

Two Commissions

by Carl Armerding

The sermon emphasizes the importance of evangelism and discipleship, highlighting the simplicity and power of going after people who have given up, and the new joy of Christianity that meets new containers.

Duration: 55:12

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 5:27-28, Luke 5:32, Luke 5:39, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Global Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of God's grace in transforming the lives of those who are considered worthless. He shares his own personal experience of being born and raised in a Christian home but later finding himself in a place where he was singing gospel hymns with a mullah. The speaker encourages the audience to use their homes to introduce others to Jesus, just as he had done. He also mentions the current emphasis on evangelism and the need for worldwide efforts, highlighting events like Expo 72 and the upcoming meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Transcript

Jesus, my Lord, today should be a resurrected day, that he paid death's debt to these things, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of Solomon. And he left all, but their scribes and Pharisees murmured, Why did he leave me? They that are whole need not a position. I came not to call the righteous.

And they said unto him, Why did the disciples, and likewise the disciples, but the days will come when the bright day shall come. No man put at the peace of a new, but knew I must be. No man also having drunk all the old.

In between our Lord's resurrection, he gave his disciples, almost immediately after his resurrection, he gave them the commission to evangelize, when he said it behooved Christ to save all nations. Then just before his ascension, as recorded in Matthew 28, he announced that all power had been given to all nations. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end.

Here are two commissions, which are sometimes not very carefully distinguished. But in the passage of Scripture which we read tonight, I believe we get the Lord giving us an example of what it means to fulfill. Not to be supposed that this was the first time that the Lord Jesus and Levi Matthew had met, but when our Lord saw him, he was occupied in his burdens.

And I like the way the word saw is rendered in the original language. We have different words for seeing in the original, just like we do in English. For example, we get a glimpse of something, a vision of something.

Then again we take a look at it. Then again we observe it. Then again we contemplate it.

And all these words have just a little stronger meaning. And the word for saw, in this 27th verse, when he says here, after these things he went forth and saw a publican, is the word from which we get our word, theater. As it were, the Lord was taking a real penetrating look at this man, Matthew Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom.

As I said, I don't suppose for one moment that this was the first time that they had ever met. You know, before the Lord says, follow me, he says, come unto me, and in that order. And that is why we believe that commission given in Luke 24, whereas that which is sometimes referred to as the great commission, is given just before his ascension, which is some 40 days later.

But these two are complementary. And it's interesting that we have in our own fellowship now, William McDonald, associated with Gene Gibson, and Jack Davies, have what they call San Leandro, which is a suburb of Oakland, California. And there they are giving training to these young men to fulfill the commission given to us in Matthew 28.

As I said, I believe the Lord gives us an example here in this 5th chapter of Luke. It seems the emphasis is on evangelism. These very recent years, I've known, stir the people up to worldwide evangelism.

And again in 1973, now there'll be a big meeting next month in Lausanne in Switzerland. But it's always on a grand scale. So big that it actually requires all the details of it.

The whole thing computed. But there it is. We look at these things and they're giant.

Sometimes we forget that there's another way to evangelize. And that I believe also finds illustration in this passage. Because when the Lord Jesus looked and contemplated, looked upon this man, Matthew, he saw Matthew, the publican, didn't make any promises.

And we find that Levi left all, just two words to describe everything. But I dare say it took days, perhaps even weeks, to really live all. A man with a business like this, for I suppose he had a pretty good sized business.

He must have been one of the chief publicans. You can imagine he not only had a little office for himself, but he probably had quite an office staff as well. And investments around and things to take care of.

This leaving all must have been a tremendous transaction. But he did it. And the scripture simply sums it up and says, I can almost imagine the surprise of some of his fellow publicans when he announced to them that he was giving up business.

Just like when I gave up my business as an engineer, an aunt of mine who had been following me in my preparation for the engineering. So I can imagine how Levi would go to his fellow publicans, maybe they had a service. The lost.

I'm going to follow one whose commission is to seek and to save that which is lost. And this is what Levi is going to undertake now. And you can imagine the look on the faces of those fellow publicans of his as this man makes this announcement that he's quitting.

He left all, rolled up, and followed them, as I said, with no promise of whatever. He must have been a man of considerable means, because we read here in verse 29 of our chapter, that he made him a great feast in his own house. Mrs. Levi is not his feast.

And he invites not only the chief publicans, but the... It is to celebrate the call to discipleship. You know, this to me is very interesting, that we should have this picture. And mind you, this thing is referred to in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

And a thing that's repeated that often in the word of God must have some very great importance. And so here's this man celebrating the fact that the Lord Jesus had called him into his service with two simple words. Follow me.

Just as simple as that, isn't it? Well, all of this, of course, arouses not only, shall I say, an interest in it, but also some criticism. Because when they see what's happening here, they notice, you notice, they say to his disciples in verse 13, They can't understand this. This is an entirely different enterprise.

Is this going out after people that nobody else cared anything about? But you know, that's the very genius of the Christian commission, isn't it? That we go out after people perhaps that he has given up. The story is told of George Whitefield, who was a great evangelist in the days of John Wesley. That one morning as he was staying, where he was staying as a guest, there was a conversation.

And he himself came to the door and saw the woman and immediately invited her. And she looked at him and she said, You said last night in your sermon that the Lord Jesus would receive even the devil's counsel. Did you mean that? What the Lord Jesus came to do.

And you can imagine the pleasure that George had in bringing all these people together. And I thought of this as I was meditating on this passage of scripture and preparing. I wonder if we have sometimes forgotten that this is a very simple method of evangelizing.

It's true we do not all have the same means and convenience and everything that Matthew Levi had. But perhaps we could do it on a smaller scale. To invite someone, say a person, to come to our home, share a meal with us.

It might be that even giving thanks for the meal will spark the conversation. I had an illustration of this on an airplane going from Chicago to Mexico City some years ago. I happened to draw a seat next to a gentleman.

He was an engineer. Say a little prayer for me while you're at it, will you? That you were trained to be an engineer. When he said, you sound more like a preacher.

Judging from some of the tapes that have come out. It led to a conversation before you. But the superiority of the language that you use.

King of kings. But they were, on this occasion of course, they were so separated in their thinking. That any man of the status of our Lord Jesus and his disciples sitting down to eat with them.

It is in this connection that the Lord Jesus announced his real mission in this world. He says, but sinners. This evidently stopped them.

And then they raised another objection. They said, well now tell us. We fast and the disciples of John.

Well said the Lord Jesus. Can you make the children of the bride chamber. That's the guests with kind of bride groomers with them.

And here our Lord Jesus is speaking of himself in one of the happiest figures that is possible. You can see how my thinking is going back 57 years tonight. I'm sure that anybody looking at me 57 years ago.

As I led my bride forth. And say there goes a happy man. A real happy man.

The Lord Jesus was a happy man. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But on this occasion he introduces himself under one of the happiest figures.

I've married a good many couples in my ministry. Unhappy bride groomers. I've seen some nervous ones.

Those kind that were reported to have said to the minister. When do you put the thing on her ring. Well it's customary.

And here the Lord Jesus is introducing himself. He says you can't make these wedding guests of mine fast while the bride groomers will be taken away from them. And then shall they fast in those days.

That must have been a very sad note here. But as long as he's present. And thank God.

Because of this we can live a happy. Because of this. The apostle and his companion Silas.

Yes. Because of this. Out of that same.

Out of that same prison he could write. Rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice. This is one of the finest apologies.

Is that the Lord. Enables us to be happy. Even in the midst of adverse circumstances.

And here the Lord Jesus is giving us the right to look at him. Do you know when you think about a bride groom. You think about a wedding.

No man puts the piece you take out of the new and put on the old. They forget. Some years ago a great news reporter.

Christianity. Muslim. Was to be the ideal.

Putting all these things. What you and I have beloved in the Christian. As you have already seen in this passage of scripture tonight.

The Lord says I didn't. In taking hold of those who were absolute. When I was put into the picture as we should.

Difficult for one. Can imagine myself years later. Being rocked in the.

Singing gospel. To realize this. Get comparing yourself to other people.

And think well. I can't be so bad. Remind me.

Of an incident. But he was out. And she was at home.

She listened to him for a while. I said you don't need to talk to me. I'm too bad to be saved.
She was worse than. All of us are worse. But the Lord Jesus knows.
How bad he came. Not to call the righteous. If he's the bridegroom.
You may be sure. We're not going to see him in his royal robes. And it'll be the best robe.
As we learn in the 50. This same gospel group. Bring forth.
And that best robe will speak to God. Of his beloved. Be the raising of sheep.
Had eight legs. And I'd never seen a creature. And its owner.
And you'd think it was a very simple procedure. But it isn't. They sniff it.
And it's not there. They don't want it. But what does the owner do.
But skin the dead lamb. Her baby. And put its skin on.
This living plant. Not slow to make the Ephesian epistle. In the beloved.
So I like to think that this new garment. That the Lord speaks of here. Oh to be dressed up in him.
How wonderful. But then he also speaks of new wine here. He says.
When you have new wine. Notice this. You do carry liquids in bottles.
38. They go today. All right.
His body is no longer in that skin. Well in our Lord's day. This was it.
He says. But you don't put new wine. Into old bottles.
The lesson is dear friends. That in Christianity. There's a new joy.
That meets new containers. The story is told of Isaac Watts. In his younger days.
When he complained to his father. That they always had to sing the psalms. Wonderful as they were.
What he would like to expect as a Christian. And so his father said to him. Well if you can do any better
than that.
Go ahead. And Isaac Watts. Began that wonderful collection of hymns.
Known as the Watts collection. He said. Behold the glories of the Lamb.
Amidst the Father's throne. Prepare new honors for His name. And songs before them.
And how wonderful are these songs aren't they. Yes. As I conclude this meditation tonight.
I'm thinking of. My early days of the mission. And where previously.
She was teaching these little ones. Just like my parents taught me. Jesus loves me.

The people around came to us and said. They're so different from what we sing. They were not only different in content.

But they were different in music. There was an equality about them. Which was recognizable.

Even by the world itself. And I've had men say this to me. Meditation.

It was on a trip. From Los Angeles down to Auckland New Zealand. The purser of the ship came to me.

On Saturday evening. He said. Sir.

I understand that you are a minister of the gospel. He said. There will be two services.

One has to repeat the service. And he said. There will be three musicians.

That will play anything that you would like to listen to. Choose for a subject. Standard hymns of the church.

And having chosen them. I said to these men. At least to these.

I wondered what his reaction would be. What we did last night. We've got up to here.

But oh how they played those Christians. The new wine. Beloved.

All of this the result. Of a man from the Lord. And who had an evangelistic service.

And his own friend. The Lord Jesus Christ. An inspiration from this.

Perhaps to use your own. In closing let's turn to hymn number 190. Take my life.

Take my life. And we're reminded.

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