

# Improving Your Evangelism

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## HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Improving your evangelism, that is the topic we'll discuss today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a non-profit, listener-supported radio ministry. You can connect with us by visiting our website, [TheChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org). The rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support in lifting us up in prayer.

While he was imprisoned in Rome and shortly before being martyred, the Apostle Paul in some of his final words to his understudy, Pastor Timothy exhorted him to quote, "Be sober in all things, endure hardship. Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." That's 2 Timothy 4:5. After Christ rose from the grave and ascended to heaven, his followers couldn't stop speaking the good news and saving message, that quote, "There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Evangelism which is explaining the good news of the gospel to others is more than a command for the Christian. It should be a response of gratitude to God for our own personal salvation and an act of love toward others who need salvation more than anything else. Think about this. Christians have the great privilege of being used by God as He redeems souls from destruction to glory. But opening our mouths with the gospel has its difficulties. We're not quite sure how to transition a conversation from the temporal to the eternal. We're concerned how unbelievers or our family members will respond. Or we conclude that evangelism is for those who have the gift.

Our guest today is Mark Spence. He's an evangelist with Living Waters Ministry, which seeks to, quote, "train the members of Christ's body in the principles of biblical evangelism and to provide them with practical tools to proclaim the gospel." This past week, the Living Waters team of Ray Comfort, Emeal Zwayne, Mark Spence, and others were invited by Turning Point USA, Charlie Kirk's organization to do an open-air Q&A and gospel presentation on the campus of California State, Fullerton.

Mark joins us today on The Christian Worldview to help us improve our evangelism, whether through conversations with friends, family and co-workers or with those God puts in our way each day as we go about our lives. Here's the interview with Mark Spence.

Mark, thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. Tell us about your background and how God brought you to saving faith and what your life is like now.

## GUEST: MARK SPENCE:

Yeah, it's good to be here, David. Listen, I grew up Catholic, but we rarely attended, maybe Christmas and Easter. And believe it or not, my goal in life was to be a con man. I watched a movie with Michael Keaton called Pacific Heights, and I remember thinking when I had watched that, "Well, that's what I want do with my

life." My conning started real early, learning a lot of sleight of hand and magic and trying to swindle money out of people.

God just had other plans. I mean, the night that I became a Christian, I was going to steal about a thousand pairs of Levi Jeans from a department store in Southern California called Miller's Outpost. I worked at the security system, the code, the cameras, where they would go, the monitoring system, even the managers. And I went down to this park right by this department store and over by where I lived and I found a gospel tract on the ground. And that gospel tract was the catalyst for me getting born again.

And I called up my girlfriend and I said, "Hey, listen babe, what do you think about going to this event with me?" And a man named Greg Laurie was sharing at an event called The Harvest Crusade. And she wasn't so interested in going with me to that event, but I went and I wasn't exactly very religious. Then it came time towards the altar call and he shared, "What would it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul?" And I was thinking about that heist that I was going to do that I put off to tomorrow night, the following night, and go to this event this night. And I went forward and I was crying. And so covetousness, the 10th Commandment was really the commandment that got me.

So that event was what God used to get my attention, and so I haven't looked back since. That was in August of 1990. And ever since then, I've just had a hunger and a thirst for righteousness and no longer wanting to con people and just give them a scripture, give them Christ. God's been gracious to me and I want to be gracious to others.

#### **HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

That is just an amazing salvation story, Mark, just how God saved you from basically a criminal act through a gospel tract and just shows God's sovereignty in our salvation. Thank you for sharing that with me. Just a followup to that is what was the impact on the rest of your family after you came to saving faith?

#### **GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

It's funny because that department store that I worked at was the one that I was going to steal from. And when I became a Christian, now I'm sharing the gospel with people before work, after work, on my break. I shared the gospel with the security guard who was over all of the Miller's Outposts. There's probably 150 Miller's Outpost department stores, and he was the head. When I was all done sharing, he looked at me and he said, "Does this mean you're not going to go through with it?" He knew what I was up to.

I was also working as a bartender, and I remember going back to the bar where I was working and I started sharing the gospel with the regulars. One guy pulled me to the side and he goes, "Look, this isn't going to work out." My brother was working there and he looked over at me and he goes, "Mark, what are you doing?" I said, "I don't know what I'm doing. I just know that I'm different. God has saved me." I didn't want to play poker anymore. I didn't want to do bad things anymore. I just wanted to say thank you with my life.

So my family have all kind of come to me individually and just said, "Mark, what is happening to you?" Individually, they've all come to me, yet when they're together, they all gang up on me. But since that time, I believe my mom became a Christian before she died. My dad, I believe he's a Christian now. My oldest brother got saved during COVID. My next older brother just became a Christian in the last couple of weeks.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Wow.

**GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

My sister, she's a mortician for the CIA and she doesn't really want to talk to me very much. Her son's an FBI agent. And that's okay, I just kind of pray for them. And then my younger brother is a Catholic who lives in Texas. We have a really great relationship, and he doesn't want to talk too much about the gospel, but by God's grace, all of my immediate family, my wife, my five kids, they're all walking strong with the Lord. They all have a desire for holiness. They're all reading books and they're sharing the gospel. So it is a win-win right now for me, even though there's still piles and piles of trials like everybody else, and I'm still praying for the salvation of extended family.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Again, Mark Spence with us today here on The Christian Worldview. He's an evangelist and the senior vice president with Living Waters. Mark, we're going to talk about improving our evangelism today. Maybe we could look back in history to start out for you to describe how evangelism has been pursued at various stages in church history within the apostolic era, the 1st century, maybe the Reformation, maybe with the Puritans, the Great Awakenings. Pick a couple of those and describe how evangelism has shifted, but yet had the exact same message of the gospel.

**GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

Yes, church history is an absolute favorite subject of mine. We have to always remember that the gospel doesn't change, right? It's that Greek word Euangelion, and it's used 77 times in the New Testament. It means to proclaim something good. So the message itself has not changed, but how has it evolved, if you would?

We start off with the Book of Acts and the early church evangelism. We're talking spirit and power, there's boldness. It's very public unless there are martyrs attached to this. But we have Peter at Pentecost, Paul was in synagogues, in the marketplaces, we have Mars Hill.

Then we have the Roman Empire, the spread through persecution, testimony. Christians, they have this love and this courage in the midst of suffering and it drew multitudes to people in the faith. Then we have that famous line from Tertullian, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

Fast-forward a little bit with Justin Martyr, and Origen, and Augustine with these church fathers and apologists. They're intellectually tackling up against Pagan critics.

After that maybe you have the Middle Ages or the Reformation, Middle Ages or missionaries like Patrick in Ireland or Boniface in Germany. They're contextualizing the gospel for cultures now as the gospel is becoming widely accepted within cultures and what does that look like?

Then you have the Reformation, the printing press, it fuels mass distribution. People like Luther or Calvin, justification. "The just shall live by faith," that's what nailed Martin Luther, which got him to nail his 95 Theses to the wall.

Then the Great Awakening with the 18th and 19th century, people like George Whitefield and John Wesley. This is Fiery preaching, revival, hymn singing. This birthed the modern missionary movement with William Carey and Hudson Taylor, who went on the field with just his Bible. And David Brainerd, his journal, goes on the mission field with just these two things and having that mindset, one with God will always be in the majority.

Then you have the modern era people like Dale Moody, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham who reached millions through mass crusades in radio and TV, that onslaught, which now leads us to today, what do we have?

The Apostle Paul would've drooled right at what we have today with digital evangelism, social media, Facebook, YouTube, podcasts. But there's now also, there's a return, I would say to grassroots, one-to-one, open-air preaching. I never saw anybody open-air preach until I saw Ray Comfort open-air preach.

Personal discipleship, discipleship is different than what a lot of people think. It's not just going through a book with someone. Somebody asks me, "Will you disciple me?" I say, "Sure, let me show you what that looks like. I'm heading to Costco, hop on in." Or, "I'm going to a memorial service. I'm going to a wedding. I'm going to a party. I'm going out witnessing." And you're able to see, just be a fly on the wall and just ask questions, how does Mark handle the sales clerk or that guy cutting him off on the freeway?

That is true discipleship and that's I think a reflection of 1st century discipleship where they're not necessarily going through a book, though that's a great idea, obviously, do those sort of things. It's coming alongside, let's link arms. Let me show you how I pray before I eat a meal or after I eat a meal or what I do when I get stuck in my car before I take off, after I leave an event.

I would say this is kind of the evangelism throughout history. We're not called to go around the world and make converts, but to make disciples. So I think that discipleship has always been, be discipled and disciple someone always, they go hand in hand. Always have a mentor and always be someone's mentor.

#### **HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Mark, before we get further, I'd like you to explain what the gospel is. When someone has shared the gospel with someone, what needs to be said to make it a gospel encounter? Because you'll hear people say, "I shared the gospel with someone." Or maybe they mentioned that they believe in God or something very, very small like that, but that's not really explaining the gospel to someone. Explain what the gospel is, Mark, and really what a believer should be really trying to communicate.

#### **GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

An evangelistic message, if you had the ability to do so, you would perhaps start off with who God is and how we were created in the image of God, [Latin 00:13:17]. And then there's the fall of the man in the garden, and then the giving of the law, the 10 Commandments, the breaking of the law, and now we deserve to be judged, "It's appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment." The promise of the Messiah and all of these prophecies that Jesus fulfilled.

The person of Christ and why Jesus is different than every other religious guru. Somebody once said that through the resurrection, Jesus demonstrated that he does not stand in a long line of other contemporary gurus where he's completely and altogether different. Maybe the life of Christ, that's where we get our righteousness from. And then we have the death, the burial, the resurrection. "There's no other true story where the hero dies for the villain," Vance Havner said.

And then you have grace, mercy, justice. Grace is getting what you don't deserve. Mercy is God holding back that which you do deserve, and justice is getting exactly what you deserve. And you don't want justice, that's where Jesus comes in. And then maybe promise of forgiveness, the hope of having repentance, counting the cost, and ultimately being born again. J.C. Ryle said, "Unless a man is born again, he'll wish he was never born at all."

What does that look like in a 30-second message? Hey, listen, friend, you have broken God's law. You've lied, you've stolen like everybody else and you deserve the wrath of God. But God says that He's not willing for any to perish and all to come to repentance, and the Bible says you're saved by grace. There's nothing you could do to earn the smile of God. And three days after Jesus died, He rose again from the dead, defeating the grave. And if you repent, which means you have a change of mind and you put your faith and hope in Him, God will give you the hope of heaven and you can have fellowship with God. We know that this will take place because Jesus rose again from the dead. Now He sits at the right hand of the Father everliving to make intercession. That in a nutshell would be the gospel. It's the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Mark, you see in the Book of Acts that the Apostle Paul explains his own salvation story over and over again. Is that a good and effective way to explain the gospel to someone just to use your own salvation story and explain the gospel within your own story?

**GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

I think I see seven gospel proclamations in the Book of Acts, and I think three of them have to do with a testimonial apologetic, what the Apostle Paul did, when he went before different leaders and he appeals to Caesar and he's going through different things. So I would say yes, but with caution.

A testimony shows the power of the gospel, but it's not the content of the gospel. We need to make sure that we share that death, burial, resurrection. A lot of people like to go through all these horrific things that they've done. There's just this elevation of what we've done as opposed to what Christ has done. In every good testimony, it's how Christ reaches into the dark cavern of our heart and does the one thing for us that we can never do for ourselves, and that is to make us right before the Father.

But our story, it builds connection. They can argue with doctrine, but they can't argue with maybe what Christ has done inside of our lives. So it makes that message personal and relatable. Your testimony needs to be a bridge and the gospel is the foundation, always trying to get to talk about Christ. When you use your story as an entry point and then you pivot to God's holiness or our sin or Christ's worth, the call to repentance and faith, then I think that it's very, very effective together.

Ray does that all the time. When I'm traveling with him and I'm on a bus or I'm on a train, he doesn't sit next to me. He sits across from me and Ray Comfort here he is saying, "Hey, Mark, so you became a Christian. Why did you become a Christian?" And he knows that I'm going to have to speak loud enough for him to hear. That means the people around me are hearing. So it's a different way to kind of open-air preach. Or if we're in an area and there's people listening in, he'll share the gospel in the midst of his prayer before we eat. Always trying to get creative on how to go about doing it, but testimonial apologetics is very powerful.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Well, we love Ray and just the example he is about living a gospel-centered life and sharing it with everyone he comes across.

Now, Mark, it's much different for a believer to talk to a stranger about the gospel than it is a friend or a family member. Are there different approaches to someone that we know very well and knows us very well versus someone we've never met before?

**GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

Oh, absolutely. If I'm on a plane sitting next to someone, I'm very direct, I'm very urgent, I'm very relatable. So you got to be clear on sin, the cross, and the resurrection. But like I said earlier, I trust that somebody's going to come along after me to be able to share. I look for creative openers, maybe with strangers, questions, news-related items, gospel tracts, those are great.

Now with friends and family, it's different, and I take my next door neighbor into that same category. This is longterm. This is relational. You got to be patient. You're in this for the long haul. So I'm going to demonstrate Christ daily in word and deed. If I go to the store and purchase a new plant for my house, I'm picking up a plant for my neighbor and I'm just putting that on their doorstep with a little note. Or we're baking brownies, we bake extra brownies for the neighbor. The Bible says, "Let your light so shine among men that they may actually see your good works, and it brings glory to your Father in heaven."

Friends and family, you're very a consistent witness. So when I have a family gathering, my friends that are Christians are going to be invited over to my house. If it's Christmas, if it's Easter, if it's my mom's birthday, whatever it may be, my friends are just as much my family as my blood family. So they come over and now I have Ray at my house and he knows it's his responsibility to share with Uncle Earl. And there's no bone in the fight, there's no stake here. There's no animosity between him and my uncle. But my uncle can look at me and say, "Mark, I remember when you were in high school when you did that thing." But he can't do that with Ray, or E.Z., or Carl. They both recorded the same gospel, maybe different methods, but same message.

Whether five minutes with a stranger or five years with family, the essentials, they just never change. The Holy Spirit, not a technique, the Holy Spirit is the one who saves. So when I'm with my family, it's a little bit more difficult to be able to share, but when I'm with my friend's family, I could be a little bit more calm and relaxed and my family learned to appreciate it. They go, "Man, that friend of yours has a lot of spunk." And I'm free to just kind of love and host at the party.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Now, there's a reticence amongst believers for evangelism, and I'm going to list some of the possibilities of why that is, but there's also a reticence of unbelievers to actually repent and believe the gospel.

Let's start with the believers side of the equation, the reticence to evangelize, to share the gospel, to be intentional about that. They might think or say that it's hard to start or direct conversations to people, to unbelievers. They're very adept at squirming or slithering away from anything that has a religious or spiritual nature in a conversation.

Believers can have a fear of hostility or pushback or being marginalized at work. Some Christians may lack confidence in answering certain questions that are sure to come in an evangelistic conversation. Or maybe they don't feel like they can explain the gospel clearly about who God is, who we are as sinners, who Christ is and what he did on the cross and the call to repent and believe. Or some, I think a real common one is, "Well, that's for other Christians. That's for the evangelists. It's not my gifting."

Could you pick one or two of those, maybe the most common one that you see within the church today and try to encourage or exhort someone listening to step off the block and do the work of an evangelist?

**GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

We are all called to evangelize. We have people say, "Well, I'm not an evangelist. I can't go out." And I go, "You may not be an evangelist, but according to Ephesians, an evangelist is one who equips the church to the work of the ministry." But we're all called to evangelize. We're all called to share the truth in love.

So people start having objections, "I can't speak the way you speak, or what if they ask me a question I don't have an answer for?" I think that we need to remember that we as Christians are no longer cool. You cannot impress people with Jesus when you're still trying to impress them with yourself. There's no such thing as a cool Christian. You need to get over yourself. And the best ability is availability it is said.

Once you realize that one with God will always be in the majority, then these fears and these hesitations that we have, they're just excuses. And it's been said that excuses are like armpits, everybody has a couple and they all stink. But if we can get over ourselves and just step out of the boat onto the crashing sea, leaving the results to God, salvation belongs to Him. He uses weak vessels like you and I to deliver an eternal message, then I think that progress can begin to take place.

God is not calling us to be fruitful. He's calling us to be faithful. Salvation, though it belongs to Him, He uses people like you and I, weak vessels to deliver an eternal message. I mean, the first time I went open-air preaching with Ray, I remember thinking to myself, what is Ray going to do? Is he going to hit the Balboa Fun Zone area here and walk around the carousel seven times, blow a trumpet? He didn't do anything like that. We get to the destination spot, he gets up and he just starts to preach.

And afterwards I asked him the question, "Why? I mean, you just went for it." And he said, "Mark, a nervous man is a praying man. And if I stop, I will get inside my head and I will get so nervous that I won't even do it. So I'm there, just do it. Just open your mouth as you want." Spurgeon worded it like this. He said, "Do something, do something, do something," when it came to evangelism, so I think that we could do the same.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

That's great advice, great exhortation. Thank you for that. . Let's go from the biggest reticence for believers to open their mouth and proclaim the gospel, whether with family and friends or with strangers or people we meet, praying for those opportunities in advance, this as we go through the course of our day. But what about the objections or impediments for non-believers, those we are speaking to?

I know you've done a lot of evangelism on college campuses. You do some on the street, you do elsewhere. A lot of different places have really enjoyed watching you and the crew over in the Pacific Rim in your latest edition of Way of the Master, and we have a link to that. It's really interesting how you talk to people in various settings over in the Pacific Rim over in the Far East there. What do you find are some of the most common, say the first or second top objections that you'll run into with someone? And then how do you overcome them or how do you navigate around or through them?

**GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

I would probably say the two top questions are you can't trust the Bible because it was written by men and everybody knows that men make mistakes, and then maybe the problem of evil. If God is so loving and so kind, where is He? I mean, why am I going through what I'm going through? It just doesn't make any sense.

If we looked at that first objection, the Bible is written by men and everybody knows that men make mistakes so you can't trust it. I was actually asked this question. I was doing a special with Ken Ham and a gentleman came up to the microphone, his name was Mike. After he was done asking this question, I said, "Hey, Mike, how old are you?" He said, "29 years old." I said, "How do you know you're 29 years old?" He goes, "Well, I can prove it to you. I have a driver's license." I said, "Who's that written by?" He said, "Well, the DMV." I go, "Well, by men, right?" He goes, "Yeah."

I go, "Well, how else are you going to prove to me you're 29 years old?" He goes, "Well, I have a birth certificate." I go, "You don't remember being born though, so you're relying upon the words of somebody else to tell you that you're 29 years old. So you do believe certain works of antiquity. You just want to kind of choose what works of antiquity you want to believe. So I would dare to say you don't have a problem with the Word of God. You have a problem with the God of the Word. You don't want God to exist for the same reason a bank robber doesn't want a police officer to exist."

So I think that's one of the top ones, and the other one is just the problem of evil. Now, when somebody asks me this question, "Where's God?" My first response is, "Why do you ask?" Because maybe they've gone through something personal, maybe some abuse, maybe they're just wondering why there's so much damage in the world. I had this student came up to me and she said, "Mark, I'm 29 years old. My parents are both dead. I have no siblings. I have no boyfriend, and when I die, my last name dies with me. I have cancer and I've been given just a few months to live and I can't figure out for the life of me where God is at."

And I said, "I think you're asking the wrong question because 150,000 people die every day, not including the 200,000 pre-born babies in the womb. But these 150,000 people are planning for tomorrow, but tomorrow never comes knocking. How kind is God to remind you that you have an appointment with death that every day, whether you're awake or asleep, eternity is stamped on your eyelids that you cannot get past your mortality. You can't just turn on an episode of Office and just be fine because you know you're about to pass from time on into eternity. And every time your heart beats it is the drum beat of your own funeral march. How kind is God to remind you that you're about to pass? And how kind is God to bring me into your



presence to share with you how you don't have to face that time alone and that when you die, you can go hand in hand into the presence of the one who made you."

There's the personal side of it, but then there's the person who's just typically asking this question like the atheist who just wants to trip you up, who thinks that it's an unanswerable question. And I like to say to those sort of people, "Well, if God were to come at 12:01 tonight to get rid of all the evil in the world, where would you be at 12:00? I mean, you have to understand that every time you've lied, you've done it at somebody else's expense. Every time you've stolen, you've done it at somebody else's expense. You're holding the smoking gun and you want to get rid of all the evil in the world, but what you don't realize is that you're an evildoer and God will judge all evildoers. God is holy and righteous. His eyes are in every place, keeping watch of the good as well as the evil. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God."

So I might try to reason with them in that way and utilize as much scripture as I can because it's the Word of God that is living and powerful, not my stories or cute, quaint little maxim sayings.

#### **HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

The great impediment for every person and what makes biblical Christianity different from any other religion so to speak, is the fact that we're saved by God's grace through faith. In every other religion or spirituality or spiritual way, it's all about what we do to earn favor with a deity or God and try to earn our way, to earn merit so we can go to heaven after we die. President Trump of all people recently did an interview on Fox News talking about this was the time when he was meeting with Vladimir Putin and trying to negotiate an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine. And here's what he had to say on Fox News, and then I will follow up with a question.

#### **Audio Sound Bite: Mark Spence and Emeal Zwayne:**

I want to end it. You know, we're not losing American lives, we're not losing American soldiers. We're losing Russian and Ukrainian, mostly soldiers, some people, as missiles hit the wrong spots or get lobbed into cities like Kyiv and towns. But if I can save 7,000 people a week from being killed, I think that's a pretty ... I want to try and get to heaven if possible. I'm hearing I'm not doing well. I hear I'm really at the bottom of the totem pole. But if I can get to heaven, this will be one of the reasons. Well, I think I saved a lot of lives with India, Pakistan. They were going at it, the planes were being shot down. That was going to be maybe a nuclear war if I let that go. And I did that through trade, I was-

#### **HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Whether he was serious or not, that is a very common belief, I just have to be a better person. I have to go to church more. I have to give to charity and I'm amassing good on this side of the scale. And that good is going to outweigh anything bad I've done. And so when God grades on a curve, then I'm going to end up on the good side of the curve. Talk about President Trump's comments there and how to cut through that very common way of thinking.

#### **GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

Yeah, God does not grade on the curve, he grades on the cross. People have to realize that. This is the typical works-righteousness problem. It reflects the most common impediment thinking that heaven is earned by good deeds. I'm going to give away a certain amount of money to earn the respect of God, the smile of God, or I'm going to go door to door. I'm going to help old ladies across the street. God is not impressed with this. In fact, the Bible says the exact opposite that all of our good deeds are as filthy rags in the sight of God.

Matthew Henry said that if you were to cut our wrist, it would bleed corruption more than anything else. I think it was Joseph Alleine who said, every unconverted man would kill God all over again if he could just get to Him. Jonathan Edwards said something along the lines of that God sees nothing in man to turn his heart, but He sees plenty in man to turn his stomach, that we are totally and utterly depraved, and without the intervention of God, then we cannot make it to heaven.

We think that our good deeds are going to earn our way to heaven, it's like somebody in the mafia offering the judge 10 cents to get out of prison after he's been found guilty of murdering a hundred people and racketeering and extortion and trafficking. It doesn't make any sense. I mean, our sins are primarily vertical before they'll ever be horizontal. Our only hope is to pivot from our good works, and this is where repentance is. He needs repentance. That's that change of mind.

Good works are the fruit of salvation, and only a Christian can actually perform a good work. Ephesians 2:10 says that very clearly, that we're His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. That word workmanship, it's a Greek word, [Greek 00:35:38], which means we are His poem or the expression of His heart, the trophy of His grace, but that's only the believer. Stopping a war, as great as that is, Mr. President, that might win applause from men, but it never will win the applause from heaven. That only comes through repentance and only the cross secures that pardon from God.

So I know that Trump does have a couple of really good people around him. I know that most of his religious advisors around him have terrible theology. But there are a couple really good guys around him and they definitely need to hit them up concerning this. I'd be happy to talk to them if you have his cell number. But yeah, no, we are saved by grace through faith. Grace is God's unmerited favor of the infinitely ill-deserving. And you're at the closest moment of receiving that grace, mercy, and forgiveness when you begin to realize that you can't do anything right.

#### **HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Mark, I also want to ask you a question about something that President Trump recently said and started. They're starting this in light of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of our nation. The President has launched this according to the White House, the America Praise Initiative. That's a call for Americans to unite in prayer for the nation's strength, peace, and prosperity. He said recently at the Museum of the Bible about our founding principles, "When faith gets weaker, our country seems to get weaker. When faith gets stronger, good things happen for our country. It's amazing the way it seems to work that way." He said, "Next year we'll celebrate 250 years since the Declaration was signed. We've invited America's great faith communities to pray for our nation, for our people, and for peace in the world." Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Scott Turner announced that more than 70 faith organizations and churches have joined together to participate in the America Praise Initiative. And it goes on from there.

We all want there to be good moral values in our country. We appreciate things like that. It makes society a better place and safer place to live in. And yet this is a broad definition of so-called, quote, unquote, "faith," with many, I'm sure, different religions involved and so forth. We as born-again Christians, what should we think about this kind of thing? Yes, we do want to pray for America, but does the prayer of those who are believing in a false God and a false gospel, God doesn't answer those prayers it seems to me. So what do we

make of this type of initiative that's going on considering that we have a country where people are free to worship as they see fit?

**GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

It's loaded with problems, but then let me state the positive first. I think encouraging public prayer, highlighting America's heritage of faith, that's a good thing. Anytime leaders acknowledge God, it opens doors for a gospel conversation. I have a friend who was having family devotions and he received a phone call, please hold for the White House, and it was President Trump. And the family wanted to hear what President Trump had to say, and so he put him on speaker. And the President started to use some really foul language, so he had to quickly turn that off so the family didn't hear that. And then he was saying, "What are we going to do to take care of this?" And they went on to talk.

And I think that a couple of things to remember here, if you voted for Trump as I did, I voted for Trump, I wasn't voting for another Savior. I already have a Savior. I'm looking for somebody that aligns more with my values. Listen, I know that Trump has made, I mean, he is a bombastic individual who says some very crazy outlier comments that are continually being checked. I can imagine every time he sends out a tweet, the entire White House is holding its breath. I get that. I understand that. I'm not blind. He's not my Savior. At the same time, some of the things that he's done have been extremely positive.

So there is a caution attached to this. National prayer initiatives, they cannot save a nation without repentance and faith in Christ. So the danger is mistaking civil religion for saving faith. Just because you mention God does not mean that you're calling on the true and the living God. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord's not going to hear." So anytime a Muslim offers up a prayer or a Mormon offers up a prayer, they're not praying to the God of the Bible, so therefore it is not being heard.

Mormons will be quick to say that we have different Jesuses. It's not the spirit brother of Lucifer. And Jesus to Muhammad was just a prophet. To the religious new age people, he's just an enlightened one. In the Bahá'í faith, Bahá'u'lláh with Jesus was just a messenger. But there's a distinction that's going on here that we have different gods taking place, and what we need to do is, as Christians, we need to humble ourselves according to 2 Chronicles 7:14, this is the biblical angle.

When God's people humble themselves and pray, not just offer up ceremonial prayers, but to turn to him from sin to do what D.L. Moody did, draw a circle in the center of your living room, get inside that circle and say, "Oh God, send a revival to my community and start with everybody inside my circle, which is me. Start with me." And when you start saying that, when you start acting like that, when you start turning off that item, when you stop engaging in that thought or scrolling down that endless doom scrolling that profits you nothing and redeeming the time realizing you can't waste time because there's no time to waste and progress is going to be made.

So America, it doesn't just need more people saying prayers. It needs God's people repenting and believing the gospel that it is the only way to get to heaven. Believe in that, and then sharing that with other people. So I like the sentiment, let's pray, love it. Who are we praying to? So whenever I meet with a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness, they say, "Hey, let's just pray." When they go to pray, I say, "Wait. Time out. I can't sit here

and listen to your prayers, but since you have no problem with me praying, allow me to pray." And then they allow me to pray, and then I just call for God to save them.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Well, Mark, we so appreciate your coming on the program today and sharing some of your experience through all the evangelistic encounters that you've had over the years. We're so grateful for all that God has done in your life, starting with saving you in a most miraculous way when you were younger. And for more broadly, what you and all the crew and Ray at Living Waters are doing to get the gospel out and to save souls. So thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today, Mark. We just wish all of God's best and grace to you.

**GUEST: MARK SPENCE:**

Appreciate it, David. Thank you so much.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Again, Mark Spence of Living Waters has been our guest today. We have a link to their website at [thechristianrealview.org](http://thechristianrealview.org), where you can find all sorts of resources on evangelism. Living Waters would be an excellent organization to support as well.

So now after hearing this discussion with Mark, let's hear an audio clip of Emeal Zwayne and Mark both of living Waters on their recent trip to the Pacific Rim, as each entered into a gospel conversation with two young men. The audio clip goes back and forth between Mark's conversation with one young man and then Emeal's conversation with another young man. And you'll notice how they use the 10 Commandments to help these young men realize that they have broken God's law and stand guilty before the just judge. And then once these young men see the dire condition they are in, then they can see their need for the good news of the gospel.

**Audio Sound Bite: Mark Spence and Emeal Zwayne:**

We're going up to people that are hanging out, whether they be tourists or locals, ask them, "Hey, what do you think happens after we die?"

Where do you think you're at with your certainty that if you were to die today, that you would go to heaven?

Speaker #1: To be specific, 75-ish.

Speaker #2: 75-ish, yeah, I would like to say that.

Mark Spence: We want to get it up to that 100. I want to do that by a means of communicating something with you. How many lies do you think you've told over the course of your life? This is the 9th Commandment.

Speaker #1: Too many to count, that's for sure.

Mark Spence: Do you think somebody who tells thousands and thousands of lies is a good person?

Speaker #1: No.

Mark Spence: 7th Commandment, you shall not commit adultery. Innocent or guilty?

Speaker#1: Innocent.

Speaker #2: Innocent

Mark Spence: But Jesus says this in Matthew's Gospel. He says, "You've heard it said by them of old, you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, whoever looks upon a woman to sexually lust after her has committed adultery already with that person in the heart." Meaning God not only sees the people you're with, but the people you think about, the internet sites that we visit when we think nobody knows, right?

Now, do you think you're innocent or you're guilty?

Speaker #1: Guilty.

Mark Spence: I want you to be fully convinced that if you were to die right now in the state of the sins that you have committed as early as two weeks ago or even last night, that if God gave you your just desert, you would deserve to go to hell. Once you are convinced of that, now you are ready for the cure.

The good news I'm giving you today is even though you've sinned so severely against God, even though you deserve hell, in His love, He left the heights of heaven, became a man, and then went to that cross and bore the judgment that people like you and me deserve. To go to heaven, RJ, based on what the Bible teaches, we have to be perfect.

Speaker #1: Which is impossible.

Mark Spence: Okay, if you can imagine this analogy, you have to be wearing a robe that says perfect all over it. Your robe says sin all over it. When Jesus came, who is God in human form, He was, if you can imagine, wearing a robe that said perfect all over it. He took the robe that said perfect on Him and laid it aside. Then He came up to sinners like you and me with robes that said sin all over them. He took them off of us and He put them on Himself. So He went to that cross wearing our robes of sin, and God was able to be just by punishing sin, but merciful and gracious by punishing sin on Jesus who willingly took it on Him. So that if, RJ, you today recognize your sin, you don't make excuses for it, and you realize, man, this is serious in the sight of a holy God, I know it's wrong, and you turn from your sin, repent, and God will take all that sin that's weighing on your conscience day in and day out. He'll remove it, wipe it out of existence. Remember we said you have to be perfect to go to heaven, right? Then He'll take that robe that Jesus was wearing that said perfect all over it, the one that He laid aside, and He'll put it on you. So that now when God sees you, bro, He sees you clothed in perfect righteousness, but it's not your own. It's His given to you as a free gift because Jesus paid for your sins, bearing your wrath in your place on the cross.

What He's requiring of you now is to repent, stop the nonsense because none of it is good, trust in Christ alone for your salvation. The moment you do that, you're granted a free gift, heaven, fellowship with God, you'll be born again and you can have 100% certainty that when you die, you go to heaven, not because of

anything that you're doing, but because everything that He's done and you trust that He paid the price for you.

I'm so glad that you stopped today and I want to urge you-

Speaker #1: I'm glad you talked to me. Yeah. I am.

Mark Spence: So my encouragement to you would be, get alone with your thoughts and think through these things. Have you ever read a Bible before?

Speaker #1: No, I have not.

Mark Spence: Do you have one?

Speaker #1: I do.

Mark Spence: Okay, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, those are the books about the life of Jesus, and just read. Just say, "Okay, I'm going to look at this with an open heart and mind. Who was this Jesus?" And begin to read. Think through what I shared with you today about your sin, about your need to repent, trust in Christ. And my hope and my prayer is that God's Holy Spirit will work in you, it'll click, and you'll repent and believe. Because bro, we're not guaranteed tomorrow. This is urgent. God, divinely I believe brought me to you, bro, and I hope you'll give this some thought. Will you do that?

Speaker #1: I'll definitely give it some thought. And I appreciate you for stopping and talking to me.

Mark Spence: Give me a hug, bro.

Speaker #1: For real, bro.

Mark Spence: This was awesome, man.

Speaker #1: Appreciate you.

Mark Spence: Are going to think about this more after today. What do you think?

Speaker #1: Yeah, I think I'm going to sit here a little bit longer and sit in the same exact spot as the days go by and reflect on this conversation.

Mark Spence: Listen man, it was a real honor and a real pleasure talking to you. I'll give you my email. If you ever have questions or you want to stay in touch-

Speaker #1: I appreciate that.

Mark Spence: If you ever want to talk more or connect, man, I'd love to get on the phone with you.

Speaker #1: Yeah. It'd be awesome. No, and I'd be pleased to talk more because I have a lot of questions. Yeah, I will be contacting you soon.

Mark Spence: All right.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Don't you just love to hear the gospel presented? Such amazing good news. Pray for these young men that God would save them. Well, I hope you found today's program helpful and that it'll be a good reminder to do the work of an evangelist. Start with praying for unbelievers in your life, asking God to soften their hearts and to give you or someone else opportunity to talk with them. Write down or practice saying your own salvation story in a few minutes or less. What you were like before becoming a Christian, how God brought you to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and what He is doing for you since.

Even better, integrate the four points of the Gospel into your salvation story. Number one, that God is the holy Creator. Number two, man is sinful and separated from God and headed for God's just judgment. Number three, that Jesus Christ is the son of God who came to Earth and lived a sinless life, offered Himself on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin, and rose victoriously from the grave. And then point four, that we are called to repent and believe this gospel, this good news, not trusting in our own works, but in Christ's work alone for our salvation.

Remember, Christians are called to faithfully sow the seed of the gospel, but it's God who is responsible for bringing someone to saving faith. Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview and for your support of this non-profit radio ministry. Until next time, think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm.

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