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One Question to Unlock Your Evangelism



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Your neighbor asks what you did over the weekend. You think to yourself, *Should I mention church?*

If I do, am I ready to share the gospel?

If I am, how do I get there?

You know you should say something to your barber, or to the barista at your favorite coffee shop — something about Jesus, something about the gospel — but you feel stuck. Palms are getting sweaty. Guilt is circling like a bird of prey. You feel the window closing.

I doubt many Christians need convincing from Scripture that we're all called to evangelize, to proclaim the

excellencies of Jesus (1 Peter 2:9–10). Evangelism is the simple and supernatural telling, pleading, and inviting of people to turn from sin, and to place their faith in the one crucified to pay for sin and reigning now over the whole universe. In evangelism, we are telling people to run to Jesus.

But we often struggle with how to tell the good news, especially with where to start.

One Question

If you struggle to get the conversation with your friend, neighbor, or barber rolling toward the gospel, there is one question you can ask that will get you there quickly. Whether you are talking to an Uber driver, a family member, or the server at The Cheesecake Factory, this question will likely get a friendly gospel conversation rolling:

“What do you think Jesus is doing right now?”

When I recently asked this question to our server at a restaurant, she was struck. “What do you mean *is* doing? He’s dead. He’s not alive.” She picked up on my grammar. The red carpet suddenly rolled out for me to tell her Jesus is not dead. He folded up his grave clothes, walked out alive, is still alive today, and desires for her to be saved.

Jesus *is* today inviting sinners to faith in him. The one who hears our good news in evangelism, hears his voice (Luke 10:16).

- Jesus is holding the universe together with his words (Hebrews 1:3).
- Jesus is sitting at God the Father’s right hand (Hebrews 8:1).
- Jesus is interceding for his people (Romans 8:34).
- Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant with God (Hebrews 9:15).
- Jesus is powerfully working among his church (2 Corinthians 13:3; Revelation 1:12–13).
- Jesus is coming back (Titus 2:13).

Remember the radical use of grammar in evangelism — the saving power of a two-letter word.

Don’t Forget the Present

People are comfortable saying Jesus was a good teacher, even if they fail to acknowledge that Jesus taught that he is the eternal Son of God and the only way to salvation (John 14:6). Asking about what Jesus is doing right now forces us to move beyond Jesus’s earthly life and ministry.

Most people think of Jesus in the past tense. You’ll hear them talk about what Jesus *was* like. He was a good teacher, he was kind, he was prophetic, and so on. When you are evangelizing, bring up the shocking truth of the resurrection. “He was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God” (2 Corinthians 13:4). Don’t get stuck with the rest of the world talking about Jesus in the past tense. Jesus *is*. If we can’t talk about him in the present tense, we are a people to be pitied (1 Corinthians 15:19).

In evangelism we need the *was* and the *is*. He was crucified for our sins. He is alive for our hope and life.

Woven through the book of Acts is the habitual declaration of the resurrected Jesus.

- Peter told the crowds, “You killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead” (Acts 3:15).
- Officials were “greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts 4:2).
- Festus summarized the buzz as “certain points of dispute . . . about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive” (Acts 25:19).

The disciples in Acts couldn't keep from talking about Jesus conquering death and reigning in heaven, and then inviting people to repent and turn to Jesus Christ. What if his resurrection was the most powerful overlooked tool in evangelism today?

A Radical Resurrection

When you ask people what Jesus is doing right now, the conversation is moving forward to the resurrection. Your barber will probably agree that Jesus died on a cross, but it's quite another thing to believe Jesus started breathing again. If we can get the conversation to the past and present reality of Jesus, his death and his resurrection, we are acting as his witnesses (Acts 1:8).

I recently asked a man named Josh this same question while playing basketball. He was amazed that I really believe Jesus's brainstem turned back on that Easter morning. “You really teach that at your church?” Every Sunday. “You really believe this?” Every day.

In some ways, it is easier to talk about the death of Jesus than his resurrection. We can be unashamed of the cross and at the same time be ashamed of the resurrection. The resurrection is a hurdle for modern thinkers. Crucifixion isn't necessarily offensive to Westerners. But telling people Jesus is not dead anymore — not a pile of bone dust in Jerusalem — that invites mocking (Acts 17:32).

Faithful, life-changing evangelism proclaims the stumbling block and rock of offense, the cross and vacant tomb. Without the resurrection of Jesus there is no gospel, no hope, no Christianity.

Next time you are in the barber's chair, or sipping a latte with a friend, or sitting next to a stranger on a plane, ask yourself, “What do *I* think Jesus is doing right now?” And then ask them what they think.