

THE SAVIOUR'S INVITATION

And Other Evangelistic Sermons

by

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SERMON TWO

THE GREAT CHRISTIAN DUTY

“Then opened be their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:45-49).

This is the Master's modern message. It is as timely today as when it fell on the ears of the eleven disciples nineteen hundred years ago in old Jerusalem. It has never been improved, excelled or abrogated. We need to meditate upon it, restudy it, measure ourselves and our programs by it, cut out the nonessential, and introduce the required.

Here is the scene. Eleven humble men, fresh from their equally humble pursuits, without organization, without exchequer, without social, political, economic, religious standing—eleven men, eleven common run-of-the-mill men—are directed to take over and make over a world.

It seems an utterly fantastic impossibility. Yet I say to you that had the succeeding generations of Christians the zeal of those early disciples, the kingdom of God would have come upon earth long ago.

The Great Commission is still in effect, still the burden, the responsibility, the obligation of every Christian everywhere.

It is our task to win the world for Christ; to win it;

- Not by powerful states, but by a proclaimed Saviour;
- Not by political systems, but by preaching salvation;
- Not by philosophic schemes, but by personal surrender.

This is the work of the Church, the labor of every twice-born child of God. Consider with me, then, first, the Master's message; second, the Master's messengers; third, the Master's method.

THE MASTER'S MESSAGE

The message is the same because the need is the same. Men are lost in sin, without God, without hope in this world and surely in the world to come. Our minds are attracted and distracted by war, by defense, by complicated problems, but the greatest need of every one of us, and of every other man, woman and child, in America and in all the world, is salvation, redemption, regeneration. Never forget that. Men are lost in sin. They are not going to heaven because they put on uniforms to go out to live or to die for their country. They are not going to escape hell because they buy war bonds or war stamps, because they attend a dance to raise money for the Red Cross. They need Christ, the Cross, the blood, the Gospel. I tell you, it is no longer merely a religious matter. It is our patriotic as well as our religious duty to accept Christ ourselves, to live sanctified, sacrificial, Christian lives, to win others. God, for Jesus' sake, send us a soul-winning revival!

The Gospel is the same.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. **“There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”** There has been and there will be no other revelation from God, no other way of escape from hell, no other method of entry into heaven. God help us to disregard all modernistic, so-called psychological, supposedly scientific vaporings that would tear the Gospel apart and would substitute men's reasonings for God's requirements. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The blood has been shed. There is balm in Gilead. The Gospel is the same.

The conditions are the same. They have never been changed. They have never been vitiated, abrogated, repealed. The Holy Spirit's cry through Paul is the only way out of sin into salvation:

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30, 31).

The message of first-century preaching is God-honoring and God-honored—repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Preach this same message! Bring men face to face with the same need. Proclaim the same Gospel. Insist on the same conditions. The Holy Spirit will do the rest. That is His business. Crowds will come. Souls will be convicted. Multitudes will seek Christ for the pardon of their sins.

THE MASTER'S MESSENGERS

The messengers are the same. Every man, woman and child in all the world who rightfully and righteously claims Jesus as Christ and Lord is enlisted by the very act and process of salvation in the ranks of soulwinners. There are no substitutes, no discharges, no reliefs, no furloughs, no Passes in this campaign. By day and by night, at home and abroad, in business, in pleasures, the soldiers of the Cross are to wage unceasing, unending warfare against sin and Satan for the souls of perishing sinners. Our testimony it to ring out at all hours, under all conditions, as clear as the reveille call of a bugler's notes.

My poor heart trembles, my soul grows heavy within me, my mind is on fire at the thought of what would happen if one out of five Christian church members of the world would play fair in this extremely essential yet frightfully neglected business of soul-winning. Think of it: a hundred soulwinners in a church, five thousand soulwinners in a city, five hundred thousand in a state, five million in this nation! Oh, dear God, hasten the day when all this may come true. Souls—a myriad of souls—would be saved. Saloons would be closed. Dance halls would be padlocked. Theaters would go out of business. Churches would be revived. Christ would be glorified, the Devil defeated. Pray, people of God! Pray with me, blood-washed band—pray that the Master may make all of us fishers of men.

This is the most practical plan for the Christian conquest of the world. Mass evangelism, with groups of churches cooperating in a crusade for Christ and souls, has been blessed of God. Individual church revivals, with set-apart seasons for concerted effort to reach the lost and the unaffiliated, are mighty agencies in the hands of the Spirit. But personal, hand-to-hand, heart-to-heart, house-to-house visitation and invitation is the best plan of all, because it is the first plan, the plan Jesus used, the plan the disciples followed, the plan that never fails.

Ask any spiritual leader in Christ, "What is the greatest need of our churches today?"

The answer will come without hesitation: "Soul-winners! We need more soulwinners!"

We cannot all preach. We cannot all teach. We cannot all sing. We cannot all give great sums of money. Most of us have but one talent. But we can all pray. We can all witness. We can all follow Jesus at His behest, that even as He has promised, He may make us fishers of men.

This is the most powerful plan. There is spiritual arithmetic as well as physical arithmetic. If one in God can chase a thousand, if two in the Spirit can put ten thousand to flight, how many more will be overcome, will be garnered in, will be won for the Lord if a hundred of us, if a thousand of us, if ten thousand of us will go out to reap this human, immortal harvest!

Pastor, will you be one? Singer, will you be one? Pianist, will you be one? Choir member, will you be one? Deacon, will you be one? Sunday school superintendent, will you be one? Teacher, will you be one? Circle chairman, will you be one? Usher, will you be one? Church member, Christian, child of God, will you be one?

THE MASTER'S METHOD

The Master's method is the same, absolutely the same, identically the same, without the slightest change the same. It has not, it cannot, it will not, it must not be changed. It is the Master's method. It is the Holy Spirit's method. It is God the Father's method. It is the method of the Old Testament and of the New. It was the method of Moses, of Samuel, of Elijah, of Isaiah. It was the method of Paul, of Wesley, of Moody. It is simple, clear, definite, direct, personal, individual, universal. It is a twofold method. It is, first, to tarry; then, to go.

We must tarry. Patiently, persistently, purposely, we must tarry in prayer at the feet of God. There is absolutely no use doing aught else until we have done just that. Someone has said, "We cannot go farther until we go deeper."

- We must tarry before God until the Holy Spirit exposes to us and convicts us of every sin, big or little, in our lives.
- We must tarry until in humble penitence we have confessed every known and unknown transgression.
- We must tarry until we know that our iniquities are completely forgiven, that our souls are cleansed in the blood of the Cross.
- We must tarry until we see the terrible condition of a lost world, until we see men, women, precious children sinking into eternal hell.
- We must tarry until our souls are aflame with the compassion that brought Jesus from heaven, that drove Him up and down Palestine, that prostrated Him in Gethsemane, that nailed Him to the Cross.
- We must tarry until God gives us a message.

Our words are empty, our teachings are futile, our preaching is as tinkling brass and a sounding cymbal unless our thoughts, our reasonings, our dissertations come from God. Unless God sends us we had better not go. Unless the Holy Spirit gives us the word we had better not speak. God has a testimony for every one of His children, but He alone can reveal it to us.

- We must tarry until the Bible becomes a living, burning, roaring volcano within us, so that we cannot remain silent.

We must tarry for power. Need I stress this? Has not each of you learned the heartbreaking lessons of your own impotence? Have you not fallen dreadfully short of your own standards? Have you not brokenheartedly sought the reason for your own barren fruitlessness? Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, the Lord is saying to each of us, as He said it through Zechariah to anxious Zerubbabel. Thank God, there is power for us, for each of us, for all of us, power in abundance, power to overflowing.

There is power for every detail, for every venture and adventure of our Christian lives. God is eager to fill us, to thrill us, to inspire and empower us. Let us take hold of God, claim His promises, beseech His mercies, hold on pleadingly until He floods our souls with His almighty Spirit.

After we have tarried—and only after we have tarried—we must go.

In the Name of the Lord, in the power of the Spirit, for the souls of men, we must go. Every one of us must go. The field is white, ripe unto the harvest. We are racing against time, against sin, against Satan, against death. We have no time to waste, no time to lose.

The way will be arduous, the toil heartbreaking. It is a task for courageous, Christ-loving Christians. It will be neither easy nor cheap. The price of souls is great. Jesus knew it on the Cross. We must know it in the field.

Victory is certain. God is on the throne. His promises are yea and amen in Christ. The Holy Spirit is ever with us. Will you take up the challenge, the plea of Christ? Will you be witnesses unto Him—for Him who loved you and gave Himself for you? Will you say to Jesus this hour: “By the agony of Gethsemane’s bloody sweat, by the torments of Calvary’s rugged Cross, by the burning fires of hell, by the joys and bliss of heaven, Lord Jesus, You may count on me. I’ll go!”

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