

Call To Evangelism

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We will look today at the balance between the doctrine of election and our duty of evangelism. When I was a teenager, there was a Christian man who was my neighbor. He was a pastor and he reached out to me, befriended me and from his hands I received my first Bible. He knew I was living in a home where my parents weren't Christians and this man exhibited to me the love of Jesus. He had a concern for my soul. He went after me, so to speak, with the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ. He would bring me into his home for breakfast in the mornings and at his breakfast table, he introduced me to morning devotions and prayer, something I was quite unfamiliar with in my own home. I was an awkward teenager but this Christ-like man continually presented the loveliness of Jesus Christ to me and it had an impact upon me. Although many years have passed since that time, I can still hear his voice as he prayed over me in love and concern for my soul.

I want to encourage each of us here today to go and do likewise, to find a teenager and impact them with the gospel of the Son of God. I'm afraid we do not evangelize as we should and I won't embarrass you by making you raise your hands and asking how many of you have witnessed to someone within this past week or even the past month or yet alone, this past year. I will let the Holy Spirit convict your hearts of your lack of evangelism. Did not someone first tell you about Jesus? Why then, don't you witness for Christ on a regular basis or are you afraid of rejection? I believe it's because we've taken our eyes off of eternity. This world consumes our daily thoughts and time and people perish all around us and enter a Christ-less eternity and what have we done about it.

The title of my message this morning is "Call To Evangelism." I mentioned that we should go and find a teenager to impact with the gospel. I believe we don't evangelize because we have no plan for evangelism. We need a plan of action and a goal in mind. If we say, "focus on teenagers and bring them to Christ," then it's a clear plan of action. All we can do is bring people to Jesus for it is God who saves a person; God is sovereign in salvation.

The text I want to bring to the forefront of our minds today is from the book of Acts. You can turn in your Bibles there now. We will be in Acts 18:9-10. Allow me to read these to us now,

“9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.”

Paul was laboring in Corinth and Corinth was a wicked city full of idol worship and sexual immorality but people were getting saved left and right, God was working in the city of Corinth building his church.

Preceding our text in verse 8, we see a glimpse of the religious awakening occurring in Corinth at this time.

“8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

God will advance on earth up until the day of Christ's return. Jesus had already informed Paul of the great work to be done in that city. Notice in verse 10 and let me reread it to us now for this is my text for today, “For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.” What does the Lord mean by saying he has much people in this city? It's very clear to me that our Lord is telling Paul that Paul must get to work and actively preach the gospel in this wicked city of Corinth and get to work immediately.

Jesus imparts two important truths to Paul here: 1. he reminds Paul that, “For I am with thee.” Listen friends, we can't save anybody; God does the saving. I'm afraid in your day and mine with our brand of modern weak evangelism, we have taken salvation out of the hands of God and placed it in the hands of men. How many evangelists do I hear today say, “I preached at this church and I led 20-30 people to the Lord,” or, “I preached at this conference and a thousand people came to Christ and got saved.” All this boasting and bragging in our evangelism is complete nonsense. In the first place, how do we know that of the thousand people who responded to a gospel invitation, that any of them at all were truly converted?

George Whitfield was preaching in Boston in 1740 amidst the Great Awakening and he was preaching to vast crowds on Boston Common out in the open air to 20,000 hearers at a time. They would stand out there all morning to hear Whitfield proclaim the gospel of, “You must be born again.” After Whitfield was done preaching, one Boston minister approached him and asked, “Mr. Whitfield, how many converts have you had since you've been amongst us?” To which the great Whitfield replied, “I don't know, sir, but I will return to these parts in a year or so and look for the evidence of their salvation.” But we make our own converts today with our meager brand of evangelism.

But the great truth I want to bring before us today, friends, is this: our Lord tells Paul that he has much people in this city and that Paul must get out and go after them. The doctrine of election stands here before us in this text: God had people there chosen before the dawn of creation, chosen before the foundation of the world Ephesians declares. And

Paul, as an ambassador for Christ, must get on the go and go after them and bring them to Jesus. All we can do in evangelism is to bring people to Jesus so he can save them and God had already prepared hearts in this wicked city of Corinth to save a people to build his church and bring him glory.

It was Paul's job to do the work of an evangelist and it is our job as well. Each of us is a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ and does not God have a certain number of souls in this city to save? In this city here, God has much people in this city. What are we doing about it? Are we expecting them to walk through the door of our sanctuary on their own? Are we to sit here on our brains until someone walks through that door? Or are we to be active in our witness for Christ and go after them? Christ never intended Christianity to become a "sitting here" gospel but a "go and tell" gospel.

Jesus told all of his followers to go out and make disciples unto the ends of the earth. Are we doing it? What excuse do we have for not sharing our faith? Do you not have the two-fold promise of our Lord as well? "For I am with thee." He is with us as we witness. It is he who takes the preached word and makes it a hammer to break the rock in pieces. Only he can take the stony heart and turn it into a heart of flesh. But we must get out there and tell others about Jesus, warn them of their great danger of dying in their sins and being cast into a place of everlasting torment called hell.

We must inform sinful man of his duty of repentance. We must be like the Apostle Paul in this regard. Listen to his words from 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. Listen to the solemnity of this text,

"14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"

Our testimony for Christ Jesus, our witness for him will be the savor of life to some and to others, it will be a savor of death. They'll have no excuse for rejecting the gospel because we have presented it to them and brought them to Jesus and God in his sovereignty in salvation, will open the hearts of some Lydias whom he has chosen before the foundation of the earth. But the gospel must be proclaimed and brought to the people in this city. Chances are, they will just not wander into our churches and sit down and listen to us. We must, we will go out after them and bring people to Jesus so he can save them. We must actively be a savor of life and death to those whom we live amongst.

O dear friends, what a tragedy it will be at the Bema Seat, at the Judgment Seat of Christ when our lives are reviewed and all our witnessing and lack of witnessing is brought before the Lord of glory and presented on that day. How some of us will shrink in shame for our lack of preaching, for our lack of evangelizing, for our lack of reaching those in our communities and in this world with the gospel of the Son of God. Will we be

obedient now and faithful to our call of duty to go make disciples and reach this generation with the gospel? Or will we do nothing other than give a few dollars to missions now and then and let others do the work of reaching the lost with the gospel? Will we on that day have gold, silver and precious stones to present to the Lord of glory which reflect our obedience to the Great Commission? Or will we stand there knee deep in the wood, hay and ashes of a wasted life and bend over and press those ashes into his nail-pierced hands?

Dear friends, let's awake out of our slumber, out of our habits of squandering the time God has given us on entertainment and sports. We're told to redeem the time for the days are evil. Let me ask you: are our days evil? Is this present society slipping into the vilest moral mudslide in the history of mankind? Good is called evil and evil good. Perversions are the norm and holiness is intolerance. My, has the gold dimmed in our churches in our day. We are content to sit and let others do the work of evangelism and we expect the poor sinner just to walk through the front door of our church and hear us rather than actively go out into our community and reach the lost with the gospel of the Son of God. Repent of your lack, dear ones, repent of your lack before it's too late. You only have so many years left on this earth. For some, it may only be a matter of months. For others, a matter of days. How will you use your time as you live your life in this world before you die and your soul returns to the God who gave it?

“Only one life, twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.”

The second promise that we have from our Lord should encourage us to be more active in our witness for him. We have the assurance that God through election has a number of people waiting to hear the gospel of the Son of God so they can exercise repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. This alone should encourage us and spur us on. The doctrine of election is a call to action in regard to evangelism. Out we go, for God has much people in this city waiting to hear the glad tidings of how Jesus came down to earth so we could go up to heaven. It, indeed, is good news, is it not? Then why not share that good news with someone today. Why not share that good news with someone every day. Let us go out and seek sinners: find them in the highways and hedges and invite them and compel them to come in to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

So, how do we arm ourselves with the tools of the gospel? I keep gospel tracts in my car and on my person at all times. I'm a big believer in the usefulness of Christian literature, especially in the form of gospel tracts. I've gone to a printer and had some of my own messages put into tract form to where I can hand them out. I also keep copies of the gospel of John in my car, in my glove box, and I also have a Day-Timer, a leather carrying case but instead of having an organizer in there, I keep dozens of gospels of John and what I do is carry that with me into a restaurant and now I've got plenty of copies of the gospel of John to hand out. Each one of us should find a gospel tract we like and stuff copies of it in our purses and pockets to hand out throughout the day. Get some copies of the gospel of John, friends, and have those in your car or in your briefcase to give away to those in need who need to hear the good news. Many individuals are more

grateful to receive a copy of the Bible than they are a gospel tract so that's very useful. I stuff the gospels of John within tracts anyway.

One of the best ways to witness is to have a Scripture memorization routine where you are continually memorizing texts that are gospel invitations. One suggestion would be to download the app on iTunes called "Evangelism Awakening." It has a Scripture memory tool as well as an entire gospel presentation and an organized way to evangelize. It also presents the gospel in its purity and proper order and presents the lost with the great doctrines of the gospel which are ruin, redemption, repentance and regeneration. It's a great tool and I highly recommend it. I recommend it because I wrote it.

In addition to this, reach out to a young person that you know, perhaps a friend of your own children and encourage them with spiritual things: give them a Bible, invite them to church, have them come over for a meal and a devotion like my dear neighbor did for me when I was a teenager. But most of all, pray friends, pray for the lost. Weep over the lost in our community. Pray that the Lord will send you divine appointments. Pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit for to be an effective witness for Christ, we must be endued with power from on high.

The last thing we want to do is to make false converts of our own making. Listen friends, listen carefully to this last bit of advice: never tell someone they are now saved. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. I believe one of the main reasons Andrew Bonar, who was a hard-boiled Calvinist, why he worked with D. L. Moody who was an Arminian, was the fact that Moody told his workers the following. Moody said, "Don't ever tell a person they are saved. Only the Holy Spirit can do that." We should listen to Moody's advice. Our task as soul-winners is to bring people to Jesus. Look at the gospels, at how when a person had a need, they brought that person to Jesus: the friends of the crippled man cut a hole in the roof and let their friend down, they brought him to Jesus; when the blind beggar heard that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by he began to cry out to him and the text reads, "And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto him."

Our job is bringing men to Jesus, bringing women to Jesus, bringing boys and girls to Jesus. One touch from him is all they need. When Jesus was here in his earthly ministry as he passed through towns and villages, those who encountered him experienced change and that's what salvation is: change, being born again. You must be born again. But how will they hear without a preacher? Listen dear friends, I hope this message has encouraged your hearts to be more active in evangelism. We will either be a savor of life or a savor of death to those we witness to but witness we must. And always be encouraged by the words of our Lord as we go about evangelizing our town, "For I have much people in this city."