

What’s your observation of an evangelist? In our generation we may see them holding tent or church revival meetings once a year; that they goes from town to city as an itinerant preaching the gospel and seeing dozens to thousands come to Christ; that they have big budgets so huge offerings always must to be taken; little accountability to the local church, and then when they leave the local churches have to do the follow up of new converts and see them established in their new relationship with Christ. Rarely do we see evangelists doing follow up phone calls or personal visits over the following months and years to see how their new converts are growing. Evangelists must have accountability to the local church and cannot run as rogue independents – blowing in and out of a community being just itinerant speakers. I believe it could be said the same with all of the five fold ministries we see mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, “*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*” All need to work together, not independently of the local church to seek their own notoriety, fame and renown, embellishing their ‘gift and ministry’. Each one will be predisposed to fulfill their gift, but will be able to function in all when needed.

That wasn’t the case in Bunyan’s day, and certainly not in the early church with apostles. We see Evangelist in the story coming with a pastoral heart – caring for his sheep - which is part of his gift. He has not only led them to the cross of Jesus, but he has kept on appearing to them, to encourage and exhort them to press on and not lose heart. The Apostle Paul is an excellent example of not only being known as an apostle, but an evangelist to those who he evangelized (led to Jesus Christ), a pastor as he nurtured his new converts like an earthly father, a teacher as he taught daily, and as a prophet as he ministered prophetically the word of the Lord to them. I Thessalonians 2:11; “*as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children.*” Do you have a caring pastoral heart to those you’ve won to Christ or to those you’re witnessing to? Do you follow up with them as they may be in a dry and barren wilderness, seeking refreshment, encouragement, peace and reassurance of where they’re going to? Or have you forgotten them already and have just hoped that they’re doing ‘ok’? I believe we need to re-evaluate this for those we evangelize and disciple. God is entrusting them into our care, especially if they are close by.

Here we see Evangelist genuinely concerned about Christian and Faithful’s wellbeing, rejoicing with them as he hears of their victories. Paul says in I Thessalonians 1:2-3; “*We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.*”

He also comes with a prophetic warning, telling them to hold fast, because the devil and others will want to rob them of their crowns that have been laid up for them after they’ve completed their journey. Reality is, as long as we have breath in our earthly bodies, we’ll have the adversary always trying to kill, steal and destroy – using people too as his agents. Matthew 10:22 says; “*And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.*” I Corinthians 9:24-27 says; “*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*” According to Paul, you can disqualify yourself from reaching your heavenly home to receive an imperishable crown. Jesus says in John 10:28; “*And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*” No ONE else can snatch you from Jesus, but you – by an act of your will - can drop out of the race. Jesus also compares the kingdom of heaven to the ten virgins in [Matthew 25:1-13](#). All were virgins, all had lamps but only five were ready when the bridegroom came and then the door was shut and he says; “*I do not know you*”.

It's not my purpose here to discuss the topic of once saved-always saved. What I would like to point out though is; how are you running? Are you running to win or don't you really care? If Paul says he could disqualify himself and Jesus says to be ready, I wouldn't want to be lazy, put in jeopardy and be apathetic in my walk with Christ and my salvation, but take it very seriously. As such, this is what Evangelist was telling Christian and Faithful. The race is real, the spiritual battle with the devil is real, the crown is real, and heaven is real! If for whatever reason martyrdom is at your door, you'll be with Jesus sooner than the rest, but don't quit running the race in the midst of trials and tribulations. Do we fall and stumble at times, yes we do, but let's get up and keep on running the race and resisting the devil!

Here are some scriptures for encouragement;

- Revelations 3:11 says; *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN."*!
- James 1:13-15; *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God': for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."*
- II Timothy 4:7; *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"*
- II Corinthians 5:15-16 says; *"For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life."*
- Matthew 28:18-20; *"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."*
- Acts 14:22; *"strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.'"*
- I Peter 4:13; *"but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy"*
- John 15:18-20; *"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."*

For you who have the gift of an evangelist – be compassionate and tender-hearted to pastor and nurture those you bring to Christ. For those like Christian and Faithful who are in a spiritual wilderness right now, continue to draw close to Jesus through the word of God and fellowship with the saints at the Palace Beautiful – the local church.

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