

**General Topics :: Open Air Evangelism****Open Air Evangelism - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/4/5 16:11**

I'm just curious, as I have recently made it a regular practice to go out and do open air evangelism at a local University, and I have gone 2 times so far (2 Mondays back to back). Though I am being patient about it all, I am curious about something. Is it normal for people to usually just walk by?

I know my voice is loud, and the area I have chosen to preach at carries sound very well (a Christian friend of mine says he can hear my voice from pretty far away), and there are hundreds if not thousands of students passing through the square where I am preaching.

I know I am preaching the full gospel when I go out, and I believe the Holy Spirit is with me when I am preaching. Yet, it seems somewhat frustrating that most folks simply just walk by. A few might stop for a minute or two to strike up a conversation, usually from other Christians (many who have given me much encouragement). But for the most part, people don't seem to be responding. If people do stop, they usually stand off at quite a distance and stare.

Any open air vets out there have any insights they might wish to share? Or should I expect that much of the time many people will simply walk by and not stop?

Re: Open Air Evangelism - posted by randyw (), on: 2004/4/5 16:27

I am absolutely convinced that the world is simply not interested in the gospel regardless of how it is conveyed. Why should they be? Has the Church conveyed a living example to the world that they would care to emulate. I think not. We cannot even convey the gospel convincingly within the walls of the local assembly much less publicly. God has said that "you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all of your heart." Who in this country has not been exposed to the Gospel in some form or another? At one time or another? I am fond of saying that "that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Some plant and some water but it is God who gives the increase. Only the Holy Spirit can convict anyone of sin and lead them to a place of repentance. Which is the first step in the process of being born again. In fact without repentance you cannot be a candidate for eternal life. Without repentance there can be no remission of sin. Perhaps your evangelistic effort would be more effective on a one to one basis. Do not be discouraged only allow the Holy Spirit to accomplish what He will. Blessings. **R. Williams**

Re: Open Air Evangelism - posted by RobertW (), on: 2004/4/5 16:29

No matter what happens brother, there are seeds being planted. People go home and remember what they saw and heard. From my limited experience in open air services, I have taken this to heart. You don't always see the results. But we are not doing our service- but as Paris Reidhead said "for the Glory of God." We want souls saved; amen and amen! Sometimes you don't always get a response. Be encouraged though!

If I might encourage you... keep doing what God called you to do. I was at McDonalds today leaving from lunch and a different looking guy walked up to my brother's window and said this "You're plate is local- you are from Kansas City?- you just won a free book on transcendental meditation!" He continued "I am a traveling monk from India..." He then handed him another book that looked wildly pagan. I was in the back seat. It all happened so fast. My brother said something like "No thanks man!" And another brother was looking for a Bible in the car to hand him. He headed right off when he refused and I looked and he had a round section of hair in the back like a tail(monk possibly?) and was shaved bald. He had a backpack- apparently full of these books. It was truly bizarre to say the very least.

If he can do that, brother I pray you will do 7 times for the truth what that young guy is doing for a lie. God Bless and Go d Speed in your ministry!

-Robert

Re: Open Air Evangelism - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/4/5 19:31

Brother,

I'm a pretty recent entrant into the open air arena myself. When I preach (on campus or downtown) I pretty much give it straight out of Ray Comfort's method (that I know of). I can't get a crowd either :) Even if you don't, though, remember Isaiah 55:11:

"So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It will not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

The Word of God will not return void.

And while most of this country has heard some form of the Gospel, most of it hasn't heard the Law properly preached. People tend to be pretty forgetful too, so a reminder doesn't hurt. One-to-one is good and very important (it's great to have someone preach while others can take questions and have conversations one-on-one with sinners, or at least give out tracts to people who are just going by).

I know some other campus preachers that can reliably get a crowd by getting more confrontational (and somewhat theatrical, sometimes). At first I thought it was over-the-top and turning people away, but I've come to recognize that it does much more good than harm because it gets people listening and gets them to take notice (perhaps the hardest thing to get through is that layer of apathy). Also, the Word is a sword, it's going to divide people if pressed firmly enough. I think John Wesley said that, properly preached to, sinners should either get angry or converted. My friend John Duncan says he deals with the problem of being ignored by being "unignorable."

Also, if you're staying in one town/area, remember discipleship. One way is to have some evangelism books on hand (I highly recommend Ray Comfort's "Revival's Golden Key," it exposes most of the problems with modern evangelism) and if you get into a conversation with an interested Christian, give them a copy if they'll give you their email address so you can ask them about what they think of the book. Having a weekly Bible study is also a very good idea, particularly if God's gifted you in teaching.

I wasn't really able to get into preaching until John started discipling me, there are probably others in your area that could make good workers for the harvest field that just need something like that.

And of course, God is the only way any of it's even remotely effective. Remember not to try to "inhale once and exhale twice" as George Mueller (I think) put it. Seek God in prayer, soak in His Word, and trust in Him. You know all that already, of course.

Well, I've gone on long enough, I hope the Lord will use it, and I pray that He'll make of you what He wills to do so.

God's grace be with you,
-Keith

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/4/5 19:56

Jimmy (PTC),

I applaud your efforts, your zeal and your boldness. Please think on this: if you were one of those who were not a Christian and you were walking by and heard someone preaching out loud outside- what do you think you would do? Honestly. Put yourself in their shoes for a minute. What would you do?

As a Christian I might stop and say thanks for standing up for God- but as a non believer I think I might pass right by too.

As Randy stated- most are not wanting to hear the gospel -or be forced to hear it. And they look to most Christians -who are stuck in their own ways, being held in their own bondages, are quick to judge, and are HYPOCRITICAL. Why would they want that? They hear us say, preach and teach one thing- yet when they look in the hearts and lives of believers- there is not much difference.

It is time for Christians to start being real Christ followers. Ones who live this: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
And live this: "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

The way into someone's heart is through the giving of Ourseves. Our time, our listening ear, our lending hand, our unconditional love (with God's help), our understanding.

Although a repentance message is good and needed for baby Christians- I find that the unsaved are in need of healing (spiritual healing). They can not tolerate "meat"- only the milk of the word and they consume it much better through "life circumstances".

(I am sure that you are lending a listening ear since you stated that some ask questions. And I am not saying that you are preaching a repentance message to these people- just using general things that we talk about on the forum alot)

A true christian who is a true disciple can more easily minister to others in their every day life by trying to really listen to another who is in need (spiritual or otherwise), offer words of hope and encouragement, offer themselves for whatever is needed- POUR OURSELVES OUT AS A DRINK OFFERING for others- whether saved or not.

This makes an impact on people. This shows that there is a difference between us and the world. We can love in any circumstance, we can forgive under any circumstance. We can give in any circumstance. There is no limit to what God has asked to do for others.

The times are different. The people are jaded and sick of hypocritical Christians. They want something they can't get anywhere else- unconditional love and healing for their wounded and empty hearts. (now I am not saying that it should be all lovey dovey and never talk of the Fear of the Lord or repentance). But you have to be honest and say that PEOPLE are rarely capable of loving unconditionally. But God is ALWAYS.

There are so many hurting people in this world. Yes, many lives are filled with sin. What alternative are we going to offer them?

Just some thoughts. I am not putting down your efforts. It takes great courage and I pray that seeds are planted as you speak. I know the Lord will honor this. I just want you to know that whether you choose to preach outside or you choose to go to a homeless center and counsel people- I am wondering if the Lord will always honor what you do that is "hidden" and far from men's eyes because you can't get the credit.

Only He can transform us into real, true disciples who are living a Christ-like life inside and out. And when He uses us in everyday life this way- He gets the credit and He shines through.

I may be totally wrong here. I am just trying to offer another point of view. I do not mean to offend.

Many blessings to you!

In His perfect love, Chanin

Re: - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/4/5 20:20

Praise God for raising up laborers!

You're planting seeds, even if it doesn't look like it.

God bless you guys.

Re: Open Air Evangelism - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2004/4/5 20:26

Quote:
-----Any open air vets out there have any insights they might wish to share? Or should I expect that much of the time many people will simply walk by and not stop?

I have had many similar experiences in open-air preaching. I've done some open-air at a popular outdoor mall complex here in downtown Phoenix. I remember one night in particular there was a pay-TV fight on at a Hooters near to where I was standing. There was a lot of foot traffic that night but very little interest in my message, I remember thinking how sad it was that people had plenty of time to drink and watch a brawl but no time to hear eternal things, then I remembered that at that was me watching those fights just a few years ago. If God could reach me He could reach anyone, anytime. Despite the apathy we cannot lose hope, seeds are planted and watered and occasionally God grants some fruit to be harvested.

One thing you may want to try is something like the Open Air Book I got from Ray Comfort's site a few years ago. It's a great way to get interest and talk with a few people at a time, usually several others will stop also. I had the book printed out on 48x36 paper (about 10 pages I think) and attached to a poster board at a local Office Depot and I mounted it on an easel, it's a nice tool for getting a conversation started and I think it only cost me around \$30 for the whole setup. I'm not sure if he has it on his site anymore but I can send it to you in PDF format if you are interested.

In Christ,

Ron

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/4/6 18:43

Quote:

Please think on this: if you were one of those who were not a Christian and you were walking by and heard someone preaching out loud outside- what do you think you would do? Honestly.

I can be a bit curious about such things, I'd probably actually go up to the person and listen a few minutes before passing on. This I remember though, that before I was saved, I can recall probably every time I heard even just a little bit of the Scriptures and the profound effect it had on me. I remember the first time I ever came across the ten commandments out of curiosity, and read them, and felt great conviction from them. Granted, I shook off this conviction for quite some time, but eventually, the Lord had His way in my life.

Perhaps if I had been very exposed to it over and over again, eventually its effects might have worn off a bit, and perhaps eventually, altogether. I've heard others testify to the same. A girl I know at school testified to me once how she got saved through Teen Challenge when she was a gang member in New York City, and she just happened to stumble across a street preacher who gave a very simple message, and moved on. She said she knew right then that God had spoken to her... though she didn't get saved right then.

Quote:

They hear us say, preach and teach one thing- yet when they look in the hearts and lives of believers- there is not much difference.

As it is written, many blaspheme God because of us. As Paul said, stop sinning because some people have no knowledge of God.

Quote:

The way into someone's heart is through the giving of Ourseves. Our time, our listening ear, our lending hand, our unconditional love (with God's help), our understanding.

Indeed. But, this is not an either-or type of thing, but a both-and. People must see Jesus. The fruit AND the gifts of the Spirit must be demonstrated. People must get a chance to hear the gospel though. Sometimes the fruit of the Spirit will act as a bridge that allows us to preach the gospel in our personal relationships with people. But, people will have no chance of believing if they never hear.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/4/6 18:53

Quote:

I'm not sure if he has it on his site anymore but I can send it to you in PDF format if you are interested.

I was unable to find it on his site, so if you could send me a copy of the PDF jimmy@christiansteps.comthnx

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/4/6 19:06

Jimmy,

Quote:
-----Indeed. But, this is not an either-or type of thing, but a both-and. People must see Jesus. The fruit AND the gifts of the Spirit must be demonstrated. People must get a chance to hear the gospel though. Sometimes the fruit of the Spirit will act as a bridge that allows us to preach the gospel in our personal relationships with people. But, people will have no chance of believing if they never hear.

I suppose you are right. Different giftings for different people. I pray that people's ears and hearts will be open for you and each true disciple who shines God's light.

In His perfect- powerful love, Chanin

Re: open air book - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2004/4/6 19:36

Jimmy,

I sent the open air book to the email address you listed. I also did some searching on Ray's site today and was able to find the document there, the link is below.

For anyone interested in getting their feet wet in open air preaching this is a great tool to get started.

(<http://www.livingwaters.com/downloads/goodtest.pdf>) Open Air Book

In Christ,

Ron

General Topics :: Open Air Evangelism

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/4/6 19:49

Quote:

I sent the open air book to the email address you listed. I also did some searching on Ray's site today and was able to find the document there, the link is below.

Thanks. I have a few things from Ray Comfort and have found his materials useful. Though, I'm trying to stay away from the "gimmicks" used to attract crowds. I think it is fine if people use them, but the more I've personally sought God about the matter, I've decided to not get too much into it. I'm simply going to rely on the gospel itself, and the gifts God has given me.

Personally speaking, my voice is rather loud as it is, not to mention where I preach at, sound carries very well. So, even if folks aren't gathering around me, the time it takes them to walk X feet, they will have heard the gospel for several minutes as it is. I'd imagine that if they stopped to play some sort of game of sorts, they'd probably only stick around for a few minutes as well before moving on.

But like I said... this is just my own personal conviction, if you do not share the same, you will still do well :)

Re: Open Air Evangelism - posted by prayer1warrior, on: 2004/4/9 11:29

Praise the Lord !
:-)

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/4/9 12:08

Quote:

Unfortunately, it is very common for people to just walk on by.

Too bad.

Quote:

I think that open air evangelism is so rare these days that most people don't know what to make of it.

Well, I know in a Western Philosophy class I took a few years ago the teachers kinda made fun of people who preached on a soap box on the streets of Charlotte. Some philosophers and atheists though consider it their job to shut these preachers down, and I'm a bit shocked I've not seen any attempts to do so by any of the UNC Charlotte students.

Quote:

You just keep on doing what the Lord has told you to do, and keep in mind that HE grants the increase, and His word never returns to Him void.

Amen.

Quote:

I just thank God that you are doing it, if you develop the thick skin that is inherently necessary to do this type of preaching, I am certain that it will serve you well in your future endeavors for the Lord...it has been so for me. Praise the Lord ! dave....

I thank God I am doing it as well, as it has been on my heart for quite some time to do. While it may make me thick skinned, I hope my heart stays sensitive and compassionate towards the people who need it. I don't want to be afraid to identify sin, even if it is unpopular to call some things sin e.g. homosexuality and abortion. But at the same time, I want to get folks to understand the gospel as what it is... good news.

Re: - posted by prayer1warrior, on: 2004/4/9 15:29

Amen