

## A Heart of Compassion

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A young woman was waiting for a bus in a slum area one evening when a rookie policeman approached her. "Want me to wait with you?" he asked. She replied, "Thank you, but that's not necessary. I'm not afraid." "Well, then," he said, grinning, "would you mind waiting with me?" Of course, the policeman was not scared, but he was showing that he cared for the woman and wanted to be sure of her protection. This man demonstrated a heart of compassion toward her. In a two-part series, we want to focus on the theme of possessing compassion toward other people.

Somebody wrote:

“Let us walk with a heart of compassion  
Care not just with words but deeds.  
Like the One we love so  
Let us live to go wherever He leads.  
Let us be vessels that carry His grace  
And love as we were loved first.  
Let us walk with a heart of compassion  
Care not just with words but deeds.”

When God’s love shines in our hearts we will possess the same kind of love that Jesus had for people while He was here on earth. This is a rather simple message today but the points are penetrating. God wants us to possess a heart of compassion for people today as Jesus did.

There are many times in the Gospels when we are told that Jesus was a man of compassion. In fact, everything that Jesus did was done out of a heart of compassion for people! His whole life revolved around compassion and caring for others. Loving compassion is what made Jesus so different than many other people. He had eyes for the world of people.

The word “compassion” in the Greek language speaks of the inward organs of a person, such as the bowels, kidneys, heart and such like. This may seem odd to us but not to the ancient people of Palestine and the surrounding areas. The inward

organs were used to illustrate the inward emotions of love and compassion that people would show. The organs illustrated the seat of a person's feelings and emotions.

God would want us to cultivate a heart of compassion today as we live among unsaved people and interact with people in this world. This is the kind of life that Jesus lived while He was here upon earth.

We should possess a heart of compassion toward lost people.

There are four lessons demonstrating compassion for the lost.

### **I. Mingling with the masses**

Mark 6:33-34

“And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.”

#### 1. We must see the need (“saw”)

The Bible says that Jesus “saw much people.” Jesus had eyes for the world. He saw people in their lost spiritual condition and need for salvation. Some of us have lost our eyes for the world! We do not see the lonely faces of people passing us by. These are people who are in desperate need of salvation.

If we want to be more like Jesus, we will begin to see the world as Jesus sees it, through the eyes of compassion and love.

Jesus saw the need of poor lost souls who were going to hell! We need to see this need as well and view the world through the eyes of God as Jesus did.

“Let me see this world, dear Lord,  
As though I were looking through Your eyes.  
A world of men who don't want You Lord,  
But a world for which You died.

Let me kneel with You in the garden,  
Blur my eyes with tears of agony;  
For if once I could see this world the way You see,  
I just know I'd serve You more faithfully.  
Let me see this world, dear Lord,  
Through Your eyes when men mock Your Holy Name.  
When they beat You and spat upon You, Lord,  
Let me love them as You loved them just the same.  
Let me stand high above my petty problems,  
And grieve for men, hell bound eternally;  
For if once I could see this world the way You see,  
I just know I'd serve You more faithfully."

2. We must be stirred with compassion.

The text goes on to say that Jesus: "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things."

Sheep without a shepherd are lost, thirsty, hungry, exhausted and exposed to the dangers of wild animals all around them. Jesus viewed lost humanity as sheep without a shepherd, who were spiritually starving and hurting people in danger of being devoured by false teachers. I have watched people on many occasions. They talk, live, and do things without any guidance and direction. They don't have a Shepherd guiding their soul. Poor lost sheep! The spiritual condition of people gripped the soul of Jesus Christ. It stirred His heart with deep compassion to see people who were in such a dreadful spiritual plight and condition.

I wonder what kind of compassion we have had toward lost people today? We live in a "do it yourself" kind of society that is pushing the old principle of "Me, myself and I." Have we lost our eyes for a world that is on the brink of going to Hell? God would want you and me to be a "world Christian." No, I didn't say a worldly Christian, but a world Christian.

This is a believer that is interested in the souls of lost people who are dying all around us within this world. Far too often we are not people centered as we should be. We move through our everyday life and have our eyes only on the TV

screen, iPhone screen, or on our homes and new car, golf, sports, and other hobbies. We are only interested in our own agenda in life. Folks, we must get our eyes off of the material and put them on the spiritual. The spiritual need of a lost and dying world must begin to be noticed by you and by me.

3. We must sow the seed (“taught them many things”).

I’m sure this included the need for believing Him for their salvation and eternal life. If we see the need, and send compassion, we will sow the seed of the Gospel. We need to be active soul winners today in our everyday life. We should be talking to people about the Lord and handing out tracts. This is also why we support missionaries and why we attempt large evangelism outreach at the Ephrata Fair. We need to have eyes for the world.

Jesus commissioned us in Matthew 28:19-20:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”

The teaching begins with the Gospel so people can be saved and it ends with discipleship for those who receive the Gospel message and are saved.

Perhaps you recall the story of a man who distributed tracts for many years on a street corner. Finally, seeing no visible results, he gave up. When he returned to the same spot two years later, he saw another individual handing out Gospel leaflets as he had done. Striking up a conversation, he discovered that the man had become a Christian through a salvation tract given him on that corner about two years before. The convert added, "Many times I've come back here to find that earnest worker and thank him, but he never returned. I decided he must have died, and so I've taken his place!" The first man suddenly realized that his work had not been in vain. The problem was that in a very real sense he had died. He died from being a faithful witness for Christ.

Where are your eyes these days? Where is your focus in life? You need to readjust you glasses and vision if you are not interested in the lost. Churches that lose

their eyes for world without Christ become out of focus and lose their purpose for existence in this world.

Matthew 9:36-37 is a similar verse

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few”

1. We see (“saw the multitudes”)
2. We are stirred (“compassion”)
3. We are sent (“the harvest truly is plenteous”)

Jesus compared the agricultural harvest to the harvest of lost people who were going to hell. Many people are ripe and ready to be saved!! The time for the harvest regarding lost souls is right now – not later. The spiritual plight of lost people all around us is an endless harvest that is ready to be reaped. God has called us to be like spiritual combines moving throughout the world, seeking a harvest of humanity.

“Somebody’s down to their last dime;  
Somebody’s running out of time  
Not too far from here.  
Somebody’s got nowhere else to go;  
Somebody needs a little hope  
Not too far from here.

And I may not know their name,  
But I'm praying just the same  
That You'll use me, Lord, to wipe away a tear.  
'Cause somebody's crying not too far from here.”

There are many Christians today who are not willing to have eyes for the lost. We are not willing to go and tell them about the Savior and salvation (“the labourers are few”). How true that is today within the church. My friend, are you willing to be part of the answer, the answer for reaching a world that is dying and going to Hell? Are you willing to walk out into the fields and see that the harvest is ready to be picked? What have you been doing to help win people to Christ? Are your eyes,

heart and compassion really directed toward the lost? Sometimes we need to refocus. There is the desperate need to have eyes for lost people.

God is not looking for spectators; He is looking for labourers!

John 4:35 is yet another similar verse:

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”

a. We must look

John 4:35

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”

If we don't look we won't labour for the lost souls of people. Once again Jesus is asking us to “lift up our eyes” or to have eyes for a world of lost humanity that is going to Hell. Jesus says that the time of the grain harvest is yet four months away; however, the time for the spiritual harvest of lost people is right now.

Jesus said the fields are white. Apparently Jesus wanted the disciples to fix their eyes on the great throngs of people that were coming out to meet Him in their traditional white robes.

John 4:29-30

“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.”

There was a harvest of lost souls was walking toward them in their white apparel and they needed to have eyes for these people. This was NOT an agricultural harvest but a spiritual harvest of lost people. Jesus is saying, “Look at them. Look at them coming. Do not pass them by.”

b. We must labor together (36-39)

John 4:36-39

“And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.”

As we labor together souls will be saved. Jesus is talking about the fruit of souls, the lives of people fit for eternity. Jesus taught that we enter into each other’s labors as it relates to sowing and reaping. One sows and another may reap but both have part in the spiritual harvest. This is what Paul taught.

1 Corinthians 3:7-9

“So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.”

Will there people in Heaven that we have led to Christ? Will some come up to you and say, “Thanks for handing that tract to me?”

“Everyday they pass me by,  
I can see it in their eyes;  
Empty people filled with care,  
Headed who knows where.

We are called to take His light,  
To a world where wrong is right,  
What could be too great a cost,  
For sharing life with one who’s lost?

People need the Lord,  
People need the Lord.  
At the end of broken dreams,  
He’s the open door.

People need the Lord  
When will we realize,  
That we must give our lives,  
For people need the Lord?"

## II. Mourning over the lost

Jesus had compassion for a lost and dying world and so must we. He wanted to see people saved. He had a passion for the lost. This is seen even as Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem. As He came near the city Jesus wept over the great spiritual ignorance and plight of the people.

- a. What God decides (28-36) – Give it to Him!

Luke 19:28-36

"And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you*; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring *him hither*. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose *him*? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way."

Yes, "the Lord hath need of him." What does God want from you? Are you willing to give it to Him? Many times we don't want to turn our possessions over to the Lord so that He can use them in His work. Oh, we give him a few dollars here and there, but when it comes to really giving sacrificially we are stingy! We don't want to commit ourselves to the ministry of giving. Folks, giving is part of the answer to seeing souls saved.

This is why we support missions and use church funds for evangelism outreach and ministry. We need to keep giving so we can reap a harvest.



b. What God deserves (37-40) – Praise

Luke 19:37-40

“And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

We must learn the importance of e praising God more than we do for His multitudes of blessings in our lives, and the greatest blessing of all, which is our deliverance from everlasting hell. We must also praise the Lord when we see others forgiven of their sins and rescued from hell.

“Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!  
Sing, ye saints! His wonderful love proclaim!  
Hail Him! hail Him! mightiest angels in glory;  
Strength and honor give to His holy name!  
Like a shepherd, Jesus will feed His people,  
In His arms He carries them all day long;  
O ye saints that live in the light of His presence,  
Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song!”

c. What God desires (41-44) – To see souls saved

Luke 19:41-44

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

We must pause and meditate on the weeping moments of Jesus in Scripture. They tell us what is important in life!

Luke 19:41

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.”

Jesus was moved with compassion and sympathy toward those who were lost and going to Hell. He had eyes for the world of lost humanity. When was the last time we wept over someone who was going to hell? Have we forgotten how terrible it is when someone goes into eternity without Christ and salvation? Think what it means to be lost forever! May God give us a fresh burden for people who are lost and to reach out to them today with a clear Gospel message.

Jonah looked on Nineveh and hoped it would be destroyed (Jonah 4), while Jesus looked at Jerusalem and wept because of the souls of people.

Three evangelistic looks result in weeping.

a. Jesus looked *back* and saw missed opportunities (vs. 42a)

Jesus saw how the nation had wasted its opportunities and had been ignorant of their “time of visitation” which refers to His presentation as their Messiah and Savior. Their missed opportunity to be saved caused Jesus to weep!

b. Jesus looked *within* and saw the blindness of people (42b)

Jesus looked within the hearts of the people and saw the spiritual ignorance and blindness of the people regarding the truth that Jesus was the Messiah and their Savior. As a result of their rejection of the truth, the truth was “hid from thine eyes.” Truth rejected is truth that is lost.

John 12:36

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”

The Jewish people should have known who Christ was for God had given them His Word and sent His messengers to prepare the way for His entrance into the world. Their spiritual blindness caused Jesus to weep.

c. Jesus looked *ahead* and saw the coming judgment (43-44)

As Jesus looked ahead, He wept as He saw the terrible judgment that was coming to the nation, the city, and the temple. In AD 70, the Romans would come and, after a siege of 143 days, kill over 600,000 Jews, take thousands more captive, and then destroy the temple and the city. Jesus wept for this reason as well. As a result of the Roman judgment, many Jews would lose their lives and end up in hell.

All of this was cause for concern and weeping from the Son of Man. Are we weepers? We can't normally be REAPERS unless we are first WEAPERS!

Psalm 126:1-6 reveals the important of weeping in relation to the harvest:  
"When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*."

This chapter teaches us the important lesson on WEEPING and REAPING. The Psalm speaks of the time when God "turned again the captivity of Zion" (vs. 1). This refers to the time when God was once again returning to His people. He was bringing them back to their former happy state. It's was a time when God decided to move and begin to abundantly bless His people once again after their time of captivity.

As God historically decided to begin to work with Israel, in allowing them to return to the land, after a time of captivity, we also need to decide to turn to lost people and see them released from their own captivity which is their slavery to sin.

A. There is the perspective of God's blessing – 1-3

1. The unsaved perspective: "The Lord hath done great things for them" (vs. 2b)

The pronoun "them" is referring to how the unsaved world was viewing Israel at this time. Even the heathen (Assyrians) take note when God is doing something wonderful in the hearts, lives, and ministries of His people. Inadvertently or unintentionally, even the heathen brings thanks and praise to God, when they talk about what God is doing in the lives of His people.

This is the reaction of the heathen or the unsaved Gentiles (Assyrians) toward Israel and what God was doing for them, as they were released from their captivity and returning to the land. Israel's return and blessing of the Lord was a tremendous testimony to the non-Jewish people. They seemed to sense that things happened for the Jews that could not be explained on the natural level.

I wonder what our testimony is among the unsaved? The world is waiting to see something extraordinary take place among the people of God. Unsaved people are looking to see a difference in the lives of God's people. Sameness does not impress them, it's the difference in the lives of God's saints, their godliness, their fruitfulness, their holiness, love, and compassion that make a spiritual impact on the lost. Trying to be like them will not have any impact. It's our Christian living that catches their hearts and lives.

Some of the newer evangelicals need to wake up. This is because many churches today are full of nominal Christians at best who live and mimic the unsaved world in just about every way imaginable. The testimony of the unsaved toward God's people should be this: "These people are different and God is blessing their lives. Something is different about them and has happened to them and whatever it is, I need it!" This is called being "salt and light" (Matt. 5:13-14) as Jesus proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount.

Charles Dickens had the right idea. The sour old miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, was changed over one night. He was seen hopping and skipping around in his bedroom on Christmas like a little schoolboy. He ordered the biggest turkey in town and sent it to poor Bob Cratchet. He went to bed miserable but he woke up with

joybells ringing in his soul. This is the evidence of conversion and this is what the world is waiting to see!

2. The saved perspective: "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (vs. 3a).

You will notice the change in pronouns. It moves from "them" (the unsaved are speaking about the saved) to "us" (a reference to God's people speaking about His blessings upon their lives). Israel is speaking to God and declaring what great things He has done for them! God's people are seen praising Him with a heart of thanksgiving. They are praising God for His great work in the hearts of people's lives and among their congregation. By way of application, we should express the same kind of thanksgiving and gratitude today, as we remember how God has worked in the hearts and lives of each one of us, in both saving us and sanctifying us. This is why we sing:

"I'm so happy and here's the reason why  
Jesus took my burdens all away;  
Now I'm singing as the days go by  
Jesus took my burdens all away.

Once my heart was heavy with a load of sin.  
Jesus took my burden gave me (wonderful) peace within,  
Now I'm singing as the days go by  
Jesus took my burden all away."

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad!" I'm so thankful to God for saving me, changing me, and making me into what I am today. Without Him, how lost I would be! Without Him, how empty I would be! Without Him, how hopeless I would be!

Please note that "The Lord hath done great things for us!" Ultimately it is the Lord doing it! It is the Lord bringing the blessing of deliverance and transformation in the lives of each one of us. The blessing is not a manmade, manufactured, and a manipulated blessing. It's not artificial! It's not false fire! It's the real fire! It is God actually changing our lives and bringing His blessing and times of refreshing upon a ministry and within our personal lives.

This reminds us that if anything of lasting value is going to take place – God will have to do it! And when people’s lives are truly being changed, we can only attribute the action to God.

Someone said:

“If you can explain what is going on – God didn’t do it.”

B. There is the prescription of God’s blessing (vv. 5-6)

God’s prescription involves some old-fashioned weeping.

Psalm 126:5-6 declares:

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing (carrying) precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.”

This is how Psalm 126 connects with the tears of Jesus!

Luke 19:41

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.”

Tears and reaping are connected together in order to receive God’s harvest of blessing. You will notice that there is the mention of “tears” (vs. 5) and “weeping” (vs. 6). The sowing of tears is connected with the planting of seed for the harvest to come and then reaping a harvest that brings great joy and blessing to everyone. The expression “sow in tears” is linked to the “bearing (carrying) precious seed” (vs. 5) which needs to be planted so the harvest can take place. In other words, the tears precede the joy, the tears precede the harvest! In fact, in this case, the seed must be sown in tears in order to bring forth the harvest. Are we willing to sow tears so we can reap God’s harvest of blessing?

The background of this sowing with tears is rather interesting. There was a certain sorrow or frustration connected with sowing seed for the first crop. Here is a farmer whose barrel of grain is low. He can use the grain to feed his family now or he can sow most of it in hope of an abundant supply in days to come. He decides to sow it, but as he dips his hand into his apron and scatters the seed over the plowed land, his tears fall into the apron. He is thinking of his wife and children, of

the skimpy bowls of porridge, of how sacrificially they will have to live in the days till harvest. He feels as if he is taking food out of their mouths. On the other hand, he looked ahead to the final harvest and the great blessing it would bring to himself and family.

The psalmist found encouragement in the principle of sowing and reaping. The setting in verses 5-6 is agricultural. After a piece of land has been neglected for a long period of time it becomes very hard to work. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears, a lot of hard work must go in to preparing the soil so one can have a new harvest. The planting would be difficult but persistence would doubtless bring in a future harvest.

This analogy of sowing and reaping is being applied to the hard spiritual work that the people did in encouraging a remnant of Jews to return to the land of blessing and to rebuild the ruins of Jerusalem and the temple. The sowing with tears refers to agonizing over the work, which in this case would signify anything that someone did to help advance and rebuild God's earthly theocracy of Israel in that day, such as praying, encouraging the people to respond to the Lord, assisting in the return to the land, and the rebuilding God's work in the land of Israel.

The point is this, if a person is sowing with tears, they are bearing a burden, wanting to see God bless His work, and change the lives of people. The burden is expressed through prayer, intercession, and hard work. The indication is this, there were many tears shed over the spiritual harvest before the harvest came. Tears are associated with a burden, tears associated with a vision, tears associated with our prayers, tears associated with the spiritual plight of people, tears associated with a need for God to move and bless. Sometimes it takes tears to get God's attention! Sometimes it takes tears to receive God's richest blessing.

Ministry is not always easy! Too often we don't want to pay the price. We don't want to do, what God tells us to do, in order to see Him really bless! We want to take the easy path but God says there is sometimes a path of tears and weeping that precedes the time of harvest and blessing. Tears are to be part of the sowing process. Sowing in tears surely involves possessing a deep burden to see God bless. It's praying with a burden, sharing the Gospel with a burden, and ministering with a burden to see God bring in a harvest of lost souls and even backslidden saints. We must get off our lazy boy chair and start praying with

unction if we are going to see God bless. Satan wants to keep us from tearful praying for he knows that it always moves the heart of God!

In summary, the expressions “sowing in tears” and “he that goeth forth and weepeth” simply mean that we will agonize over the work through prayer intercession, and laboring, and when we do, we will see the true blessing of God. Are we willing to bear the burden and shed the tears? God wants our tears before our treasure; God wants our tears before our talents. This is not shallow emotionalism! We are sometimes afraid of tears today, but someone needs to care, if people are going to be saved from hell. In order to see souls saved and the work of God advance, there is a need for some tears to be shed along the way.

Someone said:

“If Jesus shed His blood for us; surely we can shed some tears!”

We can shed tears for the work of God and for the souls of lost people.

Luke 19:41

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.”

When was the last time you wept over the soul of some poor lost soul that was going to hell for rejecting Jesus as his or her Savior? Jesus wept, can't we weep? “He that goeth forth weeping” (bearing the burden and shedding the tears) will get the harvest. The Psalmist did not say He that goeth forth with synthesizers and Rock Bands or he that goeth forth with pragmatic marketing. A man recently told me that their mega church made sure that their snack bar in church had one more set of seats in it than the Panera Bread food chain. They did not want Panera Bread to be one up on them! Folks, the most important thing that the church needs are tears! Many times the trouble in ministry is that it is not watered by tears. No wonder so little true and lasting fruit is seen, even when we get professions of faith.

Years ago a visitor went to Dundee, Scotland, deeply concerned that his ministry was producing such meager results. He decided to visit the scene where years before the saintly Robert Murray McCheyne had ministered in such evident power of the Spirit of God. McCheyne died at the age of thirty not before he had moved



Scotland. The visitor asked the old sexton (church maintenance man) at ST. Peter's if he could tell him the secret of the amazing influence of Robert McCheyne.

The old man led the young minister into the vestry. "Sit down there," he said. "Now put your elbows on the table." He did so. "Yes, that was the way McCheyne used to do it," said the old man. "Now put your face in your hands." The visitor obeyed. "Now let the tears flow!" "That was the way McCheyne used to do," the old man said. Friend, there is a time for weeping! There is a time for bearing the burden and shedding the tears so we might see God truly bless and see souls saved!

Someone has wisely said:

"Winners of souls are first weepers for souls."

So our prayer should be:

"Let me look on the crowd as my Savior did,  
Till my eyes with tears grow dim.  
Let me view with pity the wandering sheep  
And love them for love of Him."

The Bible speaks how we can "reap in joy" (vs. 5) and "bringing his sheaves with him" (vs. 6) which speaks of carrying a bundle of wheat or some other crop on your shoulders. Somehow I can just picture this scene! There is a farmer walking through the field carrying the crop that he had sown! There is great joy in this "rejoicing" as the text says. God's true blessing is compared to a harvest that produces great joy in our hearts and lives. The joyful reaping or harvesting actually refers to the Jewish people who decided to return to the land in faith and begin rebuilding, as a result of the tearful prayers, encouragement, and hard work of others.

By way of application to us today, when we sow with tears, we will get a harvest and there will be great joy. Our harvest will be saved souls, the saints of God experiencing revival, and the blessing of God upon our church ministry. Tears pay off! The psalmist was convinced that continued tearful labor and prayer, no matter how agonizing and difficult, would result in more people returning to the land of Israel, and the people rebuilding their beloved temple.

The principle we must take from this is very important. We must have a burden, a vision, pray and serve hard, and then the blessing will come. We must get excited, get praying, and get involved and then the Lord will bless. Then we will move in to a time of dreaming (“we were like them that dream”), a time of joy and praise like never before! We will “reap in joy” (vs. 5) and bring the “sheaves” into the barn (vs. 6). This is the promise of God’s blessing.

As God brought the blessing of returning exiles back to the land of promise, as a result of the tears, blood, and sweat of others praying, working, and encouraging them to return, so we have the promise that God will bless our personal lives and church ministries in wonderful ways, even with a harvest of new people and the salvation of souls. The reaping and sheaves will come if we are willing to plant the seed through shedding some tears.

“Bringing in the sheaves  
Bringing in the sheaves  
We shall come rejoicing  
Brining in the sheaves!”

There is a time for weeping and reaping! We must simply do the sowing. The reaping is in God’s hands. What kind of sowing have we been doing?

Dr. John R. Rice, in "The Price of Revival" said:

“The price of revival, the cost of soul winning, the long hours of praying, the burden, the tears, the pleading with sinners, though lonely, a stranger, is repaid at the reaping up there.”

Now let me ask you a question if you are not saved and going to Heaven. Do you want to be part of the harvest? If you are not saved, then you are going straight to hell when you die! But you can be part of the sheaves, part of the harvest if you choose to place your faith in Christ. Do you want to be saved from hell and know that you are going to Heaven when you die?

Jeremiah 8:20 says:

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”

Don't ignore and reject God's offer of salvation to you today. If you want to be part of the spiritual harvest of saved souls, you must repent of your sins and place your faith in Christ to save you.

A man once gave his testimony. He said he was a bitter, beer-drinking, foul-mouthed sinner. He couldn't understand what people saw in church. One day he went to church with his wife and something the minister said stuck in his heart and brought conviction upon him. The next morning, he had his breakfast and was prepared to go out. While his foot was on the threshold of his house a voice said to him, "If you go out in your sins and have an accident, you'll be in hell." He moved his foot back, went into the living room, lit a cigarette, and thought it over.

He decided he was imagining things. He finished his smoke and headed to the door. As soon as he reached the threshold the same voice said, "If you go out in your sins and have an accident, you'll be in hell." The man went back into the house, went upstairs, knelt by his bed, and said, "God, I don't want to go to hell. Please save me for Jesus' sake." Amen."

Jeremiah 8:20

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Friend, the Bible says we have all sinned (Rom. 3:23) and that we are all going to hell (Rom. 6:23) without Jesus. This is why Jesus died the cross. He died and rose again to save us from hell. If you place your faith in Christ today, He will save you.

Romans 10:13

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Many years ago in St. Louis, a lawyer visited a Christian to transact some business. Before the two parted, his client said to him, "I've often wanted to ask you a question, but I've been afraid to do so." "What do you want to know?" asked the lawyer. The man replied, "I've wondered why you're not a Christian." The man hung his head. "I know enough about the Bible to realize that it says no drunkard can enter the kingdom of God; and you know my weakness!" "You're avoiding my question," continued the believer. "Well, truthfully, I can't recall anyone every explaining how to become a Christian."

Picking up a Bible, the client read some passages showing that all are under condemnation, but that Christ came to save the lost by dying on the cross for their sins. "By receiving Him as your substitute and redeemer," he said, "you can be forgiven. If you're willing to receive Jesus, let's pray together." The lawyer agreed, and where it was his turn he exclaimed, "O Jesus, I am a slave to drink. One of Your servants has shown me how to be saved. O God, forgive my sins and help me overcome the power of this terrible habit in my life." Right there he was converted. That lawyer was C.I. Scofield, who later edited the reference Bible that bears his name. Dr. Scofield had eyes for the world. Do we have those same kind of eyes today?

### **III. Making friends with sinners**

We have been seeing how Jesus had eyes for lost people. In fact, Jesus had eyes for those people who were far different than He was. Jesus did not bypass the sins of lost people; however, He looked beyond the faults or sins of lost people and saw their need for salvation. That is what the Father did for us as well.

"I shall forever lift my eyes to Calvary  
To view the cross where Jesus died for me.  
How marvelous the grace that caught my falling soul;  
He looked beyond my fault and saw my need."

There is a parable that Jesus told which illustrates how He was the friend of sinners! It is found in Luke 15:11-24. This parable is one of three that teaches how the Son of Man was a friend of sinners and that he came to seek and to save sinners who were lost and going to hell.

Luke 15:1

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him."

Yes, Jesus knew where to find the publican and sinner. They were everywhere. Jesus did not remain in any ecclesiastical castle with the drawbridge closed. He went out into the highways and byways of life to reach people. We should be doing the same as well. There is a world that needs to be reached for Christ.

Luke 19:10

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Jesus went after sinners during His day while living on earth and He is still doing it today through the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us remember that if we want to be like Jesus, we will be doing the same things that Jesus did. We will be seeking out the lost. We will befriend lost sinners and seek to win them to salvation. We will possess a deep compassion for people who are on the road to hell.

- a. There is the riotous living of sinners.

Luke 15:11-16

“And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.”

This is just the way lost people live. They view life as a sponge and they try and squeeze everything they can get out of it. People are living for the husks of life when what they really need is new life. It is our responsibility and opportunity to point them to a new kind of life that gives them true meaning and purpose.

- b. There is the repentance of sinners.

Luke 15:17-19

“And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.”

Repentance means that I must acknowledge that I am a sinner before God, that Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven, and that faith in Christ is the only way to be saved. This is what occurred in the heart of the one son when the Bible states that “he came to himself” and when he acknowledged “I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.”

Without repenting that you are a sinner in God’s sight and without abandoning your own self-righteousness, you cannot and will not be saved. Repentance paves the way for faith to occur in the heart.

Jesus said in Luke 5:32:

“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

If repentance is not necessary in the conversion response, then Christ must have been mistaken. But let me tell you plainly today that without repentance before God, as a sinner, there can be no expression of faith in Christ. The sinner will not want to express faith in Christ without first repenting.

c. There is the response of compassion toward sinners.

Luke 15:20-24

“And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

This is one of the most touching parables that Jesus taught. In this parable, Jesus revealed the kind of compassion that He had toward sinners and the same kind that we must possess in our own hearts if we are going to be used as the vessel to bring people to Christ. This parable illustrates that Christ is waiting to meet the lost sinner with open arms. Jesus had overwhelming compassion for lost people. Jesus looked beyond their fault or sinful condition and predicament in life and waits to welcome them to the place of salvation and acceptance. He had open

arms toward sinners. He is waiting to welcome them into His presence, accept them, and forgive all of their sins forever.

“Give me a passion for souls, dear Lord,  
A passion to save the lost;  
O that Thy love were by all adored,  
And welcomed at any cost.Refrain:  
Jesus, I long, I long to be winning  
Men who are lost, and constantly sinning;  
O may this hour be one of beginning  
The story of pardon to tell.”

The sins of people and the character and lifestyle of people made no difference to Jesus. He was a friend of sinners and looked beyond their sinful conditions in life and went after their soul! Their conditions in life did not matter to Him. Nor should they matter to us!

A missionary to Africa told the story of an elderly woman who reached many with the Gospel. Though she was blind and could neither read nor write, she wanted to share her new found faith with others. She went to the missionary and asked for a copy of the Bible in French. When she got it, she asked the missionary to underline John 3:16 in red and mark the page it was on so she could find it. The missionary wanted to see what she would do, so one day he followed her.

In the afternoon, just before school let out, she made her way to the front door. As the boys came out when school was dismissed, she would stop one and ask if he knew how to read French. When he said “Yes” she would ask him to read the verse that was marked in red. Then she would ask, “Do you know what this means?” and tell him about Christ. The missionary said that twenty-four of the school boys that lady led to the Lord became pastors.

#### **IV. Ministering to the outcasts**

Jesus made a point to connect with the non-respectable people within society. He possessed a heart of compassion for those people who were considered to be the racially and morally wicked outcasts within certain societies.

There are two outcast stories in the Bible.

#### A. The racial outcasts

In John chapter four we discover once again that Jesus was ready to minister to sinners, especially those who were considered to be the non-respectable type of sinners. In this narrative Jesus takes a moment with those who were considered outcasts to society which were the Samaritans (the half breed dogs according to the Jewish way of thinking).

We see four evangelism tips for reaching the lost.

##### 1. We need a burden for the lost (vs. 1-6)

John 4:4 declares this:

“And he must needs go through Samaria.”

Jesus decided that He must travel through the forbidden zone of Samaria in order to win a woman to Christ. We all know who it was. It was the woman at the well. Jesus had a burden for people for He said that “must needs go.” This indicates that He possessed a deep burden to reach these people.

Do you have a burden like this upon your heart today? Perhaps God has been burdening your heart to witness to someone in particular and reach out in some specific way to someone who you know is lost. Maybe it’s a special burden to become a missionary or to go to some particular place where God wants you to witness?

The Jews despised the Samaritans. They would normally travel north through the Jordan valley to go into Galilee to bypass Samaria. Although this trip was much longer, the Jews considered it worthwhile in order to avoid contact with the despised sinners of Samaria. As a result of the Assyrian captivity the Jews who were left in the land intermarried with the foreigners that were established there. As a result, a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles came about who began to follow pagan practices. The Jews hated this race of people. There was a very strong and seemingly unbreakable prejudice spirit against them. But Jesus went into town and broke down the walls or barriers that had separated the Jews from the



Samaritans for centuries. Jesus sat at old Jacob's well and waited for a poor lost soul to meet him. Yes, it was a Samaritan, a sinner!

2. We must remember the blessing of eternal life (7-15).

John 4:9

"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

How can a Jew drink with a Samaritan? I will tell you how. Jesus loved sinners. His heart had a heart of compassion upon those people who were considered to be outcasts to society. It was to these type of people that He offered the free gift of eternal life.

John 4:14

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Jesus reaches out to this sinful outcast woman and offered her the drink of everlasting life. A gushing spring is a metaphor for eternal life. Like a spring, eternal life never ends (quantity of life). Like a spring, eternal life satisfies (quality of life).

"Like the woman at the well I was seeking  
For things that could not satisfy;  
And then I heard my Savior speaking:  
"Draw from my well that never shall run dry  
There are millions in this world who are craving  
The pleasures earthly things afford;  
But none can match the wondrous treasure  
That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord.  
Fill my cup Lord, I lift it up, Lord!  
Come and quench this thirsting of my soul;  
Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more--  
Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole! "

### 3. We must face the blackness of sin (16-19).

John 4:16-19

“Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.”

Jesus did not override or dismiss the issue of sin since every lost sinner must repent of their sin in order to be saved. This woman had a dark and sordid past. Jesus did not bypass the whole issue of sin. This woman was a very shady and immoral woman. She needed to know that her sin was a stench in God’s nostrils.

Sin must be inwardly dealt with within the heart in repentance before salvation can come into the heart. Jesus wants the woman to have deep remorse over her sin so she can feel her need to turn to the Savior. Again, we must preach repentance to the lost.

In Luke 24:47 Jesus commissioned His disciples:

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Repentance means a person has a change of mind and heart. They see themselves as a sinner and want to be released from their sins. Jesus certainly needed to address the blackness of sin in the life of this woman so she can be prepared to repent and express faith in Him as her personal Messiah. However, at the same time, Jesus was not afraid to look beyond all of her sinful past and present in order to lead her to salvation. When witnessing to people we cannot bypass the sin issue, but we can look beyond all of their sins and point them to the only One who can free them from their bondage of sin.

As we shared earlier, what was true for this woman was true for all of us: “He looked beyond my fault and saw my need!” The same should be true of us when we are reaching out to others who have a past filled with sin and uncleanness. We must address it as Jesus did and then look beyond it and see the sinner’s need for salvation.

Apparently the woman came to Christ and accepted Him as he Messiah and Savior. In fact, she went to tell others of what Christ had said and done for her.

John 4:28-29

“The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”

One of the marks of a saved soul is their readiness to tell others of Christ and their salvation.

#### 4. We cannot be bothered by man’s conclusions (vs. 27)

The thinking of the disciples regarding Christ’s encounter with this woman was very unloving and showed no compassion. Their eyebrows were standing up! The disciples were following the normal thinking and perception that the Jews had toward Samaritans.

John 4:27 records the disciples crowd mentality:

“And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?”

Jesus got passed this kind of compartmentalizing spirit. The disciples just didn’t get it. And many times we simply do not get either! We are to be a friend of sinners. And yes, we can be a friend of sinners without becoming a compromiser with sinners! I think many of us as Christians have the idea that we should never go into the home of an unbeliever or we should never invite unbelievers into our Christian home for fear that they might corrupt us.

We have the mentality that we should try to stay as far away from unbelievers as we can. Where do we get that idea? It’s not from Jesus. How can we win people to Christ if we do not get to talk with them or know them? We must be willing to reach across the barriers of color, race, status in society and common interests if we are ever going to win people to Christ.

There are multitudes of people who have a different standard of lifestyle and existence than we have. They may engage in practices that are very wrong and distasteful. They may be people that are very different than you in their nationality, color and culture. But Jesus looked beyond these barriers and went to all of them because He saw their need for salvation. Yes, He looked beyond their fault and saw their need!

Like this woman at the well, there are millions in this world who are seeking for things that cannot satisfy. Only Jesus can fill up their cup with the living water of eternal life, which alone can satisfy.

In a particular publication, which came out many years ago, Dr. Basil Miller says that Dr. Reuben A. Torrey was won to Christ through the witnessing of a godly mother; a friend of George Mueller; a teacher of John R. Mott; a book by George Whitefield; and through a picture drawn by Count Zinzendorf. There is no prescribed type of testimony that brings people to Christ, except that the testimony be Christ-centered and Spirit-directed. Are we in the place where God can use our testimony? Are we making the most of our opportunities of witnessing for Him?

It has been estimated that probably 95% of all church members have never led anyone to Christ. In the life of Christ, we see Him as a concerned soul-winner, reaching out to all kinds of people. He crossed over the barriers, looked beyond the fault of people, and saw their need.

“Let us walk with a heart of compassion  
Care not just with words but deeds.  
Like the One we love so  
Let us live to go wherever He leads.  
  
Let us be vessels that carry His grace  
And love as we were loved first.  
Let us walk with a heart of compassion  
Care not just with words but deeds.”

B. The social outcasts

There is an episode in the life of Jesus that illustrates this in a beautiful way. Jesus not only reached out to the racial outcasts, but also the social outcasts. Luke 7:36-50 reveals once again how Jesus had deep compassion for the lost.

We discover three soul winning lessons.

1. We must dine with the lost (vs. 36)

Luke 7:36

“And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat.”

Since Jesus was a friend of sinners, He was not afraid to go into a home to present His salvation message to people. Paul also assumed that we would meet with lost people in this way.

1 Corinthians 10:27 says:

“If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.”

Why a Pharisee would invite Jesus into his home who had a reputation of hanging out with sinners is not known. Perhaps he was trying to trap Jesus or maybe he was interested in what Jesus had to say. I think Simon wanted to meet with Jesus and hear Him out. However, as we will see, Simon did not have the feet of Jesus washed when He came into the home, provide the cultural kiss of friendship to Him, or oil His sun parched brow. These were the common customary courtesies of the day (Luke 7:44-46). Apparently this Pharisee tried to maintain his reputation of not treating sinners with kindness. He wanted to remain a loyal Pharisee. Some people can remain loyal to their religion and die and go to hell!

I was witnessing one day to a man in front of his door. His own words were this, “I am Lutheran.” After saying that, He slammed the door on my face! Although some may slam the door on your face, there are others who may open their doors to you. Be ready to go in and witness to them.

2. We must desire their salvation (vv. 37-38)

Luke 7:37-38

“And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.”

What happened next is an unbelievable and dramatic event! A lost sinner off of the street, who was probably a prostitute, came barging into the home of the Pharisee. It was a custom to permit uninvited guests to come into a home, sit along a wall and listen to a rabbi, when he was there. This woman expressed her repentance and faith in Jesus. She stood behind Jesus for a few moments wondering if Jesus would accept her and give her the time of the day. As she stood there, she began to weep. Why was she weeping? It was because of her sin.

She was evidently touched with the sorrow of her sin and was deeply convicted before Jesus. However, I believe that this woman recognized that Jesus accepted her within His presence and that He would offer forgiveness for her sin and give her salvation. Feeling no embarrassment, she dropped to her knees and began to shed tears upon His feet and repeatedly kiss His feet. There was no towel, so she unbound her hair and kept wiping His feet with her long flowing hair, as she wept and kissed His feet. Then she broke open a vial of perfumed oil and poured it upon the feet of Jesus as she continually kissed His feet and worshipped Jesus.

Yes, this woman expressed her repentant heart and faith in Jesus as she washed His feet with tears and dried them with her beautiful long hair. Robert Falconer tells the story of his witnessing among destitute people in a certain city. While he was reading this same account in the Bible he heard a loud sob and looked up at a young, thin girl whose face was disfigured by smallpox. After he spoke a few words of encouragement to her, she said, "Will He ever come again, the One who forgave the woman? I have heard that He will come again. Will it be soon?" Falconer replied that Jesus is going to come again someday and it may be soon. After sobbing again uncontrollably, she said, "Sir, can't He wait a little while? My hair is not long enough yet to wipe His feet."

I find this incident rather cutting to the heart. It demonstrates the child's faith in the Savior. Imagine this scene. The Pharisee stood dumbfounded and shocked as

he witnessed this scene within his own home! A woman was wiping Jesus' feet with her hair.

This woman found forgiveness through faith in the Messiah.

Luke 7:48-50

"And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

She went from tears to triumph, repentance to regeneration, being a hell-bound sinner to Heaven-bound saint! This is what happened the moment we were saved!

3. We must refuse derogatory thinking.

What was the man's response to this woman? It was a typical Pharisee response.

Luke 7:39 continues to unfold the scene:

"Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."

Simon concluded that Jesus must be a sinner as well because He associated with this type of people. And that is exactly what the Pharisees believed. They did not associate with any bad people. They would never go into sinner's homes or invite them into their homes. They would never attend the places that these people would go. It's sad that some believers want nothing to do with unbelievers! They try to avoid any contact with known sinners. This is not the way Jesus conducted Himself in life. He was a friend to social outcasts. He took time to talk to lost people from all kinds of backgrounds and who were considered to be the scum of society.

Someone has said:

"To often we view unbelievers only as they are, not as they can be by God's grace."

We must remember that Jesus recognized that lost people can be found! If we are going to be like Jesus we will have to learn to be compassionate to a lost and dying world. We must face their sins as we talk to them, but we must be able to cross the sin barrier and reach them for Christ. Their lifestyle and different character should not keep us from caring for them and sharing Christ with them.

When will we realize that we cannot find people if we are not looking for them! We have been sitting idle too long. We must get up and do something about it. Invite an unsaved family to your home. Start witnessing to someone on the job. Invite someone who is lost to church. Plan on sitting with them and become a friend to them. Ask them over for coffee one day at your home. We must do something. We cannot win the world but we can win some. You should seek to gain the confidence of some unsaved people and win your right to be heard by them. We cannot just sit here and watch multitudes around us go to Hell. Or can we?

Richard Strauss once said:

“It would be easier to avoid them and let them spend eternity in Hell, unless we want to be like Jesus!”

Yes, the Pharisees were right. Jesus was a friend of sinners! Their strong voice was heard on several occasions murmuring about this well-known fact (Luke 5:30, 15:1-2, 19:7). You will remember that Jesus “looked up, and saw him” (Zacchaeus - Luke 19:5). Jesus had eyes for the world. He even could see lost sinners standing in the trees!

Where would we be if Jesus was not a friend of sinners? He befriended us when we were lost and going to Hell (Romans 5:8). He showed His love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness to us when the Holy Spirit convicted us as a lost sinner, to turn to His saving grace for salvation.

“Jesus what a friend for sinners!  
Jesus lover of my soul;  
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,  
He, my Savior, makes me whole.”



Jesus is calling us to discipleship today. This involves an intense desire to see people saved. In short, discipleship is going fishing for lost people in the world with the intent to catch them for Christ.

Matthew 4:19

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Have you cast your fishing rod into the sea of lost humanity lately? What are you doing to see people saved? Do you really possess a heart for people who are lost? Are you willing to be part of the answer to seeing souls saved?

For over thirty years the Salvation Army and William Booth in particular were subject to some of the vilest persecutions Christians suffered in modern times. But the General lived to see the day his army would be honored around the world. His own King Edward VII invited him to Buckingham Palace in 1904. All the persecution and trials of the previous decades must have seemed insignificant to Booth as he heard King Edward say, “You are doing a good work—a great work, General Booth.”

When the king asked Booth to write in his autograph album, the old man, now seventy-five, bent forward, took the pen, and summed up his life’s work: “Your Majesty, some men’s ambition is art, some men’s ambition is fame, some men’s ambition is gold, my ambition is the souls of men.”

Mark 16:15 says:

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Remember:

“God’s requirements are God’s enablements.”

Jesus declared in Acts 1:8:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

This verse reminds us that we possess the power that is needed for witnessing to the lost. We need not fear the enemy and the conflict that is against us. We simply need to have compassion for people and take the Gospel to them in the power and help of the Holy Spirit.

Blunt common sense always characterized Mr. Moody. Once a man rose in one of his meetings to give his experience. "I have been for five years on the Mount of Transfiguration," he said. Instantly Mr. Moody interrupted him by the sharp question, "How many souls did you lead to Christ last year?" "Well, I don't know," answered the surprised man. "Have you led any?" then came sternly from the preacher. "I-ah-don't know that I have," said the man. "Then," snapped Mr. Moody, still more sternly, "we don't want that kind of mountaintop experience. When a man gets so high that he can't reach down and save poor sinners, there is something wrong."

“Lead me to some soul today,  
O teach me, Lord, just what to say;  
Friends of mine are lost in sin,  
And cannot find their way.  
Few there are who seem to care,  
And few there are who pray;  
Melt my heart, and fill my life,  
Give me one soul today.”