

introduction to *Open Air*

If you've never been to an "open air" session, the things you're going to see could shock you. Between foul-mouthed hecklers, angry shouting unbelievers, "intellectual" skeptics, and demon-possessed individuals... suffice it to say that it's much different than a Sunday morning at church. **But** when we speak to crowds in the "open air," we follow directly in the footsteps of The Master -- Jesus. We also follow John the Baptist, Paul, Peter, the disciples, John Wesley, Whitefield, Spurgeon, and others.

A good "open air" session can reach more unsaved people with the Gospel than the average church does in a year. It can touch and plant seeds in the hearts of people who would never darken the door of a church. If you want to be a fisher of men, you have to go where the fish are. They don't come to you -- you have to go to them. That's why Jesus said, "Go..." (Mark 15:16). Thank God the disciples didn't stay in the Upper Room and pray that sinners come to them -- instead they went "open air."

Our Goal

"Open air" is different than the way we interact with unbelievers on a one-to-one basis. When we interact one-on-one, we want to be winsome and friendly. But "open air" is not "friendship evangelism" -- in "open air" it is not our goal to get the unbelievers to like us and become our

friends. Our goal is to help **as many people as possible** (in the short time we have) to **see their true state before a Holy God and their need of Jesus Christ**.

The First Part

To accomplish the "**as many people as possible**" part it's important that we draw a large crowd so as many people as possible will hear the Gospel. One of the ways we draw a crowd is by asking trivia

The great benefit of open-air preaching is that we get so many newcomers to hear the Gospel who otherwise would never hear it. The Gospel command is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), but it is so little obeyed that one would imagine that it ran thus, "Go into your own place of worship and preach the Gospel to the few creatures who will come inside." The verse, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in" (Luke 14:23), although it constitutes part of a parable, is worthy of being taken very literally.

- Charles H. Spurgeon

questions and giving away our own money. If we can get people to stop and listen to the everlasting Gospel just by giving some of our money away, then let's do it! How much money is the soul of one person worth? It's worth all we have, and more. Another way we draw a crowd is by being a little controversial and "edgy." We pray for hecklers with loud voices, and we encourage them to raise their voices. The

raised voice of one heckler may draw 30 or 40 people who wouldn't otherwise stop to listen...and those people will all hear the Gospel.

The Second Part

To accomplish the "**see their true state before a Holy God and their need of Jesus Christ**" part it's vital that we present the uncompromising Biblical Gospel. We do not tell unrepentant sinners that God

"loves them and has a wonderful plan for their lives"... instead we speak directly and forcefully about subjects such sin, righteousness, judgment, and eternal Hell. We use the Ten Commandments as a mirror to help the unbeliever see their true state before God -- God is not their "big buddy in the sky" as they believe, they are actually under His wrath because they have sinned (broken His Holy Law -- the Ten Commandments-1 John 3:4). We want them to understand, "he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). We want to alarm them about the state of their soul, and help them develop a fear of the Lord that will be the

beginning of wisdom. And **after** we've done that... **then** we tell them about the incredible sacrifice of Jesus Christ on their behalf. Once they understand their need for a Savior... **then** we explain that if they will repent and place their faith in Jesus, that God will wipe away every sin they've ever committed and grant them the gift of everlasting life.

