

My name is Nik, I'm one of the pastors here, and excited to teach from this text today. If you didn't notice the theme of the passage that Elise was reading, it is definitely about evangelism. Eight different times in this text, this act of evangelism, of sharing your faith of proclaiming the message of the gospel comes up at least eight different times. Five different times in this text, the Greek word *euangelion*, which is where we get evangelism, evangelists, evangelical, those words. That's where we get that word from. At least five times that comes up in the text, and in fact, one scholar said there's three different words in the New Testament that are used for evangelism, all three of those words are used in this passage. The main character, the passage is a guy named Philip, who later on in Acts is referred to as Philip the Evangelist. He has this title of the Evangelist all through this text. Evangelism is the key theme of this text. Alright, here's what it says, here's the Message translation of verse number four, Acts 8:4, the followers of Jesus all became missionaries. Every one of them, every one of them became missionaries or evangelists, wherever they scattered, they preached the message, they evangelized about Jesus.

Now, I became a Christian when I was a teenager and I was as lost as a ball in high weeds. Alright, I became a Christian, and I don't know what your experience was like when you first became a Christian, if you're a Christian, but I wanted to tell everyone. And that's kind of what you get from the New Testament. When you read these stories of people converting to Christianity, immediately think, Who am I gonna tell... And they start telling people. During the gospels, they're bringing people to Jesus, and that's how I was.

Everywhere I went, I had these little gospel pamphlets, like in my shirt pocket, I used to wear pockets like this or in my pocket in my jeans. We called them tracks, I don't know if they still call them that anymore, but I would pass these things out everywhere I went. After school, I would have basketball practice. And I wouldn't go straight home after basketball practice, I would shower, I would put some new clothes on and I would go drive to a random neighborhood and knock on doors, and if anybody was willing to talk to me, I would try to tell them about the gospel, I would try to talk to them about Jesus. If we were in a store together and we made eye contact, that was my cue, that you're okay talking to me. I would try to share the gospel with people in stores and stuff, and Goodwill and Walmart, everywhere I went. I was just, I wanted to tell everybody about the gospel and about Jesus. I don't act like that anymore. And earlier this week, I was wondering why did I not do that?

I mean, wherever I do go, I do try to turn conversations into spiritual things, if the conversation lends it that way, if I'm at my kid's sports things, I try to talk to the other parents. If I'm at the gym every now and then, I'll try to talk somebody when I'm doing the preacher curl. There we go. So I do try to, but I'm not as enthusiastic as I used to be and so I've been racking my brain. Why am I not as evangelistic as I used to be? And I think there might be a couple of reasons for that. For one, I was younger, I was about 16, 17 when I first became a Christian. And so I was younger, maybe more bold or just youthful energy was coming out, maybe that was the case. Maybe it's because I was raised in the south, I was raised in North Carolina, and in North Carolina, it's perfectly normal to meet a total stranger and talk for 30 minutes. That's not abnormal. I moved to Pennsylvania, and it took like three years to get to know my neighbors. You know, I had a few neighbors that the garage store would come up, they would pull in, it would close and a year would go by and I would never see their face. Maybe that's a Pennsylvania/southern thing. I don't know if that's a part of the equation here.

But I think one of the key reasons why I'm not as evangelistic as I used to be, is because it was

easier back then. I just think it was easier about 20 years ago to be an evangelist, and to share the gospel. In fact, in today's world, in this country, I almost feel like evangelism is like the E-word. Right, it's like the e-word, say just evangelism. It kinda leaves a bad after taste. Right here. Try it. Say evangelism. Ready? You taste that. Alright, let's try proselytizing. Ready? No, I'm just kidding. We have kids present. We don't wanna do that, the p-word.

I don't know, it just has a bad taste to it, evangelism, are we supposed to be doing this? Is this intolerant? Is this manipulative? Is this offense? I don't know. Should we be doing this? And it is true that our culture, our society in America here is more pluralistic than it used to be, and so there's more religions out there, it used to be that the overwhelming majority of people were Christian, or if they weren't, they were well aware of what Christians believe and maybe even felt that they should be, but I couldn't take that step. But things are different now. In fact, by the time my kids grow up and are my age, it's somewhat likely that Christianity won't be the majority religion anymore, a survey just came out about that, from Pew research that showed some trends that are coming up.

I find myself feeling more awkward about evangelism, so just earlier this month, I had this bible with me and I went to Hershey Medical Center to visit somebody doing a hospital visit, I like to read a passage, pray with him, and I felt really weird. I didn't carry it like this, I had it like this, but I felt weird carrying a bible around, I don't know why I did. People, you've been to Hershey Med, there's hundreds of them, this huge hospital. People are walking by me in the hall, they make eye contact with me, eye contact with the bible, and quickly shoot their eyes up and walk forward and I don't know, maybe they were playing Mariah Carey in their head. I don't know why, but I don't know, I felt out of place. Should be carrying this thing around? And how often do you see a grey bible? Maybe that was the case. I don't know, I felt weird about it. Every now and then I meet somebody new. And a common question is, Hey, what do you do? What do you do for work? And sometimes I catch myself being feeling funny saying I'm a pastor, so I work at a church, but what do you do? So why is that? Why is evangelism like the E-word, why do I feel skittish about this, why do I feel awkward about this.

So just out of curiosity, do any of you feel this way, am I the only one? Are you guys like, No, I talk about this stuff all the time. Does anybody else? I see a couple of heads nodding. I've talked to some of you, and you actually work at places where you've been told, don't talk about this. There's a handbook, you sign the handbook, and you're really not supposed to talk about this. If you wanna go to supper after work with somebody, after hours, you can, but not while you're here. Maybe you've been told by family members, Hey, in this household don't bring up religion, we don't talk about that, maybe you've been told that before, that's fine. Maybe you're a college student and when you're on campus, it's kind of frowned upon that you talk about Cru or Navigators, whatever your campus ministry is. Maybe there's a high schooler and maybe there's some high schoolers in the room and you've been told by one of your teachers or the principal, Hey, can you cool it? Can you not talk about this when you're in school? Maybe you work at Hershey Med Center, and you're a doctor, you're a chaplain, you're a nurse, and you've kind of been told, Can you not bring this up? I know people are struggling. And faith is important to you, but it's not for everybody. Can you just not bring this up? Maybe you have been in these conversations where you've kind of been told, You really shouldn't, you really shouldn't do this.

So here's my question for today, is it wrong to evangelize? Is it a bad thing? Is it, is it unethical? Is it intolerant? Is it offensive? Is it wrong for us to do the work of evangelism? And here I'll go a step further, 'cause what I'm gonna try to persuade you of is that it's not wrong, but let's say it's a good

thing to evangelize, is it required, do we have to do this? Do I have to? I don't really like doing this, do I have to? Can I leave that to other people, Tom's great at it, can Tom do it? He really is. Do I have to... Is it like a requirement that I do this, or can I just sit this one out?

So that's what I wanna talk about today. And here's what I wanna show you, the men and women of Acts chapter eight, that Elise just read about, they believed that evangelism was not optional. They believed that it was a moral obligation for Christians to evangelize and to share their faith. And if they are right, and I believe they are, if they were right, then that means it's true for us too. Evangelism is not optional. Christians have a moral obligation to share their faith, to share the gospel and to evangelize. Not all of you are convinced. Sometimes some days I'm not convinced. So here, here's where we're gonna go today. I have three questions that I want to go over today that came up from this text as I read it.

The first one is this, is it necessary to evangelize? We kind of live in the bible belt of Pennsylvania, right? Everybody around here in Hershey, Hummelstown, maybe Harrisburg, everybody around here, they know the name of Jesus, it's a common name. If they wanna know more, there's churches all over the place, they know where to go. They know we meet on Sunday, they can come and ask. Do we really need to be sharing this, is it necessary?

Here's a second question, is it offensive to evangelize? 'cause some people would say it is. It's intolerant, it's coercive. It's manipulative, it's offensive. So some people would say that it is unethical to evangelize. Is it wrong to evangelize? We're gonna look at that as we look at the story of Phillip.

And then, hopefully, I thoroughly convinced you of the first two points: that it is our moral obligation to evangelize. Hopefully, I'm convincing. If I am, I'm hoping you're left with asking the third question, How can I do this? How can I evangelize? Full disclosure? This is not a how-to sermon, it's a should-do sermon. So I'm not gonna take a lot of time with that, but I do have a couple of tips that I wanna share with you. So that is where we are going today with today's text.

Let's start with this first question: Is it necessary to evangelize? By the way, before we jump into that, let me just say this, some of you are here at Hershey Free for the first time. Some of you are watching online. You're watching, worshipping with us for the first time, and you're thinking, What did I get into? Like, Why am I here today? And I just want you to know the friend or family member that invited you, they're thinking, What did I do, why did I bring them on this day of all the days?! Right. If that's you, if this is your first time, or if you're not a Christian, but you came 'cause a friend invited you, whatever, I just wanna put you at ease, and I want you to be able to breathe. I'm not gonna coerce you, I'm not gonna be pushy with these things. I want you to feel like you're an observer, and this is like a pastor's conference and you're just seeing here's what these people talk about. Okay, I'm gonna put you at ease. If you invited a friend and they came, I wanna put you at ease. Right? If you're at home watching online and you brought a friend over to watch service, you can be at ease, you can just observe. Here's what Christians talk about, okay? So just view it that way, there's no pressure. I hope that you feel compelled towards the love of Jesus, but I don't want you to feel pressure, okay?

Alright, so question number one: is it necessary to evangelize? Well, the easy answer to that question is, Jesus told us to. Right? It's called the Great Commission. After he rose from the dead, some of the first words out of his mouth, I want you to go, go into all the world and make disciples

of all nations. Even earlier in Acts chapter 8, I'm sorry, Acts 1, verse 8. This is what Jesus said as well, he said, You will be my witnesses. Judea, Samaria, the uttermost part of the world. I want you to be my witnesses and to spread this gospel everywhere. So the simple answer to that question is that Jesus told us to, he sent us out. We are a sent people. But here's the question I came to in this text, and we're gonna read verses four and five in a second. Why Samaria? Look at verses four and five, those who have been scattered, they're from the city of Jerusalem. They've preached the word, they evangelized wherever they went, and Phillip, so the rest of the chapter really focuses on this guy named Phillip, Philip went down to the city to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. He evangelized.

So here's my question, why Samaria? Samaria is a region that's maybe 40 miles away from Jerusalem, it's not all that far away. But here's the kicker, the people of Samaria believed almost the same exact things that the people that these Christians believe, almost the same exact things. They had the same scripture that they read and followed, alright, they worship the same God, they had very similar ethnicity, they were considered half Jews. These people were very similar, their belief system was very similar to that of Christianity. So why this need to proselytize, to evangelize, to these people that believe almost identical to what we believe? Well the kicker is, the Samaritans were waiting. They believe in their scripture, a Messiah was coming to forgive them of their sins and to proclaim the kingdom of God. They were waiting for this, but they did not know that Jesus was that Messiah. And so these early Christians, we have to tell them, and I think the same applies to us. You could argue, hey, we live in Central Pennsylvania, there's churches everywhere. Christianity is the majority religion, if anybody wants to hear it, they can come to us. Why do we need to go to them? It's because believing almost the same as we do is not the same as understanding that Jesus is the Messiah. And that if someone does not have Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they desperately need the message of the gospel. Yes, it is absolutely necessary that we share our faith. Evangelism is not optional. Christians have a moral obligation to evangelize. By the way, I wanna pause for a minute just to find the gospel, because sometimes in church we talk about gospel a lot, but we don't always have time to unpack it because we talk about it every single week. So what is the gospel? Here's kind of a working definition, okay? Basically the word gospel literally means good news. So it's the good news about Jesus, but here's specifically what that means. It's the good news that Jesus saves us from the penalty for our sin, sin and wrong-doing deserve a consequence, he has paid the consequence, the penalty for our sin. And he will someday save us from the presence, from the dominion of sin, from his tenant, the sin nature that I have. He will someday deliver us from that. But not just that, he's restoring all the creation. God doesn't just destroy things and start over, no he's a God that restores things and he wants to restore us. He wants to restore the rest of creation. That's kind of a working example of the gospel.

Now, sometimes we think of doing good works and we match that with evangelism, and that's very good, but until the gospel is presented, until your mouth is open, your pen is writing, your fingers are typing, your hands are signing or whatever, until the message of the Gospel happens, technically evangelism has not happened. And we are called to be a people that evangelize, that share the gospel with those around us. Second Timothy 4:5 reads this way: Do the work of an evangelist.

So question number one is it necessary for us to evangelize? I would argue, absolutely. It is our moral obligation as Christians to evangelize. Evangelism is not optional. If you're a Christian, that's question number one.

Here's question number two is it offensive to evangelize? Is it offensive? Someone argue it is.

Here's a message on a message board called belief.net from a few years ago, someone wrote this, I have nothing against the Christian religion itself, but I'm tired of evangelical people going around the world forcing their religion on people, it's just not right. Why can't they keep their beliefs to themselves? Does he or she can have a point? Should we keep this stuff to ourselves? I don't know. Here's another quote from someone named Brian Stone from Boston University, he wrote a book on pluralism, and here's what he says, Christian evangelism must ever remain uninterested in competing for space in the world or triumphing over other faiths, so converting someone who's already happily engaged in another faith. He would argue that we should be uninterested in converting people. Is he right? Is it intolerant for us to convert people of other religions? The Dali Lama, this is what he said in 2001, whether Hindu or Muslim or a Christian, whoever tries to convert it's wrong, it's not good. Is the Dali Lama a right when he said that? Here's a survey that was done just in 2019, so just a couple of years ago, by Barna, it reads that almost half of Christian millennials, so my fellow millennials, half of Christian millennials believe that evangelism is wrong because it is offensive. Are they right? Is evangelism offensive? There are certain states, certain areas of the country that if you were to go to, like Islamic State, maybe the state that proclaims the Orthodox Church, they would say, No, we don't allow missionaries here, we don't allow evangelism here, you can't do that stuff here. And it was said at one point that evangelism is a threat to the unity, to national unity for the country. There's a casestudy done in Russia in the 90s, in which evangelism was termed as aggressive targeting and winning of converts through improper means. That's how they define evangelism.

So some people would say, Yeah, evangelism is offensive. Is evangelism offensive? Is it unethical? Is it coercive? Is it intolerant? Is it unethical? Is it offensive? Is it wrong for us to do the work of evangelism? Well, here's how I would propose that we answer that question. First off, there are offensive ways of evangelizing. If you've been a target of one of those ways, I'm sorry, right? If you've been a target of that, I'm sorry. There are offensive ways of evangelism. If you're a waiter and someone leaves a \$20 tip and you pick it up and find out that's not a real \$20 bill, it's like a gospel thing. They can be offensive, right? Hey, hold on, you left to quarter and left me this little fake \$20. There are offensive ways. If you go to New York City and jump on the subway and the doors close and you're locked in and somebody stands up and starts going at it, for some, maybe not everybody, but some might think that that is offensive. There are offensive ways of evangelizing. If someone were to bring this up with you over and over. Somebody at work or whatever, over and over bring this up and you told them, Look, I appreciate what you're doing, I'm not interested, I really, I'm just not interested. And they keep doing that, keep bombarding you with this thing, that could be offensive. There are offensive ways of evangelizing.

Furthermore, I would say the message of the gospel can be offensive. I mean, the gospel, part of the message of the gospel is that I am a sinner and that I'm in desperate need of a Savior, and that my sin is crippling me and sending me to eternal damnation. This is not like fluffy warm news. The message of the gospel can be offensive and there are offensive ways of presenting the gospel. I mean, if my doctor would have to tell me, Nik, your smoking habit's gonna kill you, Hey man, that's offensive! Right? So sometimes somebody can tell me something, and then the message itself is offensive, but I would argue this, that doing evangelism in and of herself, if you can do it tactfully and respectfully and with good etiquette, the actual act of evangelizing, of sharing your faith, is not offensive. The message of the gospel can be offensive, the way that we do it can be offensive, but the actual act of evangelism is not necessarily offensive if you can do it graciously and respectfully and tactfully.

Okay, now here's two things in this text, we're gonna jump back into the text here and look at Phillip. There's two questions, there's two things that come up that bring to mind. First off, Philip is using this method in which he performs miracles for people, Elise read it. He's doing miracles for people for the purpose of presenting the gospel to them. Is that manipulative? I don't know, we're going to look at that. Here's the second thing that comes up in this text. Second, Philip meet someone named Simon, who as far as we can tell, is happily engaged in a different religion, he believes in some other belief system, and Philip actively tries to convert him to Christian, and he does convert him. Was that intolerant? Is that wrong? Is that coercive? Now, we're gonna look at that today.

So let's look at the first text. Here, look at Verse 5, Acts 8, verses 5-7. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. Is Phillip being manipulated by using miracles as a means to present the gospel? Now, first up, before we go further, as some of you may have gotten stuck on the miracle thing like, Wow, miracles really, this is 2022, are we really talking about this? And I won't spend much time here. Pastor George actually addressed this last week, but let me just say this, we westerners live in this culture in which, if I can't prove it by scientific observation or medical, if I can't prove it with modern medicine or modern science, it must not happen. Supernatural things just don't happen, so therefore, this can't be true. If anything is unexplainable, it just, it didn't happen. It was made up. I would push back on this radical enlightenment view of the world. And I would love to talk you about that if you wanna talk about it more. But we as Christians believe that these things can happen and that God works in supernatural ways because he's super natural. So I would push back on that a little bit, but I would love to talk to you more about that at a different time if you'd like to.

But secondly, I would argue this, there's nothing wrong with doing something physically good for someone, so that you can do something spiritually good for them. I don't think there's anything wrong with doing something physically good for someone, so that you can do something spiritually good for them as well. Now there are manipulative ways that some have evangelized in the past. I don't know, maybe there's some kind of camp and a bunch of kids are invited and nobody really tells the kids what the camp's about but then you get there and it's like heavy evangelism, and that's the key focus, and there's different tactics used to weigh on the kids in different ways. Maybe there are manipulative ways to evangelize, but the very fact that you are doing something good for someone, you're being upfront about it, and you're hoping to do spiritually good things for them too, I don't believe that's manipulative. I don't believe that is offensive or wrong to do. There's a book that I would recommend to you if you wanna learn more about this called, the ethics of evangelism by a guy named Thiessen. I can give you his information later if you'd like to. But he makes this argument, people in the marketing world do this kind of thing all the time. And if Facebook and Instagram and Amazon can find my information to sell me stuff, why can I not talk about my faith, right? If a burger joint can lure me into their establishment with provocative pictures on their coupons, if a cigarette company can lure me to buy their cigarettes with ads about this rough and tough cowboy, if these things are okay, if I work at a company that publicly endorses a cultural thing going on, a racial thing or Pride Month, and they encourage me to wear certain colors, if this is encouraged and promoted by all these other entities, I don't see why it would be wrong for me to share my faith as long as I'm tactful, as long as I'm respectful, if nobody wants to talk about it, then I won't. As long as I have good etiquette, I don't think there's anything wrong or manipulative about sharing our faith. There's nothing wrong with doing something spiritually good, so that you can do

something spiritually good for someone. If you wanna go to Florida to help with flood victims in hopes of sharing the gospel, I think that's fine. If you wanna serve in a non-profit with hopes that you can meet people and have opportunity to share the gospel, I don't think that's manipulative at all.

Now, here's a second thing that comes up in this text, is it okay that Philip found somebody who already believes in a different religion and converts him? Was that intolerant? Was that wrong? Let's look at this, look at verse 9, Acts 8-9, Now, for some time, a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, this man is rightly called The Great Power of God. They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. So there's a sorcerer in Samaria named Simon. Try saying that five times fast. Right, a sorcerer in Samaria named Simon. Alright, he practiced witchcraft, or some kind of sorcery, it says. And here's what Phillip does, he goes and converts him to Christianity. Is that intolerant? And my answer would be, no. I do not believe that's wrong. And here's a couple of thoughts I'm gonna leave with you. First off, persuading other people of what is most important to us is a right that we have as human beings. This is what we do. We argue, not fight-argue, but we make our case, and we persuade others. And if something is important to me, if something is a part of my story, I want to tell you. And if something's important to you, I want you to tell me. I don't wanna be an island, I don't wanna be separated from people. This is what we do, we write and we tell stories, and we write songs. And this is just what we do as humans, and if something is deeply important to you, it is perfectly okay for you to talk about it. As long as you don't tick people off, right? If you can be respectful with people, it is your right as a human to share what is most important on your heart. This is part of what it means to be human.

Secondly, speaking, your beliefs is not intolerant. What is intolerant is silencing someone's beliefs. I do not believe it's intolerant for us to share the gospel and to talk about what is most important to us, if that is the key driver of our life. I think this is something we can talk about and share stories with people. It is not unethical to share our beliefs and persuade others to convert. Evangelism is not optional. I would argue that Christians have a moral obligation to evangelize and to share our faith. So in review, is it necessary to evangelize? I would say absolutely. Is it offensive to evangelize? I would say there are offensive ways to evangelize. The message of the gospel itself can be offensive at times, however, the very act, as long as you're respectful and tactful, is not offensive to evangelize.

So here's a third question, how can I evangelize? Again, this is not a how-to sermon, it's a should-do sermon. But here's just a couple of tips that I wanna leave you with. Here's the first tip that I'll leave you with. You will never be ready. So just do it, 'cause I hear that a lot. Nik, I just, I don't know what I'm gonna say, if somebody asks me a question, I'm not gonna have response. I just, I don't know how to start the conversation or open up, but I just don't know. And I would argue, you will never be ready to do this. In fact, it reminds me of before I first got engaged, before I got engaged to my wife Anna, I thought, man, I'm not ready to get married. I'm too young, I don't have any money, I don't know where we're gonna live. And you know what, when we got married, I was too young, I didn't have any money, I literally, we pulled away from the church building and I didn't know where we were gonna live, so, literally, that was a problem, but we can deal with that later. True. Thirteen years though, 13 years, baby. Speaking of babies, but when I found out we were first having a baby, I was petrified. I was scared to death. I didn't know where we were gonna put the

baby. I don't have enough money. I don't know how to raise a baby. And you know when we had our baby, I didn't have enough money, we lived in a one room, one-bedroom apartment, I didn't know where to put the baby, we certainly didn't have enough money. It was very true, but you know what? Our first kid's nine years old or second kid's eight years old, we rock this, right? Parenting, we got this down. Actually, I would argue that we still don't know what we're doing. Alright, for those of you who are parents? Yeah, yeah, I don't know what I'm doing. One of my kids, I forgot which one, I think it was my daughter in second grade, she comes up to me the other day with an English question and I'm like, Alright, I'm a full-grown man, I think I can handle like second grade English, right. I went to college, I'm pretty sure I can. And so she asked me, she's like, so dad, how come sometimes the 'g' makes a 'gu' sound like golf goes, sometimes it makes a 'j' sounds like at the end of judge, and sometimes it just makes a 'f' sound like cough or tough. How come? I don't know, go ask your teacher. Ain't nobody got time for this really. I don't know. And you know what, if you're evangelizing and they ask a question, you don't know, I don't know, go ask a teacher, I ain't got time for this, right? It's fine. You're never gonna be ready for every question, just go share your faith. When you became a Christian, you were there when it happened. Just talk about that. You just do it. You're never gonna be ready.

Alright, tip number two, be chill. Just chill out. Alright, tip number two is be chill. I see Justin over here. He and I have some new friends that we met just a couple of weeks ago. And we met up four days ago, Wednesday night, we met up at Troegs with some new friends of ours. Some of them are not Christian, and we actually ended up talking about this for about 45 minutes and just, hey, have you ever been evangelized to? What do you think about this? Is this like offensive? When people evangelize? And we were just sharing a pint talking about this, and here's some of the things they said. First off, one person said, Look, if you can accept that I may not buy into this, if you can accept that we're gonna talk about this, and I may not convert, if you can accept that. Sure, we can talk about it. In fact, they were fine talking about faith with me. Sure, you can talk about this as long as you can accept that I may not convert. If you already know me, if you're an acquaintance of mine, and this is really important to you, we can, yeah, I'm happy to. If you ask my permission, we're happy to talk about this. And then one guy, he was off to the left there, he said, he said, Look, just be chill. If Christians can just be chill. We can talk about this if you just be chill about it. So listen, you're never gonna be ready and just be chill. You can talk about faith, you can talk about the most important thing in your life with people. That's okay to do.

Alright, here's the third tip I'll leave you with. Look at Acts chapter 8, verses 26, an angel of the Lord said to Phillip, so here, an angel speaks to him and directs him. Once again in verse 29, the Spirit told Philip, go to that chariot and stay near it. The Spirit spoke to him, an angel at one point, speaks to him. And listen, I wish we had more details like, oh, he did he hear a voice? Was it a dream? Did somebody poke him? Like, I don't know, how did he hear? And the answer is, we don't know, we don't know. Many of you would agree with me that I've felt as though God has spoken to me and directed me and sent me and given me a calling, and directed me in some way many times. I've never heard a voice. I've felt deep conviction at times, my heart rate went up, my hands are shaken, and a doctor would say I'm having a panic attack, but no, God was telling me something. And I felt this prompting, I felt called and directed and sent to. No, I gotta talk to that person, but I felt these things before, and if you're open to it, Philip didn't have a secret sauce, he was eating his burritos with, no, this is available. For the Spirit wants to direct you. And you can listen to the Holy Spirit, you can be open to him directing you and calling you. By way of example, when I first arrived here in Pennsylvania, I went up to Cocoa Beanery. How many of you have been to Cocoa Beanery? Well, Research Avenue, I guess there's two of them. So I went up there to Cocoa

Beanery. I got my coffee, I had a book, and I just felt like the Spirit wanted me to try to talk to somebody, right. So I get my coffee and I'm looking around for a seat, it was pretty crowded. This was before covid, obviously, about four, five years ago. And I see an open seat across from a woman who's reading a book. And so I go sit next to her and I opened my book and I'm only half reading my book because I'm kinda waiting for her to, you know how you pause reading and you do this number? I was waiting for her to do some kind of opening, Hey, what are you reading there? What you're thinking about? I was open for that. She beat me to it. And she starts talking, and it's Valerie Althouse. How many of you, have any of you met Valerie Althouse? Okay, so she's a missionary that we support, so she doesn't live here, she lives in. I forget if she still lives in New York City or not, I can't remember, but at the time she was in New City doing ministry as a missionary and she beat me to it, right? And there's this moment where I'm like, I was hoping to share the gospel with you. It's like I was hoping to share the gospel with you. So listen, if you have this burning in your heart to share the message of Jesus, if this is something that is just gripping in your heart and you just wanna tell people about it, you are not abnormal. This is not abnormal for you to have this burning in your heart to share the gospel. I would argue this though, if you don't, if you don't have this yearn to share the gospel, that is abnormal. If you're a Christian and you don't really have an interest in sharing the good news of Jesus, that's a heart problem. And I will pray that the Holy Spirit convicts you of that heart problem, and that you repent of that, and that you get busy at the work of sharing the gospel. Because evangelism is not optional. Christians have a moral obligation to evangelize.

Let me pray with you before we close our service. Father, I just wanna thank you for your grace, for your mercy, for sending Your Son Jesus to die for us to pay the penalty for our sins. I wanna thank you for calling us and inviting us into your mission and allowing us, as flawed people, someone like me, to be a part of sharing this gospel. I pray that you would give us success as we try to share our faith and just have spiritual conversations as we try to share the most important thing in our life. Would you give a success in that, would you give us courage and boldness to be able to do the work of evangelism and talk about the amazing good news of Jesus Christ. We pray this to your Father, in the name of your son, Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.