**Glorifying God Through Social Media**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday August 6, 2023

Text: Matthew 28:18-20 Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:17

**Intro**

1. The topic of using social media engenders many emotions amongst Christians because we are all too familiar with the dangers and consequences.
2. Social Media is a tool and a tool used for the right reason and function can also be awesome!
3. We can use social media to glorify God!
   1. Who here uses social media personally?
   2. Our group uses a website, Facebook and YouTube and has generated visitors, Bible studies, and new converts.
4. Evangelism throughout time has required dedication and persistence because the distractions of the world are many and it is easy to become discouraged.
   1. Daunting task: After His resurrection and before His ascension Jesus commanded His disciples to “Go” and “Teach” the lost of the whole world (Matthew 28:18-20)!
   2. Jesus had given His “mission Statement” (to use modern vernacular) in Luke 19:10 when He said, *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost”* (NASU).
   3. Now at the close of His earthly ministry, after the work for the salvation of men’s souls was accomplished, He gives the task of spreading that news to His apostles and disciples.
5. Some people look at the ‘Great Commission” to “Go” and “Teach” in Matthew 28:18-20 as a mission belonging to the disciples of the 1st century *only* so they feel the work of preaching and teaching is done.
   1. While Jesus personally commanded His apostles with that undertaking, a closer examination of further instructions will show us that the command to “Go” and “Teach” applies to all saints throughout all time, until Christ comes and calls the end of time!
   2. Paul instructed Timothy in his second letter to him, *“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”* (II Timothy 2:2). Timothy was to teach other men who would teach others and so on and so on. The Greek word he uses for “men” is *anthrōpos [anth'-ro-pos] (Strong’s G444),* which describes “mankind, human being (both male and female).”
   3. Further in the same chapter Paul instructs Timothy again on the role of saints saying, *“The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will”* (NASU: II Timothy 2:24-26).
      1. In verse 24 Paul said “The Lord’s bondservant must…be able to teach.” Notice he didn’t say the preacher, or the elders or deacons, or only the men, but he said the “Lord’s bondservant” must be “able to teach.” He is saying it is the responsibility of every saint to be able to teach!
   4. In fact the Apostle Peter addressed the issue of readiness when he said, *“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence”* (I Peter 3:15).
   5. Paul says all saints are to be “able to teach” and Peter says all saints are “always” to be ready to give a defense (that is an answer) for the hope within us.
   6. The goal of our teaching from II Timothy 2:24-26 is to help the lost *“come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”*
   7. That was Jesus’ mission (Luke 19:10) and it is our mission still today!
6. While not all saints have the ability to or should publicly teach (James 3:1), all saints can teach through their influence and example. *Social Media is a great tool for such a thing!*
7. After careful consideration of these passages, we can see the responsibility to “Go” and “Teach” was not just to the 1st century saints but that we have a charge still today in the 21st century to teach the gospel and bring mankind closer to God!
8. **Evangelism in the 21st Century**
9. Saints over time have used the technology of their day to get God’s word out to others, from having to copy the gospels and epistles of the N.T. by hand to mass printing on the printing press, to being able to send a document or file around the world at the touch of a button!
10. Let’s look at the methods and tools at our disposal today and we will see many of them mirror that of the 1st century, while many others are drastically different.
11. **“Go”**

* Walking (still an effective method of transportation)
* Ride: Various animals (many countries and cultures still use animals for travel)
* Ride/Drive: Wagons, carriages/coaches (many countries and cultures still use these)
* Water Travel: Boats, ships (though more technologically advanced, still available)
* Ride: Public Transportation (buses, subways, trains, etc.)
* Ride/Drive: Bicycles, Automobiles (cars, trucks, motorcycles, etc.)
* Air Travel (Fly): Planes, helicopters, etc. (perhaps the most drastic change in travel availability from the 1st century!)
* Phones: Landlines, cell phones (mobile) – can connect long distances
* Internet: Blurs the lines between “Go” and “Teach” because one can connect with a person or group of persons all around the world with the touch of a button!

1. **“Teach”**

* Preaching and teaching: One-on-one studies, group studies, public places, house to house
* Letters: Personal and general in wide circulation (still available today)
* Visual Aides/props: Overheads and PowerPoint
* Debates and gospel meetings
* Print: Various publications like books, tracts, magazines, articles, etc.
* Internet:
  + Blogs, websites, resource websites, church websites, etc.
  + Video: Skype (video chat, etc.); YouTube (How-to-videos, sermons, singings, singing instruction, etc.)
  + Social Media (Apps, Email, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google, Chat bots, Tik-Tok, Podcasts, insert-your-preference-here-, comments on articles, chat rooms, etc.)

1. The internet and social media have opened opportunities…
   1. Opportunities for the dangers and consequences of sin, for sure, but…
   2. Also opportunities to reach people across the world to tell them of Jesus!
2. Modern day saints are without excuse if they are not utilizing these tools in evangelism to “Go” and “Teach!”
3. **Glorifying God Through Social Media**
4. Just because all these tools exist today, it doesn’t mean one has to use them all. With so much data at our fingertips we ought to be using what is available to us, and use them to teach the lost!
5. Imagine if Paul, Peter and John or any of the New Testament writers had access to our technology and what they might have accomplished!
6. While social media can be a tool for both good and evil, it is our responsibility to ensure that we use it as a means to glorify our Heavenly Father.
   1. **Exemplifying Christ-like Character** 
      1. Scripture teaches us that as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to emulate His character and love in every aspect of our lives, including our online interactions.
      2. In **Matthew 5:16**, Jesus says, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”
      3. Our conduct on social media should reflect the love, grace, and humility of Christ. Let us be mindful of our words, refraining from engaging in gossip, slander, or divisive discussions.
      4. Instead, let our posts be encouraging, uplifting, and edifying to others, pointing them towards the love of Christ.
      5. Our example must be guarded because, when using social media, other people who we may or may not know observe our likes and dislikes, our interests and the way we communicate with others.
      6. Far too many Christians associate themselves with things not becoming a child of God, whether intentional or not.
      7. When people see your profile and either see you profess to be a Christian or know you to be one and also see you hit “Like” or “Share” on something with profanity or inappropriate content, it sends a terrible message or flat out causes one to lose credibility!
      8. Be careful what you post and share: Does it contain profanity, immodesty, or behavior not becoming a Christian? Don’t take the 2nd look!
      9. Post and share encouragement, modesty and family fun. Let your example and influence on social media glorify God!
      10. Saints need to remember that whether we are face-to-face with people or online, we are called to be lights in the darkness, to be “blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” **(Philippians 2:15).**
      11. Would you say in person what you are about to write or comment on? Let your light shine even from a distance and shine for the love of Jesus!
   2. **Teaching the Gospel** 
      1. Social media provides us with a unique platform to reach a vast audience with the message of salvation. It is the “shouting from the marketplace corner of the 1st c.!”
      2. In Mark 16:15, Jesus commissions His disciples, saying, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”
      3. We can use social media as a tool for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, posting scripture verses, testimonies, and thought-provoking messages that draw people closer to God.
      4. By utilizing these platforms to spread the hope and truth found in the Word of God, we actively participate in God's mission of reconciliation and bring glory to His name.
      5. Our faith and love ought to also be seen in the way we comment on other people’s posts or articles. If others see us say inappropriate things, such as using profanity or unloving words, then speak of loving God it looks hypocritical!
      6. Whether face-to-face or on the internet we are to speak “the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) and “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification” (Eph. 4:29).
      7. That is easier said than done, and hard to control at times. Sometimes it is very easy to forget what we are and Who we represent when combatting error or fighting against the moral decay of our society and nation.
      8. But we must remember the words we use reflect on who we profess to be. Let us not use words unbecoming a child of God!
      9. As Christians we are to be “able to teach” (II Tim. 2:24), but as we teach we are to be gentle, even when correcting error (II Tim. 2:25).
      10. Teaching online: “Is there an app for that?” The answer is there are many! Whether you use a smartphone or social media, there are apps that can help you study the Bible and share it with others!
      11. Many preachers and teachers use Podcasts, YouTube, and even Tik-Tok (I caution against using Tik-Tok for any reason for a host of reasons!) to teach and preach. I am not a podcast person but have been involved in at least three on three separate occasions.
   3. **Practicing Discernment and Wisdom** 
      1. While social media can be a source of valuable information and connection, it can also be a breeding ground for falsehood, temptation, and distractions.
      2. Proverbs 4:23 exhorts us, saying, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.”
      3. As believers, we must exercise discernment and wisdom in our social media usage and time.
      4. Let us be cautious of the content we consume and share, ensuring that it aligns with God’s values and promotes righteousness, and that we dwell on what is pure, honorable and excellent (Philippians 4:8).
      5. **Pray before you post.** I need God’s wisdom to communicate in such a way that brings honor and glory to Him. If Paul asked for prayers on his behalf so that he could proclaim the gospel boldly (Ephesians 6:18-20) then there are times we should pray before we post!
      6. **Encourage others.** Some of the greatest encouragements I receive come from people on social media. I am so thankful for the many Christians who use this platform in obedience to the Word of God: “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing” (I Thessalonians 5:11).
      7. **Remember who is watching you on social media.** The words we Christians say to one another and to others are on display for the world to see (Matthew 5:16). This platform is an incredible opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ in action, which brings us to my next suggestion...
      8. **Use social media as an opportunity to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit.** God is doing great works through those in social media who strive to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit every time they post: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).
      9. **Respond with a gentle spirit!** Let our desire be to win hearts rather than to win arguments (Colossians 3:12-15).
7. Let us not become apathetic to our teaching the gospel, but use the technology at hand to “Go” and “Teach” the lost of the world!
8. **Further Ways to Use Social Media to Glorify God**
9. Give Service Times And Information
   1. Our congregation’s Facebook Page is updated weekly with the times of service, classes, and the sermon topics.
10. Give A Preview Of What To Expect At Your Congregation
    1. We use our Facebook Page to promote (advertise) upcoming Gospel Meetings with times and dates, Singings, and weekly information.
11. Quote Worship Lyrics From A Song You Sing
    1. Many brethren on their own social media accounts, Facebook, Instagram, etc. sometimes post lyrics from a hymn that struck a chord with them. These can be uplifting and encouraging posts!
12. Share A Link To Your Live Stream
    1. Our congregation’s FB Page and weekly email posts the Livestream link to our YouTube Channel.
    2. Some of our members also post the Livestream link, and also the finished link (edited to just the sermon and posted to our website) later in the week.
13. Share A Clip From Sunday’s Message
    1. The Admins of our Facebook Page update FB, our website, and YouTube with the video and audio of the sermon weekly.
    2. Some members also share it, or take a clip of a part they especially liked or related to and share that. These can be uplifting and encouraging posts!
    3. Just remember the fruit of the Spirit when responding to some Comments!
14. Share A Quote From A Recent Message
    1. Some members, especially our Note-takers, will share some sentence or thought they took away from the past Sunday as they reflect on it during the week.
    2. These can be uplifting and encouraging posts! Again, remember the fruit of the Spirit when responding to some Comments!
15. Recap Exciting Moments From Sunday
    1. When we have baptisms, many members will try to take photos or videos and then we post those to our congregation’s Facebook Page.
    2. Members will share and post those to their Pages. It creates opportunities to teach and show the biblical way to respond to the gospel in obedience!
16. Express Gratitude For Answered Prayers and for Teachers
    1. Not just baptisms, but some members share news from the announcements, either asking for prayers or giving thanks to God for answered prayers!
    2. Some members give a public shout-out to a Bible Class teacher who really sparked a thought within them or answered a long-held question, or just for a great class!
17. Quote A Meaningful Bible Verse
    1. Sometimes our FB Page Admins will post a verse as well as many of our members post Bible verses on their Pages. These are ways to make positive and encouraging posts!
18. Promote Events And Classes
    1. Our FB Page promotes the weekly Bible Classes and their topics and times, both for Sunday morning and Wednesday night.
    2. We offer them on Zoom as well, so sometimes people ask for the link and join with us!
    3. We also promote Singings and Gospel Meetings in advance.
19. Share Articles or Podcasts
    1. Many members share links to articles, or just copy and paste the articles that are relevant to Scripture, such as a latest archaeology find or dig. Others post links to podcasts to provoke thought and contemplation.
    2. Some link podcasts they liked and wanted to share with others.
20. These are just a few of the many ways we can use social media to glorify God!

**Conclusion**

1. In all things that we do, remember who we are and Who we represent!
2. As we navigate the digital landscape, let us remember that our purpose remains the same as it was in the 1st century: to glorify God in all that we do. To teach and save the lost!
3. Social media can be a powerful tool when used with wisdom, intentionality, and a desire to honor our Heavenly Father.
4. By exemplifying Christ-like character, teaching the Gospel, and practicing discernment, we can transform these virtual spaces into avenues of God's grace, love, and truth.
5. May we commit ourselves to use social media as a means of spreading the light of Christ and bringing glory to His holy name.
6. As we do so, let us remember the words of Colossians 3:17, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”
7. Let us know the dangers and be aware of the consequences of using social media in an ungodly way, and let us choose instead to use this great tool and resource to reach out to the whole world and glorify God!
8. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized into His name!
9. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
10. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!