

# Evangelism 2024 Pt. 5 – Stats

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, July 21, 2024

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OCC SUNDAY  
CHRISTMAS IN JULY

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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** – We are in the midst of a multi-part sermon series on personal evangelism (i.e., sharing our faith). 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 recent sessions—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. BUSYNESS

**KEY** – Let us speak to the matter of busyness. 8% cited being overly busy as the primary hindrance in evangelism.

**QUOTE** – A lot of people responded that they just did not have the necessary time it takes to share the gospel. In their mind(s), evangelism is a potentially time-consuming prospect, and their lives are simply too busy as it is.

**Q1. Do we really want to stand before God the Father and tell Him we were too busy?**

**Q2. Do we really want to stand before God the Son and tell Him we were too busy?**

**Q3. Do we really want to stand before the Spirit and tell Him we were too busy?**

**Q4. Do we want to stand in the presence of faithful witnesses w/ this claim?**

**QUOTE** – “Beware of the barrenness of a busy life.”

**NOTE 1** – Often the excuse of busyness is a way to excuse ourselves from things we have not properly prioritized.

**Q1. To what degree is this excuse a mask for apathy to the Great Commission?**

**Q2. To what degree is this excuse a mask for apathy toward those in need of it?**

**Q3. To what degree is this excuse a sign that we need to assess our schedule(s)?**

**NOTE 2** – Simply put, if we are too busy to share our love for Jesus, we are likely too busy with the wrong things.

**Q. Do you want a good passage that warns us against prioritizing urgent, earthly affairs OVER the important?**

### **Luke 14:15–24 (Emphasis Mine)**

15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

16 Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

18 But they all alike began to make **excuses**. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ 19 Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ 20 Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

21 The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

22 ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

## 2. SHYNESS

**KEY** – Let us speak to matters of personality. 4% posited personal shyness as the driving hindrance in evangelism.

**Q. If you think you are too shy to share Jesus with others, how shy will you feel when you stand before Him?**

**NOTE 1** – The Body of Christ is a wonderfully diverse organism, comprised of many different types of people. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that the Body of Christ will be composed of both the outgoing and the shy. Note:

### 1 Corinthians 12:12–14 (Emphasis Mine)

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of **many**.

**NOTE 2** – Thus, each part of the Body is invaluable and should not diminish itself in relation to others. Consider:

### 1 Corinthians 12:15–16

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

**NOTE 3** – In fact, each member of the Body (e.g., extrovert and introvert; outgoing or shy) is truly indispensable:

### 1 Corinthians 3:17–20

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

**NOTE 4** – Thus said, no part of the Body of Christ has the right to diminish the significance or import of others:

### 1 Corinthians 12:21–27

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

**Q. What if God has called “shy you” to reach a person that the outgoing can never reach?**

**KEY** – Ultimately, the issue is not your shyness, but obedience. Let God use you to make Him known in this world.

### 3. INAPPROPRIATE CONTEXT(S)

**KEY** – Let us speak to matters of context. 4% stayed silent primarily because they could not find a suitable context.

**QUOTE** – Many people communicated that they did not share their faith because it felt inappropriate. Some people did not want to share their faith at work, or they did not feel like relationships were in a healthy enough place to talk about Jesus. These are valid concerns. Most work environments are not the best place for these kinds of conversations. Employers do not want their employees to feel uncomfortable at work, and faith-based discussions can lead to people feeling harassed or even filing hostile work environment claims.

**NOTE 1** – Firstly, there is validity in this. Your work place may not be the best place to share the Lord. Yet this does not mean that you cannot have appropriate, Christ-centered conversations outside of work (e.g., on the golf course, at a coffee shop, in your home, etc.)—as your lifestyle piques interest and connection!

**NOTE 2** – Secondly, this response helps us to recognize that many Christians feel that there is no appropriate time to share their because they are not close to many non-Christians. Something interesting happens to the average believer over time: they become insulated from non-believers (i.e., the people they are called to reach):

**QUOTE** – After being a Christian for a while, many people’s social circles become largely Christian-centric. There are not a lot of places where they interact with folks who do not share their faith. So, for many, work is the only place where they interact with non-Christians. The answer isn’t that people need to feel more comfortable proselytizing at work. Jesus would be better served if more Christians found ways to expand their circles beyond other Christians. If we are modeling our lives after Jesus, we are going to find ways to invite others into our circles and go outside of ours!

#### **Matthew 28:19b–20a (Emphasis Mine)**

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 (Emphasis Mine)**

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 3** – I posit that He has not called His church to hide from the world. We are to be in, but not of, the world:

#### **Matthew 5:14–16**

14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

**Q1. Are you and I hidden?**

**Q2. Are we “overly” insulated?**

**Q3. What remedies exist for you?**

## 4. DIFFICULTY IN BROACHING THE TOPIC

**KEY** – Let us speak to difficult conversations. 4% stayed silent mainly because they found it hard to bring up Christ.

**QUOTE** – How do I steer a conversation toward Jesus? That’s the question a great many people struggle with. It can feel tricky to segue a discussion toward faith issues without making it feel forced and awkward. If you do not know how to do it well, witnessing can be very uncomfortable.

### Q. How can we practically navigate this issue?

**QUOTE** – Active listening and asking questions are two keys to bringing up matters of the faith in a natural way. When we are focused on how we can turn a conversation into an evangelistic opportunity, the transition will always feel forced. But when we are genuinely interested in getting to know others and learn about their story, we discover all sorts of opportunities to share the good news of Christ.

**Q1. To what degree are you a good listener?**

**Q2. To what degree do you ask good questions?**

### James 1:19 (Emphasis Mine)

19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be **quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry . . .**

### Luke 7:36–48. 50

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, **he** [i.e., questioned] **said to himself**, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.”

40 Jesus **answered** him, “Simon, I have something to tell [i.e., ask of] you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. 41 “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

43 Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”

“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.

44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “**Do you see this woman?** I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” 48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” . . . 50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

## 5. FEAR OF BEING PUSHY

**KEY** – Let us speak to perception. 3% cited the fear of being perceived as pushy as the main cause of their silence.

**NOTE 1** – The first issue herein is the fear of how others perceive you (i.e., the fear of human opinions). What matters more: the opinion of man or the eternal opinion of the Lord? Consider carefully your reply herein!

### 1 Corinthians 4:3–4

3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

**NOTE 2** – The second issue is one of urgency. Those who are urgent about the eternal destinations of lost men and women may often appear needlessly pushy to those unconcerned with matters of heaven or hell. Yet if the realities of heaven and hell be true, and Christ is the only means whereby one finds genuine salvation, is it not worth being deemed pushy. I believe that those who do love people love them enough to tell the truth!

**Q1. Is it not best to be urgent about the gospel while there is yet time?**

**Q2. What good will it be to possess a sense of urgency when it is too late?**

### Luke 16:19–31 (Emphasis Mine)

19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

25 But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

27 He answered, ‘**Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.**’

29 “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

30 “‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

31 “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

## 6. FEAR OF OFFENSE

**KEY** – Let us speak to offense. 3% cited the fear of offending others as the driving hindrance in sharing their faith.

**QUOTE** – Similar to the worry of being too pushy is the fear of offending others. No one wants to be offensive, and there is a genuine fear (i.e., particularly in this generation) that sharing our faith may be offensive to others.

**NOTE 1** – You and I do well to realize that the core of the gospel message, even though it is the best of news, is inherently offensive. The foundation of the gospel is that people are flawed, broken beings, utterly incapable of saving themselves. This smacks our sense of pride or self-sufficiency, for who loves to be told they are wrong?

**Q. Who loves to be told they cannot do something, need help, and have no option but the receiving of “aid”?**

**NOTE 2** – Yet this is precisely what we see in the message of Jesus Christ: a message of repentance and of faith!

### **Mark 1:14b-15 (Emphasis Mine)**

14 . . . Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. **Repent** and **believe** the good news!”

**Q1. Did Christ Jesus go out of His way to offend others?** Not at all.

**Q2. Did Jesus water down His teaching so as not to offend?** In no way.

### **Mark 10:17–22**

17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

**NOTE 3** – When I survey the cloud of witnesses who went before us, they all risked of offending others w. truth. Think of the prophets, who heralded the unpopular message of repentance and faith to Israel and Judah. Think of the apostles, who called lost sinners to repent, that they might find life and restoration in the Lord. Think of men like Stephen, who took the Sanhedrin to task for their spiritual crimes, that they might find pardon. I can think of no proclamation of the gospel that does not contain the potential for offense. We must obey God!



## 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 rescheduled for this Saturday, July 27, at 9am. Invite a friend and more!

### **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.