



SUMMARY KEYWORDS

evangelism, moment, people, Jesus, life, gospel, journey, conversations, Christ, God, sharing, talking, Christian, conversion, decision, process, discipleship, hear.

Kevin Palau 00:03

This is the City Gospel Movements podcast where we have conversations about church unity, serving cities and sharing the good news.

Lizzie Burke & Ben Jack 00:16

You're listening to Exploring Evangelism Myths, a collaborative podcast series by City Gospel Movements and Advance. We're your hosts. I'm Lizzie Burke in Portland, Oregon. And I'm Ben Jack in Manchester, England. Join us as we explore five common myths that hold people back from sharing their faith.

Ben Jack 00:35

Welcome to the Exploring Evangelism Myths podcast with me Ben Jack, and I'm joined as ever by my friend and yours-

Lizzie Burke 00:42

Lizzie Burke. Hello!

Ben Jack 00:44

Hey, Lizzie, and today, we're talking about the idea that evangelism is a single moment. Lizzie, tell me a bit of your story that ties into this myth.

Lizzie Burke 00:55

Definitely, I think many listeners can probably relate to something like my story because it has to do with a Christian summer camp. And I went to the same Christian camp, my Mom went to growing up and then I ended up working there for several years. So, I kind of knew the ins and outs of it. But really what it was about is, it was a weeklong summer camp overnight. And for elementary school, middle school and high school, different weeks. And what would happen is they would build up Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, then Thursday night was this big night, because that was the night that they had been focusing on all week. This was the night for the Gospel presentation and the altar call. And it was the last-

Ben Jack 01:34

Gospel night!

Lizzie Burke 01:35



Oh yeah, it was the last night of the camp. And after that presentation, there'd be a big campfire. And people would share testimonies. It was really-it was so powerful. But that was a very strategic rhythm of building up to a single altar call to call people to Jesus.

Ben Jack 01:51

Did they put like a special food on that night? Was there like before you went into the main room for, they'd like to sweeten you up with some extra special food? Get everything ready?

Lizzie Burke 01:59

Well afterwards, there were always s'mores. And those were amazing. So, I mean.

Ben Jack 02:04

Yeah, basically, that's basically biblical. When people come to Christ you celebrate with s'mores right?

Lizzie Burke 02:09

I think so.

Ben Jack 02:10

It's in, it's in there somewhere. I'm pretty sure. You know, you know what, I think we should do because I think we should hear stories from all of us today. And that includes our producer Kaedyn. So Kaedyn, I think you should-people don't get to hear your brilliant voice. And they should. So, come and join us on the thing and tell us a little bit about your story and how this tie into what we're talking about today.

Kaedyn Lashway 02:27

Ben let's not call me brilliant, though.

Ben Jack 02:29

It's done. It's already done it. It's already said.

Kaedyn Lashway 02:31

I'll edit that out. Okay, so my story is that I was on a mission trip. And I had a friend asked me, what's the day that you celebrate that you gave your life over to Jesus. And I was like, I don't have a date. Hers was October 3rd. And I was like, I just don't have one. And I felt this pressure. And she's like, so you haven't given your life to Jesus, then you don't have a date.

Ben Jack 02:51

Wow.

Kaedyn Lashway 02:52

And I had to question my salvation after that point. And I was like, God, I give my life to you. I'm here for you. But then I realize later, for me, at least, it was a process.



Ben Jack 02:55

Oh no way!

Kaedyn Lashway 03:04

Right, it's so interesting that just a simple question and someone's preconceived idea that you should be able to remember your kind of so-called Christian birthday, which was many believers can identify that that kind of moment in their life, because you couldn't, that surely must mean, you're not saved. It's like It's like, put two and two together and come up with 10. That's like crazy. And you can kind of see if people think that it's supposed to be a moment how you could end up in that place. For me, I've got a friend, a dear friend, one of my closest friends who is not yet a believer, not yet a Christian. And whenever we meet up, we have conversations about all sorts of fun things. But invariably, we'll end up talking about Jesus at some point in some way. And over the years of knowing him years and years, he must have heard the Gospel dozens and dozens of times in different ways at different times. And, you know, I keep thinking when is going to be that moment in his life, that he finally goes, Okay. Yeah, now it makes sense. You know, I've offered an invitation to him in different ways as well. But when's the moment he's actually going to seize upon that invitation and truly make Jesus Lord. Obviously, it hasn't happened yet. But that's another story that ties into this idea of moments. And ultimately, is evangelism all about a moment, or actually, is it a process?

Lizzie Burke 04:15

Yeah, that story is so inspiring to me. And I don't think we hear many stories like that, where you are sharing the Gospel over and over again with a friend. And they aren't responding yet necessarily. They aren't saying, okay, Jesus is Lord and Savior of my life, but you still keep sharing the Gospel. And I love how you're committed to the process. Because, you know, we want to shift to why does this myth exist? Why do so many of us struggled, you know, with this idea that evangelism is about a single moment. And for many of us, it's because we've heard stories like Kaedyn just shared about a specific date of conversion, or me with about a Christian camp, a building to a climactic moment or altar call. And so much of the stories we share are about evangelism through a big event, an altar calls at a camp, a church service where the sermon ends with a Gospel invitation. And I think that's, you know, part of why this myth exists.

Ben Jack 05:10

Yeah, we've had such a kind of traditional understanding of an evangelistic event over the years that you're absolutely right, it makes sense for us to think. Okay, so when we bring them to the evangelistic event, or the end of the mission week, that that will be the moment, we could totally see how that would reinforce that what we're suggesting is a myth today, and we'll explore it more fully as to whether it actually is or it isn't in due course. But I think something else that can be an issue is that because sometimes in the church we can, we can kind of put a bit of pressure, not always bad pressure, but put a bit of pressure on people to go out and, tell their friends about Jesus. The idea is go and tell them and win them or bring them to the event. And because we're putting pressure on people to kind of get involved, we're then doubling down and reinforcing the idea that at some point, if you get involved, there will be a moment when your friend might respond to Jesus.



Lizzie Burke 05:56

Mm hmm. Yeah, and we don't want to downplay a specific moment or event. But through this episode, we hope you understand evangelism is both about a significant moment or moments. And it's about a journey, because oftentimes, what has proliferated this belief is that we're emphasizing more of the action people take in their conversion, rather than the steps they take afterward to live out that faith. So, we're emphasizing come step forward, prayer, prayer, raise a hand and more recently, it's clicked a button, to say you want to follow Jesus. And none of these are bad. They're amazing. They're drawing people to a decision. But when we emphasize that single moment over what comes afterwards, sometimes we just we minimize evangelism to that single moment.

Ben Jack 06:42

Totally, and like, we could explore all the different ways in which people are invited to respond in the moment, because there's kind of I guess, there's two levels of the moment, there's the moment of the event, come to the event. Also, the whole event is a moment where they can hear the Gospel. And then there's the moment within the moment, this is kind of getting like inception, you get you get what I'm saying? Yeah, there's the moment within the moment where the person that she then gets asked the question, and then how are you going to do it? Like you were just saying, you raise your hand, do you stand up? Do you push a button, like I've known in the times of COVID, has been driving evangelism where people drive in here, and then to respond to the Gospel, have to flash the lights of their car? -

Lizzie Burke 07:19

Oh, my goodness, really?

Ben Jack 07:20

Whatever it takes, yeah, whatever it takes to indicate the Gospel. But again, it's all coming back to this kind of idea that we want to get people to the moment where they then indicate and respond to our evangelism.

Lizzie Burke 07:31

So, what's true about this myth that evangelism is about a single moment on evangelism is unethical. Ben, you introduced this definition of evangelism that was really helpful. And what we want to define evangelism is in this series is the Holy Spirit empowered proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world, in the hope that they may accept the forgiveness of God and be reconciled to him eternally. So that Holy Spirit empowered proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ is what Ben you're doing with your friend over and over and over again, over years. And so, we want to emphasize that evangelism can happen in many different moments over time.

Ben Jack 08:16

Yeah, and of course, that will then result in many people being able to pinpoint a specific moment of conversion, like Kaedyn said that she can't do that. And I'm the same, I actually can't pinpoint a specific moment per se of conversion. I remember when I was 10 years old, initially, telling my parents that I



wanted to become a Christian. The main reason why I did that was because my sister became a Christian about two weeks earlier. And when she did, she got given loads of books and stuff. This was this was the 80s like books are about as good as it got then. So, I wanted them to, and so I was like, great. If I become a Christian, I get some books. And so, I kind of made an initial decision when I was 10. And I can kind of pinpoint it to that. But to be honest with you, when it when it really started to take root in my life was-was in and around the age of 17. And again, it was a number of events that played a role in leading me to that place, but I couldn't give you an actual date of like, yes, the 12th of January 1992 was the day that I became a follower of Jesus. I can't do it because there was more of a process. And yet it's inevitable, that if we're giving people an opportunity to respond to Christ, there'll be many people that will take that opportunity on that day and remember the day that that happened that led them into the life that follows.

Lizzie Burke 09:29

Yeah, you know, I love that. In my story similar to yours, Ben and to Kaedyn, it was a season of life where I said, Yeah, in this season, my freshman year of high school, I want to follow Jesus. So, I got the privilege of sitting down with Finu lype, who is a leader in Canada, he founded the organization Passion to Reach which trains churches and organizations how to share the Gospel, and I really wanted to get his ideas on why he thinks so many people believe evangelism is about a single moment. And what would it look like to kind of balance between a single moment in a journey when it comes to evangelism, so listen to this conversation with Finu lype. Finu lype, I'm so excited to talk to you today because we're talking about this myth that evangelism is about a single moment. And can you help us unpack why so many of us think evangelism is about a single moment?

Finu lype 10:19

Well, Lizzie, I think it's partly because of how we look at salvation in and of itself. And often, we look at salvation as just a one moment decision. Of course, there can be a moment when you make a decision. But really the, the full understanding or the full embracing and acceptance of salvation is only when you've actually walked with the Lord. It's interesting, it's uh. It's like when you get married, you know, you make a decision in a moment to be committed to a person, but really becoming one, the process of becoming one happens. Over time, it happens once you get to really understand the person, my wife, and I actually just celebrated our eighth anniversary a couple of days ago, we were talking about man, we didn't even fully understand each other and know what we were getting into when we made the commitment. We made it with our whole hearts. But there's this journey of fully embracing and understanding what that looks like. So, I think it's more around the idea of when is it that someone actually gives their life to the Lord? Is it? Is it just to the moment of decision? Or is it really once you start walking with the Lord? So, I think that's part of it. And obviously, I mean, the Bible is clear that there are moments when people make commitments to Christ, you know, that Zacchaeus spends time with Jesus and says, this is what I'm going to do. The woman at the well goes back and says, look at the man who's talked to me about everything I've done so-so there are moments of impact, but the actual process of becoming a follower of Jesus is more than just that initial moment.

Lizzie Burke 11:51



Okay, that's great. That's helpful. So how do you think we would change our evangelism or evangelism trainings, if we viewed evangelism as more of a journey than single moment?

Finu Iype 12:01

Lizzie, I think the key here is looking at evangelism in light of disciple making, I mean, the process here and the goal of what we're trying to accomplish is we're trying to make disciples of Jesus, you know, part of the challenge often is we're focused so much on let's just get people to say a prayer, if you think of evangelism as a singular moment. And then we know that they're going to happen regardless of what happens between that moment, and you know, the rest of their lives. And yet, Jesus command to us was very clear. He says, go make disciples. And so, the target and the goal are to disciple people. And so, I think it's better to look at it in the sense of disciple making in the perspective of pre-evangelism, evangelism and post-evangelism. So, we're on a journey with people from before they know Jesus to when they become fully devoted followers of Christ. And that takes a while. A bad example of this a negative example of when you focus too much on what happens when you're in a singular moment, you know, sort of evangelistic mode or model is I had friends who were part of this evangelism training and equipping time with this team of people that came into this church. And they were telling me about hundreds of people that were getting saved like that. That was the language they're using. Hundreds of people Finu are getting saved every day. I'm like, I know this city. I know how hard this city is, how in the world are they doing this? So, they sent me a picture, I asked him to send me a picture of the script that you're using, and the script that they were using, just literally focused on God loves you, God has a plan for you. And would you like me to pray for you? And in the brain for the person's need, they would say, now, can you repeat this prayer after me? And the person had no clue what they were about to pray. And nowhere in the script, you ever talk about who Jesus was, like what he had done, that he had died that he had risen from the dead, none of that was communicated. And they were declaring every evening at that church, that hundreds of people in that city in that community, were coming to faith in Christ. That's tragic. Because what it does is it causes Christians to think, that's it! I mean, my friends were calling me excited that they were getting hundreds saved. And yet, it was such a lie. And I think it's important that Christians need to consider that every person that God is going to call you to reach, you, most likely, will need to make a long-term commitment in helping them become fully devoted followers of Christ. And part of what happens when you think of it as just a moment, Lizzie is that you don't really care about the person. You'll say anything to get them to give you the right answers that you're looking for, without really considering how is this really going to impact their life? Will their life change? As of this moment, and often, unfortunately, it doesn't, because they have no clue what they just committed their lives to. Or they have no clue that they even made a commitment for the rest of their lives. They just thought they were praying some prayer for blessing.

Lizzie Burke 15:03

Mm hmm. Finu, that's really helpful. And I want to jump to this question in light of what you just said, because there's this fear that if you emphasize a single moment of decision and evangelism, that you'll end up with Christians who don't know what they signed up for kind of like you're saying, they didn't even know they made a decision, and yet some people counted it. So, what do you want to say to



people who fear that evangelism is about a single moment of decision? But won't people who make a decision? De-convert as quickly as they converted? What would you say to this?

Finu Iype 15:36

Here's where I would, I would nuance this a little bit. There is always room for the Spirit of God to supernaturally cause instantaneous conversion in the hearts of people. Now, even those people often if you start talking to them, you'll see that they were almost like breadcrumbs that God was laying out through their life that they've been following this the small little signs, so they may not even be the very first time that they've heard the Gospel. But I want to say that there are people that can come to faith in Jesus in a moment because there's something absolutely supernatural that God is doing in their life in that moment. But that's just not the typical way it works. And it's the way it should work. And so, my encouragement to people that want to see evangelism happen effectively, is invest time in building relationships, invest time in getting to know people. And I think, ultimately, if you're in an airplane, if you're on a bus, you know, if you happen to bump into somebody, and you have an opportunity to share the Gospel as he, I say, take it, take it, and explain the Gospel. And always ask them, would you like to choose to follow Jesus? Would you like to learn more about Jesus, give them that opportunity? You just never know what God has been doing in their life. So, I'm not saying we should never take that opportunity. But I'm saying is in moments and in circumstances, which I think is the lion's share of the time, that we have the opportunity to build relationships, that should be the way we do it. Because our goal, again, is to make disciples, not just converse in that moment.

Lizzie Burke 17:15

Yeah, that's good. So you alluded to something, you know, seize the opportunity to ask them, Do you want to know more about Jesus, I have a lot of friends who they don't mind talking about their faith, they bring up Jesus in conversation, but getting to the point where they would ask their friend or their relative to say, hey, do you want to decide to follow Jesus and make him Lord and Savior of your life? It's like, okay, well, I can't go down that route. So, what do you want to tell people who are great at talking about Jesus, but it's hard to ask people to make a decision or invite them to make a decision? Because, like you said, in the Bible, Jesus wasn't afraid or shy about saying, hey, come and follow me, there was a moment of decision in many ways for Jesus.

Finu Iype 17:55

Absolutely. And I think this is key, you know, it's like a salesperson showing up to your house, which by the way, that never happens anymore. But if it were to happen, it's like someone showing up to your house and showing you what, you know, a great product they're trying to sell you, they show you all the things that make it such a great product, they give you the price, and all of that, and they say, Hey, thank you so much for your time today. And we'll see you later. And as the potential customer, you'd be like, What in the world? Why do they invest all that time, they never actually asked me if I wanted to buy the product? And so ultimately, you know, you can live your life, share the Gospel, invest yourself long term in people's lives. But if you don't bring them to the point of making a commitment, you know, going back to the analogy of marriage, you know, sure, I didn't know everything about my wife, or most things about my wife in many ways, until we got married in the first couple of years of marriage. But there is



still significance to making that vow in that moment, because it was a decision of the heart and God does something in that moment. So, I think you always want to ask people, because I believe Lizzie, between the time that you ask the question and the person response, you're actually creating an opportunity for the Spirit of God to do something in that moment, for people to say, yeah, you know what, I think I'm ready to do this. And often, it's amazing. People are waiting for an invitation. I think of the parable that Jesus shared and where the king sent out his servants to invite people to his banquet, and it was just an invitation. Anyone can comment sometimes people just don't realize because the greatest challenge I think is people feel like I'm not good enough. I've heard the Gospel. I know the Gospel. My friend, who's invested so much time in me, I see the way they live their life. This is awesome. But I still don't think I'm good enough. And so, when you ask that question, say, Hey, friend, would you make that commitment right now? What if Jesus is calling you in this moment that does something to people to say, you know, what? Yeah, I should respond to that. And again, ultimately, and can I even say this, Lizzie, there are people that will say no in that moment, but the no speaks to them so loud on the inside, that it sort of resonates, echoes in their heart. And I've heard of people who, after the fact, will say, actually, Jesus, I think I need to do this. And they won't even come back and talk to the person that asked them the question. They'll just make that commitment privately to the Lord. And so, there's such power in bringing people to that moment of commitment.

Lizzie Burke 20:26

I totally agree with you. I think there is something significant about specific moments. And I love what you said, it's about creating space for your friend or your relative, where the Holy Spirit can meet them, and just at that moment, create a significant moment that they'll look back on forever. So, any final words Finu you about this concept that evangelism is about a single moment?

Finu lype 20:47

Well, here's what I'll say, my friends, we are not called to save people. We are called to love people. We are called to be committed to the lives of people if there's one thing that this transactional method of evangelism or model of evangelism has done that's so negative in the church is that we look at people as numbers, people are not numbers, they are human beings created in the image of God, that have an eternal destiny. And so, my encouragement to anyone that's listening is invest in people. And God will give you open doors and opportunity to bring them to that point of committing their lives to Jesus. But you'll never probably even get there, if you don't start just loving people where they're at and investing your life into them.

Lizzie Burke 21:41

Finu yeah, that's a perfect place to end. Thanks for chatting today.

Finu lype 21:44

Thank you, Lizzie. Great to be on.

Ben Jack 21:46

Lizzie, what's the biggest takeaway for you from that interview?



Lizzie Burke 21:50

You know, I really liked Finu perspective on creating a moment of decision for our friends and family, especially if we've been having conversations with them about Jesus, I think oftentimes, we feel like creating that moment of decision puts a lot of pressure on them. But he reframed it, like that's a really loving thing to do to create a space where they can say, I want to follow Jesus and it's encountered they have with the Holy Spirit that if we don't kind of initiate that or create that space for them, that may not happen. And I think that reframed it from pressure to opportunity and invitation for me.

Ben Jack 22:26

I think this is a really interesting myth for us to talk about because of all of the ones that we're dealing with in this series. This is the one that actually has the most truth to it. I think that evangelism is both a moment and a process. So, the myth would be that evangelism is exclusively about a single moment that that would be a myth. But to say that evangelism can be about a moment, it is not a myth at all. It's both a moment and a journey, a process. But if we were to just boil it down to it being a moment, what would be the problems with making it exclusively just a moment?

Lizzie Burke 22:59

Well, I think a lot of it has to do with we really do conflate a lot of conversion stories with an evangelism story. So, like we opened up with most of the stories, many listeners probably hear about evangelism have to do with a specific altar call, or like Kaedyn friend, what's the date that you came to Christ, and instead of sharing a lot of different stories, where people are planting the seeds in biblical language, oftentimes, we hear this moment of conversion, and we only share those climactic moments or stories. And I think that's a shame because we miss out on a lot of good inspiring stories of people sharing the Gospel. When we conflate a conversion story with an evangelism story.

Ben Jack 23:42

I wonder if that might even be discouraging to people who, who are thinking Well, I've not had that experience. When I've talked to my friends, maybe they're a bit more like me with my friend who I'm repeatedly sharing with him, but he hasn't actually got to the point of full trust in Jesus yet. And there's other people who are like, Look, I'm talking to my friends. But I've even offered them an invitation, but they have never yet turned around and said, Yes, I want to choose to follow Jesus I'm in I'm up for it. Let's pray together, let's start this journey. And because they've never got to that point, they feel like embarrassed or they feel like somehow, they're not doing the right things, or because the only stories of evangelism they hear are the so-called success stories of a moment where someone radically came to faith.

Lizzie Burke 24:22

I totally agree Ben, and in many ways, your story is much more encouraging to me and probably to many listeners, because they can relate. Oh, I've had conversations with people about Jesus, and they haven't made a decision to follow him. But does that mean I should stop having those conversations or keep having them in your examples? No, just keep sharing, keep sharing, keep talking to them about



Jesus? Because that is evangelism. evangelism is not just getting people to a specific moment of conversion.

Ben Jack 24:52

Absolutely. I also think it puts us in real danger of treating people as evangelistic targets rather than as real people and developing them relationships because it's like, oh, we haven't led them to the moment of conversion, right? Move on to the next person. Instead of cool, we're just not there yet. Let's keep going. And something like Alpha springs to mind. You know, an Alpha course, a very popular around the world now developed to help people journey over a series of weeks that ask questions to investigate. And it's evangelism by process is not taking God out of the equation. It's not recognizing that at any moment, during those 10 weeks, the Holy Spirit could move the person to, to a place of repentance and acceptance of Jesus. But it's-it's saying, let's commit to a process and see what happens.

Lizzie Burke 25:32

Yes, absolutely. So, if a story does not lead to conversion, it's still worth sharing. It's still legitimate evangelism. And if you feel discouraged, or maybe like you've disqualified yourself from having more conversations with people about Jesus, because they haven't led to a specific conversion, we just want to encourage you know, you can keep sharing about Jesus. And it is part of the process and you are sharing the gospel, and God is working.

Ben Jack 25:57

What's another, problem that might come up from us kind of making it a little bit too much at the moment.

Lizzie Burke 26:02

You know, I think, because we put a lot of pressure on Christians to get to a moment of conversion, sometimes it can lead to like, and I mean, I love camp, but it has revealed some of these things about evangelism that we have is unnecessary emotionalism and expediency. And right, you know, at worst coercion, where we push people to make a decision, maybe prematurely before we run a good enough job of explaining the Gospel and what the call of Jesus is on their life to follow him. Yeah, that can be unhealthy because even if people do make a decision, maybe they don't know what they're signing up for.

Ben Jack 26:40

That's so important to see. I mean, that takes us back to the first episode of this series, where we're talking about evangelism being unethical. And conceptually, evangelism is not unethical. But in its outworking, if we're not careful, if we're unwise that it could become so as what you're suggesting is that if we put too much pressure on a single moment, to save the day, we could become overly coercive, overly emotive. And that that actually, then our evangelism is in very real danger of becoming unethical, and ultimately, unfruitful which is the worst thing.



Lizzie Burke 27:10

Yeah, you know, and unfortunately, I was just talking to my husband about this recently, we're seeing so many friends in their 20s, who are deconverting, who are not church anymore, who are saying, I don't know if I can believe in God. And, you know, I just wonder what they thought they were signing up for when they said, I'm going to follow Jesus, because if the life they're living now isn't living up to that notion, what is it that they thought they were getting into in the very beginning, and I have a lot of compassion, and empathy for my friends in this space. But I know that part of it is maybe a misunderstanding of what it would look like to say I commit to following Jesus with my life.

Ben Jack 27:50

Absolutely. I think that raises the bigger issue as well of causing people to question the legitimacy of their own conversion. And I think that happens in two ways. It happens in the way that you've just been talking about their that they came to faith in in a very specific moment, maybe a little bit coercive, maybe a little bit emotive, whatever it was well intentioned, I'm sure but maybe a bit misguided, and unwise. And then years later, things unravel. The discipleship process hasn't been super effective. For whatever reason, they come unstuck and deconstruct their faith and step away. And ultimately, what it is, is a questioning of that initial moment of conversion of turning. But there's also the way in which Kaedyn was talking about earlier, in which case, you're still journeying with Jesus. But someone then asked you when your Christian birthday is, and you can't answer the question, and you're like, wait, am I-does does that mean I'm not, not a Christian? So again, we see that the problem, at worst of someone walking away from their faith and questioning everything, or even a believer just having a bit of a stutter, in their faith, because suddenly like, wait, what am I am I even saved? And that ultimately is unhelpful either way.

Lizzie Burke 28:53

Yeah. You know, I think what is helpful is when we're talking about evangelism as a moment, that's effective. Look at the fruit that comes afterwards, because we, we understand evangelism and discipleship go hand in glove, and we don't want to bifurcate those. But oftentimes, people who emphasize the moment can put pressure on that singular feeling was emotional conversion experience. Did I feel something extravagant? But really, the question is, what fruit do I see in my life? And if there's fruit in your life, you know, wisdom will be known by her deeds. Yes, you are following Jesus, even if it wasn't as emotional or there's not a specific date, you can pinpoint. And I remember, you know, when I was a kid, I went to a church and it was a church where after every sermon, the pastor would go to each section in the church, and everybody would close their eyes and people who wanted to follow Jesus would look up, raise their hand, and he would, acknowledge them, right? Yeah, yeah, I remember feeling this pressure, because I raised my hand one week because I really wanted to follow Jesus. Yeah. But then the next week I thought, well, I didn't feel anything emotional or like in my spirit. So, I should raise my hand again. So, I raised it the next week. Yeah, I don't think God wants us feeling that. So, Ben helped me understand what's going on there.

Ben Jack 30:15

That's, that's really interesting. I was actually going to ask you the question before you board it up. But Lizzie, in your estimation, how many times in your life do you think you've given your life to Christ, right? Because I can like through my teenage years and going to events and stuff, I must have gotten down the front for altar calls. And it wasn't just because I wanted the emotional experiences because something in me stirred in some way and convicted me that I know I need to do this again; I need to recommit. Now, obviously, when people are talking about evangelism being a moment, they probably mean, and I guess it slightly depends on a person's theology around salvation, and salvation in the first instance of choosing Jesus as Lord and Savior there and then salvation is done or whether your theology is that salvation is worked out through the rest of your life. But either way, this idea that that there's an initial moment that you profess faith in Jesus is Lord that has a profound effect on everything that follows. But my faith, the way that it's been outworked, is that daily, I find myself coming back to the course not at an event going down for an altar call anymore every time but daily in my faith coming from the Lord saying, I need to recommit my life to you today, because I need you just as much today as it did yesterday. And more so Lord, but I need you, I need you, I need you. And I want to get my life back to you afresh. And so even though I believe I'm saved, even though I believe that I committed my life to Christ many, many years ago, and that that's good. I also kind of I don't want to say symbolically, because I believe it's more, I believe it's a heart. I want to recommit myself to God daily in saying, I trust you, I make myself available to be Lord of my life. I think that's a slightly different thing to what we're talking about here. But-but I think it's interesting nonetheless to, to kind of consider this idea that even if there's an initial moment where salvation is secured, the daily act of saying, Jesus, I give my life again, to you getting on my knees before you are just a beautiful act of worship.

Lizzie Burke 32:08

But I think that's really helpful context. And again, we want to say that there is a moment you know, the Holy Spirit and dwells you you're sealed by him, you are the father's like, Jesus is Lord of your life. But we are also I think, you know, one of the problems is we confuse the relationship between evangelism and discipleship with salvation. And Ben, your story was, yes, you are a new person, when you commit to follow Christ. But sometimes we can expect our beliefs and behaviors to quickly change just as quickly as we made that decision. But the evidence of salvation is a transformed heart, it transformed life in that outplays in your desires and your behaviors. And there really is not a timeline for this other than our entire life. And that is a process is your heart becoming more like Christ are you maturing, are your desires changing? And that is salvation working itself out. But there is a moment where you say, I'm following Jesus as Lord, or a season of life like we've shared about in our life. And both are important. Both are part of the journey of the believer.

Ben Jack 33:10

Well, you nailed it on the head when you said that, you know, it's about fruitfulness and we are known, known by our fruits, what Jesus says, how will his disciples be known by their fruit. What kind of fruit well, fruit of the spirits a good place to start Galatians through the Spirit is love joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control against these things, there is no law? All right? What does he mean? He means that this is who God is. This is the very DNA of God, if you, if



you know, kind of slice God in half, these are the things that will flow pour out of him. You guys have sticks of rock in the USA? We have this like candy.

Lizzie Burke 33:44

Rock candy? It's kind of like a really thick candy cane. And we call it a stick of rock, I can see Kaedyn, you can't hear it, I can see Kaedyn right now. It doesn't sound very appetizing.

Ben Jack 33:54

She's pulling a great facial expression right now. It's brilliant, as if, she says, a stick of rock. What is he talking about? But it's really tasty, but they're famous for when you go to the beach, you can get it and they're famous for having like words written all the way through. So, wherever you break it inside, you'll see the word written all the way through. And it's like the fruit of the Spirit is the DNA of God. And if you snap a, Christian in half then, then what you'll see all the way through them is what you'd see through the stick of rock a word, words running through what are those words? That the reality is love, joy, peace, patience, the fruit of the Spirit, that's how we will be known. And actually, that's something that you rightly said, you don't just get it instantly. It's a process and it's a journey.

Lizzie Burke 34:34

That is a lifetime. Yes. And one story that we just want to share to illustrate this idea that yes, you are saved, but sometimes your discipleship and the outworking of your salvation looks different, is if two drug addicts choose to follow Christ on the same day, and one loses their desire for drugs immediately and people have heard these stories they just stop cold turkey and it's amazing and we praise God.

Ben Jack 34:58

Oh, I know people like this. Yeah, it's unreal. It is so cool.

Lizzie Burke 35:00

Yeah, it is amazing. But what happens when the other really struggles, and it takes years and years of fighting this addiction is one of them saved and the other not?

Ben Jack 35:11

Exactly. And this is the danger of where we can start to overplay our hand and assume that certain signs and certain realities. You got saved in this moment, so from this moment forward, your life should look like this. And it's like, wow, they're by the grace of God, we go. And, and I don't have to live your life, as you don't have to live my life, we are called to live the life that God has called us to live for, in his strength, but also in relationship with each other as, as the church. And so, let's say that you and I have the same struggle, when we come to Christ, God instantly out of His grace heals me of that thing, and it's no longer a problem for me. But guess what, out of His grace, he doesn't heal you and you continue to journey in the struggle? Why do we say out of His grace in both things, because God knows the reasons why he took it away from me, and he kept it with you? And either way, it was good, and it will be good, and he will work it for his goodness. And I know that that it can be very difficult for us to wrap our heads around and, and it's complicated, but it but it ultimately comes down to do we believe that



God is good, and I have no reason to believe that he isn't. And therefore, we both give our lives to Christ. And we journey forward, I'm healed of one thing, you're not healed-you know what, I'm still going to trust God and see how he works that through in our lives.

Lizzie Burke 36:23

Yeah. And our commitment to follow Christ is the same. But God knows the transformation journey better than we know. I mean, His ways are not our ways, his thoughts are not our thoughts. So, he sees how it needs to be worked out. So, Ben, as we think about where to go from here, with this myth that evangelism is about a single moment. What are some ideas that listeners can take to kind of go forward with like a reimagined way about thinking about this myth?

Ben Jack 36:52

Well, I'd say, you know, go to the Bible, that's always my go to position is to say, get back to the word, see what the Word says about this. And there's so many things that we could draw out from Scripture, but let's just home in on Jesus as a simple way of expressing his point, you know, look at Jesus's own journey with his disciples, they, they came, and they followed him, they laid down the nets, they stopped being tax collectors and followed him, you know, and all their different circumstances of stopping what they were doing and turning to follow him. And yet there was a journey of them coming to an understanding of who he is moving beyond their frailties, their weakness, their-their failures, so often was the case within their doubts, and the other side of the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, becoming more than they could ever have been in their own strength actually becoming new creations through the death and resurrection of Jesus and His empowering spirit coming upon them. And we see a journey and a process but outside of it is something for someone like Nicodemus and John chapter three, asking all these questions. Jesus gives him some answers that he doesn't really understand. We get Sir John 3:16, "For God so loved the world." great passage of scripture. But then we didn't really hear what happens to Nicodemus, in terms of the fruit of that conversation. Did he become a follower of Jesus? He certainly doesn't seem to be around Jesus for the rest of the narrative until right at the end, when Jesus is being buried after being killed on the cross. And suddenly Nicodemus reappears to wrap the body to put the relevant spices on the body and things. And he's there. And it just makes you think, oh, there's a process going on here with the Nicodemus.

Lizzie Burke 38:19

Yeah, you're right, Jesus emphasized both, moments and the process, there were times where he said, come and follow me. And then other times where people left confused. But then over time, you see, oh, they really chose to follow him. We got to interview some amazing people on their thoughts about evangelism. And we want to play a couple quotes for you right now. One from a woman named Caitlin another from a Pastor, who was-just kind of share what their thoughts are on moments and process when it comes to evangelism.

Caitlin 38:49

For me, it was opening to the idea as well, that it's not about just a conversion, and someone's saying a prayer. But how do we open to being people at a stage on someone's journey, and have been part of



that process, like Paul talks about, you know, one waters, one fertilizes the soil, and I think often we hear evangelism talked about in this Oh, they say a prayer, and it's a conversion and like, that's what evangelism is.

Pastor 39:15

So, I think Alpha is great, because it's training our people that you don't have to have all the answers. (yeah), you can keep just pointing them to Jesus, and that you can, it's you can sit in their pain, frustration, anger, doubt, whatever, that you can sit there with them and it's okay. You can have a whole night of listening to somebody talk about all the reasons why they don't believe, and you can go home and be okay with that and the pressures off of the outcome. It's not an outcome-oriented thing where it's like, man, we need to get these people to raise their hand tonight. You know? It's like no they don't, we need to just be faithful. consistent and keep pointing to Jesus.

Lizzie Burke 40:05

In these quotes, you're able to see that both the journey is emphasized and the moment and they're both significant. And when you have a really helpful analogy to illustrate this a bit more

Ben Jack 40:17

It's like a road trip, isn't it? We're talking about journeys. And if you're driving 800 kilometers down the road, but your car can only take 400 kilometers worth of fuel at some point on that journey, you need to- you need to stop and have a moment where you fill the car up with, with fuel, and then you can carry on your journey maybe needs to stop again, to go to the bathroom, stop again and get some snacks to give you sustenance for the journey. The point is, you know, you're going to arrive at a destination. But along the way to that destination, there will be crucial stops, crucial moments, I should say that will help you to get to the end. And I was talking about my friend multiple times sharing the Gospel with a him and he hasn't quite got there yet. But I believe that the conversations that I've had with him are his moments of getting some more fuel in the tank, and they will play a crucial part in the whole. Will there be a moment one day when hopefully he can receive the gospel? Yes. But will his evangelism have been about a moment? No, it's about the total accumulation of the journey that he's been on that at some point by God's grace will come to fruition.

Lizzie Burke 41:17

Yeah, it's been said that in order for somebody to respond to the gospel, it's going to take them hearing it seven times. And I know this is true for simple ideas. If you want an idea to stick you have to say at least seven times. So then when it comes to evangelism, we're asking, well, which of those seven times was the time that they received Christ? But really, it's a series of moments, right? Like you're saying, with your friend, he may not be able to pinpoint a specific conversation or moment, but he could say, "Wow, all the conversations I had with Ben over the years, really influenced my decision to follow Christ and help me see Jesus and, and Christianity in a point where I'm going to make a decision to follow Christ." Totally. I was interviewing an author the other day about his new book. And the question that came up was, how long did it take you to write the book? And he's 37 years old? And he said, 37 years. Right, what he meant by that was sure, there was a moment where I sat at the computer and put it



down. But-but it was my whole life has gone into this all my learning and my thinking, and, and it's the same with evangelism. It's Yes, there might be the moment of decision of course, but-but it's accumulation of what's come before. Yeah, so we're gonna play a couple more interview clips to speak to those of you who are saying, you know, I lean toward being more about a single moment, I want to get people to make a decision to follow Christ. And if you're more about process, like slowly planting seeds, having conversations, we want to speak to you, but really, the people we interviewed had really good insight. And so, if you're more about a single moment, take a listen to a couple of these quotes.

Guest #1 42:46

You know the importance of follow up for discipleship, and to realize that this is a lifelong process, a conversion to Christ might be a momentary thing. And you can say that I was saved at that moment, but there's also a process of being saved from then on. If you want to distinguish between justification and sanctification, for instance, and-and it's just the beginning of the story, the story is going to involve lots of ups and downs, ins and outs, and something we can't avoid, pain and suffering. And we shouldn't give people the impression that once they become a Christian, that all their troubles are going to be over with. Jesus says that as long as we're in the world, we're going to have trouble. But we can be confident in the midst of our problems because he's overcome the world. That doesn't mean that it's all going to be fun and games. And I just hope that the Gospel is presented ways that are realistic and honest about the kind of life of discipleship that we're inviting people into

Guest #2 43:42

In United States, oftentimes the model that we've seen in the past, being a post Christian nation, in the past, what we've seen is, is believe, behave and belong. But for the Japanese, it's almost always this effective ministry. It always starts with belonging, then they believe, then they begin to learn to act Christ like.

Lizzie Burke 44:07

Yeah, so if you resonate with it being more about a single moment, when it comes to evangelism, I think these interviewees just had some helpful insight that, yes, we want people to commit their lives to Christ. But sometimes we have to take the time like don't rush the process, be patient, outline what exactly they're signing up for, like one of the interviewees said, be realistic with what the Gospel is. Ben, what stuck out to you in those quotes?

Ben Jack 44:33

The idea of the ongoing process of sanctification that follows that initial moment of justification is using the nice big theological words is really is an important one for us to kind of have a basic understanding of and the idea that we don't want to again, this goes back to ethics a little bit we don't want to just miss sell the Gospel in order to win people in a moment. Because that will end up landing with the problem you were talking about Lizzie where then people 20 years later, suddenly realize They didn't weren't actually following the faith that they thought they were in, it's kind of falls apart. So, we need to commit to preaching the Gospel accurately. And, and let that take its course. And if that means



that it needs to happen over a longer period of time, and then of course, crucially be followed by good discipleship, then then absolutely, that's what must be done.

Lizzie Burke 45:16

Mm hmm. One of the pastors we interviewed who heard said, oftentimes we want people to believe, then behave, then belong. And we just want to say like, don't marry a method because he leads a Japanese church, and he's saying, we're seeing a lot of these Japanese community members belong in our community and build friendships, and then they start to change what they believe because they're around the Christian community. And then they behave as a Christian. And sometimes he was saying later on in the interview, which you didn't hear, sometimes they're Christian, and they don't even know it, you know, in some ways, because they didn't make that decision. But as they belonged to the community, they change in that process. So, don't marry a method. I think that's really good advice.

Ben Jack 45:54

Great. And I guess if you're more about process than a single moment, like we've just been talking about, then then this clip might be helpful for you.

Guest #3 46:02

The same for me with evangelism, have a crack, make a mistake, pick yourself up, learn from it. And see if the supernatural God that we know and believe and speak of wants to actually encounter someone at that exact moment. That, you know, Paul talks a lot about that, and how that can revolutionary someone's life.

Ben Jack 46:22

So straightaway, what I need to do is do a little bit of language translation. Have a have a crack, it's got nothing to do with drugs, that sounds very dodgy. What it actually means is have a go, it means just take, take a swing at it, you know, give it your best shot. And, and I love that idea of like, you know what, I might not be the all-knowing guy, I might not be the best evangelist in the world, but I just I just want to have a go winning my friends and, and, and getting stuck in and but I'm gonna commit to it. And it's a process and I'm going to go for it. But-but here's the thing. Don't forget about clarity along the way. Don't forget about urgency that I think sometimes if we're too driven by the process, we can let things become a bit unclear. It becomes a bit wishy-washy, like you were saying before in the interview, that we didn't hear that the comment was made. Sometimes they become Christians, and they don't even know that they have been. I mean, he's kind of joking there. Because of course, it's not possible to become a Christian and not know, the only way you can become a Christian is to willingly make Jesus Christ, Lord of your life. And if you can't bring clarity, to that moment of decision and turning in a person's life, then evangelism ultimately will be unsuccessful. And, and it needs to be urgent, because we never know whether we're going to have tomorrow.

Lizzie Burke 47:32

Yeah, like Finu mentioned in the interview I did with him. If you are somebody who doesn't mind talking to your friends and family about Jesus, or maybe you've been talking to them for a really long time, but



it's never gotten to that point where you're saying, hey, do you want to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior?

Ben Jack 47:46

Right!

Lizzie Burke 47:47

Don't minimize what God can do in a moment. And, and creating that space for your friends and family is actually really loving. And it can be powerful to see all those seeds you planted over time reap a harvest, when you just say, do you want to follow Jesus? Do you want to make decisions today you can become a Christian? Do you want to put your faith in Jesus today, right now?

Ben Jack 48:07

Totally, I heard an amazing story of a parish Vicar who went to his new parish and met a couple from his church, who had been in the church for 50 years. And he went to visit with him introduce himself, I'm your new Vicar and had a lovely conversation with them, by the end of the conversation realized that maybe they're not actually saved. Maybe they're not actually Christians. They just kind of go to church. So, he talked to them a bit and lead them through the gospel, and then lead them through a response. And they did give their lives to the Lord and a joyful moment. And as he was leaving, he said to them like "You've been coming to the church for 50 years. It's amazing what's happened today. But can I ask you Why? You waited till now?" And the wife of the couple she looked him in She said, "Well, well, no one ever asked." And I was just like, wow, you know, so we can see the importance of the moment as well as the process. Don't let the process become 50 years without invitation.

Lizzie Burke 48:54

50 years? Yeah, you know, and if you're about a single moment, or if you're about a process, wherever you're at, we just want to encourage you to pray more. And we really do believe that prayer and praying for the last praying for those who don't know Jesus in our lives will start in reshape our hearts to be more urgent to be clearer about what the gospel is. And Ben you love just prayer walking in your neighborhood and your city, you meet people your heart for them is changed because you're you care you're taking the time to pray God's peace and joy over your area. Can you tell us about just what that experience is like for you?

Ben Jack 49:32

Obviously, prayer in the secret place is so important, but-but yeah, get out onto the streets and prayer walk your streets because one I think there's power in that for just inviting God into the streets that you're walking around. But-but guess what, you'll meet people as you walk around your neighborhood, and they'll ask you what you're doing and you can tell them I'm prayer walking while I'm out for a walking is, is there anything I can pray for you for and you'll be amazed the conversations that you have the prayer opportunities that you get in the way that God can work through something as simple as walking your neighborhood. Praying while you do it.



Lizzie Burke 50:01

So, after this conversation, we hope that you think differently about evangelism that you see evangelism as more than just that moment of conversion that single moment. But you also view it as a process. And we kind of gave examples of what Jesus is as a process and as a single moment. So, this myth of evangelism is about a single moment it exists because so much of the stories we hear are about getting to that single moment at an event or at a camp. And we, you know, we said, what's true? Well, some people can really pinpoint a moment of conversion. And that's beautiful. But many views it as a journey, and we got to listen to an amazing interview with the Finu lype with Passion to Reach Ministries. And we realized there are a few problems with this myth that have to do with not sharing evangelism stories as often because we feel like they have to be that climactic moment of decision. And we talked about the pressure that focusing on evangelism as a single moment has on people because Christians feel like they need to get people to that moment of decision. And then people can even question there, you know, own conversion, because maybe they didn't feel something really emotional. And then we can confuse our relationship with evangelism and discipleship as we work out our salvation.

Ben Jack 51:15

So, Lizzie it has been really fun to talk about this myth today. And probably out of all of the ones we've talked about. So far, the closest that's that there is to one being true, because there's a lot of truth to it, even while some of that can be a little bit problematic at times as we've explored, but because of that, I think we need to double down next time out on a really juicy myth. So, what are we going to get stuck into next time?

Lizzie Burke 51:35

Yes, I am excited for our next episode is the final myth. We'll be talking about that evangelism is regularly celebrated in churches. So, tune in, we hope you've been really changed by these conversations.

Kaedyn Lashway 51:47

Hey, this is Kaedyn Lashway, From the City Gospel Movements team. We create a discussion questions for each episode for personal reflection, or to use as a small group. You can download this guide for free at evangelismmyths.com or click the link in the episode description.

Kevin Palau 52:05

Thank you for listening to another episode of the City Gospel Movements podcast, a ministry of the Luis Palau Association, you can subscribe to our podcast on Apple Spotify and Google Play. Leave us a review or reach out to us on social media to keep the conversation going. You can find us on Instagram and Facebook at City Gospel Movements.

Lizzie Burke 52:24

We'd like to give a special thanks to the Luis Palau Association team to Joy Bongiorno for producing this episode. Kevin Palau for your radio voice intro, Stephanie Wieber You're the boss. No literally,



Spencer Reed for listening to hours of interviews and being a Google Doc ninja and Kaedyn for running the show and telling us what sounds good and what doesn't. From the Message Trust. Shout out to Peter Thompson for responding to emails quicker than Ben Jack and for not getting fired. And finally, this series would have not happened without our interviewees, Charlie, Jonathan, Caitlin, Paul, Christine, Jim, Rob, Marissa, Lydia, Manny, Sally and Bruce. Thank you.

