

WHOSE JOB IS IT ANYWAY?

AG

Series I Session 11

Understanding roles in evangelism

Imagine that sometime tomorrow, you get a phone call from NASA, asking you to come immediately to their headquarters and build their next space rocket. How would you feel? Would you be able to do it? Why?

Once you got there, however, you found that the whole building process was governed by machines pre-programmed by NASA. All you had to do was press the buttons to make the machines work! NASA didn't actually require you to build the spaceship – they could have done it themselves, but they specifically wanted you to be involved in the process. How would knowing this change the attitude you initially had when you first got the call?

In evangelism we have a similar situation: God calls us to do a job He could do on his own. Lets look at the roles we both play.

God's Role:

Read:

- **Acts 4: 10-12**
- **Revelation 7: 9-10**

What do these verses tell us about God's role in salvation?



Ultimately salvation comes from God alone. We cannot make someone a Christian. It is a miracle of God accomplished by the death of Jesus. Yet He still calls us.

Our Role:

Read:

- **Matthew 28: 16-20**
- **Romans 10: 11-17**

So why are we needed in evangelism?



So here we have an apparent contradiction in the Bible. On one hand, God is sovereign; he alone is responsible for salvation. On the other hand, it appears God has left the responsibility of evangelism to us, i.e. it's our job. How do we deal with this?

This has been a controversial issue in churches for years, and has ended up with some people ignoring one side and concentrate on the other. So we end up with some folk at the extremes of the spectrum who leave everything to God and don't do any evangelism themselves, and others who rely on their own strengths and arguments to save people. However, when we look at the issues in the context of the rest of scripture, we can see that both sides actually do fit together.

**“We need to be able to recognise the roles both
God and ourselves play in evangelism”**

In **Acts 17: 24-28**, Paul introduces God to some people who know very little about Him:

²⁴“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

What does this tell us about evangelism? (v24-25b)

What are the implications of this? (v25b-26)

What is the aim of God's sovereign plan? (v27-28)



There are several key principles for ministry in these verses:

- God is totally in control. He gives everyone everything they have, including eternal life. God is not dependent on us and does not need our help in evangelism or discipleship (v25).
- By determining the exact times and places where people live, he determines every circumstance and relationship we encounter. We meet no one by chance (v26).
- The aim of God's sovereign planning is that people have the opportunity to reach out for him and so be saved (v27).

Get into groups and spend some time looking at these passages about evangelism, us and the Holy Spirit:

Matt 28: 18-20

1 Cor 1: 25-31

John 6: 63

Romans 10:1 4-15

Acts 1: 4-8

In light of these verses, consider: How do people get saved?

Originally an apparently contradiction, the two pieces of the puzzle fit perfectly together when joined by the Spirit. It is God's plan to send us as individuals out to save the lost, but He knows we can't do it on our own. Therefore, we are sent in the power of the Holy Spirit, who comes with us and works on people's hearts so we don't have to. With this in mind, we have no need to let the fear of getting it wrong stop us, because it's not our job to get it right. Our responsibility is to take the initiative and clearly present the gospel, leaving the rest up to God.

How does a balanced view of God's sovereignty in evangelism affect:

Our motivation in evangelism?

Our fear in evangelism?

Our role in evangelism?

“We take the initiative. God does the work of saving people.”

It's ridiculous to imagine that God using us in his plans makes things easier for him than not using us, so why be involved in the Great Commission at all? John 15v12-17 offers some answers:

John 15v12-17

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

In light of these truths, we can't mess up God's plan to rescue people. This is vital to understand, as it takes the pressure off us and means we can be assured that God is in control. We don't need to fear that if we get it wrong, someone will lose their chance to respond to Jesus.