

## Evangelism 2024 Pt. 3 – Stats

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, July 7, 2024

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### GRADUATES

**NOTE 1** – Before we dismiss the children and volunteers, today is a very special day for this assembly. Why? Today we honor those who have completed their high school education. If you recently graduated would you please stand so that we may recognize you? (**APPLAUSE**)

**NOTE 2** – On behalf of this church let me say how proud we are of you. You have completed a major milestone! Before I pray the blessing of God upon your next steps, consider these bits of wisdom I offer to every graduate:

**1)** Embrace the new season that is now upon you. A meaningful chapter in the story of your life is now complete. You cannot go back, only forward, and things will never be the same. This is a terrifying reality to a great many, as we intrinsically fear the unknown. Yet what remains unknown to us is fully known to the One we call Father. Therefore, move forward with great boldness, knowing that He is faithful to lead, guide, provide for and more!

#### Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV)

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
6 in all your ways submit to him,  
and he will make your paths straight [direct your paths].

**2)** Continue to cling to your earthly and spiritual family. Look to them—look to us—for guidance and support. Such are priceless treasures in life (even if you believe that you know it all right now). Take heed of the voice of the Lord through trusted, proven voices—hearkening unto good counsel:

#### Proverbs 12:15

15 The way of fools seems right to them,  
but the wise listen to advice.

**3)** Prioritize your relationship with Jesus (i.e., now more than ever). This is no time to retreat and/or fall away! Rather, this is a time to abide in Him in ever-increasing degrees, that His life might course in and through you. You would do well to remember these remarks of Christ:

#### John 15:5, 7–8

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. . . . 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

### PRAYER & APPLAUSE

**NOTE 3** – We have prepared a gift for you—a gift meant to cultivate your faith in or dependance on Christ Jesus!

**KEY** – At this time the children and corresponding volunteers are dismissed. May God bless our time in the Word!

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us. Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a rather short space of time.

## SETTING THE STAGE

**NOTE 1** – Last week we began a new multi-part series on personal evangelism (i.e., the sharing of the gospel). You see, I am under the conviction that we who live under the lordship of Christ live under the following call(s):

### Matthew 28:19b–20a (NIV)

19 “. . . go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

### Mark 16:15b–16

15 “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

**NOTE 2** – As Pastor it is my hope that this series will prove transformative to you, this church, and community. In our last session—available online at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org)—we cited common reasons as to why believers fail to engage in the Great Commission (cf. Matt. 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16)—despite His call and eternal stakes!

**NOTE 3** – Per the research conducted by the Jesus Film Project’s Multigenerational Survey on Evangelism, which surveyed some 1,600 Christians, here are the most common hindrances to personal evangelism (**SLIDE**):

- 1) Fear – 22% of respondents cited fear as the driving factor in their silence
- 2) Lack of Opportunity – 17% noted a lack of opportunity as the driving factor
- 3) Unequipped – 10% noted that they felt unequipped to properly share Christ
- 4) Lack of Interest – 9% cited lack of interest among non-believers as the driver
- 5) Fear of Rejection – 8% cited the fear of rejection as the driver of their silence
- 6) Fear of Hostility – 8% added the fear of hostility as the driver of their silence
- 7) Busyness – 8% of those surveyed noted they were too “busy” to evangelize
- 8) Shyness – 4% of those surveyed noted they were too “shy” to evangelize
- 9) Context(s) – 4% felt they had no appropriate contexts to share Christ
- 10) Hard to Bring Up – 4% found it too difficult to bring up the gospel
- 11) Pushy – 3% failed to share as they did not want to seem pushy
- 12) Fear of Offense – 3% stayed silent in order to avoid offense

**NOTE 4** – I wonder if a great many in this church remain silent—despite His call and stakes—for similar reasons!

**Q. How many admit that they have stayed silent at times for such reasons?**

**KEY** – We do well to consider each of these justifications (i.e., “excuses”) from a biblical perspective. Let us note:

## 1. FEAR

**KEY** – Let us begin with fear. 22% of respondents cited fear as the primary hindrance in the sharing of their faith.

**QUOTE** – When it came to talking to others about the gospel, fear was by far the most significant deterrent. People communicated that they were afraid of losing valuable relationships and wanted to avoid the tensions that accompanied these kinds of discussions. Others felt entirely ill-equipped. They would like to share more, but they are scared that they will end up fielding questions or objections too uncomfortable to navigate. Fear is the common thread that weaves together many of the different responses to this survey. Respondents often used words like “fear,” “scared,” or “afraid,” to describe their feelings about other reasons they do not talk about spiritual matters.

**Q. How are we to respond (i.e., generally speaking) to the issue of fear?**

**NOTE 1** – Firstly—and this point will prove applicable to many of our subsequent points—I wonder the degree to which we fear the wrong things. We fear losing relationships, growing tensions, looking or performing poorly, and beyond, yet to what degree do we fear the Lord or the potential consequences for our failure to obey Him?

### **Ezekiel 3:17–21 (The Call of God to Ezekiel)**

17 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 18 When I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 19 But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself. 20 Again, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before them, they will die. Since you did not warn them, they will die for their sin. The righteous things that person did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 21 But if you do warn the righteous person not to sin and they do not sin, they will surely live because they took warning, and you will have saved yourself.”

### **1 Corinthians 9:16b**

16 . . . Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

**NOTE 2** – Secondly, we do well to note that many of our fears evaporate when we realize that the salvation of another is not dependent upon our performance per se, but our faithfulness. God is not looking for you to save your peers, but to play your part in His saving of them! The Lord is at ever-at-work in the lives of the lost, drawing them to Him. Our small conversation and/or act of service is but one piece of a greater process. We might initiate the final dialogue that God uses to draw someone to faith in Christ OR our words and deeds might plant seeds for a future harvest, as the Holy Spirit utilizes them to soften hearts, convict of sin and more!

### **1 Corinthians 3:1, 3–7**

1 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. . . . 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

## 2. LACK OF OPPORTUNITY

**KEY** – Let us consider lack of opportunity. 17% cited a lack of opportunity as the primary reason for their silence.

**Q. Do we really want to stand before God and tell Him we remained silent as He never opened the right door?**

**NOTE 1** – I believe there is power in praying for open doors of opportunity. Let us consider these words of Paul:

**Colossians 2:2–3 (Emphasis Mine)**

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may **open a door for our message**, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

**NOTE 2** – I believe there is power in praying for clarity of proclamation (i.e., as we go through said open doors):

**Colossians 2:4 (Emphasis Mine)**

4 Pray that I may **proclaim it clearly**, as I should.

**NOTE 3** – Yet I also believe that the Lord, who purposes to seek and save the lost, causes open doors to abound!

**Q1. Might it be that we miss the open doors God has opened all around us?**

**Q2. Might we be too distracted to properly realize or recognize God-moments?**

**NOTE 4** – It is not an easy thing to live and serve as Jesus did. Consider what He noted and its impact in our lives:

**John 5:19**

19 “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

**Q1. To what degree are we praying for open doors?**

**Q2. To what degree are we praying for clarity re: open doors?**

**Q3. To what degree are we actively watching what the Lord is doing?**

**NOTE 5** – I also wonder the degree to which we have unrealistic expectations concerning divine moments, etc.

**QUOTE** – Many noted that the ideal moment seldom presents itself; that circumstances just never seem right. While several legitimate reasons might limit one’s opportunity to share his faith (e.g., being confined to home), this is often a problem associated with expectations. People are usually hoping for a clear signal that a moment is perfect. They might be expecting a certain feeling or sense of inner peace to come when the time is right. Or it might be that they are waiting for someone to say, “Hey, could you tell me more about what you believe?” And while such things do happen on occasion, such feelings or contexts will rarely present themselves so clearly!

**Acts 3:1–6**

1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. 6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

### 3. UNEQUIPPED

**KEY** – Let us consider readiness. 10% of respondents stayed silent primarily due to feeling ill-or-under-equipped.

**QUOTE** – “Every tenth respondent in our survey indicated that they didn’t feel equipped to share their faith. They stated that they worried about fielding questions they could not answer or not having the required biblical knowledge.’

**NOTE 1** – Is it reasonable to assume that the Great Commission is only for those of high pedigree and/or training, because if so this would rule out the Lord Jesus Himself and the apostles (save Paul), for they were not learned!

**NOTE 2** – Is it reasonable to assume that you must know the answer to every question before sharing the Lord? If you are waiting until you know it all, you will never participate in the Great Commission you are called to obey!

**Q. Do you know the best way to handle questions you are not sure how to answer?**

**A.** I honestly do not know, but I will walk with you in the pursuit of truth if you are willing!

**NOTE 3** – How much knowledge or insight must you possess before you will share your faith in Christ the Lord? How ready do you have to feel before you will participate in the Good News? Can such a response be quantified?

**NOTE 4** – Who is responsible for equipping you? If it is a purely a function of the church, what must I do to help? What training or workshop must I provide? Concurrently, to what degree are you availing yourself of the myriad opportunities for training already and ongoingly underway? If knowledge is your issue, where have you been? Moreover, what are you doing to equip yourself in the Lord? How dedicated are you to biblical study or prayer?

**NOTE 5** – How much knowledge does God ask you to possess before releasing you to share the good news? How much knowledge is required to share your testimony of who He is and what He has done in life and living?

**Q. Does it take advanced training or a lifetime of learning to share what Jesus has done for you?**

**John 9:13–17, 24–25 [Context – Christ Healed a Blind Man Born Blind] (Emphasis Mine)**

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. 15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

16 Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others asked, “How can a sinner perform such signs?” So they were divided. 17 Then they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

The man replied, “He is a prophet” [At this point the man is dismissed and his parents are interviewed in kind].

24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God by telling the truth,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.”

25 He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. **One thing I do know.** I was blind but now I see!”

**Q1. Could this man answer every question? Did he have time to be equipped academically?**

**Q2. Could this figure yet function as a profound witness and ambassador for Christ Jesus. YES!**

## CONCLUSION

**NOTE 1** – I would call you to worship the Lord through your giving. Feel free to give online or in person.

**NOTE 2** – Please check out our website for any of our beyond-Sunday ministries (e.g., MM; WM; CYC).

**NOTE 3** – Men’s Breakfast this Saturday, July 13, at 9am. Any updates re: WM (see Patty Noel, etc.).

**NOTE 4** – Week of Prayer and Fasting slated for July 15–19. Sign-Ups next Sunday morning. Note!

### **Numbers 6:24–26**

24 The LORD bless you  
and keep you;

25 the LORD make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;

26 the LORD turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.