

The story is told of an artist commissioned to create a painting that would illustrate the idea of evangelism. He set about the task by filling a large canvas with a seascape. A dark sky loomed overhead, and lightning bolts punctuated the scene. The waves and wind battered a ship with its masts shattered and bow sinking into the inky depths. Scattered about the stormy waters were sailors struggling to survive. One seaman was set apart from the others. He alone clung with both hands to a large, rugged rock rising from the waves. While his friends' faces were marked with panic, his wore a serene look of peace.

After finishing the work, the artist stared at the canvas for a long while. He knew that he had depicted the idea of Christ as our Rock – our only hope in the storm – but something was still missing. Taking up his brush again, he painted over one hand and arm belonging to the sailor clinging to the rock and repainted that section. Now, one hand of the sailor clung firmly to the solid rock, but the other hand was extended toward his friends offering hope those who would perish without help.

When we pray for those who are outside a relationship with Christ, we are praying that they would know the Rock that rises above the tide of sin. We pray that God would open their understanding, break the bondage of Satan and reveal to them their great need for Jesus (2 Timothy 2:25-26). Our prayers do not end with asking that others will see (2 Corinthians 4:3-4) but must include a willingness to boldly obey in making Christ known. Paul writes to the Colossian church, *“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison-- that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak”* (Colossians 4:2-4). We pray for the receptivity of others; we pray for the readiness of ourselves. We reach out, with prayer for the lost and with boldness in the gospel, so that others will know the security of the Rock as we do.

**Prayer prompt: Pray for those who do not know Christ, that God would...**

- **Connect them to genuine believers and the simplicity of the gospel (Romans 1:16; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).**
- **Disconnect them from the influences that are pulling them from Christ (John 7:47-52).**
- **Expose the lies they have believed that have kept them from Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4).**
- **Show mercy and turn them from darkness to light (Luke 19:10).**
- **Convict them of sin, God's coming judgment and their need for a Savior (John 3:18; 16:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Ephesians 2:1).**
- **Grant them a heart of repentance that turns fully to Christ (2 Timothy 2:25-26; 2 Peter 3:9).**

**Pray for followers of Christ, that God would...**

- **Give us hearts of love and compassion for the lost (Matthew 9:27-28; John 4:35; Romans 5:5).**
- **Help us to represent Christ well in our words and actions (Psalm 19:14; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Timothy 1:17).**
- **Empower us to effectively evangelize and make disciples of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).**
- **Lead us to be devoted to prayer, relying on God (Acts 1:14; Romans 12:12).**

*Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. - Ephesians 6:18-20*

*Prayer is crucial in evangelism: Only God can change the heart of someone who is in rebellion against him. No matter how logical our arguments or how fervent our appeals, our words will accomplish nothing unless God's Spirit prepares the way. - Billy Graham*

*At the end of the day, the biggest obstacle to evangelism is Christians who don't share the gospel. - Albert Mohler*