

I Am Debtor Missionary Message

by William A. Deans

William A. Deans emphasizes the believer's obligation to share the gospel through personal testimony and the resilience of faith in challenging circumstances.

Duration: 50:31

Topics: "Missionary Work", "Gospel Preaching"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal experience of being called to serve as a missionary in the Congo. He emphasizes the importance of being ready and willing to preach the gospel and set aside personal plans and ambitions. The speaker also acknowledges that they were poorly informed about the mission field before going, but they trusted in God's guidance. The sermon includes a reference to Romans 1:1-17, highlighting the message of the gospel and the speaker's commitment to proclaiming it.

Transcript

I'm very happy to learn that Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Hobgood are in the congregation. I wonder if you would just stand so we could identify you. I'd like to... There they are.

We'd like you to know them. They are old-time missionaries from the Congo. Good to see you here.

Our brother Mr. Hobgood is a co-translator of the Lumongo Bible, and his son, Ben Hobgood, is the rector of the Protestant University in the Congo, and they have been dear friends of ours for many years. They visited us at Nyongkundi. It's just a joy to see them here in Florida.

We thank the Lord, too, for the establishment of that Protestant University out in the Congo, and Brother Ben Hobgood has mentioned to me the need of personnel in connection with the universities there. We're happy that there are three universities in the Congo. There's the Catholic University, a branch of Levenham in the Kinshasa area, and of course our students are welcome there, too.

It's a Catholic university. And then there's a government university in Elizabethville, which is now called Lubumbashi, and there they may go, but our hearts are not too happy because of the very liberal and almost atheistic outlook there is oftentimes in that university. So we were very happy in the establishment of the university at Stanleyville in the Oriental Province, which is our province.

Stanleyville is now called Kisangani, and there's a need for evangelical faculty, those who can go and give help in that work, particularly in the science departments, I believe, of the faculty. I'm happy for the

occasion of mentioning this, and especially in connection with prayer for those who have the oversight, and particularly Mr. Ben Hobgood, who has the oversight of the university there. Now, this is the missionary week in the conference, and you'll notice that remarks have been made definitely along a missionary line, and a number of people have come to me and asked various questions about our going to the field, and the questions have included questions concerning my parents.

And the Lord has laid on my heart, in connection with the ministry this morning, to give you something of a background in connection with our going to the field, and something of a testimony as to how God led us out into His work in the Congo. May we read together from the first chapter of Romans, Romans chapter one, beginning at verse one and reading through verse seventeen. Romans one and verse one.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures. Concerning his son Jesus Christ, our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead, by whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name, among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ. To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world, for God is my witness whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making requests if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift to the end that you may be established, that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was let hitherto, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

I am better both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise, so as much as in the end I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

What wonderful verses these are. The gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, verse three, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. And then in verse nine, I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son.

Wonderful subject that is ours in the gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son, whom He sent to redeem us, to purify us from all iniquity, to separate unto Himself a people, to call out for among the nations a people for His name, to reconcile us to Himself. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. And we have this wondrous message to proclaim, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, or in a larger sense perhaps, the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, the gospel of His Son.

And we were mentioning last night, in connection with witnessing, which is the privilege and responsibility for every believer, that the subject of the witness' message is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Ye shall obtain power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Witnesses unto me,

unto the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We mentioned last night, and can reiterate now, that He who knows the living fellowship, a constant uninterrupted fellowship with the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us, who knows the joy of His presence, of dwelling in His presence, whose heart is occupied with Him and whose soul is filled with the joy of the loveliness of Christ Himself, has a heart that is abundant, abundant with praises and abundant with testimony. And it's out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. And witnessing is not difficult for him who is in the presence of the Lord day by day.

My heart has been occupied with the great possibility of being constantly in the presence of the Lord, not in a few brief minutes, perhaps at the beginning of the day, coming into the Lord's presence, but of knowing the joy of walking constantly with Him, of allowing nothing to come that would remain as a cloud between us and our living Savior, but knowing the joy of constant uninterrupted fellowship with Him and the joy of the power of the Holy Spirit for witness in His name. And so Paul writes about this to the Romans, whom he has never as yet met, rejoicing that their faith is spoken of throughout the whole world, rejoicing in the spreading abroad of the news of the faith of these Roman Christians. Paul rejoiced also when the news of the Thessalonian Christians, whom he had visited and stayed with only a short time, some a month or so, and then as he went away his heart was concerned about them.

And there in Athens he was stirred, wondering how things were going with them and how they were faring in those days, and he sent Timothy to go and find out. And when Timothy came back with the good news of their faith, how Paul's heart rejoiced. And I'm reminded how we who have served the Lord in the Congo for some years were obliged to leave the country, and how we were over there in Uganda in evacuation.

We had been flown out, the last three of us had been flown out just the day before the rebels arrived at Nyankundi with a desire to liquidate several of us, and my name was at the head of the list. We were over to the safety of Uganda, and we had to leave those African Christians. I remember as we flew in the de Havilland Otter plane of the United Nations, as we flew over Nyankundi after we had traveled through the night to get to the airport at Bunia, and there we were in the morning flying over the station of Nyankundi, circling the station and dipping our wings in salute to the Christians.

And they looked up and they waved their hands, glad that we were going to the safety of another place, and yet sorry to see us go. And we wondered if we would ever see their dear faces again. We wondered if the communist-inspired rebellion was being used of Satan, as it were, to close the door to the Congo.

And then we remembered that the Lord had set before us an open door which no man could shut without the Lord's permitting it. We went across, but our hearts wondered about those Christians over there. How are they faring? And for days, for weeks, we had no news, and we heard that our brother Yusef Boutso had been killed.

It wasn't true. The report was false. He had told the African Christians, when those rebels arrive, I'll go out and speak with them, and if you hear shooting, you'll know that I've been killed, and you run off to the hills and save yourselves.

And so when they came the day after our departure, they were having a prayer meeting in the chapel there at Nyankundi, and one of Yusef Boutso's children came down terrified, and he said, one of the Simbas are here. And so they called Yusef Boutso, and he went with our brother Ezekiel Inguera, another outstanding brother, and they spoke with these Simbas, and the Simbas said, where are the missionaries?

And Yusef said with considerable relief, they've gone. They flew over here yesterday, and they've gone out of the country.

And they were so angry with him. They were indeed very angry indeed. And they said, all right, you let them go.

We're going to capture Bunia tomorrow, but the day after tomorrow we're coming back and we're going to kill you, Yusef Boutso. Then they went around and they looted the homes. They had some hours before nightfall, and they took the cars that were available and loaded them up with things that they could take that first day, and then off they went.

At the end of the day, they went to Irumu. But before they went, in order to assemble the looting Simbas, they shot into the air, and the people sitting in the prayer meeting heard the shots, and off they went to the hills with news that Yusef Boutso had been shot, but he hadn't been shot. However, that news came all the way across to Uganda to us.

And so the next day the rebels went in to Bunia, and they thought they were going to take over the city, but they lost about a thousand people on the way as the Congolese army stood up and fought. And there's one hill, the Tinda Hill, we know it well. They say about a thousand men were killed there.

And that afternoon, they were, some of them back. There was a truckload brought in of wounded Simbas, brought into the hospital at Nyankundi for treatment. And then the next day more came.

That day, Yusef Boutso, when the rebels arrived with the wounded soldiers, showed them the way to the hospital. Here's the way to the hospital. And in they turned to the hospital, and some of those who said, two of those officers, Simba officers, who said, we'll be back in two days to kill you, Yusef Boutso.

They came in screaming with pain, and they died there in the hospital while Yusef Boutso was standing beside them, giving them the gospel. But the next day others came, and they looked for Yusef Boutso. They hated him now more than ever, and they had his name on their lips, and they searched for him.

He was sitting at his desk in the office in the printing plant. He said, I went in to work, and I stayed to pray. And he was there all day long, and the Simbas were going all around the buildings, looking for, where's Yusef Boutso? And I'm afraid the African Christians were pointing in all directions but the right one.

At any rate, they never found him. But that night the elders came to him and said, Yusef, you'd better go, because you're going to be killed, and we need you afterwards. After all these troubles are over, you'd better go.

And so that night Yusef Boutso left his wife and thirteen children and walked overland by foot for twelve days, overland, and rejoined us there in Kampala. And we thought he was dead. We'd had some sleepless nights.

And then suddenly word came. The telephone rang from the mission guest house there in Kampala. There's a friend here looking for you by the name of Yusef Boutso.

What joy! But the only news he could bring was of the arrival of the rebels, and of one man being killed the day they arrived. He had no news of the Christians, and so we waited, wondering what happened to the Christians. Were they going on the things of the Lord? And then one day, about three weeks afterwards,

we received a crumpled little note that had been sent out hand to hand, smuggled out of the Congo during the Simba occupation.

And this letter said, now don't come back now, folks. Bona, don't come back now. We're having all sorts of danger all about us, but the Christians are gathering together.

We've been meeting together to remember the Lord. We're not prohibited in our own local assemblies of believers in our local churches. We're not prohibited from meeting, and the Lord is blessing and keeping our hearts calm.

Oh, what joy it was to have that news, that little crumpled letter. I haven't yet what a treasure it was, news that they were standing for Christ over yonder in the Congo. And then when we did go back and found that they had gone on in the things of the Lord, and they were numerically greater than ever before, and spiritually they had grown in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And those local churches had grown, and some believers who had been in sin, who had been backslidden, they were brought to conviction and restoration, and there they were with their faces glowing with the love of the Lord when we went back. Many for whom we had, I'm ashamed to say, had almost given up hope of their ever being restored. There they were back again in fellowship with the Lord and with his people, and our hearts rejoiced.

And I can think of Paul as he sent Timothy back, longing for some information. Communications were poor in those days, and they were impossible in the days of the rebellion in the Congo, and we couldn't get any news except a letter passed by hand. And Timothy went, and then he brought news of the Thessalonians, and what joy it must have brought to the heart of Paul.

What a joy to see the Lord's people going on the truth and laying hold on the things of God, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so in this first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, Paul says that he would like to come and see them, and he had desired to come previously, but was hindered. His desire was that he might have some fruit amongst them, even as he had among other Gentiles.

And now as a background to the testimony I'd like to give you concerning the going out into the work, I'd like to read these verses 14, 15, 16, and 17 once again. Paul said, I am Datar, both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, with everything I have consecrated by the Lord himself, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believe it.

To the Jew first and also to the Greek, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, that just shall live by faith. There are three I am's there. You've probably noticed them.

I call attention to them again. In verse 14, I am Datar. In verse 15, I am ready to preach the gospel, and in verse 16, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

I am Datar. Now, in a general way, every believer is a Datar to give the word of life. Every believer is a Datar to proclaim the gospel to those round about him.

And this, we cannot overemphasize that each believer has his mission field in his own immediate area, and perhaps we'll go further afield in that widening scope of witness, which is the worldwide evangelization program that the Lord would have us follow in our day. I am Datar. Paul considered that he had a debt to pay in the gospel.

In speaking to the, in writing to the Corinthians, you remember he said, necessity is laid upon me. Yea, woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. He felt that he had an obligation to perform, to discharge in the preaching of the gospel.

Oh, that the Lord might impress our hearts, too, each one of us, with our sense of obligation in the gospel. We must pay our obligation in the proclamation of it. Now, as a family, we have felt that we have a very special obligation to the colored people, or as the current terminology would have it, to the black people.

My grandfather was a tailor in Aberdeen, Scotland. Not a Christian. And one day, he was walking along the streets of Aberdeen, and he saw a most unusual sight.

He saw a black man. Now, Aberdeen's pretty far north, and perhaps wisely enough, black people hadn't gone that far north, and he had never seen a black man before. It's pretty cold up in the Granite City.

So my grandfather paused at the street corner just to look at this man, to see what he was. A black man, never seen one before. And he went over and looked at him, rather discourteously, perhaps.

And then, having satisfied himself, started listening to the message the man was delivering, because he was very earnestly preaching the gospel on the street corner. Now, this was a rather special black man. His name was Dr. Christopher James Davis, sometimes called the Good Black Doctor.

And he was there in Aberdeen, taking postgraduate work at Marshalls College in medicine, because he was a medical doctor. And in his spare time, because he loved the Lord Jesus, he was on the street corner preaching the gospel, discharging his debt and his obligation. And my grandfather was saved there on the street corner, under the preaching of the Good Black Doctor, Dr. Christopher James Davis.

I had an uncle, he's with the Lord now, his name was Christopher James Davis Deans. He was the first-born son of my grandfather. He was named Christopher James Davis Deans, after the Good Black Doctor.

My father was saved as an early man, as a young man. This is my father now. Grandfather, of course, had married, and here was the family, first son, Christopher James Davis, my uncle Chris.

And the other children came along, and my father had a great responsibility, helping to support the family, it was a large family. And he trusted the Lord, he was active in preaching on the street corner, my father himself. And one day as he was preaching on the street corner, a young man was saved by the name of Willie McKeever.

And my father went to his home to tell him more of the things of the Lord, and got to know the family. And in connection with knowing the family, he got to know Chrissy McKeever, one of the sisters. And the Lord brought them together in a sense of mutual love.

And my father put the things to the test in a way, I don't know if I would have done this, but I know that he put out a fleece as to whether he should propose to Chrissy McKeever or not, after having known her now

for some time. And he decided before the Lord that he would go and stand at twelve o'clock midday at the intersection of two streets in downtown Aberdeen. Union Street, and I've forgotten the other name.

And if Chrissy McKeever should come along at that time, he would propose to her. I don't know, I'm not sure about a fleece like that, but that's what the Lord laid on his heart. And there he went, and he stood there on the street corner, and at twelve o'clock along came Chrissy McKeever.

And I don't know whether he proposed at that moment or not, but the thing was arranged before Long and my father entered the employ of the American government in connection with the building of the Panama Canal. And they became engaged, and Chrissy McKeever was to follow him after a year out yonder in Panama, and they were to be married in the New World. My father had seen in his childhood, he had seen pictures of baskets of human hands which had been taken from the Congolese under the atrocities of King Leopold years ago.

You know, when the Congo Free State was established, there were many atrocities there that we never speak about when we're over in Africa, I can assure you, but which are known to the Africans even now. The Africans were obliged to deliver a certain amount of rubber to the Belgian government, and if they failed to do so, they were dismembered, their hands were cut off, or their ears. And my father in his youth saw pictures of baskets of human hands.

And I remember speaking to some of the early missionaries of the BMS, the Baptist Mission Society, some of the old timers, Brother Millman there in Stanleyville years ago. And he could date back when he first became a missionary actually to having seen some of those baskets of human hands himself when he first came to the mission field. And so my father felt a great sorrow in his heart, and his heart and compassion going out to these people.

And he felt more than ever that because my grandfather had come to know Christ through the preaching of a colored man, that he had a debtorship, he had a sense of debt to the colored people in the gospel. So when my father landed in Panama, as he used to tell the story, he said when he stepped off the boat and his feet touched the shores of the new world, his first words were, Christ for me in North America. And he was serving Christ in the very first day.

And one of the things he was doing, although he was employed, of course, on the canal, one of the things he was doing was preaching the gospel to the colored people who were down there in the Panama Canal zone. And one day as the work progressed, my father and others were standing on a place by the Calibra Cut where the waters were being let in. And the people were all watching the waters joining there in the Calibra Cut.

And they were particularly interested because the waters were full of sharks, man-eating sharks. And the people were looking at these man-eating sharks. They're full, I don't know how many there were, but the report was that there were these man-eating sharks in the water.

And everyone was looking and straining, and the whole crowd watching the sharks and speaking about them and so on. And accidentally someone pushed my father and he fell off into those shark-infested waters. Couldn't swim a stroke.

Down he went for the first time. Down he went for the second time. And as he was going down for the third time, as he used to tell a story, he's in heaven now, as he used to tell a story, he said there was no thought

of sins or God's judgment that came before his mind as he was going down for the last time as he felt.

But there was a peace in resting in the finished work of Christ, knowing that his judgment had been settled at the cross. And so he was going down as he thought for the last time, when no one on the dock would think of jumping into those shark-infested waters. That is no one but a colored man, but a black man.

And this black man suddenly recognized my father's face as Bob Deans, who didn't curse and swear at him like the other people, but who preached Christ to him, threw off his coat and shoes, dived into those shark-infested waters, and brought my father to the surface and saved his life. And the American government stamped a medal in honor of the bravery of this man, and the employees of the canal took up a collection and gave him a bag of money. But there again was a debtorship to the black people.

And I grew up. First we lived in Arkansas and then in Canada for a time, and then in Oakland or Alameda, California. And always my father was speaking about, Oh, if I can ever go out to Africa and serve the Lord there on the mission field, tell those poor people out in the center of Africa about the unsearchable riches of Christ and the great salvation that he offers so freely.

He always wanted to go, but we were there. My father was working in the shipyards and serving the Lord, preaching the gospel as he had the opportunity. The responsibilities of the family, the desire of his heart and the exercise of his heart was not realized.

But always there was this thought, We owe a debt to the colored people, and we should pay this debt. I was saved as a young lad under the ministry of W.J. McClure and gave public testimony during the preaching of the word by Alex Stewart, the father of Mrs. Hubbinger, who is here at the conference, actually. And I came to know the Lord Jesus when I was 10 years old.

And in those years, following my profession of faith in the Lord Jesus, I sought to go on for Him. We had a class of boys. We used to cycle to one another's homes every Friday night for the study of God's word.

And the five of us used to get the scriptures out, and we would spend an hour together over the word. But the thing that was for me a passion in my early years was anything that had to do with the graphic arts, that is, anything that had to do with printing, publishing, advertising. And as a boy, in fact, I remember I was just eight years of age when I had in our basement down there in Alameda, I had pasted on the wall of the basement examples of typography and layout and design and color balance and things of that sort and typography, all of these things, because I was interested in this.

And in our grammar school, we had another boy and I had a little village newspaper, a local newspaper that we printed using carbon paper. And we had 24 subscribers, and the neighborhood grocer put in an advertisement. But this was the beginning of things.

And then, of course, the high school papers and then writing columns for the daily newspaper and studying with the School of Arts and Crafts, Graphic Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California, and taking some extension work with the University of California, always thinking of getting into the advertising business and getting into publishing and printing. Not thinking too much of our debtorship in the gospel to the colored people, although many times I was privileged to go and preach out in the street corner with the older people and give a testimony and out in the parks and so on. It wasn't that I was inactive for the Lord, but certainly not to give my life to the Lord for his service.

I was directing my life. I had the plan all worked out. I was going, first of all, to be in the photo engraving business.

Then I was going to be in the printing business. And then I was going finally to be in the advertising business. And this would be it.

And I even had the advertising agency picked out, W. Aaron Sun, that I was going to be with. And it seemed as though things were working out that way. And I was down in Los Angeles when I was just turning 21.

And I was attending classes, evening classes, at the Los Angeles Bible Institute. And during the day I was a production manager, although I was just a young man, of the Commercial Art and Engraving Company, a photo engraving plant that designed advertising and did general advertising work. And one night a missionary from South America was speaking on Jeremiah 18, and speaking from Jeremiah 18 concerning the potter and the clay.

And this missionary was speaking of the necessity of our putting our lives into the hands of the Lord as clay in the hands of a divine potter, that he might mold us and fashion us according to his will. And this to me was an arresting thought. And as I listened, the Lord dealt with me in my heart.

And they finished the meeting by singing that hymn, Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way. Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will, while I am waiting, yielded, and still.

And I said that day that I would give up all these plans that were mine for advertising and printing and publishing and photo engraving. I'd give up all these and put myself into the hands of the Lord to do what he wanted me to do. And immediately this sense of debtorship to the black people came flooding into my mind.

And I said, I'd even go to Africa, Lord. And in the next couple of days, this became very clear that the Lord wanted me to be in Africa. And so I sent a note up to my father up in Oakland.

This was down in Los Angeles. A note up to my father, and I said, Dad, the Lord has spoken to me. I have given my life into his hands that he should make me a vessel, meet for his use.

And I believe that the Lord would have me serve him out yonder in Africa. And I wrote this letter up to Oakland. Can you imagine my surprise and joy when a letter came back almost immediately from my father in which he said, You know, Bill, that your mother and I have been exercised about going to serve the Lord in Africa for many years.

And our exercises come to a point of climax and culmination. And last week we asked the brethren of the local church here to commend us to God for his work on the mission field in Congo. The Lord's hand was in it.

He had to send me down to Los Angeles, quite separate from my family so that he might call me separately, that my exercise might be an individual one. But in the Lord's great goodness, not only was I able to say, I am detour, but I was able to say, as Paul says here in the fifteenth verse, I am ready to preach the gospel and set these other plans and ambitions that I had aside. And so in a wonderful way, the Lord sent us out as a family.

We were known. My father cashed in all his insurance, sold the home and cashed in the insurance. And we had the fellowship of the local Christians there in Oakland.

And what little savings I had went into the general till. And off we went toward Africa, and we were certainly poorly informed. I spoke at the World Missions Congress two years ago on field awareness, and I encouraged young people to get to know all they could about a mission field before going out.

This is quite in contrast to what was our experience. We knew very little. I remember my father saying, Bill, when we get out there, we won't live in a grass hut.

We'll build a hut of bricks, and we will do like the Israelites did. We'll take the mud and we'll make boxes and we'll make bricks and we'll try these bricks and we'll put straw in the bricks, and we'll be able to build brick houses. We won't live in grass huts.

We'll find something better than that. Of course, when we get out to the mission field and joined a doctor who was out there, we found they already had burned brick houses already at that time. At any rate, we went out to the field.

I remember we carried all the money we had. We carried them in gold sovereigns. We didn't know anything about, maybe they didn't have traveler's checks in those days, but they must have had bank drafts, but we knew nothing about it.

And we, in New York, took all our money into the bank, or rather in London, we took all our money into the bank and we got gold sovereigns and carried these gold sovereigns out in a bank. When we got to Nairobi and poured these sovereigns on the desk of the bank, they were just amazed. They'd never seen sovereigns like that in all their life.

No one ever went to Africa, maybe in pirates' days, but not in recent days, that they go with gold the way we went. The few sovereigns we had there, they were all in this one bag. We cashed them and put them into the bank there.

But this takes us off on a long story, of course. The Lord, in his infinite grace, led us out there to preach the gospel, the unsearchable riches of Christ. I am detour.

I am ready. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. My father and mother are in heaven now.

We went out as a family. He was 49, I was 21. That was in 1929.

We went out to serve in the gospel out there. My brother and sister went out as children and were, in turn, themselves commended as missionaries and went out to serve the Lord. My mother and father and my younger brother are in heaven today.

My sister is Mrs. William Spee, serving at Lola, at a station I was privileged to open just a few months after we arrived on the mission field. We arrived in November 29, and in April 30, I opened the station of Lola among the pygmies out there in the forest. And this is now a station that has extended and become quite an important station on the field.

But oh, how the Lord has blessed in his work. The first 12 years that I was out there, I tramped around the villages preaching the gospel. Young man, of course, one picks up the language as easily in those days because you're with the people all the time.

You're listening, and you're getting the little nuances of the expressions and the idioms of the people. There was no problem there. I used to travel around, sometimes with big boots, and going through the forest, through the mud of the forest, preaching the word.

And for the first 12 years, this was it. Evangelism. Preaching Christ.

Endeavoring to show what the Lord offered in salvation to those who were dead in trespasses and sins. Telling of the wonderful life through faith in the Lord Jesus. And we had to learn the language.

We had to write the language because at that time, the things were in their very beginning, and there was practically nothing available in print in the language. And there was no grammar. We had to learn it by listening to the people and making our own vocabulary.

And then when we wrote it, we translated portions of scripture into the language. And eventually, the New Testament, as we were working together, various ones, others. But after 12 years on the mission field, the most important thing in our area was literature.

Literature. We need to have literature. We need a press.

And who's going to do this work? And so the Lord gave back to me that which I had given up back there in Los Angeles, that which I loved. He gave that back to me consecrated and sanctified by himself, for himself. The work of printing and publishing and advertising, if you like.

Anything that has to do with the graphic arts. And the major part of my work, particularly since we obtained the presses in 1940, from that time on, has been in the field of Christian literature in the wonderful providence of the Lord. Now, I do want to tell you at least one story of not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

I am debtor, debtor to preach the word. And we were particularly debtors, we felt, to the black people. We went out as a family to serve him there in Africa.

I am ready. The Lord had to bring me in a very special way to that point where I was willing to say, I'm ready, Lord, to preach the gospel to you that are in Africa also. And I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

It's the power of God and the salvation to everyone that believes. Oh, we've seen that mighty working power of God in the lives of so many out yonder in Africa. I could go on for hours.

Brother Hopkid could do the same. Telling of how God has used his word in the souls of the African people in which they've been turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. They've been born again through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by the miracle of the new birth that's come to know life through trusting in Christ.

We're not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. I remember one time going into a village and I wanted to talk to a lad there and get his attention. I saw him there, he was whittling away at a bow and he had some arrows lying on the ground and I picked up one of those arrows and looked at it.

And just to get a conversation going, I was saying, it's not very straight, it doesn't look like a very good arrow, does it? And the little boy jumped to his feet and he was quite indignant and he took the arrow from me. He said, it is a good arrow. He said, I killed a buck with this arrow last week.

He'd been out with that arrow and he'd brought home an antelope and he'd been a hero in the village. He wasn't ashamed of that arrow. What right had I to criticize his arrow? Well, that's the way we've felt about the gospel.

We're not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. We've felt its own power in our own lives and we've seen it working marvelously in the lives of others. I'll just tell you one.

There was a man by the name of Okalufu. He was an old man and he was a member of a secret society in Africa known as the Banyota. And these are cannibals.

These are men who belong to this society, not that they're interested primarily in eating human flesh, but it is a right with them. And this is a greatly feared society known as the Society of the Leopard, because the men who are in the society, and it still exists, there's been a revival of this in the northeastern province. They put on their bodies the skin of a leopard and take into their hands a stick, on the end of which are claws of iron, simulating the claws of a leopard.

And they come in late at night and the people are sitting there around the campfire and they've picked out some innocent person as a victim and they plunge this baton into the neck of the unsuspecting victim and carry this victim off for cannibalistic ritual purposes. And people very much fear these Banyota, as they're called. Even the mention of that name strikes terror, particularly in the area around Stanleyville, Kisangar.

There was a man by the name of Okalufu who was one of these men. I didn't realize that when we were preaching the gospel he was just another villager, and we gave the word of life to him. And he opened his heart and received Christ and he was born again.

Oh, what a transforming there was in his life. And he rejoiced, he confessed that he had been a Munyata, and he now knew faith in the Lord Jesus, and he knew peace to his heart, and his sins were forgiven. But he said, I've sinned against the Lord, but I've also sinned against the government, because the government hang those who are found to be members of this Banyota clan, this Banyota society.

He said, I think I'd better go to the government official and confess to him. I've confessed to the Lord, and the Lord has forgiven me. I have peace in my heart, but I think I'd better go and tell the government official, too, and make things right with him.

So off he went three days through the forest, came to the government official's place. It was during the time of the Belgian occupation. And he came early in the morning, there he was standing, the government official came out to salute the soldiers as they stood at attention.

The bugle was blown, and the soldiers stood at attention, and the little old man was standing there on the side, and the soldiers saluted, and he saluted, too, along with them. And then he said, I want to talk to that man. I want to go in and see that Belgian and tell him something, something important.

And they said, all right, we'll tell him. And they went in and said, there's an old man out here wants to talk to you. And he said, all right, tell him to wait.

And so he sat there and waited all morning under the tree there in the courtyard of the government place. And lunchtime came, and the government official started off for his lunch, and somebody said, what about this old man? Oh, is he still there? Tell him to wait for two o'clock. He can come at two o'clock and talk to me.

And so Okalufu waited two o'clock, and he was there. And they said, go on in. And so he went in with his skins.

He just had skins about his body. Went in and stood in front of the man. He wasn't, of course, offered a chair.

That would never be heard of in those days. And he stood there, and he saluted, and he said, why, I have something to tell you. He said, well, go ahead and tell me.

What is it? I'm a muñata. He said, what is that? He said, I'm a man who has killed people with the baton, and I've been guilty of eating human flesh, but I've come to tell you because I'm not doing this anymore. I'm sorry I've done this.

And the man said, I don't believe you. I don't believe you. No one's going to tell me that he's a muñata.

Do you know what happens to bañata? They're hanged. Do you not know this? Yes, I know this, but I've come to tell you and ask you to forgive me because God has forgiven me. And he said, why are you telling me this? And then he said, I'm telling you this because I've trusted the Lord Jesus, and God has forgiven my sins, and I wanted to make it right with you so that I can be at peace with you as well.

The man said, I don't believe you. He said, if this is true, go back and get your leopard skin. Go back and get the claw, and bring it here and show me, then I'll believe you.

And Ocalupa was quite happy, and he saluted, and off he went through the forest three days, brought his leopard skin three days back and his claw, and brought them back, and this time they didn't make him wait until two o'clock. The news had passed around the soldiers, and they stood aside and quickly got him into the government official's office. And he stood up and he said, Juana, here it is.

Here's the leopard skin, and here is the claw. And the official said, I don't understand, and no one has ever done this before. Do you know what I can do to you because you're telling me this? He said, I know, Juana, but forgive me, Juana, forgive me.

And the government official took the leopard skin and the claw, I think for a curio, for curios. He was glad to have them, and he trumped up a little charge of three months against the old man and said, well, you've got to go to prison. I'm going to put you in prison for three months, and when you're finished with your three months, you can go home.

He didn't put it down that he was a muñata. He just put it down as a minor offense. And so they put Ocalupa in prison, and there in prison he was so happy.

He'd learned some of the hymns, and he was singing the hymns there and telling others how he had trusted the Lord and the joy of the Lord Jesus, telling them, ministering Christ to those in the prison. A Roman Catholic priest went to the government official and said, say, why did you send that Protestant teacher into the prison? He's in there, he's going to convert those people into Protestantism. And he made a real case against the man.

He said, get him out of there. Well, he said, I've got him in there for three months, he'll have to stay for three months. So Ocalupa was there for three months, and after that time he was released and went back joyfully to his home.

Back in the village there, he was baptized as a believer and was in fellowship with a group of Christians there until the Lord called him to himself. No, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

I am debtor, O that we all might feel our debtorship in a general way, and perhaps specifically to some special place which God would lay on our hearts, perhaps even across the seas. A sense of debtorship the Lord knows, particularly for young people in these days. There are so many opportunities in a land like the Congo with its wide open doors for the gospel, O that the Lord might send laborers into his harvest field.

I am ready. There are these young people, I told you about those four last night, who have given their hearts to the Lord, their lives into the Lord's hands, and they're going out to the Congo to serve him, and others are exercised. And O what a message to proclaim, the gospel of God concerning his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his only saving gospel, the salvation uniquely through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Pray for those of us who are privileged to go, and pray for those who are on the field at the present time. Pray particularly for these young people who are exercised before God, because they have felt a sense of responsibility in the gospel, and they have said, I'm ready, and the Lord would show them his mighty power as they proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Shall we pray? We are thankful to the Lord for the message we have to proclaim that exalts the blessed person of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tells of his atoning death on Calvary's cross, the only way whereby sinners might know the forgiveness of sins, the only way whereby the enemies of God, by wicked works, might know reconciliation with a holy God through him who came to bring the message of reconciliation, through him who accomplished the work on Calvary's cross, which gives reconciliation to us. We thank thee that we have been reconciled to thee by the death of thy Son, and thou hast committed unto us the word of reconciliation, that we should in Christ's stead beseech men to be reconciled to God. Thank thee, then, for this time we've spent together in testimony as to what thou canst do and art doing.

Bless us further throughout the day as we speak of thy work yonder in the mission land, and as we converse together concerning thy word and concerning that blessed one who loved us and died for us. We commit ourselves to thee in the precious and worthy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10087.mp3>

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