

ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

The Bob Jones University Lectures on Evangelism for 1958

by

Tom Malone, D.D.

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CHAPTER TWO

WHY THIS GENERATION SHOULD EVANGELIZE THE WORLD

TEXT: “NOW then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (II Corinthians 5:20).

In this great fifth chapter of Second Corinthians, we have five tremendous reasons why every believer should serve God with all his heart and soul.

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10).

2. The Terror of the Lord

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences” (II Corinthians 5:11).

3. The Love of Christ

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead” (II Corinthians 5:14).

4. The Changed Life

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17).

5. The Appointment as Ambassadors

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (II Corinthians 5:20).

If any Christian will carefully meditate upon these five soul-stirring truths, he will see what a heavy responsibility we have. We are God's ambassadors and representatives to make Jesus and His saving grace known to the ends of the earth. We have more equipment with which to get the job accomplished than any previous generation has ever had. We have the use of the radio, the television, the airplane, the printed page and many other advantages that even our previous generation did not enjoy.

With all these advantages, however, we still will not evangelize our generation, we will not win multitudes to Christ, and we will not please our Lord Jesus unless individual believers are stirred and moved to concentrated, consecrated, cooperative action. The evangelization of the world depends upon the church of today. God uses people! God needs real men and women today who have courage, faith and character. He needs men and women who are sold out to the gospel and who are willing to hazard their lives for the sake of that message, by God's infinite grace and power we succeed in evangelizing our generation, it will be done through personal evangelism or person to person contact.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us.”

Quite a good many years ago—I don't know exactly how many—something happened down in the state of Alabama. When I heard of it many years later, it was a blessing to my heart; but it didn't mean much to me then as it has come to mean in later years. It had to do with a Christian sowing the seed and seeking to win a lost soul to Jesus Christ.

I heard my grandfather tell of one of the greatest things that ever happened in his life. He died at the age of 92 years and went triumphantly to heaven. He and my grandmother were in their 70th wedding year. He had seen a lot of things happen; and he had seen a lot of the world. Not many people have seen 90 to 100 years of life such as he had.

When I was first converted, I heard my grandfather tell something that was a blessing to me to hear, and I'll never forget it as long as I live. He was an unsaved man until he was past 70; or at least he was living in sin and not right with God. He told me how, years ago when he was a younger man and strong and healthy, he took a crew of men and was building a section of the great Jackson highway that runs north and south right through the state of Alabama. He was away from home except on the weekends. They built little shacks by the side of the road and the men dwelt in just these little shacks while they were building the highway. My grandfather had one of his own where he slept at night and ate his meals—just a little shack like a tool shed.

One night after a hard day's work he was in that little shack. He was tired and was preparing something to eat. Immediately after he ate every night, he went to bed. Just as he was preparing supper, a fine-looking man whom he knew from the little town of Russellville, Alabama, walked in. He was a wonderful Christian man by the name of Scharnockle.

Mr. Scharnockle said to my grandfather, “Will, I came to talk to you about something I have on my heart.”

My grandfather didn't have any idea what this man had on his heart. Grandfather had been a sheriff and was well-known as an unsaved and wicked man, a man who was strong of body and felt no need of God.

Mr. Scharnockle said, "Will, I have come tonight to talk to you about Jesus Christ. I'm a Christian and I've been praying that you might be saved. A lot of people are afraid to talk to you, but I knew that with God's help I could come into this little shack tonight, sit down as a child of God and tell you what the Lord has done for me and how God saved my soul. I'm interested in you, and I know that you are not too wicked for God to save."

Grandfather didn't like it very much, but he said, "Scharnockle, this is not very good food. I don't know how to cook very well, but you sit down and eat with me."

This refined and wonderful Christian man sat at the table in the little shack and ate of the beans and very common food that my grandfather had fixed. They sat at the table and finally my grandfather said, "Well, you know I have to get up early. I have a hard day tomorrow, and I'm going to have to turn in, Scharnockle."

Mr. Scharnockle said, "If you don't mind, Will, I think I'll spend the night with you. I told my family I might not be home, and I think I'll spend the night here if you don't mind."

Grandfather answered, "Well, we sleep on pallets" (most of you don't know what a pallet is. It's just a blanket or something thrown on the floor). "If you can put up with it, then all right."

My grandfather threw a quilt over in one corner and a quilt over in another. He lay on one and Mr. Scharnockle on the other. The old kerosene lamp was blown out and they lay there in the dark.

Mr. Scharnockle told my grandfather about the love of Jesus for a sinner such as he. Grandfather lay in the dark hearing the gospel.

Years went by. Mr. Scharnockle died and went to heaven. Years ago when I was preaching as a young preacher in a little school building in north Alabama, my grandfather with my grandmother on his arm came down the aisle and publicly confessed Christ as their personal Saviour.

They united with the church, and until God took away much of his eyesight a short time ago, he read the Bible two or three hours a day and talked to everybody that came about the love of God. He read the New Testament through 28 times and The Old Book, as he called it, through several times before he died.

I start my message with that story because I have on my heart but one theme — the Christian as a witness and as a soul winner for Jesus Christ. If there is anything made plain in the New Testament, or in all the Bible for that matter, it is that God's most wonderful method of making Christ known to the ends of the earth is the method of one individual telling another.

It is a strange thing to me that it is so hard to get God's people to do this. The communists do it. That is the way communism has engulfed a large portion of the world. One communist has made a communist out of another man. That is the way political parties grow. There is no trouble about that. One democrat makes a democrat out of another man; one republican makes a republican out of another man. The Bible has made it clear that one Christian has God's grace and power in his life to make a Christian out of another man.

I would like to give you a few exciting reasons now why we should lend every energy and exert every possible effort to evangelize the entire world in our generation.

I. WE ARE COMMANDED TO DO SO IN THE WORD OF GOD

We find this command in many places in the Bible. **"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"** (Acts 1:8).

The parting command of Jesus to the disciples was, **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15). Notice the closing verse of the gospel of Mark, **"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following"** (Mark 16:20).

Yes, the early Christians **"went forth and preached everywhere"**! This command has never been withdrawn or changed, the church should still be going forth and preaching everywhere even until this good hour.

I heard a friend of mine tell sometime ago of a fine, strong, healthy country boy who got saved in his church. The parents of this boy were quite well to do. They owned hundreds of acres of land and the best of farm equipment. They had willed it all to this boy, their only son.

One day the boy said to his parents, "I have lost all interest in the farm and all this land and cattle and equipment. Since I have been saved, my thoughts are only for the souls of men. I must leave you and go away to a Christian school and study for the ministry."

The parents were heartbroken. They said, "Son, we had hoped to leave our fortune with you, and we had hoped that your name would always be on these buildings and that you would carry on our family traditions."

The parents went to see this preacher friend of mine and said, "You have ruined our boy. You have made a fanatic out of him. In fact, we think he has been affected mentally."

The preacher said to the parents, "Your boy is not ruined and he is not crazy. He has had a glimpse of Jesus who died for all his sins, and he has seen the lost multitudes of earth who have no Saviour, no Shepherd, and no hope. He has had a glimpse of eternity. He has had a heavenly vision; and he wants to be able to say when he comes down to the sunset of life, **'I was not disobedient to that heavenly vision.'**"

To show no interest in soul winning, to have no active part in world evangelism is to be guilty of the awful sin of disobedience. God's Word says, "**To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.**" If you know you ought to win souls and you are not winning them, then you are sinning against God and you are guilty of a flagrant violation of God's Holy Word!

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20).

II. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST EXCITES US TO WIN THE LOST

Out of the 7,959 verses in the 27 books of the New Testament, no less than 330 of them have direct reference to the fact that Jesus is coming back again.

1. *Jesus Himself said He would return.*

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

He also said in the 24th chapter of Matthew that He would come again. In this chapter, we have the inspired record of His longest prophetic discourse. In answer to the anxious inquiry of his disciples; as to "**what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world,**" He speaks with divine solemnity concerning the close of this age of their church. He rings down the curtain on this dispensation of grace. Meditate today, Christian friends, upon His words in Matthew 24:44, "**Therefore be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.**"

2. *The angels of heaven said the Lord Jesus would come back.*

The first chapter of the book of Acts tells of His ascension and gives this! account of the heavenly messenger who came down as He went up "**And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"** (Acts 1:10-11).

3. *Paul said Jesus would return.*

The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ literally saturates and permeates all of his letters.

To the Roman believers he wrote, "**And that, knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light"** (Romans 13:11, 12).

To the Corinthian believers he wrote, **“Behold, I shew you mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”** (I Corinthians 15:51, 52). Also to the Corinthian believers he wrote, **“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha (accursed at His coming)”** (I Corinthians 16:22).

To the Philippian believers he wrote, **“For our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”** (Philippians 3:20).

To the Thessalonian believers he wrote, **“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober”** (I Thessalonians 5:1-6).

To Timothy he wrote, **“I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords”** (I Timothy 6:13-15).

To Titus he wrote, **“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”** (Titus 2:13-14).

To the Hebrew believers he wrote, **“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry”** (Hebrews 10:36, 37).

4. *John said he would come again for he closes the canon of Sacred Scripture with these words: “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen”* (Revelation 22:20, 21).

We have not the time here to dwell on the imminency of His return except to say that the signs in the Bible, in the world, in the church, and in the Jew all point to the rapid close of the age in which God has permitted us to live and serve.

People ask the question, “Will anyone be saved after Jesus comes? The answer is, “Yes.” There will be people saved after the Lord Jesus has returned and taken His bride to be with Himself.

However, before anyone becomes too hopeful about this, let us see who those people are who will be saved. The Bible plainly teaches that there will be 144,000 Jews saved during the tribulation—12,000 from each of the twelve tribe of Israel. There are groups today who claim to be the 144,000, but such claims are too ridiculous and absurd for us to devote any time toward refuting them. In Revelation 7:4 we read, **“And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel”** (Revelation 7:4). Here we plainly see that this group which are saved in the tribulation are Israelites only.

Now there is another group saved in the tribulation also. We read of them in the seventh chapter of Revelation. John said, **“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, an power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out o great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white the blood of the Lamb”** (Revelation 7:9-14).

We cannot afford to be too dogmatic as to the identity of this group except to say that they are Gentiles. Some Bible students believe that they are people who never heard the gospel before the rapture and were preached to by the Jew who were saved during the tribulation. This seems to me to be the reasonable and practical interpretation of this passage. There is no reason to believe that any man or woman living today who has heard the Word of God and has had a chance to be saved and refused to accept Christ will ever be saved after Jesus comes again. It means simply this—the people of our generation whom we fail to win will be forever lost in Hell with never, no never, a chance to repent, believe and be saved. As far as our generation is concerned, it is now or never!

During the first year of my Christian life, I heard a gifted man speak on the subject of the second coming of Christ. The power of God was upon him as he preached. He did not deal in technicalities; he blew the trumpet on the fact that Jesus would return to earth suddenly, unexpectedly and without further warning.

He showed from the Scripture how that only the saved would be raptured at His coming. He stirred my heart, and I became burdened about my loved ones who were lost. I spent sleepless night and troublesome days. I had horrible thoughts of Jesus' coming at any moment and taking me up and leaving my lost loved ones behind never to be seen again. I wept many tears; I prayed more than I had ever prayed before. I began to write letters back to my loved ones, friends, and acquaintances. I sent tracts in the mail and gave them out on the streets. I began to preach with new fervor and power. People began to be saved including members of my family. It has been twenty-three years ago since I heard that sermon on the second coming, and I still feel the influence of it in my life to this very moment.

I have buried several of my relatives during these twenty-three years, but not one died out of Christ. Yes, Jesus is coming! He may come today. Is there someone on your heart today who is lost in sin and without God and without hope in the world whom you might have won if you had been more concerned? **“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God.”**

III. THE BREVITY OF LIFE MAKES SOUL WINNING URGENT

The Word of God gives much emphasis to the brevity of human life. God says that our lives are like the grass of the field. It is green in the morning and withered in the evening. Our lives are like the vapor on the window, fragile and temporary, here for a moment, then gone forever. Our lives are pictured in the Bible as fleeting shadows and as a tale which is quickly told.

We Christians need to remember that from the time we make our entrance upon the stage of life until we make our exit on the other side is but a moment compared to eternity. If your life is to count for God and His cause, then you must start now. It is no wonder that David prayed, **“So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”**

If you do not start now to win souls as a student in school, it is doubtful if you will win them when your training is finished and you are out in your chosen field of endeavor.

My own father was saved only last year. He is in his 69th year. I have prayed for him for more than twenty-three years and have travelled thousands of miles to see him and tell him of the love of Jesus.

A few months ago my heart became so burdened that I felt that nothing could be so important as the salvation of his soul. I was holding a revival in Ohio some months ago and such a burden came upon me as I have never experienced before. I made reservation by plane to go to him fifteen hundred miles away. God saved his soul and the providential leading of God in the matter was one of the greatest joys of all my life.

Some years ago I was bringing a series of sermons to a seminar in the state of Texas. After one of the services, a young man came to me and said, “Brother Tom, I am so discouraged, won’t you please pray for me? I have five children, and going to school has been great difficulty to me. It looks as if I will have to give up my training and go back to secular work. I am studying for the ministry, but can’t see my way through.”

We prayed together and talked together for several days, and I sought to encourage him to never give up and to walk with God at any cost. Several years passed, and I heard no more from the young man until one day I read a notice that he had started a church in a needy section of the city of Houston, Texas, where my father lives. As I witnessed to my father in his home some months ago, it occurred to me to call this young man and see if his church was near my father’s home. To my surprise and joy, I found that his church was only a few minutes away. I said to him, “Brother Lovell, would you come over here to my father’s home and help me to lead him to Jesus.”

He came over to the house, and he came burdened. He came with the power of God on Him, he came with a passion for souls. Standing out on the lawn, with the neighbors looking on, he and I led my father to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. How glad I am that I went to that school in Texas and preached a few years ago! How glad I am that I prayed for that young preacher boy and his wife and five children! How glad I am that he didn't quit, that he wouldn't give up. How glad I am that God led him years later to the great city of Houston, Texas, to start an independent soul-winning church.

Some of you have loved ones scattered all over the country. You say, "How can I reach them?" You ask, "How will I ever win them? Win the sinner closest to you, win him now; and the day may come when he will in turn win some one dearer to you than your own life.

I have had many people sit in the Emmanuel Baptist Church and hear the gospel and not get saved and die within a few hours afterward "**And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment**" (Hebrews 9:27).

IV. THE CERTAINTY OF HEAVENLY REWARDS COMPELS US TO WIN THE LOST

God promises to reward the soul winner. We shall be rewarded here in this life with unspeakable joy and in the life to come with an eternal crown. "**And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever**" (Daniel 12:2, 3).

Paul was tremendously concerned about this reward. He wrote to the Thessalonians and said, "**For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy**" (I Thessalonians 2:19, 20); and to the Philippian believers he wrote, "**Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved**" (Philippians 4:1).

The great need of the hour is a crusade of gospel preaching around the world. The crying need of the hour is a revival of personal soul winning on the part of every believer. The other day I visited the home of a woman in the city of Pontiac. The woman is nearly eighty years of age. She said to me as we sat and talked in her home, "Mr. Malone, if I live till this coming October, I will be eighty years old."

I asked her, "Dear lady, are you a Christian?"

She replied, "No, Mr. Malone, I'm not a Christian. I've never been saved. In fact," she said, "I have not been to church one time since I was very young. I have reared a large family; my children are all married. I never took them to church, and I never taught them anything about the Lord, for I didn't know Him myself." She continued, "You don't know how lonely I am. Nearly thirty years ago my husband died, and for thirty years I've lived alone. You don't know how lonely it is living all alone like this," she said as her eyes filled with tears.

I said to her, “Thank God, you need not be alone. You can have a Friend Who sticketh closer than a brother. You can have One Who will walk with you and talk with you, and One Who will call you His own forever.”

I had the joy to take my New Testament from my pocket, give her the gospel, and lead her to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Then, I felt led to ask her this question, “Dear lady, has anyone ever taken the Word of God and explained to you how to be a Christian, how to be saved as I have done today?”

She looked at me and answered, “No, Mr. Malone. I’m nearly eighty years old, but I can truthfully say that in all my life, in nearly eighty years, no one ever took the time to speak to me about my soul or to explain to me how to be saved.” After the woman had been led to the Lord and prayed the sinner’s prayer, my heart filled with joy. I walked out of her home and standing on her porch, I looked less than sixty feet across the street. There stood a fundamental, Bible-believing, church. I thought, “In God’s Name, how could it be possible that one could live just across the street from a church of so-called Bible-believing, fundamental, soul-winning people, and never one time be spoken to about her soul and no effort be made to win her to the Lord?”

Jesus said, “**Go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.**” Many times I think we as Christians, in a backslidden condition, are the greatest enemy the gospel ever had. God help us to send the gospel and to win the lost until Jesus comes.

I think of two sisters, one saved and the other lost. One went to bed early one evening with her Bible in her arms. She was reading it before going to sleep while her older sister was dressing for an evening of gaiety and frivolity in the world. As the older sister stood before the mirror dressing, she put a beautiful brooch in her hair. The brooch sparkled with many jewels. She said to her Christian sister who was lying in bed hugging her Bible to her bosom and enjoying her faith in Jesus, “Why don’t you dress as I do? Why don’t you enjoy the things I do? Imagine the admiration I will get from this one piece of jewelry alone as I dance tonight to the tune of the orchestra on the dance floor.”

The Christian sister, lying in bed hugging her Bible to her bosom replied, “I am trying to win people to Jesus, and I have won some. Someday I will wear a crown that will outshine ten million flaming suns.”

That is true, dear friends. I would to God this very hour that somehow or another God could get in the hearts of every one of us the importance of the saving of men’s lives from eternal fire. That is the most important thing. Nothing else in the world is as important.

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