The Core of Evangelism Lesson 11

When the Door Is Open

Over these weeks we have talked about the cross, the new birth, repentance, and the lordship of Christ. We have walked the same road Nicodemus walked.

But the gospel is not about gathering information. It calls us to respond.

In Lesson 8 we saw that a person can stand close to a door without ever walking through it. Nicodemus had curiosity, faith, repentance, confession, and resolve, and yet he went home without taking the last step. Today the question is no longer, *what does the Bible say?* The question is: **What am I going to do with what the Bible says?**

Jesus said, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). And in Lesson 2 we saw why He opens it: He came so that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

In the book of Acts, when people understood who Jesus was and believed in Him, they did not put off their response. At Pentecost they asked, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)

And Peter answered, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." (Acts 2:38)

When the Ethiopian understood the message about Jesus, he said, "Look, here is water. What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36)

And Saul was told, "Now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." (Acts 22:16)

Faith always leans toward obedience.

Not because the water has power. As we saw in Lesson 9, it is not the water that saves, but faith that obeys in the place God appointed. Not because baptism is a human work. Not because we are earning our salvation. But because when we trust in Christ, we want to respond to Him.

From the Old Self to a New Life

What happens in the water matters deeply. Paul puts it this way: "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Someone dies. Someone is born.

The old self dies: the one who lived for himself, who served other masters, who dragged his past around. And a new person comes up out of the water. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In Lesson 10 we said that a person can go down into the water and come out still carrying the old self on his back. That is why the question is not only whether you are willing to get wet. It is whether you are willing to change direction, to let Christ rule, and to rise to a new life.

The Question That Remains

If you have come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, if you are willing to repent of your sins and acknowledge Him as Lord, then the question is the same one the Ethiopian asked: **What keeps you from being baptized?**

Perhaps the real question is no longer whether you understand everything. It is whether you are willing to trust the One who designed it all. Nicodemus went away that night without taking the last step. You don't have to.

Because there comes a moment when studying the door is no longer enough. We must place in God's hands what we cannot do for ourselves. The door is meant to be walked through.

Questions for Reflection

1. Do I truly believe that Jesus is who He claimed to be?
2. If I were standing before Jesus right now, what answer would I give Him?
3. What part of my old life do I need to leave behind in the water?
4. What decision do I need to make, and when?

If You Have Already Obeyed

If you have already walked through that door, this lesson is for you too. Think about who is standing in front of it today, perhaps right beside you, at your work, or in your own home, and needs someone to ask them gently: *What keeps you from walking through?*

If You Have Decided

If you have decided to be baptized and you are ready, let us know. You don't have to keep walking alone. Welcome!

You have taken the step. And if you have already come up out of the water, let me tell you something no lesson can say on its own:

Welcome.

Welcome to new life. Welcome to the family of God, with brothers and sisters who are rejoicing with you today. Welcome to a road that will not always be easy but, as Jesus said, will be worth it.

The old self has been left behind. There will be days when you feel it knocking at the door, and that's all right: you are no longer the same person, and you do not walk alone. "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion" (Philippians 1:6).

Because now you can say with confidence:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We are finishing this stage, but not the journey. The goal was never to complete these lessons. The goal was always to bring you closer to Christ.

Today you know more about Him than when you started. But even more important, you now have the opportunity to walk with Him.

These lessons end here. Discipleship does not.

The Bible will stay open. Prayer will remain necessary. The church will remain your family. And the Lord will keep calling you to grow, to serve, to learn, and to love more each day.

Perhaps you came to these pages with questions. Perhaps with doubts, wounds, or fears. My prayer is that by the end you have discovered what Nicodemus needed to learn that night: that true life begins when we stop trusting in ourselves and trust in Christ.

If you have decided to follow Him, walk with joy.

If you have already obeyed the gospel, remain faithful. And if you are still considering your response, don't close the door without first looking once more at the One who is knocking. Because Jesus is still the door. And it is still open. The goal was never to finish a series of lessons.

The goal was always to meet Christ.

If that has happened, even in a small way, then these pages have fulfilled their purpose. Now the Bible is in your hands. The decision is in your heart. And the future is in God's hands.

My desire for you is the same one that has guided every one of these lessons: that you would discover Jesus a little more each day, until the moment comes when you no longer know Him by faith alone, but face to face.

Until then, keep walking. Keep growing. Keep trusting.

The door is still open. And Christ is still waiting on the other side.

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