

THE SAVIOUR'S INVITATION

And Other Evangelistic Sermons

by

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SERMON FOUR

THE SOUL-WINNER'S PROMISE

“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:6).

This is the soulwinner's text—the simplest, the most definite in the world. Its directions are positive; its assurances encouraging. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit are behind it. The testimony of nineteen hundred years supports its assertion. The witness of the great soulwinners through the ages sustains its direct promise. It is universal, unqualified, to be accepted and made concrete by all who have made soul-winning the ultimate aim of their Christian experience and existence.

Clearly, easily read, on the very face of the verse, are its three stirring thoughts.

The first is the passion of the soulwinner.

The second is the program for the soulwinner.

The third is the promise to the soulwinner.

Each one of these thoughts carries with it a wealth of meaning. May God help us to understand and carry out these teachings in our lives.

The passion of the soulwinner is twofold: a burning passion of love for the blessed Redeemer; a burdening compassion of longing for the souls of men. Who can help loving Jesus? He is so lovely, so loving, so lovable. He first loved us and wrote out the proof of that love in His own heart's blood on cruel Calvary's Cross. He has pressed that matchless love upon each of us in the thousand and one providential provisions He has made for and in each of our lives. Yet our love for Him must be nurtured and fed. By communing with Him in the hours of sweet prayer, by studying Him in the pages of the blessed Book, by counting over again the mighty benisons He has bestowed upon us, by looking to the rock whence we were hewn and to the hole of the pit whence we were digged, by contemplating the frightful price He paid for our redemption we grow to love Him more and more. These are salutary exercises. The love for Christ in our souls will wield the power of “an expulsive affection,” will serve as a purifying agent in the hands of the Holy Spirit, will give us a weapon against the onslaughts of sin and Satan. Jesus kept sweet in our souls will strengthen us in sorrows, sustain us in toil, supply us with the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Our passion for Christ will generate within us a compassion for the souls of men. The two are inseparable. They ever go together. Our fellow men are immortal souls whom Jesus loved and for whom He poured out His heart's blood. They may offend us, dishearten us, scold, criticize, even curse us, but for Christ's sake we will love them, pray for them, sacrifice to the limit to reach them with the Word of Life. Christ will take away the sting of their rebuffs, the scorching of their refusals, the shame of their rejections. The knowledge that *the love of Christ constraineth us* will impel us to renewed efforts, inspire us to revived energies, instruct us to redoubled effectiveness. Dry-eyed, dry-hearted, dry-tongued preaching, praying and personal work will never win souls for Christ. Someone has well said, "It takes a broken heart to preach a bleeding Cross." Cry unto God, beloved. Cry unto God for the gift of passion, the gift of tears.

Compassion for souls must be developed, or our work will become matter-of-fact, mechanical. Study what the Word of God says concerning the condition of a soul out of Christ. Let the awful warnings of the Book burn into your soul. See the doomed and the damned, by the irrevocable decree of God, sinking into the torments of an endless hell. Read the prayers of Moses for his sinful people. Con the tears of Jesus over lost Jerusalem. Hear the heart-cry of Paul as he offered his own great life, as dear to him as our lives are to us, as a ransom for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. If you are twice born, if you have not backslidden so far that the Holy Spirit cannot break through the armor of your coldness and indifference, of your selfishness and unconcern, these prayers, these tears, these cries will move your hearts, melt your souls, set aflame your minds, constraining you to go afield to win the lost for Christ.

Go into the field. Visit the homes, the business places of all about you. See their bitter disregard of their souls' welfare, their utter thoughtlessness in the matter of their salvation. Think of their fearful blindness in the face of their awful impending doom. These facts and factors will drive you to your knees in sobbing prayer, in burning intercession that the God of infinite mercy may rouse these dead souls to a realization of their awful condition. You will put yourself utterly into the hands of the Holy Spirit that He may use you, all of you, any part of you to rescue these souls from the burning pit of Tophet.

Need I remind you again and anew that without passion there will be no purpose, no power?

- A passionless Christian is a bitter anomaly.
- A passionless Christian is the heartache of heaven.
- A passionless Christian is the laughingstock of hell.

God save us from selfish, callous Christianity that takes everything God has to give and renders nothing in return.

Oh, for a passionate passion for souls,
Oh, for a pity that yearns;
Oh, for a love that loves unto death,
Oh, for a fire that burns!

Oh, for the prayer, prayer that prevails,
That pours out its soul for the lost;
Victorious prayer in the Conqueror's Name,
Oh, for a Pentecost!

Our second thought is the program for the soulwinner. Let Jesus be our great example in this. Let Paul's life and pursuits guide us, challenge us, instruct us. What did Jesus do to win the lost? What did Paul do to rescue the perishing? Two things signalize the lives of both Jesus and Paul. Intensive prayer was one of them. Extensive witness-bearing, publicly and from house to house, was the other element in their success. We can do no better than follow in their steps. We cannot improve upon their procedure.

We too must heed the admonition of Jesus when **“he spake a parable unto them . . . that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”** We too must take up the cry of Paul, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. If Paul needed ceaseless prayer, oh, if Jesus required unending supplications, how much—how very much—more do we.

- Prayer will condition our lives, leading us to the fountain of spiritual cleansing.
- Prayer will keep Jesus ever before us.
- Prayer will unfold the mysteries of the Word to us.
- Prayer will bring the Spirit down upon us.
- Prayer will keep us sweet, pure, gentle, yet unswerving in purpose.
- Prayer will lead us into the pathway of duty.
- Prayer will convict and convert the lost about us.

That doctor of souls, Hudson Taylor, spoke wisely when he said, “The nearest way to a man's heart is by God's throne of grace.”

Conviction and conversion are beyond our scope, beyond our ability. They are the work of the Holy Spirit. He and He alone can bring a soul to a realization of its desperate condition, and to a recognition of its need of the Lord Jesus Christ. He and He alone can work the miracle of regeneration in the souls of those whom we are striving to reach for Christ. Prayer, and I speak reverently, harnesses the Holy Spirit to the Word we preach, to our consistent Christian lives, to our testimonies. Prayer multiplies our efforts by the omnipotence of God.

The second part of the soulwinner's program is this: he must go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. This Christian generation lacks “going” Christians. We have rich Christians, educated Christians, prominent Christians. We need compassionate, brokenhearted, weeping, agonizing, ceaselessly interceding, “going,” witness-bearing Christians. We need Christians who feel a personal, definite, individual responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission.

A “going” Christian will quickly become a glowing Christian, fresh, interested, interesting, studious, attractive, with the dew of heaven and the afflatus of the Spirit upon him. A “going” Christian will be a praying Christian, a loyal-to-the-church Christian, a tithing Christian, a dependable Christian, a victorious Christian.

The Psalmist said it better than I can: **“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed.”** There is much about which to weep.

- There is the vastness and ripeness of the harvest field.
- There is the paucity and scarcity of harvesters.
- There is our own utter helplessness.
- There is the soul-destroying unconcern on the part of Christians and the unsaved.
- There is the race against time, against the hardening influence of sin, against death, against Satan.

It is difficult to understand the heart of a Christian who is unmoved, untouched, unbroken at the thought of the perishing multitudes everywhere. What connection there is between tears and power I do not know, but this one thing I can say from experience: I have never seen, and never expect to see, a revival of any magnitude that was not swept in by the weeping agony of God’s people.

There is seed to sow. I am aware that much of our witness-bearing is futile because we do not use the proper seed, the Word of God.

The average church member has much to say about the size of the church, the excellence of the organization, the graciousness of the pastor, the attractiveness of the program. The very essence of sowing is often left out. There is not a word said about sin and salvation. There is not a word said about the Gospel, the Cross, the blood, the Christ. God has not promised to honor anything save His Word. It is His Word that will not return unto Him void. Try it, I beseech you. Give God’s program a fair trial. Go into the secret closet to commune with God. Tarry in prayer until you are endued with power from on high. Go out into the harvest field bearing the blessed Word of the Gospel. It will bring forth fruit some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, some an hundredfold.

Last of all there is the promise to the soulwinner: **“Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”** That is the guarantee of God. God’s promise has never failed. The “going,” weeping, sowing Christian will become the reaping Christian. Jesus said, **“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”**

- Where Jesus goes, there is joy.
- Where Jesus goes, there is victory.
- Where Jesus goes, there is fruitfulness.

This promise has never fallen short of fulfillment. Nineteen hundred years bear witness to the fact of the eternal truth of our text. Multiplied myriads of souls now rejoicing in the presence of God, together with the multiplied myriads of the saved still upon this earth, are an inspiring testimony to the verity of God’s assurance. Our going, our weeping, our sowing shall not be in vain.

All of the power in heaven and earth is at the command of those who do the will of God in this most sacred task to be performed by the children of God.

The joy of the soulwinner is beyond description. It outstrips and outweighs any and every other benediction and pleasure that comes to the human heart. Nothing on earth can compare with it. To know that you have been instrumental in the hands of the Holy Spirit in rescuing a brand from the burning will compensate for every tear, for every toil, for every trial, for every trouble that may come your way in this greatest of all pursuits. To see men, women and children whom you have been able to lead to the Lord Jesus Christ rejoicing in the fullness of salvation and serving God, to meet these persons again and again, to see their smiles of appreciation, hear their words of commendation,—ah, this is a pleasure which the angels covet.

When this life of affliction is ended, when you stand complete in Christ in the presence of God, when you see about the throne the souls who otherwise would have been in the torments of an eternal pit, and hear their voices join with yours in the everlasting song, you will give glory to God for the privilege of being a soulwinner. What shall I say further of the smile of approval of the blessed Lord Himself, of His “thank you,” of His Well done, thou good and faithful servant, of the crown of reward that the angels shall place upon your head. All these things are awaiting those who give themselves to the task of witness-bearing.

This very day, this very hour, this very moment let us determine in our hearts that we shall be in the ranks of the soulwinners. Let us dedicate ourselves to the task with all that we are and have. Let us count no cost too great, no sacrifice too extensive, no toil too arduous, no task too exacting to accomplish this great duty, God’s appointed business.

Christ leads the way. We follow in the steps of the apostles. The great of the Church set the pace for us. The Holy Spirit is urging us on. The nodding sheaves of the overripe harvest are beckoning us to the task.

From the corridors of heaven, proclaimed by the voices of the holy angels, from the torture torments of hell, heard in the groanings of the damned and the doomed, from the burning needs of the living about us, there comes the cry —

“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

~ end of sermon 4 ~

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