor is sin committed only by a certain group of people—notice that “There is no

difference between Jew and Gentile” (v. 22). Sin is the fundamental problem of every human heart.

And we are powerless against sin (v. 9). Throughout the Scriptures, sin is pictured as a dangerous and powerful enemy. It is a beast, crouching and ready to pounce (see Gen. 4:7). It is a murderer whose house is filled with corpses of her previous victims (see Prov. 9:13–18). It is a crippling weight and a clever trap (Heb. 12:1). Even when we think we are doing the right thing, our actions are still tarnished by sin.

Our sin is rebellion against God’s holiness, and it alienates us from God. Sinful people cannot have a relationship with a holy God. Our rebellion places us under the just wrath of God (v. 5). Like the lost son in Jesus’s parable (see Luke 15:11–16), each of us has rejected the good life God intended for us and now faces death and judgment alone.

APPLY THE WORD

Our gospel message begins with the solemn truth that every human being has rebelled against God. This is admittedly not the happiest part of our evangelism, but we must not gloss over it. A doctor cares for her patients best when she tells them the true severity of their illness so that they can be convinced of the necessity of treatment.

PRAY WITH US

We are grateful for Event Marketing and Management’s Mary Chapman, Lauren Cuevas, Hannah Morley, and Anna Gonzalez, who worked hard on the logistics of Founder’s Week. Praise God with them for this time of spiritual growth and fellowship.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY

8

But God

Every beloved fairytale has a dramatic plot twist. The princess is trapped in the tower, the castle is under a curse, or the good guys are lost in the enchanted forest. But wait! Suddenly, the prince arrives or the spell is broken, and everything gets better.

Yesterday, we saw the somber reality of our sinful condition. Today's passage also begins by recounting the depths of our miserable state. We were spiritually dead (v. 1), slaves to Satan and sin (v. 2), and condemned by our own sinful actions (v. 3). It would be incredibly sad if that were the end of the story we are to share with others.

Thankfully, it's not the end! Verse 4 reveals an astonishing twist with two simple words: "But . . . God." Sinners are the objects of His wrath, but God loves them and has mercy on them. Sinners are dead in their rebellion, but God raises them up and makes

them alive. Sinners are weak and powerless—the cowering slaves of Satan—but God seats them with His Son and gives them the promise of a glorious future. Evangelism is sharing the message of God's gracious action toward sinners. And, as we will see tomorrow, sinners receive this salvation by faith.

Out of His love for us, God sent His Son to be the "atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10). By His life of perfect obedience, Jesus kept the law we are guilty of breaking. By His death on the cross, He paid the penalty due for our sin. By His resurrection, our own eternal life in fellowship with Him is guaranteed. This good news about Christ is so essential to our evangelism that the apostle Paul could say, "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

APPLY THE WORD

The gospel message does not end with our hopeless, sinful condition. Instead, the glorious plot twist of the Bible is that God saves sinners. Meditate on John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." How are you sharing God's love for the world?

PRAY WITH US

As a special event at Founder's Week, we celebrate *Today in the Word's* 30th anniversary today! We invite you to visit *Today in the Word's* booth, attend the evening reception, meet the staff, and thank God with us for this unique ministry of His Word.

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY

9

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

Acts 2:38

Repent and Believe

When a friend, family member, or coworker announces, “I’m expecting a baby!” or “I’m going to be married!” we cannot ignore their joyful news. Instead, we break into a smile of delight and offer a heartfelt, “Congratulations!”

Sharing the news of God’s love doesn’t simply end with announcing the glorious truth of Christ’s salvation offered to sinners. The gospel message requires a response from everyone who hears it. In today’s passage, we meet an unnamed man who worked as a jailer in the prison at Philippi. He lived in “the leading city of that district of Macedonia” (v. 12), but only a few believers lived in the city (v. 13), and he was not one of them.

Surely in his career he had stood guard over prisoners who had responded to their incarceration in various angry ways. But prisoners Paul and Silas were remarkably different. Rather

than grumble or sulk or rage against the penal system, they proceeded to pray and sing hymns (v. 25). As the jailer listened, he heard about a God who was worthy to be worshiped in all circumstances. He learned about a God who hears and answers the prayers of His people wherever they are. He discovered a God who condescends to enter a relationship with ordinary men and women.

When the earthquake shook open the prison doors, Paul and Silas still didn’t respond as other prisoners might. Seeing them still in their cell, the jailer asked them the life-changing question: “What must I do to be saved?” (v. 30). He knew that the truth of who God was—the truth he had witnessed in Paul and Silas’s jail-cell worship—demanded a response. And Paul had a ready answer: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (v. 31).

APPLY THE WORD

The gospel message we proclaim demands a response. As we go about the work of evangelism, we call others to respond by repenting of their sin and trusting in Christ as their Savior. Make the invitation of Peter your own: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38).

PRAY WITH US

On this last day of Founder’s Week, executive VP and chief operating officer Steven Mogck requests your prayers for the participants on stage, in the audience, and behind the scenes. May the Holy Spirit work in their hearts as they go home.

*Dear friends, now we are children of God,
and . . . when Christ appears, we shall
be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

1 John 3:2

SATURDAY
FEBRUARY

10

New Life in Christ

In the 1950s, believers in the Wolaitta district of Ethiopia adopted a saying to describe their conversion. “With two hands,” they would say. “With this hand I renounce the devil and all his works! With this hand I surrender to Jesus Christ! All I am and all I have.”

We come today to the final part of our evangelistic message. We have shared with our friends and neighbors the solemn truth of their sinful condition. We have unveiled the hope of salvation in the two-word plot twist: “But God.” We have called them to respond to this joyful announcement with repentance and faith. Now, we invite them to new life in Christ.

This new life requires “two hands,” as the Ethiopian Christians understood. First, our relationship to sin is fundamentally changed. Because we have a new identity in Christ and are united to

Him in His death and resurrection, sin is no longer the inevitable habit of our lives. As Christians, we no longer have to say “yes, sir” to Satan and call him our master (vv. 6, 14). Sin has no power over those who have been set free in Christ. Of course, even Christians sin. But if we sin, “we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One” (1 John 2:1). We turn to Him in repentance, assured of His loving forgiveness.

At the same time that we renounce sin, we also offer ourselves to God. This is not a partial offering of only some aspects of our lives. Today’s passage commands us to “offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness” (v. 13). Our new life in Christ is one of willing obedience to His commands and eager expectation for that day when “we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2).

APPLY THE WORD

An important part of our message is the new life that God gives to those who trust in Christ. Through Him, everyone who believes is released from slavery to sin, set free to righteousness, brought into relationship with the triune God, and promised a future day of being made perfect in holiness. What a privilege to share this news!

PRAY WITH US

Dr. Bryan O’Neal, VP and dean of Moody Distance Learning, welcomes the prayers of the Moody family for his teams that reach learners across cultures and generations. Ask God to give Bryan strength and wisdom for accomplishing his work at Moody.

Jesus said . . . “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

Matthew 16:24

Jesus the Evangelist

One useful technological development in recent years is the Global Positioning System, or GPS. Drivers who are directionally challenged can tell their smartphones where they would like to go, and GPS will identify their current location, orient them in the correct direction, and guide them to their goal.

The man in today’s passage was in need of direction. He came to Jesus with a question: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 17), and Jesus’ kind answer reoriented him. The man was mainly interested in himself—how he had kept the law in the past and how he could be assured of an eternal reward in the future. But instead of giving him directions to heaven, Jesus had compassion on him and showed him that his greater need was to know and serve God.

At first glance, it might seem strange that Jesus evangelized by using the Ten

Commandments. He certainly wasn’t saying that the man could earn his salvation by keeping the Law! Rather, the Law should have caused the man to confront God’s holiness and his own shortcomings. As the Puritan Thomas Watson said, “Until sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet.”

Furthermore, the Law showed the man that following Christ was not simply a quick road to heavenly bliss. The Christian life requires each of us to deny self and take up our cross (see Matt. 16:24). And it is when we give up our own interests that we receive God’s gracious repayment (vv. 29–31).

Jesus’ conversation provides a model for our own evangelism. We too can have compassion, apply God’s Word to their hearts, cause them to count the cost of discipleship, and hold out the promise of heavenly treasure and a new life following Him.

APPLY THE WORD

If we are intent on evangelizing like Jesus did, we must grow in our own knowledge of God and His Word. As you study Scripture, consider how each passage shows you God’s holy and gracious character. Thank God for revealing Himself in the Bible, and be ready to bring those precious truths into your conversations with unbelievers.

PRAY WITH US

Today and tomorrow, pray for the staff of Moody Distance Learning who oversee operations, program development, and instruction. Please pray for Andrew Beaty, Ashish Varma, and Douglas Murphy as they help expand the reach of Moody education.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

1 Timothy 1:15

MONDAY
FEBRUARY

12

An Evangelist's Heart: Humility

“Secure your own oxygen mask before assisting other passengers.” These instructions are familiar to anyone who has traveled on a commercial airplane in recent years. In order to be useful to other people, travelers should first make sure they have what they need to breathe.

In order to effectively evangelize the lost and dying people around us, we should first turn our attention to our own spiritual health. For the next few days, we will consider our hearts and the spiritual supply that equips us to help others. In today's psalm, David cries for forgiveness after committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband, Uriaah (see 2 Samuel 11).

So often we are tempted to minimize the severity of our sin—to play it off as a mistake or reframe it as the inevitable conclusion to a bad day—but

David here freely confesses his own wickedness. He looks at it squarely and does not look away (v. 3), and he acknowledges that the chief object of his rebellion was God Himself (v. 4). He affirms God's right to judge him. David measures the depth and the length of his sin, and then he casts himself on God for full and complete forgiveness.

As immense as David's sin is, he knows that God's mercy is greater still. David calls on a God whose love is “unfailing” (v. 1). Even in the depths of sorrow, David is confident that God can again teach him wisdom, mend his broken spirit, give him renewed joy, and bless him by His Holy Spirit. Like David, we come to the work of evangelism not because we are perfect but because we know ourselves to be sinners. As evangelists, we must plainly acknowledge our own humble position as people in need of God's mercy.

APPLY THE WORD

The *Harvard Business Review* reported that humility is essential for effective leadership: “We tend to connect with people who share their imperfections and foibles—they appear more ‘human,’ more like us.” How is acknowledgment of your own sin essential to effective evangelism? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart today.

PRAY WITH US

Keeping the Distance Learning staff in prayer today, add Kerwin Rodriguez, Madeline Seghers, and Troy Dueck to your list. May the Lord use their expertise to make Moody education a powerful presence in the lives of people around the world.

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY

13

We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Acts 4:20

An Evangelist's Heart: Joy

In an 1850 letter to her publisher, George Smith, English novelist Charlotte Brontë wrote: “Happiness quite unshared can scarcely be called happiness; it has no taste.” As we will see in today’s passage too, our happiness in our salvation should necessarily overflow into sharing—and this makes our joyful experience sweeter.

The second half of Psalm 51 is David’s response to the salvation he has received. Having seen the depths of his sin and the fullness of God’s mercy, David commits himself to evangelism. He promises to “teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you” (v. 13). The mouth that once summoned Bathsheba for sexual sin and dispatched Uriah to his death will now declare the praises of God for the spiritual good of everyone who hears.

David’s ultimate goal is not simply his own salvation or even the salvation of

others. David’s goal is to glorify God. He longs to see God’s people prospering and growing (v. 18), and he longs to see God worshiped by all people (v. 19).

As Jeremy Walker writes in *The Brokenhearted Evangelist*, “Nowhere is the power and wisdom of God more gloriously displayed than in the good news of Christ crucified, and there is nothing that the saved sinner desires more than the display of God’s glory.” We magnify God’s glory as we bring others to experience it for themselves.

This is true happiness! Those who are created in God’s image, redeemed by God’s Son, and destined for an eternity in God’s presence find our highest joy in multiplying God’s praises. We affirm with the Apostles: “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

APPLY THE WORD

Our experience of salvation compels us to tell others how they can have the same joy. Spend time reflecting on God’s gift to you. Take the opportunity to praise God for the ways that He has brought joy into your life, including His salvation and His provision. Then, look for someone with whom you can share your happiness.

PRAY WITH US

Moody Distance Learning is again in our prayers today. Please uphold in prayer Nancy Kane who oversees the Spiritual Formation program, as well as Christian Martinsen, Lanna-Marie Enns, and Patrick Friedline at Independent Studies.

*Streams of tears flow from my eyes,
for your law is not obeyed.*

Psalms 119:136

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY

14

An Evangelist's Heart: Sorrow

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court effectively legalized abortion until the third trimester of pregnancy with its ruling in *Roe v. Wade*. Cardinal Terence Cooke spoke for many when he lamented the decision to *The New York Times* as “an unspeakable tragedy.” In days to come, groups opposed to abortion would begin to take action, but first they responded with deep sadness.

In our study of an evangelist's heart, today we see that an evangelist is saddened by wickedness. Psalm 119 is a psalm of delight in God's Word. As one of God's redeemed people, the psalmist knows the goodness of walking in God's ways. Earlier in the psalm, he uses the word *blessed* to describe people who “keep his [God's] statutes and seek him with all their heart” (v. 2). The psalmist knows from personal experience that God's commandments describe the best life—the life that gives happiness to people and brings glory to God.

But while the psalmist finds wonder and understanding in the commandments (vv. 129–130), while he hungers and thirsts for them (v. 131), and while he constantly seeks mercy from the God who constantly gives it (v. 132), the people around him do not. Many of us can relate to this situation, when our friends and neighbors and coworkers are ignorant of the joy that comes from walking in God's ways. In fact, they actively disobey what God has so clearly unfolded.

The psalmist's first response to his neighbors' rebellion is sadness. Charles Spurgeon tells the story of Bendetti, a Franciscan monk, who was found weeping one day. When asked why he was so sad, he replied, “I weep because Love goes about unloved.” As evangelists, we mirror the holy emotions of Jesus who wept over the city of Jerusalem because it lived in willful ignorance of the Savior (Luke 19:41–44).

APPLY THE WORD

Sadness is not always a comfortable emotion. We often try to avoid sadness and protect ourselves from it. But sadness can be good and useful. When we allow ourselves to honestly lament that God's Word is not honored in people's hearts, we will be moved to speak to them of the good news of Christ crucified for sinners.

PRAY WITH US

On this Valentine's Day, when there's so much talk about love, let's pray for our students—that God will touch their hearts during this time with a deeper love for Him, and for their lives to be shaped by the power of prayer.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Dr. Winfred O. Neely, Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Studies

Q In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus preached, “You are the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13).

Why did Jesus use a salt metaphor to describe His people?

A In the ancient world, people valued salt in many ways. Before refrigeration and the canning of food, salt was the main way people preserved meat and fish. In addition, the taste of food mattered then (just as it still does today!). In both the first century and the twenty-first century, people used salt to season their food, and it is one of the oldest and most universal of food seasoning (see Job 6:6).

Given its beneficial properties, salt was an important trade commodity in ancient world. People sometimes used salt as currency or money. On occasion, a Roman soldier’s pay was a negotiated amount of salt. This payment was called *salarium*, from which we get our word *salary*. The expression “not worth his salt” comes from this practice.

With this understanding of salt’s value and beneficial properties, the Lord Jesus, the master teacher, used salt imagery to help us understand how we are to function as Christians in a fallen world. Jesus says, “You are the salt of the earth”—we are to be people whose grace-filled lives act to preserve, flavor,

and value those around us. I suspect that the first hearers of these words were stunned with the magnitude of the practical implications of the metaphor.

Q What are some of the practical implications of salt imagery for our personal lives today?

A Salt imagery has several practical implications for our lives as Christians today. First, we live in a world where sin’s corrupting power is constantly experienced and observed (see Rom. 1:18–32; 2 Tim. 3:1–9; 2 Peter 1:4). The 24/7 news cycle and the pervasive reach of social media heighten our sense of these sinful and corrupting realities. As Christ followers, we should be what Jesus says we are: a penetrating and beneficial influence and gospel force for good, our redeemed presence preserving what is good in this world, keeping it from descent into all-out moral decay and rottenness. It is the presence of the church on earth as salt that has preserved the world from becoming a bag full of morally rotten potatoes!

Second, we are the seasoning of life. It is the presence of Christ-followers *living* as Christians that gives life its flavor and its zest. We are the seasoning of life and language (see Col. 4:6). Third, we are thirst generators. When we live our

It is the presence of Christ-followers living as Christians that gives life its flavor and its zest.

lives in the Spirit's power, we function as salt, generating thirst in others for the things of God and for God Himself.

Q **What did Jesus mean by *earth* when He said, “You are the salt of the earth”?**

A In context, *earth* is not the physical Earth but a reference to the people of earth. This means that the scope of the church's missional and beneficial influence embraces the entire human family and should not be restricted. In keeping with the Great Commission of our Lord in Matthew 28:19–20, Christians are to be a salty witness of God's love to all people, willing to go anywhere God leads and to share with anyone He places in our path.

Q **What is Jesus communicating when He says, “But if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again?”**

A Understanding the cultural and historical context of Jesus' words will clarify what He means. In ancient Israel, salt came mainly from the Dead Sea, or more accurately, the Sea of Salt. The Salt Sea is so rich in salt and other minerals that you can literally float in it. I have been to the Salt Sea in Israel several times. Today, salt refineries are located in the

region of the Salt Sea, but in Jesus' time salt refineries were nonexistent. In the first century, salt taken from the Salt Sea was mixed with other chemicals. Over time, the salt left or drained away from the mixture, and all that remained were minerals without salt. The leftover minerals were consequently useless, fit only to be discarded.

Salt without saltiness is useless. Jesus is saying that, when we do not function as salt in our personal and corporate lives, we are not useful; we are not serving the function for which He left us on Earth.

Q **Jesus told His disciples that “You are the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13). I was told that the “you” is plural. Is this correct?**

A Yes, the word *you* in Matthew 5:13 is plural. It is not only an individual Christian who is salt but the redeemed community of Christians as a whole who are the salt of the earth. The plural *you* does not eliminate our personal responsibility to function as salt, but it does highlight the responsibility of the church as a whole. This is more striking when we understand that the *you* is not only plural, it is also emphatic in the Greek text. Jesus emphasizes that His body, the redeemed believers who are following Him, are the salt of the earth.

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY

15

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart”
... and, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

Luke 10:27

An Evangelist’s Heart: Compassion

During a qualifying heat for the 5,000-meter race at the 2016 Olympic Games, New Zealand runner Nikki Hamblin fell, accidentally tripping American runner Abbey D’Agostino. The two women took turns helping each other to stand and then finish the race. Though neither medalled, they were given the only Fair Play awards of the Games. Hamblin explained the women’s compassionate acts: “Once you are on the track, there is a mutual understanding of what it takes to get there.”

In today’s passage we see that an evangelist’s heart is filled with compassion for people who are in the same lost and fallen condition we once were. Elsewhere, we learn that the apostle Paul had lived an exemplary life as a religious Jew (see Phil. 3:4–6). He knew what it meant to live according to a strict interpretation of the Law. He had taken pride in his identity as a zealous Jewish religious leader.

After Paul met Christ, he longed for his fellow Jews to meet Him too. In Romans 9, he uses the strongest terms possible—“great sorrow and unceasing anguish” (v. 2)—to describe his concern for Jews living apart from Christ. He even says he would be willing to give up his own salvation if only they could be saved instead (v. 3). Paul’s words reflect the heart of Jesus Himself, who had compassion on the crowds because they didn’t have anyone to teach them the good news (see Mark 6:34).

As evangelists, we are compelled by the two great commandments to love God and to love our neighbors (Luke 10:27). Because we love God, we long for others to praise and worship Him. Because we love our neighbors, we desire for them to accept the privileged life of adoption to sonship.

APPLY THE WORD

We share the gospel out of love for others. Like Christ Himself, when we see others blinded by sin and in rebellion against God, we have compassion and proclaim the news of salvation to them. We want what is good for them and what accomplishes God’s merciful purposes. Who needs your spiritual compassion? Are you bringing them to meet Christ?

PRAY WITH US

Junias Venugopal, provost and dean of Education, is grateful for your prayers for the ministry of Christian education at Moody. He invites you to join him in thanksgiving for God’s faithfulness guiding and protecting this ministry through the years.

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 14:6

An Evangelist’s Heart: Conviction

In 1521, the Diet of Worms demanded that Martin Luther retract his teachings. He courageously answered: “My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise. May God help me.”

In today’s passage, Peter and John were also asked to defend their convictions. The Apostles had been “proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead” (v. 2), which thousands of people received with faith. But the religious elite responded with angry opposition. To say that salvation is found only in Jesus was unpopular, but Christ has always been a stumbling block (v. 12; 1 Cor. 1:23–24).

In our evangelism, our boldness and confidence comes from Christ. It was Christ Himself who first proclaimed: “No one comes to the Father except

through me” (John 14:6). The exclusive claims of Christ are not something that we have invented. We are telling people what Christ said about Himself.

The truth that Peter and John preached was so important that they were willing to defy those who opposed them. The religious rulers foolishly assumed that the Apostles could choose when, where, and what they preached. But the Apostles, constrained by a higher allegiance, made it clear that they had no choice. Having met Jesus, they could not help talking about Him (v. 20).

Many of the truths of our message continue to be very unpopular in our day. The necessity of repentance and faith, the exclusive claim of Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation, and the cost of self-denying discipleship are all objects of scorn among our neighbors. The godly evangelist needs a heart fully convinced by the truth of God’s Word.

APPLY THE WORD

The claims of Christ are exclusive. Like Peter and John, we need hearts that are convinced of the fact that “salvation is found in no one else.” Only then will we tell others about Christ with boldness and urgency. To prepare our hearts for evangelism, we must diligently study the Word of God and allow ourselves to be constrained by its teaching.

PRAY WITH US

Frank Leber, vice president of Information Technology Services, invites you to remember in your prayers today the service of his teams. May God bless their expertise in the computer technology field that they use in the service of the kingdom.

You may become blameless and pure. . . . Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky.

Philippians 2:15

An Evangelist's Heart: Holiness

In a 2012 conference address, author Albert Mohler said, “We shouldn’t expect that the gospel will have credibility if we don’t look like gospel people.” As important as our spoken message is—and it is essential—we must also testify about Christ with our entire lives.

Christians ought to be beacons of holiness in the world. Our coworkers, friends, and neighbors may be quick to take revenge, practice deceit, and stir up arguments. But those who belong to Christ should be loving, compassionate, and humble (v. 8). In our quest for peace, we ought to be quick to return blessings to even those who hurt us (vv. 9, 11).

The ultimate goal of our holiness is God’s glory. Theologians use the Latin term *coram Deo*, “before God’s face,” to describe a life lived in every detail for God. We ought not to live a certain way

just because people might be looking at us (see Eph. 6:5–8). We pursue holiness because God has called us to it, and He is pleased when we seek to follow the example of Jesus. This is why we can commit to obeying God even when it may bring persecution (vv. 14, 16).

Holy conduct often leads to opportunities for evangelism (v. 15). Our culture is warped and confused in its thinking, but a life lived according to God’s instruction shines like a beacon pointing toward salvation (see Phil. 2:15–16). Were it not for the work of God in us, we would act just like our neighbors, and the change in our conduct may even startle our neighbors into asking us about our God (v. 15; see 1 Cor. 6:9–11).

When we pursue lives of holiness, we testify to God’s transforming power. If He could change us, He can surely change anyone.

APPLY THE WORD

Our lives show the truth of the gospel we proclaim. Does your life “shine” (Phil. 2:15) for God’s glory to encourage others to follow Him? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart to reveal any area that may need His correction. And give Him thanks that our holy lives are only possible through His strength, not our own efforts.

PRAY WITH US

Pray for Enterprise Infrastructure Services in the IT department. System administrators Paul Walker, Michael Paniak, Kyle Sparrow, Joseph Kessinger, and James Hickman turn computer systems and programs into Moody’s life-changing ministry.

Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ.

Colossians 4:3

SUNDAY
FEBRUARY

18

Prayer and Evangelism

In a business-school paper, researchers demonstrated that people value products more when they participate in their construction. Titled “The ‘IKEA Effect’: When Labor Leads to Love,” the paper studied the satisfaction reported by people who purchased from the Swedish retailer IKEA, which sells inexpensive furniture and household items that buyers must assemble.

Over the next few days, we will look at ways that we actively participate in evangelism. And, like the proud owners of a new waxed-wood coffee table, we will hopefully value evangelism more because of our labor.

In today’s passage, Paul first reminds the Thessalonian believers of their own salvation so that they will be encouraged to pray for the salvation of others (vv. 13–14). We know from personal experience the power of God at work for our salvation. We know that

apart from His Spirit and the truth of the gospel, we would still be lost (v. 13). And this moves us to pray.

Our prayers are weapons in a spiritual war, which God uses to accomplish both judgment and salvation (see Eph. 6:10–20; Rev. 8:3–5; 2 Cor. 1:11). In response to the prayers of His people, God sends out gospel laborers into His abundant harvest field (Matt. 9:37–38). We pray, then, for our own evangelistic efforts, asking God to work in the hearts of our unbelieving friends and neighbors. And we pray for the evangelistic efforts of the whole church. We participate in the proclamation of the gospel throughout the whole world when we pray.

The prayer of every evangelist is an act of dependence on God. We know that one person may plant the seed and another may faithfully sprinkle the water, but God is the one who makes the tree of faith grow (see 1 Cor. 3:6–7).

APPLY THE WORD

Set aside time to pray for boldness as you speak to friends and neighbors, and also for the work of pastors and missionaries as they proclaim the gospel throughout the world. Thank the Lord that He allows us to participate in evangelism through our prayers, and praise Him for His faithfulness to hear our prayers and to call people to eternal life.

PRAY WITH US

Greg Thornton, senior vice president of Media oversees the ministry of Moody Radio and Moody Publishers, a service for which he needs wisdom daily. Would you include him in your prayers today?

MONDAY
FEBRUARY

19

*As we have opportunity,
let us do good to all people.*

Galatians 6:10

Doing Good and Evangelism

In 1865, Londoners William and Catherine Booth had a goal to serve the poor of their city: “First, soup; second, soap; and finally, salvation.” Their ministry, The Salvation Army, now serves over 25 million people in 127 countries every year with its mission to “preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name.”

Today’s passage brings us to the feet of Jesus as He teaches the crowds what it looks like to follow Him. And Jesus tells us that He has made us to be salt in the world (v. 13). Salt, as commentator Matthew Henry explains, means that we must “not only *be* good but *do* good.” (And see the “Q&A” column in this issue for more on this important metaphor about our calling to be salt.) We do good so that our service to our neighbors might “transform them into the taste and relish of the gospel.”

Jesus also tells us that we must be light (vv. 14–16). As we saw a few days ago, our holy conduct cuts through the fog and confusion of the surrounding world like a beam from a bright star. Part of our holy witness is to do good to the people around us. We don’t huddle in our homes, keeping the joy of our salvation only to ourselves. We allow our faith to spill over in acts of kindness so that other people might know joy in Christ, too.

If we are kind to our neighbors, we display the character of Christ Himself. If, on the other hand, we ignore our neighbors, we act as if the gospel has made no difference in our lives. Our goal in doing good is never to get praise for ourselves. Rather, our goal is to encourage others to glorify the God in whose name we act.

APPLY THE WORD

Evangelists must be kind to their neighbors. As we see that they have burdens and needs, we have an opportunity to care for them and to show them the love of Christ. What needs do you see in the lives of people you encounter every day? Think of one thing you could do to “let your light shine” for Christ today.

PRAY WITH US

Amanda Cleary and Connor Sterchi serve on the editorial team at Moody Publishers. As they pore over copy they edit, please pray for stamina, attention, and discernment, thanking God for the power of the written word and the ability of God’s truth to change us.

See that you also excel in this grace of giving.

2 Corinthians 8:7

Giving and Evangelism

When institutions and organizations want to construct a new building, they often invite their supporters to purchase a single brick. The bricks are inscribed with the supporters' names, and they serve as a reminder that many people contributed a small part to make a larger project possible.

Today we will consider how financial generosity is an important way that we participate in evangelism. Our reading gives us the specific example of the members of the Macedonian church who “gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability” (v. 3) to support the Jerusalem church. Though we may only have the equivalent of “two very small copper coins” (Mark 12:42) to give, we are contributing to something much larger: the work of the church in the world. Our gifts allow gospel ministers and evangelists to preach the gospel without distraction (1 Tim. 5:17–18), they send gospel labors

to faraway places, and they maintain the ordinary ministry of the local church so that it can extend an invitation to people in our communities.

We may be tempted to approach our financial gifts with a grudging attitude, carefully measuring how little we can get away with giving and how much we can keep for ourselves. But the Macedonians encourage us to think differently about giving. These Christians saw the opportunity to give as a privilege. In fact, they “urgently pleaded” (v. 4) with Paul for his permission to give!

The Macedonian Christians knew that giving was a way for them to share in the work of the gospel, and so it was something they greatly desired. They wanted to imitate Christ, who “though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

APPLY THE WORD

Sharing our financial resources with our local church and other Christian ministries is an important way to participate in evangelism. Let's strive to imitate the Macedonians, who “welled up in rich generosity” (v. 2). Review your financial giving—are you regularly giving to support missionaries or Christian organizations?

PRAY WITH US

Ken Heulitt, chief financial officer, invites you to thank God in prayer for His financial provision for Moody that Ken and his teams witness year after year. All of us at Moody also thank you for your part in God's plan for Moody Global Ministries.

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY

21

*Dear friends, since God so loved us,
we also ought to love one another.*

1 John 4:11

Christian Love and Evangelism

In Charles Dickens's story, *A Christmas Carol*, the miserly and miserable Ebenezer Scrooge lives a solitary, stingy life. But a series of ghosts visit his dreams to show him a different life—one filled with the love of family and friends. In response, Scrooge awakens from his dream and immediately embarks on a new life of joy and shared human kindness.

The love that we have for one another in the church can be one of the most winsome and powerful tools for our evangelism. In today's passage, Jesus commands His disciples to love one another (13:34). Love is central to God's nature (1 John 4:8), and so love must be central to the nature of His body, the church. God loved us so much that He gave His Son to die for us so that we might have a loving relationship with Him. And because we have been loved by God, we overflow in love for one another.

This mutual love testifies to Christ at work in us. This is the only explanation for why people of different ages, genders, races, and economic classes would come together in the church. It is the only explanation for why we would pray for one another, bear one another's burdens, and love one another more than we love ourselves. The church father Tertullian described pagans observing the Christians around them with amazement, saying, "Look how they love one another!"

We cannot demonstrate God's love in solitude. Only as a holy community—gathered together as the church—do we have an opportunity to present to the world the kind of winsome family love that Jesus commanded. As the ghosts encouraged Ebenezer Scrooge to look through the holiday windows, God can use our fellowship to invite our friends and neighbors to share this loving life.

APPLY THE WORD

One winsome way that the gospel is demonstrated in the world is through the love that Christians have for one another. Our acts of kindness—praying for one another, greeting one another with a smile, bringing casseroles, and sending birthday cards—testify to the work of Christ in us and encourage others to come and join us.

PRAY WITH US

Please include in your prayers the service of Larry Davidhizar, VP and dean of the faculty, as he, together with our leadership team, directs the development of Christian education at Moody in our changing world.

How can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Romans 10:14

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY

22

Preaching and Evangelism

One snowy Sunday, a 15-year-old boy ducked into a church to get warm. While there, he heard a sermon from Isaiah 45:22, “Look unto me and be ye saved,” and he trusted Christ that day. The boy was Charles Spurgeon; over his lifetime, he would preach to more than 10 million people and baptize more than 14,000 converts.

The preaching of the Word in the church is one of God’s most important tools to bring people to salvation. In today’s passage, Paul begins with his desire that both the Jews and the Gentiles would call on the name of the Lord. The glorious truth of the gospel is that Christ is the hope of Jew and Gentile, of male and female, of slave and free (see Gal. 3:28). Jesus is the Savior for everyone, and everyone who calls out to Christ in faith will certainly be saved (v. 13).

But, Paul asks, how will the world’s people know to place their trust in Christ? The answer is that they need someone to preach the gospel to them (vv. 14–15), because “faith comes from hearing the message” (v. 17). This call to repentance and faith must resound from our pulpits. Though we ourselves might not be the most trained or eloquent gospel communicators, we can bring others to hear the saving message from those whom God has appointed.

Jesus told His followers: “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2). Joining the work of evangelism means we must highly value the preaching of the Word ourselves, invite others to come hear it, and pray to the Lord to prepare more preachers of the gospel.

APPLY THE WORD

Moody Bible Institute has been training preachers of the gospel for over 100 years, preparing them to follow God’s call to the mission field, the pulpit, street evangelism, and more. Pray for our faculty to be faithful in this essential work of equipping preachers to proclaim the gospel, and pray that God will raise up a generation to preach His Word.

PRAY WITH US

For the next three days, focus your prayers on the faculty of Moody Bible Institute in Spokane. Today we pray for Beverly Tronsen, Chris Rappazini, Craig Ferderer, Daniel Ward, and David Beine, thanking God for their ministry to the students.

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY

23

*We have this treasure in jars
of clay to show that this all-surpassing
power is from God and not from us.*

2 Corinthians 4:7

We Are Weak, but He Is Strong

Since 1862, children around the world have been singing the words of Anna Bartlett Warner’s hymn, “Jesus Loves Me.” Its first stanza contains a line that is true for children and adults alike: “Little ones to Him belong—they are weak but He is strong.”

At this point in our study of evangelism, you may be feeling overwhelmed. We have a wonderful task—to share God’s love in Christ with the people around us. But we are also aware of our own frailty. None of us is as winsome or prayerful or bold or faithful as we know we ought to be. All around us, people are drowning in their sins and we feel like we can’t throw out enough life rafts fast enough. Or, we are throwing out life rafts and our friends and neighbors seem to just ignore them.

Today’s passage offers us rest and encouragement. Our weakness is not a surprise to God. He has deliberately

and lovingly placed the treasure of His gospel “in jars of clay” (v. 7). In fact, throughout the Bible, God repeatedly uses frail people. He made Moses, who struggled to speak, His prophetic mouthpiece (see Ex. 6:10–12). He made women, whose testimony was suspect in the first century, the primary witnesses of His resurrection (see Luke 24:1–11). He made Paul, with his constant physical affliction, His world-traveling missionary (see 2 Cor. 12:7–10). And he made each one of us, with our weakness and struggles, His evangelists in the world.

Why? He does this so that we will not depend on ourselves or focus on ourselves. He does this so the world will know that the power of the gospel comes from Him alone. He is the one who takes our feeble evangelistic efforts and uses them to accomplish His saving purposes. “Therefore we do not lose heart” (v. 16).

APPLY THE WORD

We can become discouraged when we are aware of our weakness. Take heart in God’s encouragement that He is glorified even in our frailty, and He uses us to accomplish His saving purposes. Sing “Jesus Loves Me” as an acknowledgment of your weakness and an affirmation of your trust in God. We are weak, but He is strong!

PRAY WITH US

Add to your prayer list Moody’s professors in Spokane, Wash.—Dominick Hernandez, Floyd Schneider, George Orr, Gerald Vreeland, and John McMath. May the Holy Spirit encourage them as they teach in class and mentor outside the classroom.

There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Luke 15:10

SATURDAY
FEBRUARY

24

Jesus Will Be Satisfied

The ubiquitous to-do lists on our desks and kitchen counters give us concrete goals for the day's work. In fact, making a detailed to-do list may actually cause us to be more productive. According to a study from Wake Forest University, "When participants were allowed to make and note down concrete plans . . . [their] performance on the next task substantially improved."

Of course, we are seldom able to finish *everything* on our list for the day, but Jesus Christ always accomplishes exactly what He intends to do, as today's passage shows us. Isaiah begins this "servant song" with an acknowledgment that the gospel does not always appear to have much success in people's hearts. "Who has believed our message?" (v. 1) is the poignant cry of a prophet-evangelist who longs to see evidence of faith in many hearts but sees only indifference.

To Isaiah's hearers, and also to many who hear our message, Christ Himself appears unworthy of attention. He was not outwardly beautiful or powerful. He came from an unknown woman and an out-of-the-way town (see John 1:46). During His life on earth, He received few accolades and plenty of criticism. He died the death of a criminal.

This is one perspective. But, reorienting our view for a moment, Isaiah shows us what the death of the Nazarene carpenter looks like from the throne of God. Jesus, who looks so unremarkable, is seen from heaven as the substitutionary Lamb, the One whose death gives life to many. And His death accomplishes exactly what He intended. Christ died by the will of the triune Lord (v. 10), and His death and resurrection bring many to salvation. As He looks at His finished work on the cross, Jesus is satisfied (v. 11).

APPLY THE WORD

Even when you feel like your efforts in evangelism are incomplete, even when you know there is so much more that you could do to share God's love, remember that Christ always accomplishes His task! Thank the Lord today that the to-do list is ultimately His, and He will be faithful to complete His good work.

PRAY WITH US

To conclude our prayers for the faculty on Moody's Spokane campus, lift up professors Joshua Malone, Keith Krell, Marc Canner, and Michael Kibbe, as well as the associate dean of Academics, Wendy Liddell, during your time with God today.

SUNDAY
FEBRUARY

25

The good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it.

Luke 16:16

Press On and Press In

In the documentary series *Dispatches from the Front*, director Tim Keeseee tells the story of David, a gospel worker in the Southeastern European nation of Albania. Though the challenges for missions in Albania are immense, David persists with a simple approach: “Pray. Meet people. Tell them about Jesus.” And, little by little, people are coming to Christ and churches are being established.

The church today might appear to be faltering. Many pews are empty, younger members seem to be scattering, and enthusiasm is dwindling. From local communities to foreign countries, people barely acknowledge that the church exists, even if they drive past a building. Evangelistic outreach seems to bear no fruit at all. Baptisms of new converts are unusual. We can understand Isaiah’s descriptions: deserted, desolate, plundered by her enemies (vv. 4, 8).

This may be the church’s momentary condition. But it is not our promised future. At the end of time, God’s people will have glory, splendor, and praise (vv. 2, 3, 7). When people speak out—refusing to be silent—about the gospel, God will vindicate their message and make it winsome to its hearers. When people pray—persisting in their petitions to God—God will answer by ensuring that His people receive “the praise of the earth” (v. 7). When God’s people do diligent kingdom work, God promises to reward the Son with a redeemed people (vv. 11–12).

Through the simple work of prayer, meeting people, and telling them about Jesus, God promises to build up those who follow Him. The image that Jesus gives us is encouragement indeed: “The good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it” (Luke 16:16). As we press on, people will press in.

APPLY THE WORD

God has in the past poured out a spirit of revival in which many people have come to saving faith. Reading the historical accounts of these great spiritual revivals can encourage our hearts today, and one excellent resource is the book *A God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories that Stretch and Stir* by Collin Hansen and John D. Woodbridge.

PRAY WITH US

Bruce Everhart, VP of Donor Development and Channel Strategy, will be grateful for your prayers for his teams as they expand the circle of Moody’s friends and donors. May their service at Moody reach people for Christ and bring glory to God!

He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Hebrews 7:25

MONDAY
FEBRUARY

26

Able to Save

In order to become certified as a lifeguard with the American Red Cross, an applicant must take a 25-hour training course and pass two examinations. Applicants must also master and demonstrate 61 different safety skills. Only then will they be deemed competent to serve as a lifeguard.

In today's passage, Jesus declares Himself competent to save all kinds of people. He reminds us of the bronze snake that Moses made to save the Israelites from dying of venomous snake bites. Anyone who looked at the bronze snake lived (see Num. 21:4–9). So, too, any person—our verses use words like “whoever” and “everyone” and “anyone”—who looks to Christ for salvation will receive life.

The testimony of Scripture bears this out. God saved Jacob, a liar and swindler. He saved Rahab, a prostitute, and King David, a murderer. He saved

thieves like Matthew and violent men like Paul. He saved us. Like the members of the Corinthian church, we were once great sinners, but we have been redeemed by a Savior who is greater still (see 1 Cor. 6:9–11).

And Jesus declares Himself competent to save into eternity. Nineteenth-century theologian J. C. Ryle writes: “Christ will never allow any soul that is committed to him to be lost and cast away. He will keep it safe, from grace to glory.” Christ's death guarantees eternal life for all who feed on Him by faith (v. 54).

We can proclaim the gospel to all kinds of people caught in all kinds of sin in all kinds of situations because there is no one whom Christ cannot save. Every person who comes to Christ in faith will be rescued and welcomed (v. 37). And all whom Christ redeems are held securely by Him until their sure and certain resurrection (v. 40).

APPLY THE WORD

We are encouraged in our evangelism because Christ is an all-powerful Savior. He saves all who come to Him in faith, and no one who comes will be turned away. Memorize or write down this verse to orient your perspective: “Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear” (Isa. 59:1).

PRAY WITH US

Today we ask you to lift in prayer our Human Resources department headed by vice president Debbie Zelinski. Thank the Lord for Debbie's leadership and for her team of godly men and women committed to excellence at the workplace.

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY

27

*Surely I am with you always,
to the very end of the age.*

Matthew 28:20

Never Alone

In *Lone Survivor*, a memoir of life as a Navy SEAL, Marcus Luttrell explains one of the central tenets of SEAL team conduct: never leave a man behind. “It’s a sacred promise to us from our high command,” he writes. “That’s why it gets drummed into us from the very first day . . . you are not going to be alone. Ever.”

The work of evangelism can feel lonely. You may be the only employee at your workplace, the only student at your school, or the only tenant in your building who is sharing the love of God in Christ. Your message may seem strange to others, and they may distance themselves from you because of it.

Today’s passage provides encouragement by reminding us that we are never going to be alone when we evangelize. Jesus acknowledges the difficulties we will experience in the world. But

because God is our Creator, Savior, and King, we can say with the psalmist: “In God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?” (Ps. 56:11).

We are secure in the knowledge that God loves us and will be with us by His Spirit. The God who watches little birds and counts tiny hairs will not forsake His beloved children. He will come alongside us as we face challenges to our testimony (vv. 11–12). And as we declare our allegiance to Him, He will declare His allegiance to us (v. 8).

The work of evangelism is a work that delights our Lord. By His Spirit, He is pleased to make our message effective in the hearts of our friends and neighbors. By His Spirit, He helps us in our mission to invite others to the family of God. As we share the good news of God in Christ, the Spirit will be with us every time.

APPLY THE WORD

The Spirit gives us boldness, helps us pray, teaches us from the Word, and gives the gospel success in the hearts of our neighbors. Thank God for His Spirit, which means you are never alone! Pray today that this truth will penetrate your understanding, strengthen your confidence in sharing God’s love, and encourage your heart as you obey the Lord.

PRAY WITH US

Join Collin Lambert, vice president of Moody Radio, in prayer for our radio ministry. God has powerfully used Moody Radio to send out His Word around the U.S. through Moody’s owned and operated stations and across the globe via the internet.

Before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

Revelation 7:9

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY

28

The End of Evangelism

At the end of John Bunyan’s classic book, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the characters Christian and Hopeful meet two angels as they reach the Celestial City, or heaven. The angels tell them what to expect: “You must there receive the comfort of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow; you must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers, and tears, and sufferings, for the King, by the way.”

Evangelism is a temporary task. It will only be necessary as long as this world lasts. One day—not too long from now!—Christ will return and gather to Himself the full number of His redeemed people (Rev. 22:20). Not one of all that the Father gave to Christ will be lost; each one will be carefully numbered (vv. 4–8; John 6:37).

In eternity, we will no longer proclaim the good news of God’s love in Christ

so that people can be saved. Instead, we will proclaim it because we have already been saved and cannot stop thanking Him for it. We will no longer labor, but we will rest in His near presence and delight in His glory (vv. 15–17).

In eternity, too, we will see the fruits of our evangelistic labors. As the psalm promises, “Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them” (Ps. 126:6). The child from Sunday school, the elderly man who lived next door, the girl at youth group, the postal carrier, the college roommate—all rejoicing with us. As we look around the throne, we will see every person who trusted in Christ through our prayers and testimony. Together, we will all raise our voices in worship: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (v. 10).

APPLY THE WORD

In anticipation of that day of rejoicing, plan a time of prayer and praise. Pray for loved ones who still need to trust Christ for salvation, and praise the Lord for His promise to redeem all who call on His name. Pray for continued faithfulness in witnessing to the lost, and praise God for His encouragement and strength that will be yours as you follow Him.

PRAY WITH US

On this last day of the month, we invite you to prayerfully reflect on the lessons of our study of evangelism. Thank the Lord for the power of His truth and for His wisdom that is available to us today, as we tell people about Him.

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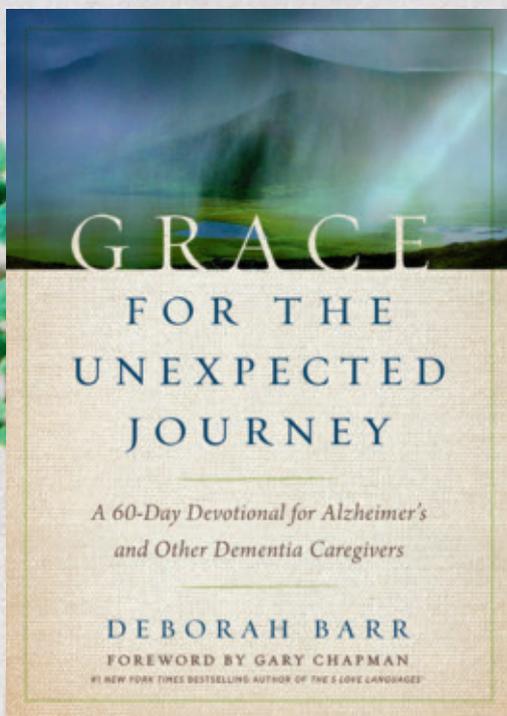
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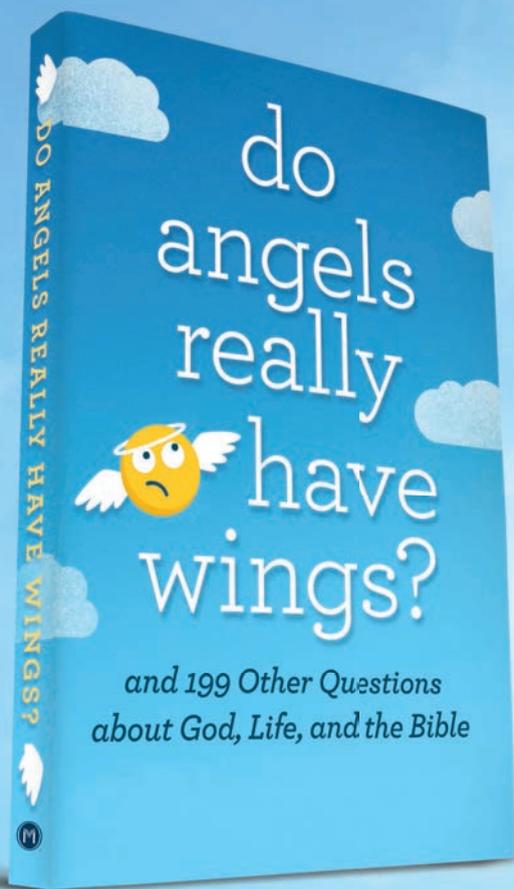


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