

The Heart That Cares For The Souls of Men

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I heard the late Manly Beasley relate the following story, he said there was a certain cliff in Mexico where you could stand and gaze down at a certain village of Mexican workers. These people worked down in the riverbed in their corn patch and there they grow their corn and when the corn is ready to harvest they shuck it and after it dries out, they'll take it and grind it. They'll grind it into corn meal and make tortillas and then take these tortillas down to the open market and there sell the tortillas for a few pesos and put them away, come back out to their houses and there they will off of lizards. They'll go out among the rocks and catch these huge long lizards and they'll eat those lizards and save that money for a special day.

A special day when they will start a pilgrimage to a wooden statue of Jesus up in the mountains. The terrain to that statue is so bad that most of the people have to crawl on their hands and knees a couple of miles and by the time they get to that statue they are bleeding all over. Standing beside the statue is a priest and that priest is saying, "Now, you love God, give to him because you show your love to God by giving." And those people will reach into their little bags and purses and pull those pesos out, stained in their own blood and drop that money into a slit in the top of the head of that wooden Jesus.

Then the priest prays and when he is finished, the priest will yell, "You have not given enough. Look, Jesus is sad. He is crying." And all the time there will be another priest hidden in that hollow statue with a little hand pump. He will pump water to where it comes out of human made tear ducts and that statue is crying. And there those people will give all they have, crawl down that mountain and go back to eating lizards, growing their corn to make more tortillas to get more pesos to go and give to a dead god that cannot move or hear. And they are sincere, honest and sacrificial in their service to this idol which they serve.

Dear friends, this message today is a burden on my heart for I fear that we today with our brand of evangelism have committed two crimes. The first is that we have gotten out our pocket knives and have whittled out ourselves a little wooden Jesus who we can serve on our terms. And the second crime we have committed is that we have what today is evangelism, taking salvation out of the hands of God and placed it in the hands of man.

If we do any witnessing on a regular basis at all, many today present a Jesus that does not resemble the God of the Bible. We sneak up on people and catch them unawares and get

them to accept this Jesus without telling them of any demands of the Lord Jesus Christ on his followers. We fail to mention that to have Jesus means you must have him as Lord and that he requires repentance towards God and faith in him that when we truly are saved self is dethroned and another is enthroned there with all his rights and claims on our lives, that to be saved means a life of surrender to our Master and utter obedience to his commands in a life of discipleship where we take up the cross and follow him. But we, I fear, have diluted the true gospel message to make it more palatable and acceptable to man. And, sadly, many professing Christians today have no regular witness to the lost at all.

My message today is entitled “The Heart That Cares For The Souls of Men” and my text is from Luke chapter 10, verse 2, “Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great but the laborers are few. Pray ye that therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.”

Like I said, this message is a burden upon my heart for the days in which we live are the end-times. These are the last days friends and the night is far spent. It’s been estimated that 83 people a minute die apart from Christ. Do the math and that comes to almost 5,000 people an hour. That means each and every day 120,000 people enter a Christless eternity. That’s over 800,000 people a week who perish without Christ. Every month that adds up to 3.3 million people falling into the torments of hell. Think of that. Over 3 million souls a month fall into hell and its agonies. Do you realize that through the course of a year over 40 million people populate the regions of hell. Let ten years go by and another 400 million souls are shut up in hell to scream in agony.

Now think in your mind of how all the generations since the time of Adam and add up all the hordes of people who have died apart from Christ and occupy hell right at this moment and it’s not hard to see that hell is a very crowded place. Right this minute somewhere on this planet over 80 people are dying and landing in hell.

Let me ask you friend, when was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? When did you witness to a lost soul last? Was it today? Yesterday? Last week? Last month? Think about it? Who was the last person you shared your faith with? When was the last time you handed out a gospel tract and told someone about the love of Christ towards sinful man? Has a year passed without your witness to another? When was the last time you told somebody about the free grace of God? When last did you tell a fellow sinner about the mercy, pardon and eternal life offered in the gospel of the Son of God? When did you tell them about Jesus and the heart that cares for the souls of men?

Dear friend, if you are a Christian then you are an ambassador for Christ and it is your duty to carry the treasure of the gospel and tell others about this good news. You are to go out to the lost sinners and invite, entreat, require, command and compel them to come in. It is your duty to tell others about the pearl of great price. Jesus said, “The harvest is truly great but the laborers are few.”

The time is short, friend. Your life is but a vapor that appears for a little while and then disappears. How you have spent your time on this earth will impact eternity. All that will matter when we stand before the judgment seat is how many sinners did we share the gospel with and how faithful we were to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only one life will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

This message today is an alarm to awaken you to your duty as a believer in sharing your faith with others and it is a call to share that faith with the full counsel of God and call men and women and girls and boys to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

You friend, should have a heart that cares for the souls of men. If you don't and call yourself a Christian then repent now and ask the Lord of the harvest to send you into his harvest field with the gospel of the Son of God. Your pocket or purse should be loaded with gospel tracts and they should be handed out throughout the day. The fact you don't hand out gospel tracts may reveal that you do not like rejection so you don't hand out tracts. But Christ suffered rejection while in the flesh and he hung naked on an ignoble cross for sinful man.

How can some today call themselves a church when the carpet in their sanctuary isn't stained with the tears of broken hearted Christians praying over the lost in their community. That's your only business friends, to bring in the lost. Why are you here? Why did Christ save you? Are you living a self-centered life or a selfless life spent for others? How can you keep Christ to yourself and not share him with others? How did you come to Christ but had not someone told you about him. A heart that cares for the souls of men lives so that others may live.

When you stand at the Bema seat and your life is reviewed by the one who has eyes of fire, what will your life reflect? Will it be gold, silver and precious stones of a life lived on the full stretch for God? Or will you stand there knee deep in the ashes of a wasted life and bend over and scoop up those ashes and place them into his nail pierced hands.

I grieve over the fact that I failed to witness to a man who worked on my house. I was too preoccupied to share the gospel with him. A month later I was reading the newspaper and his face stared out at me from the obituary column. He was a young man who died suddenly and I failed to tell him about Jesus and how he came down to earth so that sinners could go up to heaven. That man's face still haunts me still. Oh friends, when we get to heaven how we will wish that we witnessed more for our Savior. Never miss an opportunity to share the gospel with others, to invite them in.

There is a story about D. L. Moody which I can't get out of my mind. Moody was in Chicago preaching to his congregation and he ended the service without giving a public invitation, rather he told them to go home and think about it and they would talk next week about what to do with Christ. But next week never came for many in his congregation that dreadful night, perished. It was 1871 and the night of the terrible Chicago fire where the entire city became an inferno and thousands lost their lives.

Listen to Moody's words about his deep regret of not giving a gospel invitation that terrible night. "What a mistake, I have never dared to give an audience a week to think of their salvation since. If they were lost, they might rise up in the judgment against me. I remember Mr. Sanke singing and how his voice rang when he came to that pleading verse, 'Today the Savior calls, for refuge fly, the storm of justice falls, and death is nigh.' I have hard work to keep back the tears today. Twenty-two years have passed away and I have not seen that congregation since and I will never meet those people again until I meet them in another world. I have asked God many times to forgive me for telling people that night to take a week to think it over. And if he spares my life I will never do it again. One lesson I learned that night which I've never forgotten and that is when I preach, I press Christ upon the people then and there."

Oh friends, there are so many missed opportunities each day where we fail to share the story of the good news of the Son of God. You never know if your witness today will plant a gospel seed or water another seed already planted or that you will be the one to lead a soul to Christ after others have paved the way.

There's a story about a stewardess who was being witnessed to by a passenger on a plane and she replied, "You are the seventh person to tell me about Jesus this month." She went on to accept Christ from that recent gospel witness. The next week, she was on a plane that went down on 9/11.

Oh friend, you never know how important your witness for Christ may be to a person. You may not have the reward of seeing the fruit of your witnessing, but you are planting seeds. You may be number 5 or you may be number 7 in that person's conversion. It's always worthwhile to share Christ with others. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." How then, shall they call on him in whom they've not believed and how should they believe in him of whom they've not heard. And how should they hear without a preacher. Think of how you came to Christ. Someone told you about him either from the pulpit or pew. Oh friend, ask the Lord to give you a heart that cares for the souls of men.

I have given up many a night going door-to-door in neighborhoods sharing the gospel. I have the blessing of an active tract ministry for years. Handing out tracts is a wonderful way to tell others about the love of Jesus Christ who came to save sinners. A pen ministry is also a wonderful way to spread the good news of the gospel. Gospel literature will work while you are asleep.

But friends, not only is it our duty to tell about the love of Christ, but we must preach the full counsel of God. With all the claims of Christ, we must point sinners to the cross and preach about Jesus our sin substitute who cares for the souls of men. And we must warn men to flee from the wrath to come and that repentance is necessary to true salvation. We must show poor sinners that Christ is Lord and anyone that desires him must submit to him as Lord, that they must throw down their shotgun of rebellion and surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ on their lives. That self must be dethroned and Christ enthroned

there. For to be a follower of a crucified Christ we must take up our cross and live crucified lives all the Father's glory.

Listen to this story, friends. There's a big Baptist church in Memphis, TN and one of the former pastors was R. G. Lee. He is known for preaching a famous sermon called "Payday Someday." Well, there was a member in Dr. Lee's congregation, an attorney who had to be out of town on business frequently but no matter where this lawyer went he made sure to catch a train back to Memphis on Saturday night so that he could listen to R. G. Lee preach on Sunday. He'd love to hear that man preach. Well, this lawyer got cancer and he was in the hospital dying and he called for his pastor to come to his bedside. Dr. Lee entered the hospital room whose window overlooked the Mississippi River. The lawyer told R. G. Lee, "I want you to know how much I've enjoyed your preaching through the years and I never missed a Sunday if I could help it. I lie here dying with only a few weeks left to live and I want to reprimand you sir, for never telling me how to be saved. You never preached the cross to where I could see it. You never put the blood out there where I could reach. I am dying and I will die in my sins and I chastise you sir, for your lack of preaching the true gospel."

R.G. Lee left that man's hospital room with his head down feeling berated and guilty as charged. It was now dark outside as he walked down to the banks of the Mississippi River. There he got down on his knees in the mud, getting his white suit pants dirty in the process while he dipped his hands in the muddy river. He knelt there awhile reflecting on what this dying man had told him and right there and then he promised God from that point forward he would preach the cross and the blood and he changed his message that night. And in three weeks time there was a move of grace at that church and three blocks of downtown Memphis were shaken with revival.

You see, friends, the heart that cares for the souls of men will be honest with them. The heart that cares for the souls of men will not dilute the gospel to make it more palatable to sinners. The heart that cares for the souls of men will preach Christ and him crucified. The heart that cares for the souls of men will speak the ruin, redemption and the need for repentance and regeneration.

Oh friends, those Mexican farmers served a dead wooden Jesus because they were ignorant of the true gospel message of grace. Those farmers needed someone with a heart that cares for the souls of men to share the good news of the gospel of the Son of God with them.

But there are so many false gospels today and not enough true witnesses for Christ to declare the true gospel. That's why it's so important for each of us to actively witness for Christ on a daily basis and tell poor sinners about Jesus who cares for the souls of men so much that he hung upon a bloody cross for sinful man.

We are to invite, entreat, require, command and compel the lost to come in. We are not to be silent followers of the Lamb but vibrant and active witnesses for him who loved us enough to die for us.

The Apostle Paul declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes." Listen friends the power of his glory and his grace is seen in the conversion of sinners. Let us be like Paul and not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ because when we fail to be witnesses for Christ, we fail in our duty to proclaim him to our generation. The Apostle Paul had a heart that cared for the souls of men.

Paul was a Christ intoxicated man who could not live unless he preached the gospel. Let us follow in his footsteps and boldly proclaim the gospel of the Son of God to this lost and perishing generation. Listen friends, your witness today has impact more than you'll ever know this side of eternity.

Let me close with the following story which highlights our duty to be daily witnesses for Christ Jesus. D. L. Moody was a soul winner long before he became a famous evangelist. Moody was converted in the back room of a shoe store in Boston where he worked as a clerk. He was a teenager at the time. His Sunday school teacher had a great burden for him and he nervously made his way down that street and went on a God-sent errand that day to witness to young Moody.

Well God did his work that day in D. L. Moody's heart and his life was never the same again. Soon after his conversion, Moody moved to Chicago and there he began to share Christ with every citizen in that great metropolis. He refused to go to bed at night without sharing his faith in Christ.

One night, he got into bed around midnight and he realized he had not witnessed to a lost soul that day. It was drizzling rain outside but Moody got up out of bed, put on his coat and went through the night. There was a man leaning on a lamp post and Moody walked up to him and asked him if he were a Christian. The man was offended and cursed Moody out and called him "crazy Moody," that was the nickname that the citizens of Chicago gave Moody, "crazy Moody" because he would stop anybody on the street any time and ask them if they were a Christian and share his faith.

Well, after Moody asked the man if he were a Christian, the man flew into a rage, doubled up his fists and cursed Moody. Moody replied, "I'm very sorry if I have offended you." "Mind your own business," roared the man. "That is my business," Moody replied as he walked away into the night going home to his bed.

Several nights later there was a knock on Moody's door, it was around 2 a.m. Moody got up to answer the door and to his astonishment there was the man who had cursed him for talking to him about Jesus as he leaned against the lamp post. Moody asked him, "What do you want at this late hour?" "I want to become a Christian," was the reply. "I'm very sorry," said the man, "I haven't had any peace since that night you spoke to me. Your words have haunted and troubled me. I couldn't sleep last night and I thought I would come and get you to pray for me." That man accepted Christ that night and then asked Moody what he could do for Christ. Moody put him to work in the Sunday school until

the Civil War broke out and that man was one of the first to be shot down, dying on the battlefield.

Oh friend, how can you keep the gospel to yourself? How can you not weep over the lost around you? Where are your prayers and your tears and your testimony to a dying world? Be like Moody and commit to sharing the gospel with others each day. These are indeed the last days and hell fills with the lost each hour. Ask God to make you a soul winner for him. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will give you a heart that cares for the souls of men.

Pray with me as we go to God right now.

Oh King of Glory, you died for me, you have a heart that cares for the souls of men. Forgive me for not telling my generation about your great love for sinful man. Oh Lord give me an ounce of Moody. Lord Jesus give me I pray today, a heart that cares for the souls of men. Help me to weep over them. Help me to reach them with your gospel. Help me to be a soul winner for thee. While I have breath in my body, let me proclaim you to my fellow man. Grant me this I pray right now in your holy name Lord Jesus. Amen.