

# Lesson 9

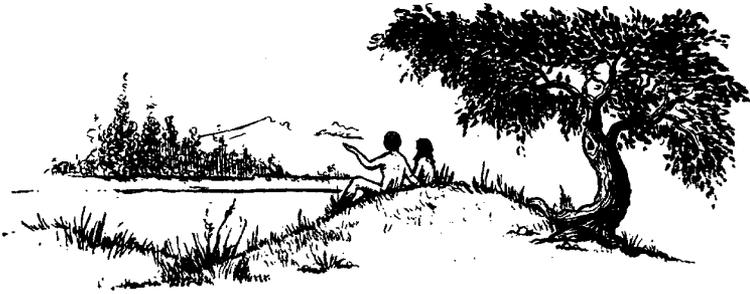
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## The Act of Ministry

There is a story about an emperor who wanted to find out what language Adam and Eve spoke. To make an experiment, he set apart several newborn babies. He gave strict orders that no one was to speak a word in the presence of these babies. He thought that by doing this the babies would learn to speak a language of their own. That language, the emperor thought, would be the language of Adam and Eve. Of course the experiment failed, because the babies died from lack of communication.

Man is born to communicate. He was made to communicate with his fellowman and with God. The people of God have a responsibility to communicate the gospel of Christ. The life of the church is to share Christ. The life of the world depends on its hearing the good news. Without this communication, the world will die.

In this lesson we want to talk about the act of ministry—the act of communicating the gospel. This communication is done in three ways: by speaking, by sharing, and by serving. As you study the lesson, think about your part in carrying out this three-fold ministry of the church of Jesus Christ.



## **lesson outline**

Christ Our Model  
Proclaiming the Message  
Sharing by Example  
Serving With Love

## **lesson objectives**

When you have completed this lesson you will be able to:

- Describe the three-fold act of ministry as seen in the life of Christ.
- Understand practical ways you can be involved in the church's ministry to the world.
- Recognize possibilities for ministry through your local church.

## **learning activities**

1. Study the lesson following the procedure given in Lesson 1. Be sure to read all Scripture texts given in the lesson, and answer all study questions. Check your answer to each question after you have written your answer.
2. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson and check your answers.

**key words**

communicate  
deacon  
herald  
hospitable  
proclaim

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**lesson development****CHRIST OUR MODEL**

**Objective 1.** *Recognize the goals of Jesus in communicating the gospel.*

Effective communication of the gospel is what ministry is all about. Only as the believer begins to communicate the gospel does the act of ministry begin.

As the scripture says, “Everyone who calls out to the Lord for help will be saved. But how can they call to him for help if they have not believed? And how can they believe if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear if the message is not proclaimed?” (Romans 10:13-14).

Communicating the gospel is not simply passing on information. For communication to be effective, the gospel must speak to the hearts of people—it must be applied to their lives.

Jesus spoke to the hearts of people. We have already learned the words of his first public address. Read again Luke 4:18. These words, based on Isaiah 61:1-2, show us what Jesus considered His ministry to be:

1. *Preach the gospel to the poor.* Jesus’ message was for the welfare of the soul—the poor in spirit—as well as for those who were poor in body and mind. He was concerned about the whole man.

2. *Proclaim liberty to the captives.* Man is a captive of sin. He is also a captive of his own condition resulting from a life of sin. Captives need freedom. Christ came to set men free, so that

they could be all that God intended for them to be. He makes possible a full and rich life. Jesus said, “I am come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness” (John 10:10).

3. *Heal the brokenhearted.* Jesus is concerned with man’s suffering and his needs. Redemption offers the solution for everything that keeps a man from having a full life, whether it be an emotional problem, conflicts with others, sorrow, or pain.

4. *Recovery of sight to the blind.* This may refer to spiritual healing as well as physical healing. The gospel can be applied to all areas of a man’s life.



Jesus wanted to redeem the total person. He was concerned for man’s physical and emotional well-being as well as his spiritual needs.

**1** Read Isaiah 53:5. What does this Scripture show us was included in Christ’s redemptive act upon the cross?

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Christ’s goal in communicating the gospel was to make people whole or complete in Him. In Matthew 5:48 Jesus said, “You must be perfect—just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” A better word for *perfect* in this instance is the word *complete*. This same word is used by Jesus when He talked with a rich young man. He said, “If you want to be perfect [complete], go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me” (Matthew 19:21).

To be complete is to do the right things. It also means to reach maturity and fullness. (See Colossians 1:28). This is the goal of the gospel—that all men might come to maturity in Christ. Christ came to destroy the works of sin so that we might obtain our completeness in Him. Through His words, by His example of a holy life, and in His actions of servant ministry, He sought to free men from sin and its effects. His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead were the final signs of victory over sin. He communicated the good news by His very life. This is the good news which the church now communicates to the world!

**2** Which of these statements explain the goals of Jesus in communicating the good news?

- a** His concern was only for man's spiritual condition.
- b** He knew it was important to minister to man's physical and emotional needs as well as his spiritual needs.
- c** He spoke to the hearts of men through His example and His concern as much as through His words.
- d** His ministry was mainly to those who were not troubled by disease or problems.
- e** He wanted all men to be complete or whole persons spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

## **PROCLAIMING THE MESSAGE**

### **The Spoken Word**

**Objective 2.** *Describe ways the gospel is communicated through the spoken word.*

Men who set out to conquer nations usually do so with great armies and powerful weapons of war. Christ's goal was to conquer the world and bring every nation under His feet. But He sends men not with the glittering sword or the thundering cannon, but with the power of speech.

We are sent as heralds of the gospel. A *herald* is one who proclaims a message. He may speak to one person or to a group of persons, in public or in private, but always he brings a message from his master and lord.



One outstanding characteristic of the herald is his authority. He does not speak in his own name, but in the name of the one who has sent him. His authority is not only in his words, but in his ability to act in behalf of the one who sent him.

The men Christ sent out were faithful and spoke with the authority He had given them. They returned with joy, and said: "Lord . . . even the demons obeyed us when we gave them a command in your name!" (Luke 10:17).

Today Christ is still calling men and women to become heralds of God's truth. The power of the New Testament believers depended upon the importance of the truth they spoke. What was this truth?

1. God's love has been made known to man.
2. There is salvation from sin for man.
3. Salvation from sin is only possible through the death of Jesus.

Let's look at some ways the gospel is communicated through the spoken word.

*Preaching and Teaching.* The Great Commission is a command to preach and teach. There are many other Scriptures concerning the importance of heralding the good news in these two ways. The following Scriptures emphasize the value of preaching and teaching:

1. Faithfulness is required from those who are instructed to preach the Word (2 Timothy 4:2).

2. The Lord has chosen that by the foolishness of preaching men should be saved (1 Corinthians 1:21).
3. It is through preaching that God's Word has been revealed (Titus 1:3).
4. There is tremendous power in the Word of God as it is proclaimed, whether from a pulpit or elsewhere. The Word is able to save (James 1:21).
5. The Word helps newborn Christians to grow (1 Peter 2:2).
6. The disciples followed the example of Christ in preaching and teaching (Acts 5:42).
7. The apostle Paul's ministry included both preaching and teaching (Colossians 1:28).

By preaching, men and women are brought into the kingdom of God, and by teaching, they are held and confirmed. It is our responsibility not only to preach and teach, but to receive preaching and teaching, so that we too might be edified and strengthened by God's Word.

Peter and John were warned not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. Their answer was, "We cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). If we have been redeemed by Jesus' sacrifice and have experienced His love in our hearts, how can we help but speak that which we have experienced ourselves!

*Personal Testimony.* Real communication involves a two-way process. It is a sharing of ideas, attitudes, and experiences. An example is given in Acts 8, when Philip shared the gospel with an Ethiopian. Although God had instructed him to approach this man, Philip did not immediately begin to speak of the gospel. Rather, he began with a question which served to ask, "May I get involved with your life?" Philip began to talk to the man about Christ in response to a direct question from the man himself (Acts 8:31). Then Philip's testimony was effective because it answered a specific need that this man had.

Even though we may never be called to preach, we can all communicate the gospel by our personal spoken testimony. We can find many opportunities, in talking with others, to tell them how the gospel can answer a specific need in their lives.

The apostle Paul reminded us that our communication of the gospel by the spoken word is only effective when we also have a two-way communication with the Spirit through prayer. In 1 Corinthians 2:4 he said, “My teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with convincing proof of the power of God’s Spirit.” Without the power of the Spirit we can accomplish nothing of any lasting value.

**3** Explain the *particular* value of each of these three ways of communicating the gospel:

- a** By preaching: .....
- .....
- b** By teaching: .....
- .....
- c** By personal testimony: .....
- .....

Today the gospel is being preached in large city churches and small village chapels, in prisons, on street corners, over the radio, on television—in almost every country of the world. The Word is being taught in neighborhood Bible studies, in Sunday schools, at youth gatherings, in college classrooms, in prayer groups, in hospitals—everywhere that Christians gather together. And the sharing of the good news in one-to-one personal evangelism is still a wonderful, effective way of bringing men and women to Christ. Believers cannot stop telling the world what they have discovered about Christ!



## **The Written Word**

This lesson would be incomplete if we did not mention the power of the *written* Word in communicating the message. There are some places in the world where a spoken gospel witness is not permitted. Missionaries are not allowed to go to these places. But there is a way to reach even into areas like this with the gospel. ICI has many recorded testimonies of people who have found Christ after receiving an ICI evangelism course by mail or from a friend. If we cannot *go* with the gospel, we can still *send* the gospel, and the Word of God is powerful—it speaks to men’s hearts whether the message is spoken or written! Do you know someone who came to Christ after *reading* the message of salvation? Have you placed a gospel tract or other Christian literature in the hands of someone to whom you could not speak, or sent it by mail? We must use every available means of proclaiming the Word to all people everywhere!

## **SHARING BY EXAMPLE**

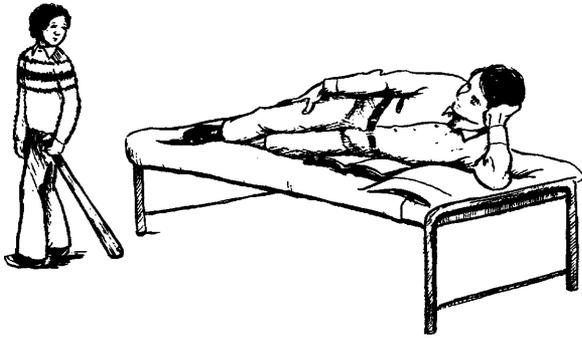
**Objective 3.** *Recognize good examples of the principle of sharing Christ through our example.*

Throughout history, the good example of Christians has had a powerful impact upon unbelievers. This type of sharing, or *communion*, has led many people to know Christ. Actions speak louder than words for the kingdom of God. We communicate the gospel through our contact, our fellowship with people.

Albert Schweitzer once said, “Example is not the *main* thing in influencing others. It is the *only* thing!” A contact with someone whose life is consecrated to the Lord is a message with tremendous power! A good example has twice the value of good advice.

A friend once asked Henry Ward Beecher (a famous preacher in the 1800s), “Who influenced you most toward Christ? Was it some college professor, some great

preacher, or a faithful Sunday school teacher?" Beecher replied, "I doubt if the man knew at the time what an influence he was. He used to lie on his cot and read the New Testament, hardly aware that I was in the room. Then he'd talk to himself about what he read. Sometimes he would smile as he read. I never saw the Bible enjoyed like that. It challenged me more than any other thing." "But," his friend said, "you didn't tell me who this great man was." "Oh, I'm sorry," responded Beecher, "that man was Charles Smith, a hired man on my father's farm."



Like the moon that has no light of its own, but reflects the rays of the sun, so it is that the Christian who lives in close communion with God can reflect Christ when he shares his life with others. What is a normal and natural life to a sincere Christian can be a moving message to the unbeliever. No one can give what he does not have. Peter had something to offer to the lame man at the gate of the temple: "I give you what I have" (Acts 3:6).

As we share our lives with others, and as they see the beauty of Jesus in us, they will want to have what we have. We have a great responsibility to be Christlike at all times—in our home, on the street, at our jobs, in the shops—wherever we may be. Our conduct may influence someone *for* or *against* Christ. As we share by communion with others, the Holy Spirit will give us opportunities to tell them the good news of salvation.

Someone once said, “Power with men proceeds from power with God.” We have already talked about the importance of a prayer life. Prayer is our communion with the Lord. It is easier to plan an evangelistic campaign, organize the promotion, visit homes, and invite people to church than it is to pray earnestly for their salvation. A genuine love for those to be reached is born out of a life of prayer. It is through love that our communion with the world will bring the unbeliever to Christ.

- 4** Circle the letter in front of good examples of sharing and communion which could help to win others to Christ.
- a** John works for a man who is not a Christian. John always arrives early for work, and does not waste time on the job.
  - b** When James is driving his car, he gets angry and blows his horn when other drivers are too slow or get in his way.
  - c** Mrs. Smith is a friendly neighbor who always seems to know when her help is needed because of sickness or other needs.
  - d** Robert prays every morning that the Lord will help him to be Christlike in all his activities throughout the day.
  - e** George is polite and kind to most people, but he is often unkind and critical to members of his own family.

## **SERVING WITH LOVE**

**Objective 4.** *Describe the relationship of service to the preaching of the gospel.*

The Bible gives us some definite instructions concerning our service ministry through the church. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13. The first seven verses describe the church leader. Verses 8 through 13 describe the church helpers. In many Bible translations the word for church helpers is *deacon*. The Greek word from which the word *deacon* comes means “one who serves, one who ministers.” The Bible text suggests three ways of serving:

1. The first way is in the sense of serving at tables, providing for the physical needs of persons, attending to visitors or guests, or in a more general sense, it describes the actions of a hospitable person.



2. Another way of serving is to give a service of love to a neighbor, particularly the poor and needy, such as food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, clothes for the naked. (Read Matthew 25:42-45; Acts 11:29.)

3. In a broader sense, serving means performing any activity that contributes to the good of the community.

*Love Your Neighbor.* The concept that Christ taught concerning service was closely related to the commandment to love one’s neighbor as oneself (Mark 12:31). This, together with the commandment to love God (Mark 12:30), is the basis for Christian conduct. Service for others involves an active Christian love for one’s neighbors. This is the characteristic of a true follower of Christ.

5 Read Matthew 20:26-28; Mark 9:35; Mark 10:43-45; and Luke 22:26. What is the principle given in these verses concerning service?

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 .....

Christian service is an effective way to communicate the gospel in today’s world. When the church is moved

with the compassion of Christ to serve the lost and needy, even when it means self-sacrifice, it can reach the world with the gospel through its service. To minister in service without proclaiming the gospel is to fail to meet man's deepest need. To preach the gospel and at the same time ignore the physical needs of the poor is not an expression of Christ's love. He wants us to minister to the whole man.



*Respond to the World's Needs.* The problems of the world are multiplying. The only solution for the evils of the world is the gospel of Christ. When we see the needs of the world, our hearts are moved to respond to those needs.

We must continue to preach the truths of the gospel. But we must also join those who oppose injustice and hatred. The two go hand-in-hand.

Jesus said that He came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life (Matthew 20:28). This is not easily understood in today's world. Today when a man reaches a high position he expects to be waited on. Jesus recognized that this is a characteristic of the human heart. He told the disciples that they were to be different from the Gentiles, who liked to rule over one another. He told them that the one who wanted to be the greatest among them should be

the servant of all (Matthew 20:27). This is a basic quality of a true believer in action-one who serves or ministers.

**6** How is our service to others related to our preaching the gospel?

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.....

**7** How does the concept of love taught by Christ affect the way we minister in service?

.....

**8** Can you see ways you or your church are ministering in service along with preaching the gospel? List them here.

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.....

**self-test**

ALTERNATE CHOICE. Each pair of statements below refers to a principle taught in this lesson. For each set, choose the statement that best reflects the principle taught.

**1** *Communicating the gospel:*

- a) Communicating the gospel is done most effectively by preaching and teaching.
- b) Communicating the gospel is more than just passing on information-it involves applying the truths to people's lives, reaching into their hearts.

**2** *The purpose of Christ's redemptive act:*

- a) Christ's suffering and death made provision for all of man's needs-physical, emotional, and spiritual.
- b) Christ's death had one purpose, and that was to redeem man from sin.

**3** *Power of the spoken Word:*

- a) The power of the message depends upon the ability and power of the one who speaks it.
- b) The message has power because it is spoken through the authority of the one who sent it-Jesus Christ.

**4** *Sharing or communion:*

- a) The most effective message we can give to an unbeliever is the example of our own life as we share it in love and self-sacrifice.
- b) Although our actions are important, people pay more attention to what we say than to what we do.

**5** *Serving:*

- a) A true servant of God will do everything he can to minister to man's human needs as well as his spiritual needs.
- b) Christians should concentrate on preaching the gospel, and let the government and other service organizations take care of other needs.

**6** *Love:*

- a) Real Christian love causes us to be as concerned about the needs of our neighbor as we are about our own needs.
- b) A true Christian does not allow love to rule his decisions for service but he serves God out of a sense of duty and respect.



**answers to study questions**

- 5 The one who serves others is the one who is great in the kingdom of God.
- 1 Through His suffering and death He paid the price to secure for us forgiveness of sins and complete healing in mind, body, and spirit.
- 6 We must minister to meet the human needs of man as well as his spiritual needs. Christ wants us to minister to the whole man.
- 2 a False.  
b True.  
c True.  
d False.  
e True.
- 7 Christ's love will give us a love and desire to help men in their need, whatever that need might be.
- 3 a It is by preaching that God has chosen men and women to be brought into His kingdom.  
b It is by teaching that believers are built up in the faith. (*Note:* There can be considerable overlapping in preaching and teaching. Many times teaching takes place when the gospel is preached. And the unbeliever can be drawn to repentance through the teaching of gospel truth.)  
c It is by personal testimony that we can have two-way communication. By sharing what Christ has done in our lives, we can answer specific needs in the lives of others.
- 8 Your answer. Has this lesson helped you to see other ways of winning the lost through service?
- 4 a Yes.  
b No.  
c Yes.  
d Yes.  
e No.

**For Your Notes**