

Missionary Meetings 04 Working in Africa

by William A. Deans

William A. Deans emphasizes the importance of faith, community, and teamwork in bringing individuals to Christ through personal experiences from his missionary work in Africa.

Duration: 41:14

Topics: "Evangelism", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of four men who bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus for healing. The preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing our role in bringing others to Christ and collaborating together in the work of leading souls to Jesus. The preacher also highlights the power and authority of Jesus to forgive sins and bring salvation. The sermon concludes with an invitation for those who do not know Jesus to experience the joy of God's salvation and to participate in the mission of bringing souls to Christ.

Transcript

Mark, chapter 2. Second chapter of Mark's Gospel, beginning at verse 1. And again, he entered into Capernaum after some days, and it was noise that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door, and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was born of four.

And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was, and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why does this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sin but God only? And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin, he saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thine house.

And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion." Now, I don't know if you're all acquainted with a book which is a tremendous help in Bible study. It's a book we call The Harmony of the

Gospels, and this book has parallel columns showing different incidents recounted by the writers of the Gospels in parallel columns, so that you have, shall we say, this instance, the account of the Lord and the man born by four. We have this in Matthew, and we have this in Mark, and we have this in Luke in the Synoptic Gospels, and you have these three columns in The Harmony of the Gospels, and you can look across and see what complementary information is contained in the other Gospels, and look it up, of course, in the Bible, but it's a very helpful book in Bible study.

Now, at the very end of this story, in the Luke version concerning this man who was healed, we read, he departed to his own house glorifying God, and they were all amazed, and they glorified God. Luke adds that little bit of information that the man himself who was healed went glorifying God, and the rest of them were all amazed, and they glorified God too. So, it's good to compare the accounts of the different evangelists.

We have in this second chapter the story of the Lord Jesus coming to Capernaum. I remember during the time of the war, during the time we were there with the troops in the Middle East, I had the privilege of visiting Capernaum a number of times, and there it is on the shores of Lake Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee, and now it's just a ruin, but in the time of the Lord there was a synagogue there, and the Lord went to the synagogue to preach the word. Let's look across for a moment.

In the first chapter of Mark, at verse 21, they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught, and they were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one that had authority and not as the scribes. Then came the incident of the man with the unclean spirit who cried out, saying, Let us alone. What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee whom thou art, the Holy One of God.

Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. When the unclean spirit had torn him, he cried with a loud voice, and he came out of him. They were all amazed.

The question was, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority he commanded even the unclean spirits, and they obeyed. And then his pain was spread abroad throughout all that region. Then came the incident of the healing of Simon's wife's mother in the next three verses, when she had the fever, and the Lord came and healed her.

But notice verse 32, and even when the sun did set, they brought to him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door, and he healed many that were sick of divers' diseases, and cast out many demons, and suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him. As I was reading that, I thought of our experience out on the mission field, particularly years ago when we traveled about with the gospel by foot.

Nowadays there are roads. I suppose you would call them roads. They're not very good ones.

You can get through with a car. To many of the places, we still must do much of our traveling by foot in going into gospel work, village work, in the different villages. But we would go oftentimes for weeks at a stretch preaching the gospel out in the villages, and all day long we would go from village to village having little meetings in the street of the village.

And we would go from village to village, and once in a while we would stop and have a cup of something, a cup of tea usually, because that's one way to be sure that the water is clean. Boil it up and make a cup

of tea. We become real tea drinkers out yonder in Africa.

And then, at the end of the day, we would get to the final village, dead tired, longing for just a little quiet, and longing for maybe a bite to eat, and a rough sponge bath, and then so do our campcots for the night. But, of course, the people of this final village knew that we were coming, and they were expecting us, and thought that we had singled them out for special attention because we were going to spend the night in their village, and they had prepared a little hut for us and cleaned it up, and then we would arrive. Sometimes the people would be along the road to receive us, and sometimes the children would have flowers or banana leaves and be waving them as we came along.

It was a real experience for them to have a missionary visit to their village. And then they considered themselves a little special, and they wanted a meeting immediately. This happened so many times, and so dead tired as we we would sit down and have a meeting with them, and teach them some courses, and give them the gospel.

And then we would go to the little room that had been prepared for us, and the boy would be preparing some food for us, and he would have made the table ready by that time, a little folding table. But then, as we were preparing to eat, the head men, the local sub-chiefs, would come, and they had some special things they wanted to talk about. They didn't want to be with the rabble, with the general crowd in the meeting, but they wanted to have a little personal interview, and so sometimes, as we shared the meal with them, we would talk to them and discuss some of their problems and, of course, the things of the Lord.

And then, after they were gone, and by this time we were certainly anxious to get to bed, by this time the main chief would put in his appearance, and he wanted special, super special attention, real VIP attention. And so we would sit down and talk with him for a time, and then he would go, and we would be so glad then to throw ourselves into our camp cots at the end of the day. Well, I thought of the Lord Jesus as he trudged in the weariness of the flesh, truly, as he trudged over those paths and dusty roads in Galilee, and preached the gospel as he went from village to village, and as he had a day like this one of which we've read, and even when he came and the sun had set, the whole village gathered at the door, and all the sick people and those that were under the oppression of Satan, they came and he healed many of them.

And then verse 35, and in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. I wonder how much time you have in your busy life for that solitude with God, that prayer. We have found on the mission field that prayerlessness is powerlessness, and we found it absolutely essential to spend time with the Lord day by day, preferably in the quietness of the early morning.

I remember one brother, Ezekiel Inguet, one of the leading Christians in the area, Yankundi, I remember one time asking him, Ezekiel, I know you have a large family and many things going on in your home, how do you find a place and time to be alone with the Lord? And he said, well, one, it's this way. You know those antelope that come and during the night spend the night on the hills and back of Yankundi, the foothills of Yankundi Mountain? Well, you know they trample down the ground, and they make a place there with the grass all lying down, and they spend the night in this bed that they've prepared. Well, he said, early in the morning, I rise up and I go up into the mountain there, and I look for one of these places where an antelope has spent the night.

And I go into this little place, the antelope has gone with the first crack of dawn, and I find this place with the tall, long grass all about, and then this one place that's trampled down where the antelope has spent the night. And he said, there I'm alone with the Lord, and there I pray. He's the man who, when his wife was expecting their first child, his wife Anna was at the mercy of the African midwives who knew very little in those days.

The little, the boy was, the child was arriving, and the mother was in labor, and he was not able to help, so he slipped away, came up into the chapel at Yankundi. In those days, we just had a little grassroots chapel there, and in the middle of the night there, he went on his face before God praying. He couldn't help his wife, and he was praying before God.

And so, as the night wore on, he was there in the Lord's presence, and then just at daybreak, a little boy was born. And they said, where's Ezekiel? The baby's arrived, and they couldn't find Ezekiel. And someone who knew his habits, even in those early days, said, maybe you better go up and look in the chapel, maybe he's up there praying.

And so, they went up, and there they found him on his face before God praying for his wife Anna, and they said, Ezekiel, Ezekiel, you have a son! And he said, we're going to call his name Timothy. And Timothy is now the superintendent of the Sunday school at Yankundi, and he's one of the lanotype operators in our printing plant. The joy of knowing fellowship with the Lord, and even our Lord Jesus knew the great value and necessity of going in the solitude in the quietness of the early morning and finding a place to pray.

In the chapter we read, you see, again he entered into Capernaum. He had been there before, and they knew about him. His fame had spread, and there he was in the house.

And really, to understand this picture, you have to know something about the houses in the Middle East. Our brother Willie knows about this, the way they build these houses. Many of you have traveled over there in Palestine, and you'll know that the roofs of the houses are largely flat because of the scant rainfall in the area, and oftentimes there's a flight of steps, stairs up on the outside of the building.

And the buildings are usually constructed, were in those days, and in fact are now by the Arabs in the area, constructed in which the house is part of the compound, and then a wall continues around and encloses a courtyard. And there's an outside door, and then of course there are the doors of the house which usually look onto a veranda there inside the courtyard. And doubtless it was in one of these houses that the Lord Jesus had gone when he was there preaching the word to them, as we have in the second verse.

He preached the word unto them. He would have been the guest, the honored guest, and he would be at the guest chamber, doubtless at the door of the guest chamber. Perhaps there was this veranda over the passageway by the doors to the different rooms, and perhaps those scribes and other important people were sitting in the guest chamber.

At any rate, the great crowd was there, and they filled that whole courtyard and right out to the door because they came to hear the words of this one who had already been there and manifested his great spiritual power. Many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them. No, not so much as about the door, and they tell me this is the courtyard door at the end of the enclosed court, and there the Lord was speaking to these people, many of whom were skeptics.

They weren't sympathetic at all, but they were coming to hear what this great speaker would say. But the story hinges on the concern of four men for their friend. These four men knew that their friend, who was sick of the palsy, was helpless in himself.

He could do nothing to help himself, and they knew also, and by faith believed, that the Lord Jesus could meet the need of their friend. Therefore, they had as a great burden on their hearts to get their friend into the presence of the Lord, because he alone could meet the need of their friend. And the joy in this portion is, to me, in the application of it, because I like to think of the four men picking up their friend on that litter, on that couch, on that bed, and heading off toward the Lord Jesus, desirous of bringing their friend into his presence, because by faith they knew that the Lord could meet his need.

And I like to think that on the mission field, God has guided throughout the years in the use of means. Our objective is to bring souls into the presence of Christ, and this hinges a little bit on our thoughts this morning concerning bringing people into the presence of the Lord Jesus, introducing them to the Lord Jesus, as John the Baptizer did so long ago. We use means.

Paul said in the ninth chapter of 1 Corinthians, he said that by all means I might save some. And we use many means out there in order to bring individuals to the Lord Jesus Christ. I know the work is the work of the Holy Spirit of God, and yet how gracious God is that he permits us to use means to bring them into the presence of the Lord and to come to know him.

And so we use such things as radios, we use Bible correspondence courses, we use personal witness, which is, of course, most important, and we use the medical work. I won't use the word date particularly. That isn't the thought, but that by the use of these means we're able to present to them the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they thus come to know him.

Using Christian literature, using the schools, using the work like the Pioneer Girls. Our daughter Sally, our second daughter who's a missionary out there, has recently started two troops of Pioneer Girls. Merck Wolcott has started a group for boys, such as the Christian Service Brigade boys out there in the Congo.

We use these means to seek to bring them to the Lord Jesus. Born of folk, we like to think of our work in the Congo as a cooperative effort. We like to think that we work together as a team for the Lord, everyone with a part to do.

I think of these four men, each with a corner, and carrying that litter to bring that man into the presence of the Lord. We don't think of ourselves only as individuals with a personal witness for the Lord, but we think of a cooperative effort for the Lord in a teamwork on the mission field, and God has greatly blessed this concept of missionary endeavor. Take, for example, our literature work, our printing work.

We have some who are skilled in the work of the press. Our brother Wolcott, for example, is a trained linotype operator and a mechanic who can dismount a linotype and put it all together again. I'm sure I could dismount it, but the putting together again would be more difficult, but he's a specialist in that line.

We have people like Betty Partridge, who was working for Eastman Kodak, and God called her to come and serve out on the mission field, and she's there with her typewriter, a first-class secretary, serving the Lord in a cooperative effort, preparing manuscripts, typing manuscripts accurately and perfectly that they might be typeset and Christian literature made available to the people. And then there's Marion Baisley, who is a bookkeeper. She was a bookkeeper for Sarah's Roebuck until God called her, and now there she

is out on the mission field and day by day supplementing her personal individual witness for the Lord Jesus.

She's cooperating in this work, and our books are perfect. We have no hesitation about anyone coming in to examine them, and even the government officials come to Marion Baisley. For example, the Minister of Labor has come and asked her, Miss Baisley, would you help me to understand what this government law regarding labor is so that I can apply it? They come and inquire of her concerning the government ruling, and so there are so many of us who have different tasks to do, and these are part of a team of collaborating workers with a common purpose, everyone with a job to do.

And isn't it a joy that we can work together? Some can't go to the mission field. Some of you won't have the privilege of going out, as I have had, going out into those pygmy villages and those other villages and sitting down with the people and in their own language telling them of the unsearchable riches of Christ and proclaiming his great salvation. But you can have a part, and we don't underestimate.

In fact, we underscore, we emphasize the importance of the prayer part. I remember my father, who was saved in Aberdeen, Scotland, and who was active as a gospel preacher as a young man, telling the story of a sister by the name of Miss Cowie. Miss Cowie was badly crippled with arthritis, and she couldn't move from, as he called it, the garret where she lived, the attic where she lived there in Aberdeen.

But these young men, before they went out on the street corner to preach the gospel, would oftentimes stop by at Miss Cowie's place, and they would pray together, and then they would go down and preach the gospel. As my father told the story, he told of one time they were down on the street corner preaching the word, and four trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. Know what a joy it was, and his heart was filled with the wonder and the blessing of it, and he ran as quickly as he could, and ran to Miss Cowie's house, and up the stairs, bounded up the stairs to her door, and knocked on the door, Miss Cowie, Miss Cowie, and she said, Come in, laddie.

He went in, and she said, Miss Cowie, four trusted the Lord tonight on the street corner, and she said, Half of those are mine, laddie. I've been praying for you all the time you were there. Working together, a teamwork with a common objective.

Then I like to think, thinking of these four men carrying their friend into the presence of the Lord Jesus, I like to think of a chain of witness. I think we mentioned that this morning, because this is something that is on my heart. The Lord commits to each one of us the responsibility of witnessing constantly for him.

You may not be present at the time that individual comes to know the Lord Jesus. You may have just a little part right along the way. One brother who's here tonight and was here last night came to me after he saw that picture last night, and he said, You know, I've had a part in that work.

He's never been to Africa, but I know that he's had a part in that work. For a long time, he's had a part in the work, and God realizes that it's a collaborating effort. Yes, too, you might give out a tract of the gas station.

You may never see that person again, but your giving of that tract may be part of a chain of witness that will eventually lead to the salvation of that precious soul, and that the judgment seat of Christ shall find out about it that that witness for him was not in vain, or a word here, a word there, a testimony for the Lord Jesus. All part of a chain of witness. You may not be present when the child is born, when that individual is

born again.

You may not be there at that time, but that doesn't matter. You had your part in it. You were one of those who collaborated in this chain of witness that led, eventually, that individual to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Well, as these men went with their friend to the Lord Jesus, toward the Lord Jesus, they couldn't come near him because of the press. I'm not thinking of a printing press there. I could make some remarks along that line, but we'll just pass on beyond that.

Because of the crowd of the people there, there they were. There are always people trying to prevent, trying to obstruct the way of souls coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan has his own ways of preventing people from getting the attention of individuals that they would not come into the presence of the Lord Jesus to know his great salvation.

These men came, there they were with the litter, with their hearts full of expectation of bringing their friend to the Lord, that the Lord might heal him. And they came, and here was the crowd. How often there's that crowd.

Zacchaeus knew that crowd, and he knew he couldn't get to the Lord, and he had to climb the tree that he could see the Lord. Oftentimes, obstructions in the way, and sometimes of satanic origin preventing individuals to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, out on the mission field, we're undaunted when one avenue is closed, we try another.

And we recommend that to those who have a part in Christian witness in this land. If one avenue is blocked, try another. We try for some time, and we find that one effort that we're doing, one direction, is not fruitful, is not being blessed to the Lord, we'll abandon that and try it some other way in order to bring souls into the presence of the Lord Jesus.

That's why we have such things as teams going out into the village and evangelism. We have worked in the markets, in 23 markets around Yonkundi, every week the gospel is proclaimed by the African brethren. And we found that people listen better when an amplifier is used, and we have six amplifiers that they pass around among themselves and use in Christian witness.

Oh, I met a man in the Middle East when I made a trip some years ago in the interest of Christian literature there, made a trip to see what is being done in Arabic, in Christian work, in Christian literature, in the Arabic language. And I met a man by the name of Fuad Akkad in Beirut, and he is the secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. And as I sat in his office, he told me some of the ways he was using in order to get the Bible into the hands of the people there in Lebanon and into those other Arab countries.

And his list was a long list, including not only car cards and streetcars, but also outside advertising. Down there in Beirut, you would see a tram car coming along, a streetcar coming along with a great big sign, buy a Bible. And that's the way he had agendas, and pencils, and buttons, and whistles, and any time any of those Arab sheiks came to visit the country, he arranged that he should be able to give him a presentation Bible, and he fixed it up with the photographer from the newspaper that he might take a picture of this Arab receiving a free copy of the Bible, all sorts of ways.

Well, these four men were undaunted, and so they tried another way. They couldn't get through that way, and they went around up the steps up to the roof of the building, and across the roof of the building over

the place where the Lord Jesus was standing. Then they started dismantling the roof, and you can imagine those scribes and the others down there how unhappy they were when they heard that noise.

Here they had been listening to the speaker, listening to the teacher, and now people were making a noise on the roof, and they would have been unhappy. And then, particularly so, as they started dismantling the tiles, and the dust would be falling down if they looked up into their eyes, and they were quite perturbed about it, as you can visualize the picture. But the tiles came off, and eventually down came the bed, and they had to move away.

Here, this bed was coming down, and their hands would steady it as it came down, and there was the individual laid at the feet of the Lord Jesus. You don't hear anything more of the men. They've done all they can do.

All you can do is to bring a person into the presence of the Lord. He must do the miracle, and so the Lord did. There was the man as he lay there, unable to help himself with doubtless with parched lips and glazed eyes, and unable even to speak, but the Lord saw their faith.

Oh, I love that in verse 5, when Jesus saw their faith. Now, whose faith? Well, I think, first of all, since it's plural, certainly the faith of those four who made this undaunted effort to bring their friend into the presence of the Lord Jesus. But I've consulted other commentators and find that others agree with me in believing that their faith also included the faith of this man.

Although he couldn't utter it, there he was, this was the one who could meet his need, and perhaps he realized his need greater than those who carried him to the Lord, because what did the Lord say to him? Arise, take up thy bed and walk? Certainly not. He said, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. Now, I could tell you stories of Africa tonight that would move your hearts.

I could tell you about the lepers without the fingers and without their toes, and we've seen them by the hundreds, and their ears gone and their noses gone. I could tell you about those pygmy people who spend their time traveling around in the forest, eating berries, roots, nuts, and leaves, and have practically nothing in the way of clothing to spend their time out among the animals in the forest, and this is their life, and you would be concerned with their condition. Or I could tell you about the diseases of the people.

I could tell you about that, and I will tell you one at least as an example. I was asked to go into a hut, because we always take a little medicine with us when we travel about, and some years ago I was asked to go into a hut. They said, there's a girl in here, and we would like you to come and see her.

She's sick, and so I went in, and here was this girl lying down on the floor, and there was in her chest a large hole, and as I looked at the hole, I was horrified, and I said, who made that? Where did that hole come from? How did she get that hole in her chest? Oh, that, they said. Well, we didn't invite you in because of that. She had an evil spirit in her chest, and so we took a bar of iron, and put it in a fire, and heated it, and bored it into her chest to make a way for the evil spirit to get out, and the evil spirit's gone, but she doesn't get well.

She died that night. We buried her the next day. We could tell you about the physical condition of the people of Africa, and your heart would be moved by it, but oh, how much more needy are they spiritually.

The Lord's concern was not, first of all, for the man with his palsy. He realized that the greatest need was the man's soul, and this is the need for anyone in the company this evening who does not know the Lord

Jesus Christ as Savior. You've never put your faith in Him.

You may feel that you have troubles, and physical troubles, material troubles, mental troubles, all sorts of things that are bothering you, but actually your greatest need is a spiritual need, and that which separates you from a holy God is your sins. You need to have your sins forgiven, and this is only possible because of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died, who shed His blood on Calvary's cross, that those sins which separate between you and God might be put away eternally, and you might know eternal reconciliation with a holy God. Yes, we could tell you about the men in Africa, and the boys and girls and the women, tell you about their physical needs, but oh, the spiritual need is so greater.

The man was paralyzed. There he lay, but the Lord said to him, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. Much more important than the physical need is the spiritual need for any individual, and the Lord knew that.

You remember in the ninth chapter of Matthew how the Lord saw the multitudes, and His heart was moved with compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, unable to help themselves, and He looked at them, and He was moved with compassion because they were as sheep having no shepherd. He recognized that their greatest need was for the good shepherd Himself, the one who laid down His life for the sheep. The greatest need is the need that is spiritual, the need to know the Lord's salvation.

Oh, we can be engaged in many things. We can be engaged in the work of printing Christian literature. We can have our medical centers, and we can have our school work, and we can have our youth work, and all of these things that could be classed in some respect welfare, but all of these things are secondary in our work because we know that the thing that is the most important for any individual is to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus saying, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." And so He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee,' and then the skeptics were there, and they said, "Why does this man speak blasphemy? Who can forgive sin but God only?' Perfectly true.

No one can forgive sin but God only, but they were in the presence of God manifest in the flesh. The Lord Jesus Christ is God, the Son, and He indeed could say with the authority, that same authority that was used in casting out those evil spirits, He can say, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." You know, I would just like to mention in the gospel tonight that if there's anyone who has never come to know the forgiveness of sin through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you can hear His voice by faith tonight, and you can make peace with God through the blood of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ tonight. You can know what it is to go and put your head on your pillow tonight with the joy of sin forgiven, God forgiving your sins, that your sins might be cast as far as the east is from the west, or buried in the depths of the sea, never again to be brought to the remembrance of God.

"Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' Who can forgive sin but God only? Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, can do that even now. And so the Lord Jesus said to these men, "Why reason ye these things in your heart? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the fall, "Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk?' Which is the easier of the two? Certainly he was demonstrating now that he says to the man, he was demonstrating his mighty power to forgive sins which was nothing visible by something visible which in their lack of faith they could perceive. That you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.

He saith to the sick of the palsy, "I say to thee, arise, take up thy bed, go thy way to thine house.' And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth, departed to his own house, glorifying God." And they were all amazed, and they glorified God. Oh, we praise God for the miracles we've seen out yonder in

Congo as men and women, some of those who were witch doctors, a woman witch doctor who was recently saved, men like Toco who was the witch doctor of the Banyali tribe, and who led a whole tribe in idol worship, came to know the Lord Jesus, and he said, "I know that only the blood of Jesus can cleanse me from sin." He who had previously poured out the chickens on the feet of a wooden idol came to the point as the Holy Spirit used the word to his heart to say, "I know that only the blood of Jesus can wash away sin." We've seen men turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, and they've received forgiveness of sin, and an inheritance together with them that are sanctified through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh yes, we've seen these things out in Africa, and we know that it's possible even tonight for any who would put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, put yourself in the picture. Are you one of the four participating in this wondrous work in which I class as well, missionary work in distant lands? Are you participating in leading souls to Christ, in bringing souls to Christ? Do you have your part, and do you recognize it? Mark 13 speaks about to every man his work. You recognize the corner of the litter that you have in bringing individuals to the Lord Jesus.

Are you one of the four, or are you tonight as that poor helpless man who has never heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Son, thy sin be forgiven thee." All that we might know the joy of being part of a team, of collaborating together, having our individual personal witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, but collaborating together in the work of leading soul, bringing soul to the Lord Jesus Christ. And I would just add, for anyone who knows not the Lord Jesus, our time is gone. We'll close now with a word of prayer.

But before we do close, I'd like to say, if you would like to know the power of this one who, with mighty authority, could say, "Son, thy sin be forgiven thee." If you would like to know this in your own life, if you would like to know the joy of God's salvation, we would like to speak with you further. Don't put it off to another time. We've learned from experience on the mission field, through a good many years, we've learned not to say, go home and think it over.

You can be saved some other time. We know that, behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.

Trust the Lord Jesus. Know him as your Savior in the joy of sins forgiven that can be yours tonight. Shall we pray? We thank thee, gracious God, for thy word, and for the record which we have of the gracious work of our Lord Jesus, who went about preaching the gospel and healing, casting out demons, who with mighty authority proclaimed the word of salvation, and who himself forgave sins, as in the story we've read this evening.

We pray, Lord, that thou would work in the heart of any who knows not the Lord Jesus tonight, that here at Park of the Palms, in the quietness of this place, that one, be he young or old, man or woman, boy or girl, might even now turn by faith in his helplessness and need to the one who alone can do that miracle of salvation to the Lord Jesus. And so we commit thy word into thy gracious hands, and we ask for thy blessing upon us now as we separate, in the blessed, the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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