

Evangelism and the Layman #1

by Ernest C. Reisinger

The sermon emphasizes the importance of laymen taking responsibility for evangelism and living a holy life that reflects Christ.

Duration: 54:20

Scripture: Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:41, Mark 5:19, Mark 6:2, Mark 8:2, Acts 8:1, 1 John 1:3

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sharing the gospel with others. He highlights the contrast between selling products and sharing the message of salvation. The speaker shares a personal experience of witnessing to a man who was initially distracted by the television but eventually cried out to God for mercy. He concludes by urging the audience to consider the power of the gospel and to pray for the Holy Spirit to work in their evangelistic efforts. The sermon encourages believers to prioritize sharing the message of grace and salvation with others.

Transcript

I've already seen a lot of faces that I've met in various churches and one thing that's sad about conferences for a short time you don't get a chance to see everybody and spend as much time with them as you'd like to. I saw Herb Hathaway the other night at a meeting and I wanted to spend a few minutes with him but by the time the meeting was over he was gone so I see lots of faces here that I've seen at various times I hope I at least get a chance to say hello to you. I don't know what Saint Paul meant exactly.

I don't know all that's involved in that statement where he said, my spirit was stirred within me. But when I see men such as tonight and hear the singing to know that though Jesus is gone two thousand years ago to see the great work of his spirit working in the hearts of men that would interest them enough to come away from a lot of other things that other men will be doing this weekend, I rejoice. And I don't know as I say exactly how Saint Paul felt when he said, my spirit was moved within me.

But there is a measure I hope that I share that tonight as even we think about such a theme as we have this week. Because if the manpower in Christ's church, you know about 99% are laymen. And if the manpower, the 99% who keep silent for Jesus pretty much most of the time they manage, they seem to be very successful at keeping silent.

You know they come home at night and say, well Lord I was successful again today in not talking to anyone about you. But if that could be harnessed we'd see a great change in our churches and a great change in our nation. And I pray that these days together when we've come together to pray, to meet with one another, to try to help one another, I pray that these days may be used to that end to make us willing to be evangelists, to be witnesses, willing to not only live for Christ but to speak for him now and again and for his church.

I only want to correct one part of that introduction and he says I'm not church related. I am church related. I believe that the great evangelistic origin is the church.

The longer I live the less I'm interested in these things that's supposed to be right and left arms to the church. I'm afraid that some of them prove not to be such a great right arm or the left arm as they make the claims. And I am very familiar with many of those things.

I do believe that Jesus Christ founded a church. I believe that there is what's sometimes referred to as the organism, that we don't know who's in the real church, but he also, as R.B. Kuyper points out in that great book called *The Glorious Body of Christ*, there is an organization as well as an organism. And I believe in the elders and the deacons and those men who stand by their church even when sometimes the ministers are gone.

Well, I'm happy about that and I do pray that God by his Spirit and by his Word would meet us in that most deepest place where we need to be met. Because if the only voice you hear this week is my voice, you have missed it. Unless the Spirit of God in that way that I understand takes the Word of God and does something down here to you, you have come in vain.

You have come in vain. And it is my prayer that that's what would happen. Well, I want to read him.

First I should say a bit about the theme. You know, I didn't ask him about time. I'm going to put this watch back on tonight.

And you know, some of the fellows at the university, Ofer and Carlisle, used to go out with me to speak sometimes. And when they came back, I heard it was rumored around that Ernie doesn't go by the clock, he goes by the calendar. But outside I watch the clock.

I do see a clock back there, that's why I don't need the watch. So that's not, I am not going to forget the time. I hope you do though.

I might say a word why this particular theme was very attractive to me, very attractive to me, when I saw it was evangelism and the layman. Because on the human side, I'm here tonight because a layman took Jesus Christ serious when he said, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. And his world was not Africa or China or South America or India, his world was a construction job.

And that's where I heard the gospel. I don't have that wonderful privilege that some of you have of experiencing a Christian home, only since I've been a Christian. I say that not to, not to be disrespectful to my parents.

They were good parents. My mother loved us. The fact is she loved us so much she scrubbed floors to put clothes on our back because we were so poor that the poor people called us poor.

But with all that mother love to her son, she couldn't tell me what she didn't know. And she couldn't tell me what she hadn't experienced. And so when I think of lay evangelism, I think of that construction job where I met a man that told me about Jesus, told me about Jesus.

Oh, I get thrilled sometimes when I think of, you know, I get tired of these people acting like sometimes they, they act like the Christian church has had it and we ought to fold up. And why there are thousands and thousands tonight, men and women on the mission field and in behind pulpits will be there Sunday and places like this. We look so few when we're out in the world, but there's thousands who are seeking in some small way to obey Jesus.

Not so long ago, I picked up the, that book A Thousand Tongues to Go or something like that and think about how that man started. He was one man, the Wycliffe translators, one man. And now they have 2300 missionaries.

And it thrills me tonight to know one of the evidences that God is alive and the Holy Ghost is in the world is the fact that people still are seeking to obey Jesus. And you know, that's why I'm here because somebody in some small way was trying to obey Christ as best he could on a construction job. And you know, I suppose tonight I'd be safe in saying that there isn't a Christian man in this place.

There isn't a Christian man here tonight who's here who would be here if somebody, a godly mother, godly father, a godly pastor, a good church, if somebody hadn't been obeying Christ to tell you about the gospel and about your sins and about the wonderful Savior, you wouldn't be here. The fact is, if we would take a chain tonight from my very lips to the man that told me, to the man that told him, I could chain my testimony and your testimony to the lips of Jesus Christ when he said, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. And that overthrew you with all our weakness and all our stumblings and all our fallings and all the crooked steps we make.

There's still men trying to obey Christ in that. Well, I want to read a couple verses of scripture tonight, Acts chapter 8, because I'm going to be informal. And I've been in some of your churches, some of the things I'm going to say tonight, I'll probably sit there.

But I feel constrained to be as most informal and as simple as I can be and stay with the general idea of our theme, which will be in a lay evangelism. In Acts chapter 8, I suppose the biggest and awfulest trick the devil has ever pulled on the Christian church is somehow to get lay people the idea that witnessing and propagating the gospel is only for foreign missionaries and ministers. I suppose that's the greatest trick the devil has ever pulled on the Christian church.

I suppose if Russia tonight would concoct the idea that they wanted to, and they might be doing a pretty good job in our colleges on this anyhow, but I suppose they wanted to concoct the idea to weaken us. And they propagated the idea that war is kind of a dangerous thing and people get shot and killed and only people that are fit to do this job are generals and admirals and all the rest of you go home. Now I think they'd be successful in a great way if they could convince everybody that the only people that ought to participate in the defense of their country or anything are admirals and generals.

But it seems to me that that's what the devil has done to a great degree in the Christian church. He's kind of convinced the layman at least to act this way, that the only people it's meant to witness and propagate the gospel is the theological admirals and generals and the rest of you. You just kind of go along and sit there and warm the pew.

Now that's not true in the New Testament. It's not true. My dear brethren tonight, that's not true.

And it appalls me and it has appalled me as I've come into the Christian church and I've been in your congregations and other congregations over this land and not unusual to find people vigorously singing, I love to tell the story and the truth of it is most of them have never told it once. Not once. We wouldn't do that in any, we wouldn't do that mockery in anything else but religion.

Suppose I, you, you, you were my neighbor and I kept telling you how I love football and every time I see you, I tell you how I love football. Boy, it's a great game and it captivates my mind and captivates my attention. Oh, how I love football.

And someday you take me to a football game and I, I say now, what are those fellas trying to fight with, about that ball for? And what are those funny little men down there with those checkered stripes on, what are they doing? What are those fellas doing trying to take that pole from each other? And while they run up and down here with that pole and I keep asking you stupid questions like that, you kind of wonder about what kind of a fellow this is who tells me, I love football, I love football. That's the way we are with evangelism, we love to tell the story. But if this is a typical group, and I say this not to scold you, but to face you with some cold-blooded facts, if this is a typical group, I'm looking into the face of men, that the next time you talk to an individual about his relationship to Jesus will be the first time.

And yet you've been singing those hymns, I love to tell the story. Now there's something wrong with that kind of a thing. It would be, it would, in any other area, it would be ridiculous.

And tonight, and these days, I want to try to point out that it's, that it's not left to the theological admirals and generals to do the great work. You know, in the, there's a, what they call, a book called Reformed Evangelism. It was published by the Christian Reformed Church, it's called A Manual on Principles and Methods of Evangelism in 1962.

Some years ago I got a hold of it, it's an excellent book, I love it. And there was a Reverend Dick Wolfe, Walter, who, a Christian Reformed minister, later became the president of the Bible School in Grand Rapids. What's the Bible, Reformed Bible School.

Reverend Wolfe, Reverend Walter. And he said this in one of the articles, it's a series of articles in this book, this manual, and it was done by the Reformed Evangelism Committee, compiled at the Board of Evangelism for the Christian Reformed Church. And one of the things this minister said was this, and it's a quote, he says, put together the words daily, everyone, everywhere, and you have a New Testament picture of evangelism.

I like that. Daily, everyone, everywhere. Three words that could summarize New Testament evangelism.

Now in Acts 8, this ought to dispel that awful idea about it's only for ministers, it's only for the admirals and the generals. And I say, after that tremendous sermon of Stephen where Paul witnessed his death, we see that Saul was consenting unto the death of Stephen, and at that time there was great persecution against the Church, which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Now I want you to remember that, because this is very important to the point I want to make.

They were all scattered abroad except the apostles. Verse 2, And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into

every house, hauling men and women, and committing them to prison.

Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. And a good Greek scholar tells me that that preaching the word could be just as accurately translated, evangelizing. Now the point I want you to see is this.

Where were the apostles? Well, probably they were having a prophecy conference or something on an ivory theological tower, but it does say in verse 4, everybody was scattered abroad except the apostles. They stayed in Jerusalem. And in verse 4 it says they which were scattered abroad, that everybody but the apostles were everywhere evangelizing.

So I hope we ought to dispel that awful idea from your mind that this is not a layman's job to evangelize. It is a layman's job, and tonight I want to try to talk about what is a true witness. And I'm going to do this in the form of a testimony, because I believe that God in his mercy, God in his providence, sent a man across my path that was what I would call a true witness.

And I believe on the human side, I said on the human side, I believe with Jonah that salvation is of the Lord. He had to go to the belly of the whale to learn that, but I learned it without going in any whales. I learned it from the Bible that salvation is of the Lord.

But I believe that the same Bible that tells me who does the saving tells me how he does it. And the two extremes that I find is the extreme that's not reformed, their evangelism needs to have the note sounded, who does the saving? Because some of them don't seem to know who does the saving. They think it's psychology or a thousand other things, but it seems that they don't understand the clear teaching of the Bible on who does the saving.

But when I get amongst some reformed groups, they seem to not read those parts in the Bible that tells us how God does the saving, how he does it. It's not either or, it's both. I say I'm talking about the human side.

What is a true witness? Proverbs chapter 14, verse 25, it says this, a true witness delivers souls, and a false witness speaketh lies. Years after I was converted to Christ, in a period when I would say it was kind of wintertime in my soul. You know anything about that? This is a good place to come if it's wintertime in your soul.

This is better than playing golf tomorrow, John. This is a good place to come. But this was a period in my life when I would say it was wintertime in my soul.

That's a bad time to look for fruit, you can't even find any leaves sometimes. But I remember this day, I was, that year I had tried to take a day a month off of my business to go and pray and read. Sometimes I rented a hotel room just to be alone, not to prepare messages or study my Sunday school lessons, but to get away from the world, my family, my business, just me and my Bible.

Well it was one of those days, and I wasn't in a motel room this time because we had a radio shack on top of a mountain where we have a house of radio equipment for our two-way radios. And I was headed for that shack because I had a little desk in there and it was up on top of a mountain looking out over a valley. Many days I've gone there, and I was going there this day with my Bible.

I had a legal pad and I had a little pamphlet by a Presbyterian called Words to Winners of Souls by Horatius Bonar. And I was going to the mountain because of the coldness of my own heart. And I can remember, and I think this is almost verbatim, my prayer, it wasn't a long prayer.

But I was going to that mountain and this was about the essence of my prayer, if not verbatim. I was praying, Lord show me what Elmer had on the human side that caused me to want to know you. Now Elmer was the carpenter that pointed me to Christ.

That's the man that told me the gospel. That's the man that rendered to me the greatest service that anyone this side of the grave ever has or ever will render one human to another. The greatest service that's ever been rendered to me in this world.

I say this thoughtfully and I say it seriously. He's the man that told me of that redeeming message of Jesus Christ that changed my life, my home, my marriage, and blessed God my destination. The greatest service that's ever been rendered to me, any human being, is the man that told me the gospel.

And this day my prayer was, Lord show me what he has caused me to want to know you. Well I never thought of sharing this with a soul. I have many times since I shared some of the things that I want to share with you tonight.

But my purpose then was not to share. And what I did was I took, I would just scratch down things on this legal pad as they would come to my mind, trying to think of what did I think when I went on this job and met this fellow. What did he do? What did he say? And all the things that went on in our conversation for the next year.

And it was evening when the sun was beginning to go down. And it was so wonderful as I thought about the mercy of God. All the awful thoughts I had about him at first.

The warnings and so on. That he was a good carpenter and a good fellow to work with. But he had a bug on religion.

I thought of all this. But at the end of the day it was so wonderful that I summed it up. Because I believe in that summary I had the basis of what is a true witness.

And don't think I'm going to have you ten easy ways to win souls or something like that. Or some little pat thing that you run up to everybody with and have a little, like you're selling fuller brushes or something. When you're dealing with men and women you're not selling fuller brushes.

Now there's nothing wrong with fuller brushes. But when you're dealing with eternity bound men you're not hockstern off fuller brushes. What did he have? Well I'm going to tell you what the first thing I put on my paper that day, my summary sheet.

Because I'm not going to tell you all I had written down there. I couldn't begin to do that. But I will try tonight.

If I don't get finished tonight maybe I'll finish tomorrow. I want to tell you what I believe a true witness is because I believe he was a true witness. And it's principles not rules.

What is it? A true witness delivers souls. Well the first thing I put down on that was this. The power of a holy life.

The power of a holy life. You see I watched it. And I'm amazed as I read the New Testament, and I've been doing it this week particularly in preparation for something I was doing at Westminster the other day, to see the number of times and the number of texts where the great apostle associates his life with his labors.

Where he could appeal to his conduct. Where he could appeal to this manner of living. For instance in texts like, take heed to thyself.

He told Timothy among other things, do the work of an evangelist. That's what we're talking about this week. Do the work of an evangelist.

But in the course of that same instruction he says, take heed to thyself and to thy teaching. You see and he put together the life of the witnesser. The life of the servant.

With his work. With his labors. With his ministry.

I quoted Baxter this week when I said, Baxter said, the life of the minister is the life of his ministry. That's true of a witness. The life of the witness is the life of his witnessing.

And true witness is even nothing more than an overflow of that devotion to Christ. The power of a holy life. That's what I put down first.

I remember the men on that job used to joke with my friend Elmer. In fact as they told me to, you know they said he's a good carpenter, he works hard, he'll always carry his end of the load. But they said don't get too close to him.

It's too long because if you do, he'll talk to you about religion. I'm glad I got close to him a few times. And you know they were all wrong a couple places because he didn't talk to me about religion or about his church.

He used to talk to me about somebody he called his savior. And he talked in such an intimate way that when he'd go away from me I'd kind of feel that he knew that person he was talking about. And you know they laughed at him.

They used to say, make remarks when he would bow his head over his lunch to thank God for his food. They used to ask him all those crazy questions, you know, that people aren't interested in anyhow asking. They'd say, Elmer, where did Cain get his wife? He'd say, oh I'm a Christian, I don't bother about other men's wives.

And he'd go on about it. But you know there's one thing they couldn't gainsay. They could not gainsay his life.

They could not gainsay his life. And my dear friends, tonight I have a little suspicion after being associated with many of my Reformed brothers, that some of them are a bit afraid of holiness. They kind of equate it with a special little group over there that call themselves holiness people or something like that.

Ah, that's not true of the real ones. They're so afraid of false piety, some of them, that they even miss real piety. Let me read you a great Reformed man, that when I say his name, there isn't a man here that won't know him.

There isn't a man here that if he does know him, won't love him. Great Presbyterian that died before he was 30. But he lives on today in every preacher's library.

He lives on today in our hearts and our minds. Robert Mary McShane. Let me tell you what he said about holiness.

This isn't some little special group. If he wasn't Reformed, I don't want to be. He said, it's a holy-making gospel.

He said, without holy fruits, all evidences are vain. All your words and theology and everything else. All evidences are vain.

Dear friends, you have awakenings, enlightenings, and experiences, and many do signs. But if you lack holiness, you shall never see the Lord, said McShane. Jesus is a holy Savior.

He first covers the soul with his white raiment. Then makes the soul glorious within. He restores the lost image of God and fills the soul with pure, heavenly holiness.

Now get this last sentence. Then he said this, unregenerate men among you cannot bear this testimony. The power of a holy life.

I was telling some of my friends coming up in the car today about a dear friend of mine who, I was with him in the Navy. We were together in the South Pacific. After the war, we were separated for a period, maybe it's ten years.

He made a Christian profession, at least he did in the South Pacific. And some other times too, but we were separated for about ten years. And one day I got this long-distance call from five states away.

It's the longest phone conversation I ever had. Two hours and fifteen minutes. He was paying the bill.

But he was begging me to come to his house, to come with him, to fly there, because he was having a serious domestic problem. And he wanted me to talk to his wife. Well, I was in the midst of real business problems in the construction business, we mostly are.

You men know that. Mostly we're in the midst of real problems. And I couldn't see how I could go.

And I tried to beg off, but he prevailed upon me to such an extent that I finally agreed to go. So it took me a day or a day and a half, maybe two days to get organized, get my suitcase packed, get a plane ticket. But I flew there in hopes that God would maybe use me to save that home, or say a word, at least try to do everything I could.

But by the time I got there, he met me at the airport. His wife had already left the house and gone back with her mother. So all the way back from the airport, he's telling me how he's been witnessing to his wife.

He said, I've been witnessing to her. I got back to the house and he had gospel tracts on the windowsill. He had them on the ironing board, on the kitchen sink.

He even had gospel tracts on the back of the commode. And he said, I've been witnessing to her. I said, you sure have.

You sure have. So we talked a while that evening and I said, do you think that Alice would talk to me? Yes. He said, I've told her about our days in the Navy together.

I believe she would. So I called to her mother's home. She was very gracious and agreed to meet me the next day at about two o'clock.

I go there to the place where I was to meet her. I listened to her for two hours. When she was finished, I said, Alice, I said, I'm very, very sorry about your domestic problem.

But I said, there's something I'm more sorry about. I said, you've never seen a Christian. You've never seen a Christian.

I went back to the house and I told my friend to get his Bible. I said, I want you to read me a verse of scripture. I said, I want you to turn to 1 John 1, verse 3. I said, I want you to read it to me.

And he started to read. He said, that which we have seen. And I said, stop.

He started to read again. He thought he made a mistake. He said, that which we have seen.

And I said, stop. And he started again. And he said, that which we have seen.

And I said, stop. And then we read the verse together. It says this, that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that he also may have fellowship with us.

And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And I said, George, they not only heard a preacher, but they saw a light. Now, I know that there's some people who hide behind living a right life and never open their mouth.

And there's other people, we'd be doing God a great service if we could get them to shut their mouth about religion. If we could just get them to keep their mouth closed about religion, we'd be doing God a great service. But anybody that takes a cursory glance at the New Testament will see that it's not either or.

They'll see that the New Testament principle is, that thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, and thou shalt be saved. Why? For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made. It's by life and by lip both.

The power of a holy life. Oh, I could repeat the instances. I could spend the rest of the night just telling you about people that I know that have been led to Jesus, and the first thing that stopped their mouth was God put them beside somebody that was holy.

They didn't understand. My old minister, when he was in college, I remember he had a roommate, and he was going to, he could hardly live with this fellow because he would stay out at night, and my pastor used to get up at 5 o'clock and spend an hour in his Greek Testament before he did his other studies, so he went to bed early. And the other fellow would come in and wake him up every night and say, he's missing the world, he's missing the grave, you don't know what you're missing.

Wake up, you're sleeping your life away. But he wanted to win into Christ, and he stayed in that room, and there were times when he almost left. I remember he talked to me once about this, and he says, I don't know what I'm going to do.

I might have to move out. But I love this fellow. He said, I want to see him come to Christ.

He told me what he would do. He'd come in at night, and he said, I'd get up in the morning. I said, what time does he get up? Well, he said, most of the time he misses his first class.

And he said, he doesn't get up very early. I said, well, let me make one suggestion before you move out. I said, when you come in, when you get awake in the morning, wake him up and tell him the birds are singing, and the sun's shining, and he's sleeping his life away.

And I said, do that for about three or four morning showers. I don't want to tell you all the stories. But that other, that fellow that was so bothering, and the things that he was doing was bothering Jesus Christ, but he's told me with his own lips.

He said, I either had to get rid of Walter, or come to grips with the gospel. Come to grips with Christ. And that fellow's a Christian tonight.

Oh, the times I could multiply. The power of a holy life. My wife and I were in Florida several years ago, and there was a young lawyer.

It was a very informal little situation where we were gathered with some Christians. And this young lawyer was sharing his Christian experience. I'll never forget it, because it only underlines, it only underscores this principle, the power of a holy life.

And he was sharing his Christian experience. He told about how he, his father was a lawyer, upright family, his family was highly moral, but just had nothing to do with the gospel. They had nothing to do with the Christian church.

They had no domestic problems, they had no extreme moral problems, but they just were not a church family. And one day at a Sunday noon meal, the mother said, she said, we ought to go to church somewhere as a family. And the discussion was, where would we go? And immediately the mother told about some little woman down the street.

She said, she's a holy woman. Let's see where she goes and follow her. And this young lawyer went on to say how he saw his mother come to Christ and change.

And he said he rationalized it the way she was getting old and needed a little religion. He said, I saw my father make a Christian profession, come into the Christian church, and he said, well, I rationalized that because he loved mother and they always did everything together, so he was doing it to please mother. He said, I saw my 30-year-old sister make a public profession of Christ, come into the Christian church, he said, I rationalized that away, he said, because she is 30 years old and hadn't found a husband, and he said Jesus would probably do her some good.

She was lonely. He said, I rationalized that away. He said, then I saw my 16-year-old sister in high school, and I saw their lives change.

He said, my brother and I got together one night, and he said we plucked some blood from our veins and we signed a blood covenant that we would not let this religion touch us. Well, I'll make it sure. His brother was converted.

And then he went on to say how he watched their lives. Oh, he said they weren't perfect, but he said they had a purpose, and they lived a holy life. What is a true witness? Well, I'll tell you one thing that's involved in a true witness.

It's somebody that knows something about a holy life. You can learn the ten rules and these canned little things that you run around worrying people with all you want. If you don't know anything about a holy life, you better can that too.

The second thing I put on my summary sheet that day was this. Elmer cared for me. He had a passion for my soul.

I wasn't converted in an icebox. That's why some of you don't see any conversions in your church. It's an icebox.

Elmer cared for me. He loved me. I'll never forget the second time I ever went to a Sunday school.

The first time I went was with no intention to go for myself, but my boy was five years old about, and he had never been inside of a Christian church, never had an ounce of Christian instruction or any kind of religious instruction. And the first time I went, I went mainly to get him acquainted and so some of the people would take care of him, and I'd be relieved of my parental responsibility. But the second time was a different reason, because I'd been under conviction for a while, bothered about my sins and my soul.

And I remember the second time I ever went to Elmer's Sunday school, the second time I ever went there, he met me at the door. As I entered the Sunday school that morning, the first man I saw was Elmer. And as I put out my hand that morning to shake hands with him and put it in that hard, rough carpenter's hand, I looked in his face and tears were rolling down his cheeks.

And I thought to myself, there's nothing emotional about shaking hands. No preachers telling any deathbed stories. Gentlemen, I never understood those tears until I started to read this book.

And I read of another who wept over Jerusalem. I read in Mark 1, he was moved with compassion. I read it in Mark 5, 19.

I read it in Mark 6, 2. I read it in Mark 8. All passages referring to the compassion. And though I did not understand those tears that Sunday morning, I can tell you about them tonight. Because I believe that my friend walked in such a relationship to Jesus Christ that he had a small measure of the compassion of Christ for sinners.

Sinners. I've told many a church crowd, and I'll tell you. If I'd have lived on your street, most of you, at least many of you, would have said, no hopes for that man.

That's right. You've got people like that on your street tonight. No hopes for that man.

But I'm here because somebody cared. Somebody believed Christ. Somebody believed in the power of the gospel.

Somebody believed that regeneration was just not some theological word that we banty around, but an experience. They believed that we talk about Jesus saved, it was not just a hymn we sing and know nothing about, but it was something that really actually happened. He had some of the compassion of Christ.

I wish I could tell you that I had a lot. But I'd be a liar. I hope I have a little.

I hope you have a little. I pray for more. I prayed for it today.

I prayed for it yesterday. I don't think it's anything you whip up and pump up. If you have any of the kind of thing I'm talking about, you've got it from Jesus.

It's not natural concern. You don't have to be a Christian to be concerned for blind people and cripples and all that. If you're a Christian, you ought to be concerned about that, too.

I'm talking about not natural compassion. I'm talking about that compassion that cares about men's souls, not just their personal well-being. I'm talking about that compassion that cares for their souls.

Jesus said, don't fear him that kills a body, but rather fear him that they will destroy both body and soul. He was concerned about people's souls as well as their bodies. He had a passion for my soul.

The second, I've seen it time and again. I've seen it in my own church. I've seen it in the course of visiting other churches, where there's that holy compassion.

May I just cite you an example? In my own church, there's a little girl. She's not a little girl anymore. She's got a family.

But I remember when she was in high school, and I remember another little girl brought her out to our church. She was from the wrong side of town. She was from the wrong side of the tracks.

Another girl brought her out to church. In fact, there's a girl who brought her out to church. She's not even going to church.

They brought this little girl out, and she came along, and in due time, she made some inquiry about her relationship to her Maker, about her salvation, and God in his mercy converted her to Jesus. After that, she used to attend the prayer meeting every week. I could hear her when the pastor would say, is there any requests for prayer tonight? We have a great prayer meeting at our church.

I think so anyhow. I think there was about maybe a hundred people there last night, and we have about a hundred members. But I remember this little girl used to put up her hand like she was in school.

She would say, pray for my daddy. He's not a Christian. Every week.

Well, one week she didn't make the request. After the prayer, after the people started to offer their petitions to the Lord and their requests, I heard this little feminine voice. She started to pray.

She was about a junior or senior in high school then. She started to pray in general, but when she got to her daddy, she broke down and cried. She never finished that prayer yet.

I wonder if I'm looking at a man tonight who's got some children praying for him, and he's not a Christian. Huh? Eh? Am I looking at a man of these 180 men? Somebody in your family is praying for you, and you're not a Christian. Well, let me tell you what happened.

So when she started to pray, she broke down and cried. Never finished that prayer yet. It was a long silence in the prayer meeting.

Then somebody else started to pray, and the prayer meeting was over, and we all went home. I couldn't wait to see my friend, my lawyer friend. You know, we had a young lawyer in my church.

We used to pray together every morning. We met together for ten years. We took the list of the people in our church.

We didn't pray for everyone every day, but we'd take so many this day, and we'd pray for them. Then we'd pray for another group, and we'd pray for them. We met for ten years to pray for our pastor and officers and people.

Now, we didn't make it seven out of seven. I would say in a period of ten years when we were not out of town, we probably averaged five out of seven. We didn't have some legalistic arrangement about it.

But I'll tell you how long we did it. We read the Bible through on our knees together. That's how long we did it.

We used to read a half a chapter, and he'd pray, and I'd read a half a chapter, and I'd pray, and he'd go to his law office, and I'd go to construction office. We read the Bible through. But the next morning, he wasn't in the prayer meeting.

The next morning when I met him, I said, Roger, you missed the prayer meeting. You should have been in the prayer meeting last night. I said, I believe I witnessed some holy tears.

I believe there's alligator tears. I believe there's crocodile tears, and I believe there's all kind of tears. But I believe there's some holy ghost tears, too.

I believe Paul had some holy ghost tears. You read it in Acts 20 when he talks about his tears. Well, I related to him what happened.

And I said to him, I said, Roger, I believe God's going to deal with that man. He said, why? He said, you talked to him on a hospital bed. And I had talked to that same man on a hospital bed when I went to visit him.

And I remember he looked up off of that bed to me, and he said, when I was talking to him about the claims of Christ, he said, I never did anything wrong. And I looked at him, and I looked at him, and I wondered what kept his head from falling in from sheer emptiness. He never did anything wrong.

And I came back that time and told him that he wasn't even a candidate for salvation. He said, why'd you change your mind? Oh, I said, let me tell you. I said, let me tell you.

I said, I don't know what the psalmist means, and I don't know the night all that's involved in Psalm 126, verse 5 and 6, where the psalmist said, he that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed shall doubtlessly come again bringing his sheaves with him. I don't know if it always has to be literal tears. I don't know about that.

Maybe it's just those kind of tears that some men shed in their hearts. That holy concern. Maybe that's what the psalmist talked about.

But I said, Roger, that verse and those verses, they mean something. And I remember it in my own case, and I related that to him. In a few weeks we had a businessman in our church.

He was speaking morning and evening, and he was staying in my home. That afternoon, that Sunday, and the young people come to our house a lot. They did when we had a house.

And they used to use our recorders and books and car, anything else. And so he had gone upstairs in the afternoon to take a little Sunday afternoon siesta. And when he came down, there was about a half a dozen young people in my home, and this little girl was one of them.

And he's kind of a gregarious fellow, loved young people, and he started to talk to them and engage them in conversation. And he started asking, what does your father do? And they said, well, butcher, baker, lawyer, chemist, maker, whatever the answer would be. And then he would say to them, is he a Christian? And they'd give the answer.

This little girl was on my left. I can remember it vividly today. And I looked out the corner of my eye because I remember what happened in the prayer meeting.

And I thought, well, when it gets to her, we've got a little problem. And sure enough, at least it seemed to me the closer he got, the more crimson her face got. And finally he got over to that little girl and he said, honey, what does your daddy do? She said he works in the post office.

Is he a Christian? And she started to weep. But my friend looked at me and he just kind of slid on the edge of his chair. And I knew what he wanted me to do.

He wanted to visit that man. That's what he wanted to do. And I looked at the watch and it was about an hour before the service.

We were going to the evening service. And I must confess to you tonight that my faith was weak. I thought, well, the one-eyed truck of maniacs will be blazing away.

They'll probably have company. And then that hospital thing came up in my mind again, even though I believed that God was going to do something. And the devil was just waving all that stuff around my mind.

I said, I know what you want to do. You want to go see that man. He said, yeah.

I said, okay, let's go. So we go on the way to church. And of course, when the doorbell rang, the man came to the door.

He knew me because I had visited him before. By this then, sure enough, they had company. Sure enough, the mechanical babysitter was full blast.

And most people don't have enough sense to even turn it down, let alone turn it off. My friend, he's kind of a stockbroker and he has a lot of diplomacy. We don't have that in the construction business much, but he has a lot of diplomacy.

So he went over and he said, Dad, he said, we've come to talk to you about something very important. You don't mind if we turn off the television, do you? And I sat there and my friend did the talking and he told him some things about Christ, told him what happened in my home. And I saw that same man, that same man.

Without any invitation or anything else, I saw that same man just slide off his chair. And I heard him with these two ears cry out to God for mercy. I didn't see all the evidence.

After that, I'd like to see, but I do know that he's dying weak. He spent reading the Bible. I'm not God.

I don't go around saying who's a Christian and who's not. But I did hear that man who told me he never did anything wrong. I heard him cry out to God for mercy.

What is a true witness? Well, part of it is somebody that knows something about a holy life. You can't bluff that. You can't kid people about that.

It's somebody that walks in such a relationship that they have a little bit, a little bit of the compassion of Jesus. I'm going to quit. Late at night.

I'll maybe start there tomorrow. I'm not sure. I'm glad for this, for this subject, this weekend, for this theme that you have assigned to me.

Because I long to offer any little word I can to harness and encourage, not to scold you, but to encourage men to do what Christ told men to do. You know, I was amazed when I came into the Christian church to find out where they teach that verse, Mark 1, 17, where it says, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. Where do they teach that in your church? Who do they teach that to? The little children.

Thank you, Mr. Pantale. Thank you, Dr. That's who they teach it to. I'm glad they teach it to somebody, but listen, Jesus wasn't speaking at the little children.

He was talking to men that day. He wasn't talking to the cradle roll. He was talking to men.

And oh, it's the burden of my soul and life. My prayer, my prayer this weekend, that some man here who never heard it before with the ears of a heart will hear it by the word and by the Spirit. Jesus say, follow me, that's command.

And then there's a promise. I will make you fishers of men. If we had time tonight and I could ask you to stand up here tonight and have every man tell me, as a Christian here, how many of you are here because somebody was a fisher for you? I suppose it'd be a lot.

I know this old sinner's here because somebody cared. Somebody cared. Somebody believed Jesus.

Somebody took it serious. The Bible and the clear command in the New Testament. It's in every gospel.

It's in Acts. It's the last thing that Christ said when he left this world. He shall receive power.

After that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. And ye shall be witnesses unto me. Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.

And you know that old construction job where I heard about Jesus? That was in the uttermost part of the earth. That was somewhere. And you got a world too.

Every man here has a world. It may not be China, Africa, South America, but you got a world. Jesus is saying to you if you're a Christian, you go into that world, your world.

Old Elmer's world was a construction job. And I was in it. And I'm here tonight to tell you about it.

Tonight we thank you for the power of that gospel that saves men from the guttermost to the uttermost. And you've made this our trust, those of us who call ourselves by your name, Lord Jesus. And we pray

that this weekend as we consider your claims, we plead for your Spirit to press them upon our hearts.

We ask it for the glory of thy great name and for the good of thy church. Amen.

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