

The Message of Evangelism

by Ernest C. Reisinger

Ernest C. Reisinger's sermon emphasizes the critical role of evangelism, the clarity of the gospel message, and the necessity of faith and repentance in witnessing.

Duration: 1:25:45

Scripture: Exodus 20:8, Matthew 8:20, Matthew 28:19-20, John 14:27, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of preparing oneself for witnessing and sharing the gospel. They emphasize the need for sincerity and avoiding deceit in evangelism. The speaker also mentions the trust that believers have been given by God to share the gospel. They highlight the significance of understanding what the gospel truly is. The sermon encourages believers to be diligent in their witness and to have proper motives for evangelism.

Transcript

Before we have our closing session, may I just call your attention to two more books. The books I called your attention to this morning were certainly relevant to evangelism and our theme this week, and there are at least two more, and I'm sure Mr. Edwin wants me to say something about this, and I think I will, this book. But Words to Winners of Souls by Charles Haddon Spurgeon is most helpful.

You won't have to blink and apologize. I meant Soul Winner, excuse me, I'm holding this one up and talking about this one. Soul Winner by Spurgeon, not Words to Winners of Souls.

This is a little book that I referred to a while ago that I took with me to the mountain that day. This book, the Bible and a paper pad, and I highly commend it to you. I try to read it every year myself.

It's very searching, and I'm sure if you're halfway on it with yourself, it will lead you to prayer. It will lead you to prayer to God for help and assistance in your great, great work. And then, another little book that Mr. Craig has published, the Presbyterian Reform Publishing Company.

Several years ago, now this is in its second printing, several years ago, a preacher friend of mine in New Jersey called me on the phone and said, Ernie, somebody brought me the pages. It's all falling apart of an old book by a great Presbyterian who was a minister at the same church, I think, for either 35 or 45 years. It's been a while since I read the introduction.

But he said, it's so great, he said it ought to be reprinted. So I said, well, send it to me and we'll see what we can do. So I immediately read it, followed the pages, and the book was all torn apart.

And it was by Dr. Gardner Spring, a priest at the Little Brick Church. It has to do with the distinguishing traits. And I want to emphasize the word distinguishing.

A man can be moral by the world's standards. There's a lot of people who do not commit adultery and do not steal and do not lie and don't even take the Lord's name in vain and live what we consider by the best standards a good moral life. He points out some of the things that a man can be moral and not be a Christian.

And he points out the fact that man can have a certain amount of knowledge of holy things without being a Christian. He can have a form of religion. He can have eminent gifts.

He can even be a conviction of sin. And then he goes into those distinguishing marks of a Christian. Al and I wrote a little introduction to this and left it as it was.

And Mr. Craig printed it. You may be here today and wonder about your own experience with the Lord. And it's a good book to read anyhow.

I commend it to you very highly. Now, if you have your Bible, I'd like to turn in our closing time to 1 Thessalonians. Before we read the scripture, may I again, since this is my last session with you, may I again express my deep gratitude for this invitation to be instructed with this holy task.

I take this serious. I feel that when we open the word of God and think about holy things that we are not on a fool's errand. And I'm not seeking your applause or approval, but seeking to be a friend to your soul and also seeking to be honest to God and his word as I see those things revealed in the scriptures.

But may I again express my deep gratitude for your invitation. And secondly, I express my gratitude for such a title, because I believe it's one of the great weak links in the church, and that is laymen who are really witnessing. I heard a preacher not long ago who ministers to a lot of ministers, who was in Portland, Oregon, and he was speaking.

It was a council on evangelism, and he was speaking to some 400 ministers. And it was evangelism, and therefore they tried to be very honest with each other. And at one point in that they were taking an honest survey, and the question they were raising is, how many men in your church, that was the ministers, how many men actually engage in any sort of systematic witnessing, not something they did once 50 years ago and haven't done it since, but engage in a program or are conscious or are active witnesses for Christ.

400 ministers. Five ministers answered in the affirmative. That would be 395 who didn't have a man in their church who was a witness.

And out of the five, there were nine. They come up with nine. I figure if there were 100 to 200 in that represented by each minister, congregations of 100 to 200, that would be some 40,000 or 80,000 Christians with nine witnessing.

Now, as clear as it is in the Bible, I think it's the clearest command of Christ in the New Testament. You can understand why I'm grateful for such a theme. And I hope it's not only the theme for this year, but I hope you pursue it in days to follow.

Let's bow in the word of prayer and look to the God of the book before we look to the book. Let us pray. O Holy Father, we are all men of like passions.

Our need of thy wisdom is great, therefore we confess our ignorance. We confess our impotence and plead for your power. And especially today as we think of all the lives and the churches represented here, we pray that you'd be pleased to grant for Jesus' sake a great measure of your Spirit to not only speak, but to seal to hearts those eminent truths that we are considering these days together as men.

Therefore we plead for your help, for your Spirit to come and do what we cannot do by tricks or gadgets or any other thing. Come, O Holy Dove, and take us to the Lamb and to His teachings and to His commands. For His name's sake, Amen.

In 1 Thessalonians 2, I'd like to read 12 verses, but I want to take particularly as the speaking portion, or probably commonly known as the text, I want to take verse 4 particularly. For you yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain. But even after that we had suffered before and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention or amid much opposition.

For our hesitation was not of deceit. Every form of evangelism must bear this in mind. It cannot have any deceitful element in it whatsoever, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.

And this is our text. But as we are allowed of God or approved of God to be put in trust with the gospel, that's our trust. Dear sir, that's your trust.

Even so we speak as our task to communicate it. Our trust to gospel, our task to communicate it. Not as pleasing men, but God which trieth or proveth our hearts.

Neither at any time use we flattery words. Good principle, very good principle for witnessing and preaching. Neither at any time use we flattering words.

As ye know, nor cloak of covetousness God is witness, nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others. When we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ, but we were gentle among you. And here we have that principle we saw this morning in 2 Timothy.

Not to strive, but be gentle, not to teach patience and meekness. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not the gospel of God only, but our own souls.

It costs a little of that to spend time with people and witness and preach. That's some of the cost, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail, for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Ye are witnesses. And God also, how holy, and he appeals to his conduct again, is the strange mingling of our life and our labors in this gospel work, so peculiar that it's only peculiar to gospel work. A man's life in other areas may have not anything to do with his labors.

He may be a keen lawyer and a crooked and rotten at the core, but still may be a keen, prudent lawyer. A man may be a great surgeon, great in the medical profession, and be morally corrupt. And therefore his life does not necessarily have a great deal to do with his labors.

Not so in this work, gentlemen. Somehow that strange, almost mysterious mingling of our life and our labors. And here we have it again.

That's why we talked about the power of a holy life. But the apostle appeals to us. If he's talking about his conduct, you're witnesses.

You know how I lived among you. Justly, unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you to please. As you know how we exalted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father, thus his children, that you would walk worthy of God who has called you into his kingdom and glory.

A great apostle points out in verse 2 what courage and resolution he did this work. And it does take some God-given courage and boldness to do it. You see it in verse 2. He reminds us also in the same verse that it was against opposition, suffering.

Although it was against opposition, opposition, this kind of suffering, only sharpens the edge of our holy resolution. That's what opposition does to the man of God. It sharpens that edge of holy resolution.

He could appeal to that. And then he said in verse 3, covetousness. It was without that, against that.

No deceit. Not to tell the hard side of some of the things of the gospel. In other words, he's appealing to his honesty and his sincerity, not deceitful.

Why was he honest and sincere? Well, I think we have it in this context here. He was a steward. That's what he said in verse 4. And in the gospel was his trust.

It was not Paul's gospel, it was the gospel of God. And he was entrusted with it. He reminds us two or three times, verse 8 and verse 9, that this was God's gospel.

And in verse 4 he said that's his trust. So the reason he was honest and sincere is because he had a trust. Secondly, because of his design and desire to please God.

Then, of course, another reason for his honesty and sincerity was, he was honest and sincere because his labor was under God's omniscience in the sight of him who tries our hearts, he said. We see the evidence of his sincerity in verse 5. That's why he avoids flattery. That's the evidence of his sincerity.

We see, secondly, in verse 5, that's why he avoided covetousness. He did not make religion a cloak nor a life, like the false prophets did in 2 Peter 2, verse 3, where it says, they were so covetous with sane words made merchandise of the people. Is there any water in this place? This is the evidence of his sincerity.

Proved in avoiding flattery. Proved in avoiding covetousness. And another reason, you see in verse 6, he avoided ambition and vain glory.

That's the proof. Now today, I want to somehow try to bring this to a close. I said, I told you this morning, I was quite off schedule.

And I'm not in any better shape today. Sometimes when I have these little missions, I feel like that bishop that's on the train who lost his ticket. And the conductor knew the bishop very well.

And as he came by, he said to the bishop, he said, you know, the bishop was kind of gone through his clothes about his ticket. And the conductor said, that's all right, bishop, I've got the rest of this car to do, I'll

be back. So he did that car and came back, and the bishop was quite a bit more exercised about it and was getting more extreme.

And the conductor said, that's all right, bishop, I have another car to do. I'll go collect the tickets in the other car. Finally came back, the poor bishop was all in sweat.

He was really frantic. And the conductor said to the bishop, he said, that's all right, if you don't find it, he said, we know you and you'll pay. The bishop said, that's not the problem.

He says, I don't know where I'm going. Sometimes I wonder if I know where I'm going. But I do, believe it or not, know where I'm going.

I just don't always get there. I want to talk about our trust a little bit. We've talked about the man, it's important, the man in evangelism, whether it's lay evangelism or other than lay evangelism, people doing the work are important.

We've spent two sessions on that. Today I'd like to talk a little bit about the message of evangelism, and if we have time, the motive. The proper motive, too, principally, for evangelism.

First of all, our trust, the gospel. It's important that we're clear on what the gospel is. Now, it don't look so that I could make a statement like that in a meeting like this.

I had three women call on me some years ago. My secretary kept telling me to come down, there's three young women there who want to see me. And I said, well, they could see Mr. Corman or somebody's office manager, somebody else.

She said, no, they insist on seeing you. So finally she prevailed upon me, and I went down. There were three women from the church, and they were selling a cookbook.

Now, what a contractor wants with a cookbook, I don't know. But that's the point. The point was, they heard that I was religious and I was a good touch for some money.

So I soon realized that I was duty-bound to buy a cookbook. And since I'm going to have to buy the cookbook, I thought I might at least ask and inquire what they're going to do with the money, since they said they're from the church. And when I asked, what are you going to do with the money, they didn't seem to be too sure about that.

So I said to them, they really didn't know. They knew they were doing it for the church. Now, these were serious, young, married women beating the streets to collect money.

And I said, well, it would be a good idea if you used it to propagate the gospel. And that seemed to solve everything, and they all agreed, yes, that's right. And then I said, what is the gospel? And I asked the first one, and she said, that's the Ten Commandments.

Now, this is accurate. I asked the second one, and she said, it's a symbol of Christ. I asked the third, and she said, it's the Golden Rule.

I said, do you all go to the same church? And then I had a chance to tell them about it. But if I were to ask you this afternoon, what is the gospel, would you tell me, well, that's about Christ dying on the cross. But suppose I went into a situation over in New York City, where the New York Bible Society is from, our

friends from there.

And I went into that area with a group of Jewish children, somebody that never heard the name Jesus Christ. And I say to them, all boys and girls, I want to tell you the good news, the glad tidings, the joyful announcement. Let me tell you, once upon a time, some wicked men took an innocent man to the brow of a hill, and there they put nails in his hands, and a spear in his side, and he died.

Isn't that wonderful? They had looked at me as though I had something wrong with me. Now, it's true that that has something to do with the gospel, but those facts by themselves are not good news. They've got to be related to some other facts.

I suggest to you, the little book that many of you bought, Packer's book on the Saulius Garden of Evangelism, there's an outline of the gospel in there, and he says this, and I agree with him, that the gospel is a divinely inspired message about God as our Creator, who has absolute claims upon us as creatures. When Paul was in certain synagogues, he didn't start with the law of God or the creation, because he was talking to people who were already theists. They had a theistic base, and he started talking about the Messiah.

But what did he do in what is probably the most unique gospel situation in the New Testament, on Mars Hill? Did he start with the Messiah? No, he started with God our Creator. And the gospel is a message about God. It's a message about sin, and you can't talk about sin and just run up to somebody and say, Oh, sin comes short of the glory of God.

That doesn't tell them what sin is. Everybody will agree with you mostly on that. What is sin? We learn from 1 John 3, 4 that sin is the transgression of the law.

So the law has something to do with the message, too. We learn from Romans 3, 20 that by the law is the knowledge of sin. No law, no sin.

That's why three great truths of the Bible stand or fall together, and that's the law of God, the cross of Christ, and the righteous judgment of Almighty God. You touch one, and you touch them all. Take away one, you've taken them all.

Take away the law of God, there is no such thing as sin. That's our great problem on our campus. And not only on our campus, the homes from which those people came from.

No sin. No fixed standards. No objective standard as to what's right and wrong.

And they don't care about Jesus because they don't know anything about God's law. So if you take away the law, you have no sin. If you take away the cross, you have no answer to sin's problem.

If you take away the righteous judgment of Almighty God, who cares about Jesus or the law? Who cares about Jesus or the law? So certainly when we talk about sin, we can't think of the divinely inspired message of the gospel without thinking about the creator-creature relationship. Then comes, and then comes sin automatically as soon as you establish that. And then you're ready to talk about the redeemer relationship.

The gospel's a message about God our creator, about sin, about Christ, who he was, what he did, why he did it, where he is now. There's something else, and I'll touch on this later. The message is a summon.

The gospel really is a summon to faith and repentance. Notice I said faith and repentance. Now why did I say that? Because you cannot separate true, saving faith from Bible repentance any more than you can separate evangelical repentance from true Bible faith.

So you better check over your evangelistic program and see if it includes repentance. Because if it doesn't include repentance, it's not evangelistic. You can't separate the two.

I'm glad for the old, shorter catechism. I hope you don't mind if I catechize you a little. The catechism is very clear on this point.

Very clear. Very clear. Question 87.

Thank you, Jim. Question 87 in the shorter catechism is this. What is repentance? What is that? In the Confession it says repentance is something that's to be preached by every minister of the gospel as well as faith in Christ.

That's almost a verbatim quote from the Westminster Confession. What is repentance? Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner out of the true sense of his sin Now notice this. This is what I want you to see.

And the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. Without the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ repentance is what Judas did. Remorse, despair, and destruction.

True repentance always includes faith. That's why the catechism was so concise, so biblically correct on that point. Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner out of the true sense of his sin and the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience.

I say the gospel is a summons to faith and repentance. I want to show you maybe later if I have time how Jesus preached it and Paul preached it. Peter preached it.

The apostles preached it. I wonder if you know anything about it. I wonder if you know anything about it other than a definition.

I wonder if you've experienced that thing that the catechism calls it's a grace. Well, we must be sure of our message. If we're thinking of lay evangelism now I don't suggest that you run up to everybody and go through these four or five points that I'm giving you.

But underneath all that you do on the foundation all that you do will stem from a right view of the gospel. The gospel is a message not some nebulous spirit. The gospel is a message definable in words.

But it must be communicated in power. That's the unique thing about it. That's the difference between the gospel and other learning.

Other learning can be communicated to men's heads their intellect apart from power other than the power of abilities to preach and teach rather. But the gospel is a message definable in words but must be communicated in power. May I read it to you? Same epistle.

For our gospel came unto you in word our gospel came not unto you in word only but also in power of the Holy Ghost and much assured as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. Paul

is saying yes, it came to you in word but not word only came in power. So it's bold, it's communicated.

You know when we think about witnessing today what we're trying to do what I hear a lot of time is boy you don't know where I work you ought to work where I work. Or some preacher wants to move out of this particular place because you ought to know where our church is located down in among this people they're all Roman Catholics in our area and they give me all this word. You know what I think down inside of me when they say that I think that Jerusalem was a pretty hard place to work in about the year 31, 32.

The name Jesus was not very popular Jerusalem was not very those people were pretty hard. Your situation, don't tell me that your situation is no different. We don't have all the drunks tough people on construction but we have our share but that's a tough place.

So I'm talking about our message our task is to speak it. Now we've got to have a motive for that. I want to be very careful here today I don't want to be misunderstood on this.

There are two basic motives that I can find in the New Testament for witnessing and I'd like to give them the order and I believe the order is important. You know, most evangelism is stirred up with the motive of man's need. Now that is the motive and that's the second.

But I don't believe that that's the first motive for evangelism.

I remember when I was speaking at a missionary conference once and I was late, late on the program there was a lot of other speakers before me I was like late in the weekend and they were trying to get drawn up a trip to go to Haiti and almost it became almost the conference jargon to talk about broken hearts go and see these people and get a broken heart and I thought if somebody didn't say something else to them we were going to start a broken heart denomination you don't have to go to Haiti to get a broken heart and I thought I was constrained to do something about it but my problem was solved because before I spoke immediately there was a young missionary there medical missionary, a doctor, a medical doctor who had just gotten back from the jungles of South America on his first term

and he was so tired and weary that he was recommended not to take any speaking engagements or do anything but to just rest and right before I spoke they did ask him if he would say a word and I remembered very vividly he got up and he said he wished he could give some glowing reports of how many people were converted but he said I can't I have no such glowing reports and then he went on to say how he still had a certain amount of joy in obeying Christ and he said how day after day he would pray in the morning Lord Jesus you sent me here use me today and he would exercise his medical ability to help talk and tell the gospel and he said at night I could come back by that same bed and kneel down and say Lord Jesus the best I know how I have obeyed you today he says I had a measure of joy in

obedience I don't think you can separate these two motives too far but I believe that your motive for witnessing ought to first be, God said you to do it stemming from the first table of the law when Jesus gave the summary of the first table of law he said to the lawyer who asked him what's the great commandment of the law he said thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and so on and thy neighbor as thyself and then he summed up the second love to God that ought to be my first motive for witnessing and I tell you when people spit on you and you're not successful and you're discouraged there's still a great deal of joy that comes from knowing that you have exercised your best efforts in obeying God the first motive for witnessing is not the need of man and it comes from the

second table of law thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself and if you love him in that sense you'll not only be interested for the clothes he wears and where he lives and his physical things if you love him in that sense you'll be interested in his soul as well our bonding company they I don't know I haven't been in the office for four years so I don't know what the status is now but we used to I used to talk to my bonding man for years and I'm sure Stan I think our premiums we paid him about 75 or 100 thousand dollars a year so he'd listen to anything I had to say and we used to meet in the morning for breakfast and I would talk to him not every time about Christ in fact there may be a couple times I would I'd give him I guess if he had everything beside his bed that I'd give him to

read he probably couldn't get in bed but he always seemed to listen but I remember this one morning we were meeting in a hotel for breakfast and I something came up about I don't remember the details but I do remember that this is one of the mornings I was talking to him about the claims of Christ and he looked across the breakfast table and he said to me Ernie why in the hell are you bothered about my soul? and I took my testament out of my pocket and I said to him Ken I said I could not believe what's in this book and claim to be your friend and not care about your soul that's impossible I could not believe what's in this book and say I love my neighbor and not care second motive for witness now I think there's something else about the message that I want I thought I better get into

motive first our message is the gospel it has two keys in it not only trust Christ trust Christ trust Christ but turn from sin faith and repentance not only that our message must be addressed to the whole man I hinted at this this morning when I said the gospel must reach the whole man or it hasn't reached you savingly if the gospel hasn't reached you in every area of your life it has not efficaciously reached you and you're lost and if it doesn't reach you in every area of your life you'll go to hell playing church it must reach a man's intellect because that's what he thinks Christ must open the mind read it in Luke 24 where it said he opened in a few verses at the end of Luke 24 from about 45 on it said he opened our understanding he opened the scriptures find it in Luke 16 Lydia her

mind needed to be opened so it must reach the intellect because that's what people think with it must reach their emotions because that's what they feel with it must reach their will because that's what they discern with surely whatever else true religion is it cannot be less than right thinking in relationship to God right feeling in relationship to God and right acting in relationship to God that's the least that true religion can be that's the least and that's why it must reach the whole man not just one of these psychological upheavals that's the reason I said this morning and emphasized the fact that Christ set us out to teach now I don't want you to go away and think that I believe that God couldn't somebody could come in this door lost and go out saved I believe that's possible I

believe that's God's not his normal way of saving man I believe that we have in the scriptures at least four ways at least four ways vividly set forth in the scriptures that God calls men to himself don't go away and say I'm talking about some kind of preparation doctrine that you gotta prepare yourself for grace I'm not talking about that at all but I will say if grace doesn't prepare you you'll never be saved I'm not talking about you preparing yourself for grace I'm talking about something that grace does for men God called some from the womb you have a vivid example in Luke chapter 1 with John the Baptist he was filled with the spirit from the womb so I got to allow that at least I have a record in Holy Writ that he called one that way I learned in the same connection that Jeremiah

was ordained of God from the womb Jeremiah 1 5 so we have that record we have the record of God calling at least one man on his deathbed so we have to allow for that this day thou shalt be with me in

paradise we have what I would call a sovereign gospel call not in Saint Paul I don't think that represents a dramatic it's a dramatic conversion but I don't think it represents one of those instantaneous conversions where he was walking on the road to the Baptist and he yes he was converted but you must remember he heard Stephen and you must remember that he was locking up Christians and putting them in jail and he surely knew why he was doing it so I can allow for a period of conviction in Saint Paul I think the sovereign gospel call the best illustration is Zacchaeus up in that tree Jesus

said to him today salvation is coming now when I said all that I believe that these are God's unusual way of calling men I believe God's most common way of calling men and women is by prior work of the law convicting them of sin showing them the knee of his savior and then revealing Christ by his spirit to them but the gospel must reach the whole man and I say that if we would bear this in mind in all of our evangelism it would eliminate some of the awful curse that's come upon the church in at least a couple areas and this awful sentimental affection of the gospel just a sentimental affection all sentimentalism it would eliminate that it had to reach the whole man his mind, his emotions, and his will it would eliminate antinomian abuse of the gospel if it reaches the will if it has

something to do with how a man acts he won't be an antinomian he won't be against the law of Christ and the rule of Christ it would eliminate that awful fruitless speculation about the gospel all in his intellect, his head he knows all the facts he knows the doctrine he can spit doctrine at you like a machine gun shooting bullets all up here all up here stranger to heart religion stranger to the power of the gospel in his life if it just reaches his intellect and let me tell you something that's the danger in our circle that's the danger in reformed circles the other danger is something just an appeal to the emotions that's the danger in other circles the danger in our circles is that intellectual comprehension of certain facts but stranger to the power of religion that's why I say the

least true religion can be is right thinking, right feeling, right acting in a relationship that demonstrates to a whole man our message another thing, our message must be a whole Christ it must be a whole Christ this idea that's so prevalent not in our circle but it's crept into some of your churches too this wicked idea that you can trust Jesus as your personal savior whatever that is I don't know not in the bible not in any of the historical confessions you won't find you won't find terminology like that in the Westminster Confession or the Heidelberg Catechism or the old London Confession you won't find language like that you won't even find language where you trust Jesus as your savior in the bible or any of those things now don't misunderstand me he's our savior you want to know

how the Westminster Confession does it? you won't find that language it's a whole Christ now don't go away and say I object to that language I don't I see about him as my savior we just did it I don't have to turn some theological switch to do that but who is the savior? who is the savior?

Jesus Christ the Lord when I say a whole Christ I mean that kind of thing that's expressed in the catechism may I catechize you again a little more? it must be a whole Christ I can't just embrace I can't just embrace one aspect of him and kind of use Jesus as a hell of church policy no no let me catechize you a little this is question 23 in the shorter catechism what offices does Christ execute as our redeemer? Christ as our redeemer executes the office of prophet, priest, and king both in the state of his humiliation and exaltation how does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

Christ executes the office of a prophet in revealing to us by his word and spirit the will of God for our salvation how does he execute the office of a priest? Christ executes the office of a priest in his once

offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God in making continual intersections for us question 26 how does Christ execute the office of a king? Christ executes the office of a king in subduing us to himself get that in ruling and defending us and restraining and conquering all his enemies and ours prophet, priest, and king that's the Christ of the Bible this idea that you can have a savior without having a prophet to teach you and instruct you without having a king to rule over you and subdue you and rule over you and reign over you it's far into the Bible there's more souls in evangelical circles self-deceived in that area and I'd want to count them live like they're pleased but they're nodded to Jesus back here sometimes live like the devil not an evidence of Christian intimacy so man doesn't love what a Christian loves and hate what a Christian hates and cease to do what a Christian's meant to do and act like a Christian's meant to act go where Christians go hunger for what Christians hunger for if none of that is in his life what reason does he have to believe that he's a Christian? because he did something way back here gave a little nod to Jesus he's a self-deceived hell-bound soul Christ is our prophet oh now I don't think that we have to run up to somebody and say can you instruct Jesus to be a prophet, priest, and king I'm not suggesting that but this undergirds all of evangelism a girl came to me in a meeting and she said to me you know I was raised in a climate where I never heard anything like that all I heard is Jesus as your savior well I said let me ask you a question or two I said did you I'm not going to get caught today Bob Dr.

Van Til told me I said to this girl honey Dr. Van Til laughed when I said that I won't do that today I did say honey let me ask you a couple questions I said let me ask you a couple questions I said because I believe she was converted I believe she was a true Christian she was hungering after righteousness she was trying to please Christ I said when you came to Christ forget about words and terminology now I said did you long to be part of him and to know his will I said was not it your desire that he your king to rule you from his enemies and yours I said well I believe your experience was better than your understanding and today your understanding caught up to your experience so you must remember in these other areas people who don't say it just like we do they can have a genuine experience with Christ they may never have heard those catechism questions but their experience with Christ may be real if that doesn't give us license to keep on running around provoking and promoting the error and the wickedness that that's caused in the church well it must be a whole kind prophet, priest I want to take a couple minutes longer today saying a little more about not only our message but our our message I do want to say a little bit about message first of all if you read the context that I read today and caught some of the things I was saying you'll see that honesty honesty with men is takes a very prominent place in that context honesty with people not flattering words all that context you'll see that honesty takes a very prominent place and I want to suggest two areas Mr.

Moderator you know I didn't look what time it was when I started what time did I begin I don't know if I ought to go into this or not well these tapes are running out so that means it must be an hour I can't believe I've I've been talking an hour Adam I'm making words out of rain oh I see ok I forgot to look alright let me just touch two things very important in personal evangelism and one of them is this honesty at the invitation when we are dealing with men or women or boys and girls in personal we've got to be honest about the invitation that is honest in this respect that we can't tell them all the wonders beauties of the Christian life that's true but that's only half true it's hard to be a Christian and this idea that coming to Christ is going to solve all your problems that's not

true because you're going to get a new set of problems and there isn't a man on any of these benches today that won't act if you haven't experienced it's hard to be a Christian there's some difficult places I've

got some fellow contractors here and I know today that there's times in their life they have to say I can't do that be very lucrative and all that goes with it but I can't do that it's hard to be a Christian it's difficult to be a Christian this idea of painting all this rosy picture that's true I wouldn't crave being a Christian for all the money in the world I sleep at night and I hope for eternity and hope when I die and the hope of heaven and all those beautiful glories that we sing about and love that's true and I love it and I'm not complaining about being a Christian but

I'm going to tell you there's another side to it when you just paint all these rosy pictures and all that you're not honest with people and you're not honest in your invitation you know some years ago I went through the Bible the best I could the gospel particularly and I studied the invitations of Christ and you know what I came to the conclusion that he's more honest with people than we were he wasn't dropped off after statistics he was honest with people did you ever study his invitations? let me just call your attention to a couple well first let me make reference to Luke 14 because I won't get there but if you go to Luke 14 and read from verse 25 to 33 you'll find that in his invitation to come after me he does this you know he says like come with this hand but wait a minute count

the cost and he gives that illustration of a man building a tower he says he doesn't start to build until he sits down and sees if he has enough money finished to finish it less when he gets started he's embarrassed so he says count the cost he gives another illustration of a man going to war he said he doesn't go out with 10,000 with somebody coming with him 100,000 I forget the figures and then in verse 33 he says so likewise everyone that comes after me so he's honest but let me show it to you again in Luke 9 particularly and I'm only saying this that our message must be God honoring and they must be honored in Luke 9 in verse 23 he said of them all if any man will come after me let him deny himself any man not just a missionary any man come after me let him deny himself take up his

cross daily follow me now the flesh doesn't like self-denial my flesh doesn't like it that's not a very good way to encourage people ah but let me show you where it brings this point out more vividly in the same chapter look over at the end of Luke 9 will you verse 57 and it came to pass as they went in the way a certain man said unto him Lord I'll follow you whithersoever thou go boy if that would happen in your church next Sunday night if you'd be in a Baptist church you'd baptize him that night and have him give his testimony I don't know what you'd do in some other church but if that would happen you'd tell him to make him an elder next two weeks I'll follow you wherever you want me to go he'd say hey buddy man we're looking for you come on man we're looking for you come on get on

the bandwagon why I'll follow you wherever you want me to go boy he's saved I know that he's on my statistics got another one last night said yes put his name in John 3 16 he's ready for heaven this is more honest than that what did Jesus say to that fellow oh if he'd have been in a lot of churches especially if he'd been one of these half converted Hollywood stars that still have most of Hollywood in them they'd have prayed him all over the country giving their testimonies or one of these great big Christian athletes who live in an open rebellion against God's holy day clear command clear and you can't bring that under acts of necessity or mercy by say a little I trust in Jesus and prayed him all over the country giving his testimonies I'll follow you wherever Jesus said unto him the

foxes have all the birds have their nest the son of man hath not where to lay his head not a very good way to get customers is it but it's honest it's honest and all I'm saying about this yes tell them about the beauties of heaven tell them about the peace that Christ gives let's not kid these young people they're in some battles you talk you men who have young people in high school and college they know some battles

you know what I think about when I think of this you know I ran away from home when I was 16 to join the navy I was always just gung ho for the navy I thought I got to be in that navy and I'd see those movies on the navy and every picture on the billboard what I'd see a sailor something down in here would just go like that so when I was 16 I took off and I went over to this

old recruiting officer I think he knew I was lying my age I had to tell him I was 18 and I think he knew I was lying but he didn't say son you're a liar he turned me down he said I didn't have the proper bite you know and I went back and I kind of got that out of my system and a few years later I thought boy I'll try again so I went over it wasn't the same fellow and he felt me back of the neck and he said you're warm you're in old chief steady officer I said is it true sir that you get these clothes that you have free and do they furnish your meals yes is it likely that you'll see the world or a lot of it he said sure will you know something he didn't tell me one lie not one lie and all that I got in the Navy and everything he said was true but he didn't tell me everything about the

horrors and the hell of war where you hear men thousands of miles away cry out did you know I thought of it in connection with Christ's invitation I believe it would be best if we'd be a little honest with people instead of being so swift to get them on our statistics to be a little more honest with them honesty I was going to talk about honesty and assurance and their assurance but I don't think I will I want to not discourage you from witnessing I want to encourage you to be honest but I do want to encourage you just as well I want to encourage you to be witnesses I want to encourage you in this conference but at least to have some biblical substance to all that we try to do let the angels encourage you to witness when I read Luke 15 it says joy in the presence of angels of God over one

sinner that repented I said to you earlier in the week that the greatest service that's ever been rendered to me by one human being in this world or ever will be until I cross the river that has no bridge the man that told me about Christ when I say to you I don't know any greater joy to see a home where you've worked with a month three years somewhere knew not God in the gospel to see them come in and take a role in a church week after week see their children grow up under the instruction of a godly pastor my wife and I was reading that great Presbyterian missionary John Payton and this is what he said in this respect I copied it down verbatim because I want to encourage you by the joy that it brings to you not as the cause of their salvation as perjury but as one of the means that God

uses Payton said this he saw the harvest of those sacrificial labors in the glorious and gracious work of conversion to some of the people on New Hebrides he said this he tells of his first communion his first communion he said when he put the bread and wine into those dark hands once stained with the blood of cannibalism now reaching forth to receive the emblem of the blood of Christ he said this he said I had a foretaste of joy and of glory that when I break my heart to pieces I shall never taste a deeper bliss till I gaze upon the glorified Jesus I wonder today this weekend if you've ever thought about why you don't witness I wonder if I've been speaking to men who have nothing to witness about no experience no experience with Christ to share with me he said oh this would be a great

weekend to see if you've come here unconverted to God nothing to witness about oh I pray we should become a diligent seeker after Christ and his salvation oh I know you can't get to Christ he can get to you so you just fall where you are he'll get to you you don't have the power or the strength of the ability maybe not even the desire to get to Christ oh God our Father we've said a lot of words we thank you that you've told us that the gospel must come not only in words word only but in power therefore we plead with you to do what we can't do for one another or for others send your spirit and grant that power the power of thy

I called it passion because it was manifest in all these ways, which means that it's not just some passion thing. I'm not saying that he has a feeling for me today when he sees me in need or sees me drunk, but it's a feeling for me on Monday and a feeling for me on Tuesday and a feeling... enough that his wife, as I said, testified how he would go and pray for me, and that's more than just a passion concern. I like your phrase, abiding concern.

Does that help you? Gene, any comment on that? No. I think if you remember, I said I wish I had more of it, and I don't think I had, experientially, all that he seems to manifest, you know. Oh, that's why we ought to pray.

That's why we're together now to help each other. Well, I say if it comes from a devotional life to Christ, certainly Christ manifests. We wouldn't be too strong in saying he has passion for men and brought him to earth in the first place.

So I think it all comes out of a closer devotional life to him, which certainly includes prayer and the scriptures. I think that's correct. I'd say amen to that.

I'd say it wouldn't be real. Any other comments on this question? We talked about this question a little bit in my group. Why is it that we are reluctant to express an abiding concern? What is it about an abiding concern for a person that makes us reluctant to get involved? Some people say we don't want to get involved.

Some people say we're afraid. Well, why? Why don't we want to get involved? Why are we afraid of this kind of a relationship? The point of the relationship is that we're afraid that the other person might take... ..be so consistently abiding. That's why we come to meetings like this.

That's why we go to church. And I suppose that his life would be that there were times when he cooled off, too. I'm talking about that which was obvious, and I think it's a pertinent and important aspect of witnessing.

But I think that that's a wrong... that's the trouble with biographies. You know, you never always hear the bad side of a fellow. The best of men have other problems.

And I suppose that Elmer cooled off, too. Why did Elmer cool off? Anybody that would like to express themselves on why... Thank you. That's the point I was trying to get to.

I believe our problem is selfishness. I think we need to be specific. It's true we don't trust God enough.

We don't have enough faith. But we need to be specific. We're selfish.

We're unwilling to give of our time. We're unwilling to give of our money. We're unwilling to give of the things that we have for others.

When we get involved with people in this kind of a way, it's going to cost. It's going to cost you to follow Jesus Christ, but it'll cost less if you just follow Christ and never get involved with anybody else, you see. When you begin getting involved with others, then it's going to cost you this.

And I think that's what we have to face up to. We have to be willing to pay, because this is what God wants us to do. They're so needy.

Let's face up to that. That it's our selfishness that belongs, you see. We can have what Elmer had.

And we can have what we have had at times that can grow in our lives. And looking at it, and then going to God for the help. Don't be leaving.

I think it's more blessed to get. Because I have a problem with this. To share what I have.

Okay, well we've heard now from Dean Gary Stokes. Did you have anything that your group would like to say? Well, I think that the problem is greater for women than for us men. Especially women who are home with a family and don't see many people.

But I do believe that we all have enough contacts outside. We buy gas and bread, and we have business associates. And I think witnessing ought to be natural, as well as maybe sometimes discipline ourselves into it.

But even like women, find opportunities. Now, you've got a fellow sitting there right beside you, not too far. He's got a wife that I think is a true witness.

And she's not, they're not in our town anymore. Not beside you. He's one chair over from you.

But I remember when Anne Amundsen was in our church, she had a family of her own. She was busy, and ours was a tough taskmaster. But you know, we've got people in our church today because of her witness.

There was a woman up the street who could hardly speak English, from Poland. Had how many children? Nichols? About five children. That woman wasn't well.

Anne used to go up there, and her whole motive was to witness. She'd go up there and help that woman scrub the floors and do menial tasks. And the lady was a Catholic, too.

And when she asked him out to church, you'd see there was some blood mixed with it. And it cost her time, and who wants to scrub floors, even your own? But that's an example. I believe, and he's sharp enough.

You know, like a fellow says, well, I had an opportunity today. Well, that's kind of like a lot of baloney. You have a thousand opportunities every day.

He means I seized upon the opportunity. I do understand the question, but I don't think it's as acute as you would. I think that I'm on all these boards and committees, but I still buy concrete, and I still buy steel, and all that sort of thing.

I'm an insurance man. Let me tell you how I do it. Oh, wait a second.

You have a contact. You can say, I see you're busy, George. Here's a little pamphlet.

Read it. I want to talk to you about it some day. That's the first step.

And then you make your time when there's not three cards there, but you've had the contact. I have a wonderful illustration of it in a fellow that called on me on licensure, to sell licensure. When he was done on the premise that I'm going to die, he was worried about what's going to happen to my marbles and my shotgun and my golf club.

I just said to him, now, Bill, I've given you my undivided attention for an hour. Let me talk to you for a minute on the same premise, but not what's going to happen to your golf club, but what's going to happen to you when you die. Now, that led him to a witness.

He's called me on the phone and come around to my house. Today, he's a witnessing Christian. But, I mean, I could have said, well, it's 12 o'clock, and it was.

It's time to go to lunch, you know. Bill, I'll see you later. He never said anything.

I think so. I appreciate what you're saying, and all this business, but I believe that if you can make opportunities, if it's foremost in your mind, and something on moderation.

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