

Are You a Missionary or a Mission Field?

by Alan Redpath

We are either missionaries or mission fields, and the difference is made by surrendering to Jesus Christ as Lord.

Duration: 37:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:13-15

Topics: "Missionary"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a missionary or a mission field. He quotes Acts 1:8, which states that believers will receive power from the Holy Spirit and become witnesses for Jesus in various parts of the world. The speaker highlights the need for individuals to surrender their lives to Jesus as Lord in order to truly become missionaries. He shares a humorous anecdote about different nationalities on a desert island to illustrate the importance of unity and fellowship among believers. The sermon concludes with a call to pray and reflect on whether one has truly received the gift of life in Christ and surrendered to His authority.

Transcript

Good evening everybody. Good evening everybody. Thank you very much.

I'm glad you're not mad with me already. There were two Englishmen, two Welshmen, two Irishmen, and two Scotsmen who were thrown up on a desert island and lost for six months. When they were discovered, the two Irishmen were fighting, the two Welshmen were singing, the two Scotsmen were talking about Home Rule for Scotland, and the two Englishmen, well, they weren't speaking to each other because they hadn't been introduced.

Now we get the reputation of being what you call snooty. English people like to call it reserved. But I would be very grateful if in these days you would help me by taking the initiative, coming up and telling me your name and where you come from, and let me have a word with you.

Because I would like to enter into your friendship, into your hearts, and to know as many as possible before this week is over. Now will you turn with me to the Acts of the Apostles in the first chapter and the eighth verse. Before we turn to the Word, let us turn to the Word, to the Lord of the Word, for a moment of prayer.

And will you echo, please, in your heart the prayer which I would offer on your behalf and mine. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Speak just now some message to meet my need which thou only dost know.

Speak now through thy Holy Word and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Having got a little of the sound of this hall, which is not easy to speak in because it isn't designed for public speaking, may I just ask you, do you hear me? Anybody who doesn't hear me, stack up your hand. Excuse me being Irish. Can you hear quite clearly at the back? Right? Thank you.

Acts chapter one and verse eight. 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 old Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Everyone in this hall this evening is either a missionary or a mission field. May I repeat that? Everyone here tonight is either a missionary or a mission field. What is it that makes the difference? The moment in a fellow girl's experience when they stop running their own lives and hand over the management to Jesus Christ as Lord.

When he is really Lord of your life you start being a missionary. You notice I said when he is really Lord. In Great Britain, omit the great, in Britain we have, as you know, a queen.

And we have a constitutional monarchy. The queen is on the throne. She is number one.

She is our recognized sovereign. But she has nothing whatsoever to do with the government of the country. Harold Wilson and company, for better or worse, handle that.

And the more things go on, the less the queen has anything to do with it. She is on the throne. The government make the decisions.

That's called a constitutional monarchy. And we Christian people seem to imagine, many of us, that we can get away with that in the spiritual realm of life. And set up a constitutional monarchy in which we say that Jesus Christ is Lord.

But we make all the decisions. May I ask you, very frankly, tonight, who makes the decisions in your life? Who chooses your career? Who chooses your friends? Who chooses the books you read? Who chooses how you spend your money? Who makes the decisions? Christ or you? There is a question in the New Testament which he asked, which I have never been able to answer. It's this.

Why call ye me Lord and do not the things that I say? And the bankruptcy of our Christian living is entirely due to our partial obedience to Jesus Christ as Son. We refuse to take our hands off the reins. If anybody here falls into that category tonight, whether you realize it or not, my friend, you are a desperately needy mission field.

A professing Christian, a member of CE, a member of your church, even perhaps a leader. But you refuse to give Jesus Christ absolute control. You are a mission field.

But there are many people listening to my voice who, by the grace of God, have sold out to Jesus Christ. And he is Lord of your lives. Now this verse has something to say to us tonight about our witness.

And that's the subject about which I want to talk to you. May I say that I haven't come 15,000 miles from Britain to preach nice, entertaining, easy sermons. I've come here with a great big concern in my heart.

For people, for Christian people, that we may realize that time is not on our side. That it's nearer to the midnight hour than we think. And this perhaps is the moment in the history of the endeavor movement when it must catch a fresh glimpse of the Lordship of Christ and obey it or perish.

First let me speak to you concerning the sphere of our witness. Ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Of course, you may be a missionary in your home.

If Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, he may require you to be a missionary right there. And you may be a missionary in your school, in your college, in your university. You may be a missionary in your Jerusalem, in your Judea, or maybe the Lord wants you to be a missionary in your home state, in your Samaria.

But it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that he wants you to be a missionary in the uttermost parts of the earth. And may I say tonight that none of us has the right to settle down in the job in which we are placed, especially if we were in the job before we came to know Christ as Lord. We have no right to settle down in that job without taking to him the whole question of where he wants us to serve him.

90% of Christian work today is done among 10% of the world's population. 90% among 10% of the world's population. It took from the time of creation to the dawn of the 20th century for world population to reach 1 billion, 1,000 million people.

It has in the last 60 years trebled that figure, more than trebled that figure. And it is increasing at the rate of 75 million people a year. There are more un-evangelized people in the world today than ever in history.

Two-thirds of this world's population know nothing about Jesus Christ. This is an impossible task for 40,000 missionaries. That is the sum total of missionaries on the field.

But God never intended 40,000 missionaries to do it. Remember that Christianity is always only one generation removed from total elimination. May I drive that home by repetition? Christianity is only one generation removed from total elimination.

God has no grandchildren. You can have spiritual grandchildren. It's a wonderful thing to lead someone to Christ.

It's even more wonderful to see the person you led to Christ leading somebody else. You can have spiritual grandchildren. But God has no spiritual grandchildren.

He has only children. Someone has said that the strength of every movement depends on its ability to mobilize every member of it to propagate what it believes. That's the reason for the tremendous upsurge in the Muslim faith in this last decade.

It's the reason for the tremendous breakthrough of Jehovah's Witnesses. It's the reason for the tremendous advance in Mormonism. Propagation by the individual adherent of what they believe.

And failure to do that is the reason why Christianity has its back to the wall. In a recent article in Christianity Today published in the States a country, incidentally, which is very fond of statistics and these are statistics for which I cannot vouch. But they are near enough home to make me feel very

uncomfortable.

I read that in the average Evangelical church 5% of the congregation don't exist. 10% can't be found. 25% never attend church.

50% never contribute a penny. 75% never attend a prayer meeting. 90% have no missionary concern.

And 95% never win anybody for Christ. Is that true of you? Are you among that 95%? Listen. How long is it since you tried to bring someone to Jesus Christ? Have you ever done it? What a challenge! Would you mind answering, in your mind, not to me, you can't do that, but in your mind, three questions which I have had to put to myself as I prepare this message today.

One. Was the death of Christ upon the cross adequate to provide for the salvation of everybody? Get it? The answer to that question is unmistakably yes. Adequate for everybody, but effective only in the lives of those who repent and believe.

Question two. Because of the cross, and what Jesus did there, is everybody going to be saved one day? That's what a lot of people would have us believe. That if there's anybody landed in hell, that means a breakdown in the love of God.

Therefore, everybody must be saved. With all the authority of the Word of God behind me, I say the answer to that question is no. Everybody will not be saved.

If that was true, you'd have to tear up the Gospel of Matthew and the Book of Revelation and other sections of your Bible. Question number three. Can anybody be saved without hearing the Gospel? My answer to that question is unmistakably no.

Romans chapter 10 and verse 13. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him whom they've not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? The motto of Satan in the Old Testament was keep Jesus from the cross.

And how nearly he succeeded. The motto of Satan now is keep everybody from hearing. And how easily he seems to be succeeding.

I heard the other day of a little girl who went for the first time to a party. And when a little girl goes for the first time to a party, her mother always says the same thing. Now, be a good girl, won't you? And when she came back from the party, her mother said to her, well, were you a good girl? And she said, well, mummy, I wasn't too good.

And I wasn't too bad. I was just comfy. Are you a comfortable Christian? Merely comfortable? One of Britain's great preachers, who is now in glory, was the minister of St. Paul's Portsmouth Square, Colin Carr was his name.

And I remember him saying at a youth meeting some years ago, I used to pray, Lord, show me what it means for a soul to be lost. And he said the Lord never answered that prayer. Because if he had, I believe, I would have gone off my head.

Do you ever think about people in a lost eternity? Hell has gone out of our picture. Do you really believe that someone who dies without Christ is doomed? How can you afford to be a comfortable Christian in the

light of that truth? The sphere of our witness to the uttermost parts of the earth. Secondly, the subject of our witness.

Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Not to a movement, not to an organisation, not to a church, but to me, to Christ. Evangelism has been defined as the preaching of a whole Christ to a whole man by the whole church in the whole world.

A whole Christ. The Christ of eternal glory. The Christ who became a baby at Bethlehem.

The Christ of the pure and spotless and holy life. The Christ of the atoning death on Calvary. The Christ of resurrection power who ascended into heaven.

The Christ who gave back to everyone who believes in him his Holy Spirit. The Christ who reigns in glory till every enemy shall be his footstool. And the Christ who one day shall come back again.

A whole Christ. To the whole man, to his mind, to his emotion, to his will. And you have never secured a convert till you have got all three of those.

A man's mind and emotion and will. A whole man. By the whole church.

Not just a few people interested in evangelism, but everybody, everywhere, in all the world. That's evangelism. That's the priority task of every person here who's been born again by the Spirit of God.

Have you begun? I had a letter about a month ago from my younger daughter at home. She's just coming up to 18. She'd be mad with me if I told you this.

But she wrote in this letter to me that she was going with a boyfriend now. She's kept them at bay recently. And as far as I know, because I may be wrong, this is her first real boyfriend.

He's a member of our church and he's a very good, keen Christian fellow and I'm very happy about it. But I say, I've had a letter from her every week now and they're simply dueling with this boyfriend. You know I'm getting so excited about it.

You know, she says he's wonderful, he's super, he's fab. That's the word we use in Scotland. That's equivalent to beaut.

Beaut. That's right. Yes.

Well, he's all that you see. He's absolutely wonderful. He's the last word.

You know, I'm really beginning to wonder if he's the fellow I think he is. She thinks he's marvelous. Absolutely marvelous.

She's absolutely taken up with him. And she's got me so excited that I'm longing to get home to see him. The disciples could not but speak the things that they have seen and heard.

They'd fallen in love with the risen Christ. Their hearts were filled with the Holy Ghost. They were compelled to obey God and compelled to speak for Him.

And somehow the thing became infectious. Anything infectious about your Christian faith? You can only witness to somebody who is real to you. Is Jesus real to you? Do you love Him? Have you spoken about

Him? Have you begun to be a missionary where you are right now because He so thrills you and fills you? You sang tonight, we may go anywhere with Jesus.

Have you gone across the road to speak to your friend about Him? Have you told your family that you love Him? Your girls, your friends at school? Do they know? Oh, has he caught the glow? You see, my daughter is so in love with this boy that she says he's wonderful and she's made me enthusiastic. Does anybody ever catch the glow from you? The reality of Christ shining out from your life. The subject of our witness, oh, our wonderful Lord Jesus, ye shall be witnesses unto me, but the last thing and the most important thing, the secret of our witness, ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

The secret of our witness. These disciples were absolutely useless without the Holy Spirit. They'd been three years at school with Christ.

They'd been eyewitnesses of His death. They'd seen the risen Lord. They'd seen the marks of the hands and nails in His hands.

But they were helpless, helpless to do anything for Him without the Holy Spirit. Jesus, His last words to them before He went to heaven was, I am with you always. Go and preach the gospel to every creature and I am with you always.

But Lord, you're just about to leave us. Ah, yes. But you remember what He said to them in the 14th chapter of John's gospel in the 16th verse? I will send you another Comforter and He shall be with you and shall be in you forever.

I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you and shall be in you. At that hour ye shall know that I am and my Father, ye are in me and I am in you.

Now He has come to be in them like that. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come to you and ye shall be witnesses unto me. That's the only secret.

Forgive me, it's not more Christian endeavor if you mean by that more effort, more work, more prayer, more verbal study, more hard work in my church. That's not it. It's more room for God the Holy Spirit.

In Northern Ireland there's a little town called Balenino. The most Protestant town in the world, I imagine. Very true Roman Catholics.

A lady there had a succession of cottage meetings on three Wednesday evenings. Her next door neighbor was the one Roman Catholic in that street. And so she asked her to come and the Roman Catholic lady said, Sorry, can't come.

Not allowed to. But after the meeting she was very curious and said, Do you have a good time last night? Oh, wonderful. We had a great meeting.

How many do you have? Twenty-seven and my house was full. Come next week. Can't, not allowed to.

Next week went by. Second meeting was held. Same conversation over a wall or garden.

Did you have a good meeting last night? Wonderful. How many do you have? Fifty-one. My house was full.

Fifty-one. Will you come next week? Can't. Not allowed to.

Third week went by. Third meeting. Next morning, same conversation.

Have a good meeting last night? Oh, thrilling. Best of all. How many do you have? Sixty-two.

My house was full. That was too much for an Irish Roman Catholic. So she said, Here, you said your house was full when you were twenty-seven.

The next week you got fifty-one. And the next week, sixty-two. It's impossible.

No, no, perfectly easy, she said. Easy? Well, how did you do? Didn't you hear us? What do you mean, didn't I hear you? Well, she said, all we did was put the furniture out in the garden. Listen, young people.

There's some spiritual, unspiritual furniture in your life that's got to be thrown out before God can get control. The Holy Spirit fills what I'm prepared to empty. Have you ever been to Christ and said to Him, Oh God, use me for Jesus' sake and if it costs anything, empty me of myself that I might be filled with your Spirit.

Ye shall receive power. Oh, have you the Holy Spirit in your life? If you're a Christian, you have. If you've been born from above, He is in you, but He perhaps doesn't control you.

It's one thing for you to have the Holy Spirit. It's another thing for Him to have you. It's one thing for you to possess Christ and His indwelling life.

It's another thing for Him to possess all of you and use you. You see, I repeat, it's not more Christian endeavour, it's not what I do for Christ that matters, it's what Christ does through me. I labour, Colossians 1.29, I labour according to the power of Him who worketh in me mightily.

Oh, says Paul, I work, I work, I'm labouring, I'm giving my whole life to Jesus, but thank God it's not my effort, it's His mighty power flowing through me. Yes, you have Him. Maybe He hasn't you, and you're a desperately needy mission field, you see.

Listen, there are two words in the New Testament which find their way into our English Bible and translated by the word power. The one is a word that means authority, and almost always it is used in reference to Christ. For instance, hath not the potter authority over the clay? He hath been raised up far above all principalities and powers.

What's authority? Authority. And the other word is the word that we have in our text, ye shall receive power, and it's a word that means dynamite, dunamis. Look, oh my, we've only a few nights here, but I long that there shall be an infusion of dynamite into Christian lives at this time.

Have you the Holy Spirit but no dynamite, no power? I'll tell you why. Let me tell you why. Listen, oh, you've already found that this sort of preaching isn't an entertainment.

It's not funny, it hurts, but listen, I'll tell you just why. I know it from experience, I'm not preaching at you, I've known it in my own wretched, miserable life. I had no power because I wasn't prepared to submit.

To authority. I walked down Regent Street in London not so long ago, and when I was walking down on a nice, warm summer day, I found all the buses were lined up, two abreast, and all were stationary, engines

ticking over, driver at the wheel, knows nothing moving. Being an accountant by nature, I started counting the horsepower under the hoods, the bonnets of those buses, soon lost count, hundreds of thousands, and I arrived at the bottom of Regent Street, Piccadilly Circus it's called, and I found the reason why they're all stopped.

The traffic lights were out of order, and a little five-foot-eight London policeman stood there, little fat man he was, and he had one hand on his hips, and one hand up in the air like that, he wasn't even looking at the buses, but I tell you that none of those buses dare move. And I stood and watched him, absolutely fascinated, and I said, I didn't say it to him, but I thought it, you think yourself no end of a swell guy, don't you? Think you're important? My, I expect you've got a wife and a few kids, and you live in a little suburban house in London like I do. Do you know what I'd like you to do? I'd like you to go off duty right now, I'd like you to go home and put on a suit of clothes like mine, and come back to Piccadilly Circus and stand and do that.

You'd be in a hospital in ten seconds, either that or dead. All those drivers and all that horse power didn't care a scrap for a fat little London policeman, but I tell you this, they cared a mighty lot for the authority of Scotland Yard, the headquarters of London police, with which uniform that policeman was vested. Because the man was under authority, he was in power.

No bus dare move, no horse dare move an inch. Christian, what you want here tonight, what I want, is to get right under the authority of Jesus in your life, and look up to his face and say, Lord, and mean it with all your heart. And from that moment on, there's dunamis, dunamis, but ye shall receive power, and ye shall be witnesses unto me.

Let us pray. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me. Have you received the gift of life in Christ? Is he within you? Have you his power in your heart? Does he control you? Have you got Jesus? Has he got you? On this night of the convention, the whole mission fields of the world would be radically transformed if every person in this place went out of this whole spirit field to live under the control of a risen Lord.

Let us ask him to do it for us in a second of prayer. O Lord, Thou knowest my failure, my sin. How often I have tried to keep the reins in my hands and refused to yield to Thy sovereignty.

Bring us at Thy feet in total surrender to the Lordship of Jesus, and send us out with dunamis dynamic to live for Thee and for Thy glory. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

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