

Evangelism. What does that word do in you? It has a nice ring to it. It also has specific things we associate it with and might even carry some baggage. How do you feel when you hear it? What do you envision? How would you define it?

Here is a dictionary definition.

e·van·ge·lism (ə'vanjə,liz(ə)m)

noun: The spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness.

It comes from the Greek noun word “euangelion” (εὐαγγέλιον, pronounced yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on). This is a compound word. “Eu” means good. “angelion” means announcement. Together they mean “good news”. The New Testament uses euangelion 76 times, and each time it is translated with the English word “gospel”. When Paul says that he is not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe, he uses the word euangelion. The word “evangelism” is an English form of the Greek word for “gospel”. Paul was not ashamed of evangelism. Evangelism is the sharing of the gospel or the good news of God!

There are many kinds of evangelism. There is literature evangelism. This is simply sharing the gospel through literature. It's the same gospel sharing idea with public evangelism, personal evangelism, friendship evangelism, and hypocritical evangelism. Except that hypocritical evangelism only appears to share the gospel but leaves out the good news part. Hypocritical evangelism is a term of my own, but it is described and denounced by Jesus.

Matthew 23:13, 15 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.”

After spending time in the words of Christ I have a definition for the hypocritical evangelism that Jesus spoke of. **Hypocritical evangelism is calling people to religion while keeping them from God.**

Again, what do you think when you hear the word evangelism? Maybe you have been a victim of hypocritical evangelism, a participant in it, or a critic of it. In any case, it is responsible for a lot of church baggage. Jesus speaks against hypocritical evangelism, not because he hates evangelism but because he loves it. It is the hypocritical part that he hates. In this series we are pursuing what pleases God. It is my goal to expose hypocritical evangelism. To run from it. To repent of it. And to not allow it to damage people in our church. And also, to run toward true evangelism.

We will be in Matthew 23 for 5 weeks, so there is a lot of the context that I will skip now and pick up in other studies. The one piece of context that is most appropriate at the beginning is to understand the importance of the message of this chapter. First, it is in the Bible. Second, these

are the words of Jesus. These two facts give foundational authority and value in this message. The value is heightened beyond this. These aren't just words of Jesus, they are words spoken during the last week of his life, offered on his final day of public teaching, the Wednesday of passion week. This is the last recorded sermon of his life. Since Jesus knew what was coming for him and he knew what he had experienced with the religious leaders, he would have chosen the most important message for them on this occasion. And we have it recorded. These words are a treasure.

The context frames these words with the expectation of value and the message delivers the value that the context promises. I don't enjoy guessing what someone else wants from me. If my employer is making cuts and my job is on the line, I want to be clear about the expectations. When the dog scratches at the door, I don't mind taking care of her, I just wish I didn't have to guess. Are you hungry? Do you need to go outside? Are you trying to rescue me from a fire in the basement or are you just needy and bored? If I give my life to follow God, I don't want to have to guess what pleases him. This is the value of Matthew 23. Jesus tells the religious leaders what he really thinks. He has carefully observed them. He has endured conflicts with them. He knows that this is his last chance to address them. What we get in Matthew 23 is a concise but loaded summary of the ways of doing religion that grieve the heart of God. If we walked into the throne room of God and asked, "What are the major things you want us to change or avoid in the Palmer SDA Church?" There would be some specifics to our situation, but I am convinced that the main message we would hear from the throne would sound a lot like what we read in Matthew 23. If you are going to do religion, don't do it like this. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. This broke his heart when he interacted with the religious system when he was on earth. The same things displease him about the church today.

If I was to only use one word to express God's displeasure with the church it would be this, "hypocrisy". This is the word you will hear repeated in Matthew 23. Each woe denounces a different way of being a religious hypocrisy. In my study I have looked at the words of these woes and tried to understand what the behaviors are that Jesus calls hypocrisy. I have put labels on the behaviors to help us apply this teaching. The first label I find is hypocritical evangelism. When Jesus gets specific about how they are being hypocrites, evangelism is the first thing that comes to his mind.

Engage with me in a parable to help us process hypocritical evangelism.

You are spending the winter in the arctic. There are 30 of you camped out at an abandoned mine. There is no electricity, and you haven't seen the sun since Thanksgiving. And you know that when it sets it doesn't come back up for more than 60 days. Your only heat comes from the fire that you stock with wood salvaged from broken buildings. The temperature has dipped to negative 60 degrees but regularly hangs around negative 30 degrees. For food you have a ration of dehydrated meals and some frozen candy. It isn't easy at the old mine but to leave it before the end of winter would be a trip guaranteed to end badly.

After a month without sun and another month to go you see some lights in the distance. As they approach, your dark adjusted eyes are temporarily blinded by the headlamps of two mushers. They explain that they have come from a lodge on the south side of the Brooks Range, across 200 miles of frozen tundra and mountain passes. They came for you. They distribute headlamps, hand warmers, and a few days' worth of the freshest food you can get in winter in the arctic. Then they make their offer, anyone willing to make the trip back with them could stay for free at the lodge through the winter. The group was tempted to take the risk as the mushers told of the food made by the lodge chef, the hot tubs, the Wi-Fi, and the heated rooms. The appeal was high, but the risk was higher. The mushers were kind, but they were strangers. Even if you could trust them, you can't trust the arctic winter to be gentle. You are all stunned by their generosity but sobered by the risk of 200 miles through some rough cold country. It was simply safer to stay with the mine.

But you can't shake the image of the lodge and before you can talk yourself out of it you step forward and accept their offer. The group tries to talk sense into you, but you won't be stopped.

The discomforts of the expedition are balanced by the gratitude you feel. These mushers risked their dog teams and their equipment and their own lives to bring one person back to their lodge. You are amazed at their effort, generosity, and commitment. They keep up your courage with legends of this winter paradise.

Early on the 5th you day can't feel your toes but you can see a light in the distance. The lodge is 1/2 a mile away and it is all downhill.

You are welcomed by a massive group gathered on the front porch. It is a big porch, and it is full. You would really like to get inside, take a shower, get some food, crawl into a bed. But the crowd on the porch is so eager to engage you in conversation. Even if you weren't caught in conversation, the gathering is too thick for your tired body to push through. The conversations are filled with more descriptions of the lodge, introductions to the rules, and there is even a stack of paperwork for you to complete, but it will have to wait until you can feel your fingers again.

You grow more assertive, excusing yourself from conversations and working your way to the door. That is when you realize that nobody is going in. These people look just as cold and worn as you. It hits you, these porch people don't have a room, they aren't guests here. They are warming themselves by the heat that comes from the windows and doors and their descriptions are just midwinter fantasies of poor people who wish they could have access to the lodge. You feel a mixture of gratitude and pity. There are people right there on the porch without access and you were brought from a great distance and a place was saved for you. The mushers who brought you aren't even going inside. But you are.

You see the glowing red open sign and you have no more time for socializing outside. As you approach the double doors, two hosts open them from the inside, releasing a wave of wood

heat. You smell the food. You hear live music. It all hits you in a welcome you can hardly believe. Then you are hit by something else, and this time it knocks you off your feet and you land on your back. Your surprise causes you to ask out loud, “what was that?” You look up at the porch people. You manage to lift your shoulders off the ground and rest your shaking upper body on your bent elbows planted on the porch. That’s when you see what hit you. It was the door, which you can see is now closed. It happened so fast that you didn’t see it closing. Then you see the ropes tied to each door and the men in the crowd holding the ropes, shaking their head at you. The hosts on the inside were holding the doors open for you but the men on the outside shut them in your face.

By this point, most of the crowd is looking at you, disgusted. One porch person bends over you, and looking down, in a tone of forced compassion, says, “What were you thinking? If we hadn’t stopped you, you would have walked right into the lodge.” You clarify that this is exactly what you were intending to do. She apparently decides that she is your new mentor. She sits down next to you and explains that you are not ready to enter the lodge. You haven’t completed the paperwork. You are dirty. Your boots are encased with snow that would melt and damage the historic wood floors. Sure, the lodge is open. But you can’t just walk in. You have much to learn, much to change.

You join the porch people. The conversations center on the lodge. You hear tales of the tile work in the dining hall and dessert menu on Tuesdays. You learn all about reservations, rates, background screenings, and quiet times. Occasionally, someone else locks their gaze on that open sign, and determines to go inside, only to end up on their back like you had, saved by the porch people. You can see their ignorance now. They aren’t any more fit to enter than you were when you tried. Look at their hair. Look at those clothes.

For a time, you embrace the porch people. If you ever doubted that those who were keeping you out cared for you, you just remember that they risked their lives to rescue you. But in time, the cold, disappointment, and pain lead to resentment. The abandoned mine was nothing in comparison to the lodge, but at least you could go inside. You distance yourself from the porch people. You see their empty promises. You feel their judgment. You doubt that their approach will ever get you into the lodge or, if it did, that it would even be worth it. You withdraw and set up a camp a safe distance away from the porch people. When people pass by longing for the lodge, you warn them that the porch people are all a bunch of hypocrites. They will only hurt you. You warn that they will never go inside that lodge. Life was better back at the mining camp. But you can’t get back there. The porch people ruined that for you too.

Hypocritical evangelism calls people to religion while keeping them from God.

The parable is not hard to interpret. If you are struggling to track the illustrations, look to Matthew 23 for the meaning.

Matthew 23:13, 15 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who

would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.”

Porch people displease God.

These verses describe hypocritical evangelism. Notice, hypocritical evangelism is not tied to a specific wrong method or style. It is marked by a wrong spirit. It would be easy if hypocritical evangelism was a style, say radio evangelism. We could just avoid that. But the hypocritical spirit can pervert any form of evangelism. It is anything that calls people to religion while keeping them from God. If we do evangelism that does not help people access God, it is hypocritical.

These verse highlight two great tragedies: 1. We don't go inside, 2. We don't allow others to go

Verse 13- “For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.”

Verse 15- “you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.”
Nobody is going in!

Let's spend some time with this first tragedy, we don't go in. True evangelism starts with going inside. It starts with us having a true experience of the acceptance of God. The first call to the church is not to go out but to go in. The church hurts people, not because we are nasty. Not because we are wicked. Not because we don't have any good qualities. But because we have been hypocrites. We have told them how they could access God while our lives, as porch people, gave a different message because we have failed to go inside. We have told them of an experience that we are not personally experiencing.

We may have stayed out for the same reasons as them, we aren't good enough to enter the kingdom. We may be dirty, but the showers are on the inside. We may be malnourished, but the food is on the inside. The necessary first step of true evangelism is to **go inside!**

Enter God's love, grace, acceptance, his kingdom, and a personal relationship with him. Not once but continually. Our assurance is attractive to others. Our belonging is inviting to others. If you haven't gone inside, STOP. Don't do another religious thing until you go inside. Even if it is a good work or a good study, if you put off going inside to do it, it will only distract you from going in and misrepresent the God that you share but have not found.

We evangelize people to the form of religion that we practice. If our access to God is blocked that will color our evangelism. Our converts will think that barriers are normal. If you are convinced that you are not good enough for God, the person you evangelize will never be good enough either. When we go inside, we show them that they belong on the inside too. If we fail to go inside, any converts we gather will become porch people.

It is possible to be committed to evangelism to the extent of traveling over land and sea, but to be a child of hell. Let that sink in. This is someone who has not gone inside. This phrase “child of hell” is not used elsewhere in the Bible. In contrast, Jesus speaks of sons of the father (5:45) and sons of the kingdom (8:12; 13:38). He tells the religious leaders that they listen to their father the devil. To be a child of hell is to not be in relationship with God. To not be saved. To not be born again. To be outside the kingdom. It is sobering. It reminds me of these words in Matthew 7.

Matthew 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

You did all those good things as porch people! First go inside. Then help others get inside.

Verse 13 “For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.”

There is a distinct, tingling pain of getting your nose smashed. There is a distinct pain when the church shuts the kingdom of heaven in your face. Doors are dangerous. When my kids have friends over, and the play gets exciting, doors start slamming. And I am the door police. I have had my little fingers smashed in the hinge of a slamming door. So I tell them to leave the doors open or someone will get hurt. **Stop slamming doors!** A whole lot of people have gotten hurt in church because of our door slamming. They might not describe their church PTSD like that. They might say, “they were so judgmental”, “I was told that Jesus didn’t love me because I got pregnant”, “all they wanted was my money”, “the picture of God they gave me is not a God I want to spend eternity with”, “it wasn’t a safe place for sinners”, or “they treated her so wrong”. All of these reasons are specific examples of how our behavior made it hard for them to find God. It is not enough to reach out to them if we don’t bring them in. Help them go inside. It is not just that we can fail to bring them in, we can block their way. These are people who “would enter” the text tells us. They didn’t need us to find God. But we disrupted their path.

We don’t have to do anything to shut the door for people. We just have to fail to welcome them into the kingdom. By simply existing, the church communicates that this is where people will find God. When they don’t find him we have made a barrier. Jesus hates a church culture that makes him hard to find. We should have a high access culture. How is children’s ministry giving people access to God? How about our worship service? How about fellowship meal? How about our conversations in the lobby? Everything the church does should be an easy onramp for someone to come inside. How long do you need to hang around our church to get the idea that God wants a personal relationship with you? How many of my sermons would you have to listen to before you hear that there is salvation for sinners? Would a faithful seeker in our

church only find a relationship with God by chance? How many times would the average person need to step inside our church to get the impression that they are invited into the kingdom?

I cringe at the possibility that someone might grow up in a church under my leadership and not know that God is accessible. Or that they might never see a clear example of someone who has gone inside and was living intimately with God. When people come to the church, they might not expect much but they expect that they will find God here. If they find more barriers to him than access points, we have a culture of hypocritical evangelism.

It is tragic when people find belonging more accessible in a bar than in church. It is wrong when the world does a better job of making sin attractive than the church does at displaying the attractiveness of God. It is a shame when people have to jump more hurdles to engage with the church than with a secular group. It is no wonder people turn elsewhere when they feel it is just not worth the effort to penetrate to the inside of the kingdom.

Evangelism is not just telling good news but helping people find access to the good thing.

There is a book in my office called Holy Humor. Rue opened it while she was waiting for me to finish some work. She discovered that most of the jokes aren't holy or humorous. One of them simply and sadly had a little boy saying, "God, we went to your house today and you weren't there." That is not a joke. That is what it feels like in a hypocritical church. But it is not fully true. God is here. We have just made some barriers and slammed some doors that make him harder to find.

What barriers do we put up to block access to God? The church has shut the door of the kingdom in people's faces with legalism, judgementalism, sacramentalism, lack of discipleship, not modeling intimacy with God, making light of sin, making little of grace, abuse, lacking integrity, greed, relationship conflict, unfriendliness too... Accessibility can be a doctrinal problem too, when the doctrine makes it hard for people to find God. Our low level of spirituality is a barrier. Our not going inside is a barrier. People see our standard and assume that is all there is. Let's inspire each other with increasing levels of intimacy with God and we will see barriers broken.

The gospel brings its own elements of offensiveness. It calls out our sin and calls us to change. These are nonnegotiable in the gospel, and they can be offensive. Our job is not to remove those offenses but to remove every unnecessary offences.

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Let's call people to deny themselves and take up their cross. Let's not make it harder for them to do by our own hypocrisy.

Convert to Christ! Conversion is sacred. But here is the key. It must be conversion to Christ. Look at verse 15: “For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte”.

There is an element of this that is Christlike. He leaves the 99 for the 1. But if you fail to bring in the one, then this is an inefficient evangelism budget. This is the kind of ministry that makes a church treasurer nervous. Consider the disparity between a large evangelism budget and the unloving ways we treat people. If you had to guess our evangelism budget by the way we value the people who come to church, what size of a budget would you guess we have? One rude comment might counteract a lot of tithe dollars given to reach our community.

“...when he becomes a proselyte...”. The leaders Jesus was speaking with were successful in making converts. They didn’t fail in converting. They succeeded in conversion to the wrong thing. They had a message but not a saving message. They called them to religion but kept them from God. Their convert is not counted in the kingdom, but becomes a porch person. But you can be sure that the evangelic counted that conversion on their report. What are we converting people to?

“...you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.” Apparently, we can convert people to some unholy things. What is that all about? Like the person in the parable that was filled with bitterness toward the porch people, the most blasphemous critics of God are those who have been victims of the church’s hypocrisy. Our barriers to God have driven people away but they don’t just go away. They are sent out as spokesmen against religion. Their emotional trauma fuels their sin and they hurt people because of the ways they were hurt by the church.

These are true stories. The devil is the one that makes people into double children of hell. Hypocritical evangelism is one of his most effective tools in this work.

When we make converts it is crucial to understand what we are converting them to. History holds some poor examples of insincere conversions. Charlemagne “converted” his entire army to Christianity simply by marching them through a river and declaring them baptized. When it is the result of marching orders, it does not usually result in people coming into the kingdom. The church, in countless crusades and inquisitions, extended the options to convert or die. It is an effective message for producing “converts” but not for inviting them into the kingdom. There are sad statistics on the numbers of people the church has baptized in evangelistic efforts and the number that walk away shortly after the close of the meetings. Hypocritical evangelism calls people to religion while keeping them from God. We can’t just convert them. We must convert them to Christ. We win them to what we win them with. Let’s win them with the love of God.

The truth that we must embrace in order to go inside and to bring others in is that **God is accessible**. Barriers to access are not put there by God. Barriers can make God harder to find

but they cannot make him impossible to access. The kingdom of heaven is accessible to sinners. Maybe you have become content on the porch. God actively works to remove obstacles. He comes to us. He says, “seek me and you will find me.” He is not playing hard to get. He is accessible from the porch, the dog sled, or the mining camp!

God is accessible. We do not make him accessible. God has made himself accessible. Humans have made him hard to find. Humans in the secular world create barriers that make it hard to find God. It is harder to find him with the barriers of addiction, abuse, poor role models, perverted entertainment, and sinful habits. God didn’t make the barrier. The world did. The church should not join the world in erecting barriers. We can keep busy enough tearing them down. We can help people see God’s accessibility or we can put up barriers to block their access but cannot change the truth that God is accessible.

I did a word study of all the times the word access is used in the Bible. Listen to these three verses that highlight the truth that our God is accessible.

Ephesians 2:17-19

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Hebrews 10:19-22

¹⁹ Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

God makes salvation as simple as possible to increase our access to him. There is so much to know about God, but so little knowledge needed to be saved. It is the best example of clear communication and clear action steps. There is such a high likelihood for confusion here that the Spirit inspired the Bible to make it as simple and concise as possible.

Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:13 For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Acts 16:30-31 Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ And

they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

There are other important aspects to religion. There are other things you should know. But not in order to be saved. You have to get inside and then you get to the other stuff. Sanctification comes after justification and this makes it accessible.

Acts 15 tells about the Jerusalem council. In verse 1 they are faced with the disruptive and popular opinion that unless people are circumcised, they cannot be saved. After much debate James concluded that "we should not trouble those who have turned to God." (verse 19). Did you hear that? They were turning to God. They were finding him accessible. The church can trouble them by adding barriers.

The good news is not just that there is a God but that this God is accessible. Accessible to sinners. Accessible to jerks. Accessible to religious critics and religious hypocrites. Accessible from the dark places of the world. Accessible from a church that is far from perfect.

I also did a word study on all the uses of the word "open" in the New Testament. Let me tell you, the kingdom of God has a big glowing open sign and you can trust it. We have an open God. He says, "knock, and the door will be opened to you."

Job 41:14 Who can open the doors of his face, with his terrible teeth all around? Who opens his face? He does. He is the only one who can. He is transcendent and he has made himself accessible.

He opens prison doors.

Acts 16:27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

Acts 5:19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out.

Acts 16:26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

He opens heaven.

John 1:51 And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Ezekiel 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, on the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the River Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

Acts 7:56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of

God.”
<p>He opens doors of opportunity. Revelation 3:8 “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.</p>
<p>He opens us. Psalm 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. 2 Kings 6:16 So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who <i>are</i> with us <i>are</i> more than those who <i>are</i> with them.”</p>
<p>Isaiah 50:5 The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away. Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, <i>in order</i> to turn <i>them</i> from darkness to light, and <i>from</i> the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’ Luke 24:45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. John 9:14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.</p>
<p>He opens blessings. Deuteronomy 28:12 The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.</p>
<p>Psalm 104:28 <i>What</i> You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good. Psalm 145:16 You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.</p>
<p>He opens graves. Ezekiel 37:12-13 Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you shall know that I <i>am</i> the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.</p>

There are a few things he doesn’t open. But he only keeps things shut to keep the way of access open to him. Closed mouths of lions, blinded eyes of Syrians, closed the red sea over pharaoh’s army, and opened not his mouth to his accusers. And it was all to make himself accessible. It was all to break down a barrier that someone else set up.

I wish to convince you that you can trust the open sign.

If you find in yourself hypocritical evangelism, repent. Go inside the kingdom. And share in the joy of inviting others inside. If you have been hurt by hypocritical evangelism, know that it hurts God too. It was not God who hurt you. He didn’t cause your burden, so it is safe to lay that burden at his feet. Let these woes call us to please God with true evangelism that goes inside and brings people to God. Hypocritical evangelism calls people to religion while keeping them from God. Let’s call people to a religion that connects us with God.