



Evangelism

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Webster's Dictionary defines "evangelism" as 1) to preach the Gospel to or 2) to convert to Christianity. This is a very simple definition but what does it mean to me as a Coptic Orthodox Christian? In all our questions we should turn to the Holy Bible for the answer. And for this one we must look at the Holy Book of Acts 2-4 as there in my opinion could be the strongest examples of evangelism we find in the Holy Bible.

In these three chapters we see that 8,000 people were converted to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, some of whom were the same people condemning our Lord to be crucified on the Holy Cross fifty days earlier. We read in the Holy Book of Acts 2:4 that ***"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance."***

After being filled with the Holy Spirit, St. Peter witnesses to the glory and power of our Lord and as a result of his witnessing we see in the Holy Book of Acts 2:41 ***"Those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to him."*** We don't see any mention in the Holy Bible that St. Peter sat for weeks and wrote and rewrote the words he was going to preach to the people to help them convert to the Lord Jesus Christ teachings.

Instead what we do see is a man who previously had denied the Lord Jesus Christ not once, not twice, but three times speaking words so powerful through the Holy Spirit that they converted 3,000 souls. If we move on to the Holy Book of Acts 3:6 ***"Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."***



St Peter

Again we see that St. Peter realizes that he is not the cause of the miracle or evangelism through works, but our Lord Jesus Christ is.

In the Holy Gospel of St Matthew 5:16 the Holy Scripture says ***"Let you light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."*** Then we see that St. Peter was not done evangelizing and in the Holy Book of Acts 4:4 we see that ***"Many of those who heard the word believed: and the number of the men came to be about five thousand."*** St Peter was safe in the Upper Room and surely he must have feared the crowds that had condemned our Savior less those two months previously. Why then did he feel compelled to evangelize and speak the Word of God?

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit it means we come to know God, which will lead us to love him. This love will lead us to serve Him by sharing that love with others because it is so strong it cannot be kept to oneself. If you go to a great restaurant you can't wait to tell all your friends to go and have dinner there. If you have dined from the table of the Lord how can you keep it from your friends?

It truly is **not** our duty to evangelize but something that is natural for us. I do not like the word duty because for us as true Coptic Orthodox Christians we cannot help it. It is as natural for us as our heart beating or our lungs breathing. Evangelism is something that takes on very different forms for everyone. The question is, Does that person you just met in passing or the one who works with you everyday see they fire of the Holy Spirit burning in you? And if not, why? It is that fire that has the ability to convert 8,000.