



“BIRTHDAY BASH: INVITATIONS”

In preparing for a party, one must send out invitations so friends are aware of the time and place of the occasion. You have to make an intentional effort to get the word out about your celebration. Food, drinks, music, and games will not be enough to bring people to your house. They must be aware of the opportunity. Are we making an intentional effort to invite people to Christ?

DAY 1

Today's Scripture:

Revelation 19:6-9; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:13-15

The Word

Have you ever looked forward to a special event? Did you count down the days until it happened? Time is counting down as well. All of time looks forward to one moment. It will be the event of the ages. People from every tribe and nation will be in attendance. It will be a glorious.

Revelation 19:6-9

⁶Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

⁷Let us rejoice and be glad

and give him glory!

For the wedding of the Lamb has come,

and his bride has made herself ready.

⁸Fine linen, bright and clean,

was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

⁹Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God."

Verse 6-9: To be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb is the ultimate blessing; it means that you will spend eternity in heaven. The invitations to this event are unique to every person. The King, Jesus Christ, decides who to invite yet He allows people to be the deliverer of the invitations. If you are a believer in Christ, then someone handed you an invitation to the marriage supper. Now, you are to be intentional in delivering invitations yourself.

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Verse 18-20: You are to "go" and hand the invitation of eternal life to others. Does this make you bear the responsibility of people's eternal destination? No. You are like the postman. He only delivers the letter come rain, snow, or shine. The person who receives the letter has the responsibility to choose whether to accept the invitation or not. But if the invitation is never given, how can the person deny or accept it?

Romans 10:13-15

¹³for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Verse 13-15: The invitations need to be passed out. The marriage supper of the Lamb will take place. People will only know about it if you let people know how to get there.

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord for the person or people in your life who were instrumental in handing you the invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

How does it feel that God has chosen you to pass out invitations for the marriage of the Lamb?

What keeps us from passing out the invitation to others?

Why do you think God chose us to give out invitations for eternity?

DAY 2

Today's Scripture:
John 4:35-38

The Word

The invitations we are to extend are of a spiritual matter. In order to see the importance of them we must see life with an eternal viewpoint.

John 4:35

³⁵Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

Verse 35: You can look around at this world and see it for it is. Or you can look beyond the present and see the eternal. Jesus wanted us to see people with the viewpoint of their eternal destiny. People are all around us in need of hearing the gospel message. But we must decide to do the work.

John 4:36

³⁶Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.

Verse 36: True joy is experienced by those who see the salvation of people. Often we believe that joy is found in circumstances or vacations or material possessions. However, this goes against the Word of God. Joy is felt by those who labor in order to bring others to Christ.

John 4:37

³⁷Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true.

There are many ways to reach people for Christ. Not everyone plays the same role. Some sow the gospel while others reap. But the fact is that everyone has a part to play. God has created each one of us with our own individual personalities. In our own way, we can be a part of leading others to Christ.

John 4:38

³⁸I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

Verse 38: Much labor has taken place over the years. Others have labored. Old Testament prophets labored. Disciples labored. Believers through the centuries have labored. Many have worked and continue to work all over the world. But God placed you here at this time in history. Are you laboring faithfully for Him? The harvest is ready. What are you doing to bring the harvest in?

Up Close and Personal

Ask God to help you be a part of the work of the harvest.

How can we view people with an eternal perspective?

When have you experienced the joy of experiencing someone coming to salvation?

How are you laboring on behalf of the harvest?

DAY
3

Today's Scripture:
Ephesians 6:18-22

The Word

Billy Graham is known throughout the world as someone who has shared the gospel faithfully to millions of people. Two thousand years before Graham, there was an evangelist named Paul. He, too, had a similar ministry to bring people to Christ. Paul, the foremost evangelist of all time, recognized the role that other believers played in his ministry.

Ephesians 6:18-20

¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

¹⁹Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Verse 18-20: Paul wanted others to pray for him. He knew that it was vital for others to lift him up in prayer in order that Paul could witness to others. Prayer is powerful. It is where the natural meets the supernatural. The enemy of our souls wants to keep people in spiritual darkness. He does not want the Light of the world invading their souls. But we can fight him through prayer. Do you pray for people who do not know Christ? Do you pray for people who present the gospel to others? Prayer is beyond a quick “bless him, Lord” but involves knowing the details of the lives of others.

Ephesians 6:21-22

²¹Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²²I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

Verse 21-22: Paul wanted Tychicus to share the details of his life with the people of Ephesus. He wanted people to pray for him in all aspects of his life. We must be willing to pray for others in a specific manner. These were not random people but friends of Paul. He had lived among these people for three years. Now he was writing back to them requesting their prayers.

Reaching others with the gospel is not done alone. Prayers of others are needed. Ask others to pray for you. Make every effort to pray for others.

Up Close and Personal

Spend time in prayer for the people who share the gospel.

Why is prayer vital in leading people to Christ?

Why would praying for others in detail be important?

DAY 4

The Word

Today's Scripture:

Jonah 1:1-3, 3:1-10; Matthew 5:44; 1John 1:3;
Galatians 1:10

To extend the invitation of Christ, we must be willing to step outside of our comfort zone. A classic example of someone who did this is Jonah.

Jonah 1:1-2

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ²"Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."

Verse 1-2: Jonah was asked to go to his sworn enemies on behalf of God. Have you ever disliked someone? Are your thoughts usually "Lord, let me be a witness to that person who hates me?" or are your thoughts more like this: "Strike my enemy, Lord!" If we do try to think nice thoughts, it involves someone else reaching out to our enemy. We do not want to let down our guard long enough to extend the invitation of Christ. That is exactly how Jonah felt.

Jonah 1:3

³But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

Verse 3: Jonah went the opposite way from Ninevah. Tarshish was the other way. I have done the same thing. I have avoided people that I did not get along with. If I saw them coming down the hall, I would choose to go another way. I may not have sailed in the opposite direction but my heart was like Jonah's. I stayed away from the "enemies" instead of reaching out to them. God convicted me, just as He did Jonah. Thankfully, I did not experience a fierce storm at sea, or being thrown overboard, or having to be in the belly of a great fish for three days and nights. After everything Jonah went through, he repented and then received the grace of God.

Jonah 3:1-10

¹ Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ²"Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

³ Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. ⁴ On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He

proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

⁶ When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷ Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹ Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

Verse 1-10: Jonah, who was way outside of his comfort zone, saw an entire city repent before God. What comfort zone do you need to step out of? Do you need to reach out to someone whom you do not like?

Matthew 5:44

⁴⁴But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Maybe your comfort zone is not necessarily other people, but your fear. You may not think you are equipped to tell others about Christ. Yet, all we need to do is to tell others what we have experienced in Jesus.

1 John 1:3

³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Verse 3: What do you know about Jesus? Share that with others. You do not need a seminary degree to tell others what Jesus means to you.

Maybe your comfort zone is not about what to say but instead how people will respond. Are you concerned that people will laugh at you, ignore you, exclude you, or hurt you? Others have felt the weight of this burden as well. But you must choose who to live for.

Galatians 1:10

¹⁰Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Verse 10: We need to break out of our comfort zones so that we can see the people in this city turn to Christ.

Up Close and Personal

Ask God to help you break out of your comfort zone into the freedom of living for Christ.

Name some other comfort zones that prevent us from telling people about Jesus.

How does your “comfort zone” keep you from reaching others for Christ?

How would your life be different if you had no “comfort zones”?

DAY
5

Today's Scripture:
1 Corinthians 9:20-27

The Word

I am going to write something that seems obvious: to extend the invitation of Christ to others, you must know people who are not Christians. The paradox in the Christian community is that we know we are to tell others about Jesus yet more often than not, everyone we know are Christians as well.

The church needs to have fellowship with one another. However, Christians are to actively pursue relationships with nonbelievers in order to be in a place to share the gospel with Christ. This involves work on our part.

1 Corinthians 9:20-22

²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

²¹To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²²To the

weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

Verse 20-22: Paul wrote the previous verses. He witnessed to both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews). He made an effort to meet them, build a relationship with them, and present Christ to them. He understood their backgrounds (the Jews had the Law while the Gentiles did not). His main purpose was to reach them for Christ. He made an effort with all people, knowing that only some would be saved.

With whom are you making an effort? Is there anyone in your circle of influence who does not know Christ? How are you building a relationship with that person? If you only know other Christians, then how can you carry out the call of God to tell the world about Jesus? It is time for us to evaluate our actions.

1 Corinthians 9:23-27

²³I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Verse 23-27: Are you living your life for the sake of the gospel? In order to reach others for Christ, we must have discipline on our part. An athlete trains for the game so that he might win. This requires strenuous effort on his part. We are to strain as well. We must make intentional effort to live for Christ. The athlete makes many sacrifices in order to be in physical shape. He may turn down fun things to do in order to spend time training. As believers, we will make sacrifices to reach others for Christ. We may have to give up our pleasures and time for others. An athlete has a plan for how to train for the game. We are in need of a plan of how to reach someone with the good news of Jesus. This plan would include how and when to spend time with someone who does not know Jesus. If you do not know an unbeliever, the plan needs to begin with how to meet someone who needs Jesus in his or her life.

Up Close and Personal

Pray for the Lord to help you to live for the gospel of Christ.

Name the unbelievers that you know.

If you do not know any unbelievers, write a plan on how to meet people who need the gospel.

How can you build a relationship with the people you named?

What sacrifices need to be made in order to reach others for Christ?

Who will you ask to pray for you as you work for the gospel of Christ?