

Embassadors for the King

by Darrell Champlin

We must see reality as eyewitnesses and understand that the earthly life is not worth pursuing because it does not last for eternity.

Duration: 30:41

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 8:23, 1 Corinthians 15:53, 2 Corinthians 4:18 - 5:1, 2 Corinthians 5:20

Topics: "Eternal Focus", "Ambassadors For Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of seeing and understanding certain key aspects in order to be effective ambassadors for Jesus Christ. These aspects include heavenly time, the earthly tent we live in, the heavenly tribunal to come, and the love of Jesus Christ. The preacher encourages the audience to focus on the eternal rather than the temporal, as the things that are seen are temporary while the things that are not seen are eternal. The sermon also includes powerful anecdotes of missionaries facing persecution and hardship in their mission fields, highlighting the sacrifice and dedication required to be a true ambassador for Christ.

Transcript

Now listen to the chapel platform coming to you from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. Throughout the years, God's servants have shared treasures from the scriptures in the chapel and worship services here. Listen to this humbling biblical message by a missionary who spent years on the field in Africa and in Suriname, South America.

Our speaker is presently from Greensboro, North Carolina, Dr. Darrell Champlin. Some comments in this message are current as of the date that he spoke on Tuesday, July 25th, 1989 at a university chapel service. His text is 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 20.

We may not know how many millions have been lost for eternity, but God does. He has used missionaries here and abroad to get the message of salvation to a lost world that can only be released from their sins by the grace of God. This is only had through Christ.

Dr. Champlin shares with us that reality is that which lasts forever. We have the privilege as humbled royalty to obey God by reaching and winning the lost, sinful world with the salvation of God. Let's listen to Dr. Champlin's imploring challenge titled Ambassadors for the King.

Joy to be with you here this morning. We were in the hill country of North Carolina on an occasion. In a tiny church, I would imagine not much larger than a quarter of this room, certainly not larger than a third.

One of our dear Southern friends, Ann Duckworth, stood to sing in her inimitable Southern voice, Oh tell me that name again. Glorious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matchless, blessed, glorious name.

Oh tell me that name again. How many of us have gone down the road singing to our Lord, My Jesus I love Thee, I know Thou art mine, for Thee all the folly of sin I resign. Well beloved, do we exalt Thee, glorious name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well do we extol that name. Well do we extol and proclaim and declaim the matchless, glorious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When our eyes lift up to Him, we cry out to Him, O Thou Jesus, sweetest name I know, Jesus, fairest Lord Jesus.

Well do we extol and proclaim that glorious name. But I was reminded that night, beloved, as she was singing, Oh tell me that name again, of the three billion across this world who are crying out, Oh tell me that name. Just once, just once, three billion beloved who have never in their lifetime so much as heard the name of Jesus Christ preached to them in the glorious gospel of this book.

Three billion. Now how many is a billion? Well a mathematician would say it's a thousand million. But how do we get our minds around a thousand million? Perhaps there's a better way.

If by some magical process we could begin turning back the pages of history. Turning back the calendar of the years of our lives. Just push those pages back.

86, 85, 84, 83. Down into the seventies. 72, 71, 70.

Down into the sixties. Keep rolling those pages back. 65, 64, 63.

Push the calendar back into 1950. 55, 54. Beloved, when we turn the calendar back to 1953, we would have turned the calendar back one billion seconds.

For it takes 36 years to accumulate one billion seconds. And that means, beloved, in terms of souls who have yet for the first time to hear the blessed name of Jesus Christ in the gospel, we have the equivalent of lost souls across this world to a hundred and eight years. The scripture says, where there is no vision the people perish.

And I want to spend the next few moments this morning asking you and asking myself what do we see? Oh, beloved, what are we seeing? It was a late night in the country of Mali. It was so dark there in Africa. So dark that the black velvet of the sky, even though hung with the chandeliers of the stars, was not illumined enough so that you could tell where the rising sand dunes met the descending sky.

And in that dark night, a little wooden boat carrying a missionary family was wending its way up that desert river in Niger, in Mali, pardon me. Midnight passed. One o'clock, two o'clock, until early in the morning, at last that little wooden boat went aground there on the bank of the river and it arrived.

Suddenly against that sky stood the form of an Arab in flowing robes, began descending that sand dune carrying a kerosene lantern before him until at last he stood at the edge of the river and by that little boat and leaning over he illumined the faces of those missionaries with that lantern. And when he saw they were Americans and when he saw they were missionaries, he screamed in their faces, What are you

doing here? We don't need you here. We don't want you here.

Get out. And that, beloved, was their introduction to their mission field. They climbed that sand dune and found a place to stay.

And the next morning they began going to the little town that would be their home. And soon they were wiping from themselves the spittle of those fanatic Muslims that were spitting on them at every opportunity and mopping their brow of their moisture. And then through the crowd they heard a strange sound, a demented voice screaming.

They moved through the crowd until they could see a young man standing on the street corner crying out in this crazed voice and they said, Who is that? And they were told that's the first person to attempt to become a Christian in our village. And our leadership took him and they buried him in the sand to his head and they poured honey over his head. And the ants began to gather first by the score and then the hundred, then by the thousands, then by the uncounted multitudes until his head was nothing but a writhing ball of ants and they were pouring through his ears and up into his nostrils and forcing themselves under his eyelids and into his mouth and they drove him insane.

And now he stands on the street corner through the day screaming out, screaming out in that demented voice the only thing he has left in his mind, those precious Bible verses. Then in a few days of the joy of his salvation he crowded into his heart. Oh beloved, who can reach people like that? Who can preach the gospel in a place where there are more missionary graves than there are converts to the Lord Jesus Christ? You know as well as I do, we call them missionaries.

We call them ambassadors. Ambassadors for the King of the universe. And I want to take you this morning to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 20.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's dead be ye reconciled to God. Now then, we are ambassadors.

Beloved, I find it, shall I say, passing strange that we have some Christians that believe that ambassadorship comes with the territory, comes with salvation. It's part of the package. I try not.

I don't think, beloved, that God sells his service so cheaply. And I believe that subject is spoken to here by the Apostle Paul. Why now then? Now then, we are ambassadors.

Now then, of course, is one of the signposts of Scripture. Wherefore, therefore, because of, and so forth, forasmuch as. Now then, a signpost of Scripture, beloved, indicating that something has been said before this declaration that bears upon the declaration prerequisites for ambassadorship.

And as I studied through the passage, I found there is a particular word, not being a Greek scholar, but understanding a little enough to discover some of these things. I found there is a particular word, the Greek word oida, O-I-D-A, that is used both in chapter 4 and chapter 5, sometimes as to know, and other times translated to see. And I pondered that.

How is it possible that a single word can be translated to know and to see until it dawned on me that the word simply means to know because you have seen it as an eyewitness. Seen it as an eyewitness. You cannot be disabused of it You cannot be disillusioned of it.

You cannot be dissuaded of it. You have seen it as an eyewitness. I saw it, and I know it.

Beloved, there are a number of things in this passage that we could bring to your attention this morning, but I'd like quickly to bring four things to your attention, four things that by the Spirit of God we must see as eyewitnesses, for we will never indeed be ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ. Now then, when you have seen heavenly time. Now then, when you have seen this earthly tent.

Now then, when you have looked upon as an eyewitness that heavenly tribunal to come. Now then, when you have looked upon the love of Jesus Christ and been transformed in the reality of your life. Now then, I invite you to become an ambassador.

Now then, when we have seen eternal time. Look at verse 18 of chapter 4. Why we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. But for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

How is it possible that we should see things that are not seen? Well, it's evident of course that we're talking here about two kinds of sight. We're talking a physical sight, looking upon those things which are temporal. And we're talking, beloved, of the eyes of the Spirit which gaze upon the things of eternity.

Beloved, I call upon you this morning to gaze upon the things of eternity with the eyes of your spirit until you know because you are an eyewitness. What is reality? It's not often that scientists and philosophers get together in agreement, but in this case they have. Scientists and philosophers have concluded that reality and stability are integrally connected.

Indivisible, in fact. Scientists and philosophers have agreed that unless it lasts, it is not real. And I find, beloved, that the Word of God teaches us that very same thing.

What is reality? The God of heaven. What is reality? The love and power and grace and might of God. What is reality? The character, the mysterium tremendum of the universe.

What is reality? God's Word. God's church. God's message.

God's people. God's mission. Eternal things.

The things of the reality of the God of heaven. In fact, beloved, I believe that the Bible, if taken as a dictionary of God, would define reality as this, that which lasts forever. And that should we look in the dictionary of God, we would find that which lasts forever is reality, and unless it lasts forever, God says it is not real.

A missionary trained here at Bob Jones University, a little Korean fellow, not taking, unfortunately, the position of Bob Jones University at this time, but still preaching the gospel. I listened to him one day as he preached, and he said, you know, I used to enjoy having folks call me that warm-hearted little Korean preacher, until I looked up in the Korean dictionary the definition of warm, and found that it said not so hot. I submit to you, beloved, that the reality upon which God would have us gaze are the things of eternity, and that he defines all else as not so hot.

Not real. You say, well, how in the world would God do such a thing? Think just for a moment upon our God. Which way is north here? Behind me.

It's usually behind me for some reason. You look up in the northern sky, you notice that there's a huge blank spot up there with no stars. For years, man has trained the most powerful telescopes of Earth upon that site, the great 200-inch telescopes of Palomar and Mount Wilson, and they have strained to catch even the slightest glimmer of light, and have been unable to do so.

But somehow the electronic ears upon these instruments can hear, and there are explanations we won't take time for this morning, can hear emanating from that dark vastness of space the singing of the stars that is out there. The stars are out there, so far away that light speeding from those stars at 186,280 miles per second has yet to reach the view of the most powerful telescopes on Earth. And beloved, this God, who can take a single step across the Milky Way when it takes light 100,000 years to take the same span, this eternal, majestic God is out there beyond those stars.

And here, at the very same moment, is it any wonder that He should define reality as that which lasts for eternity. And I submit, beloved, until we begin to measure the life that we have in the service of the God of Heaven by the yardstick of the Eternal, we will never indeed be ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. The second thing we must see is that earthly tent, and I'm going to have to hurry.

Let's go back to that desert. Go back to the desert, it's daytime now. Look way back there against the horizon.

You see, it looks almost like a trail of ants. And now it's disappeared. Now they're coming closer.

Those are camels. It's the Berbers, those nomads of the desert. They've disappeared again.

Now they're they must be coming our way. Yes, look, there they are, in plain view now. Why, it looks as though they're going to make camp for the evening.

Look at that woman. She's getting down off her camel. She's opening a bag.

She's pulling an old ragged cloth out of that bag. She's spreading that old ragged cloth on that thornbush. I can't believe it.

I can't believe it. That old ragged cloth spread over that thornbush is her home. That's all the house she's ever known.

She was born under an old ragged cloth spread over a thornbush. She's had her children under cloth like that. She'll die there, somewhere on the desert, under her house, just an old ragged cloth spread over a thornbush.

Do you see that? If you do, beloved, you see chapter 5 and verse 1. For we know, for we see as eyewitnesses, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God and house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. Can you believe that? For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, what's God saying? He is saying that this earthly life is nothing but a tent.

I don't believe it, and neither do you. I think it's impossible for an American to believe that this life is nothing but a tent, nothing but an old ragged cloth spread over a thornbush. We have some beautiful tents.

Beautiful tents. I remember speaking for Ed Johnson up in Minnesota, Rosemount, Minnesota one Sunday. They put us in this newly refurbished colonial inn.

Walked in, you know the smell of newness. Walked in there, deep carpets, opened our door. Why? Carpet that thick.

They had drapes on the walls, but the drapes were covered with lace. I tell you, beloved, if you took your shoes off, left on that carpet and didn't mark where you put them, you're about to lose a pair of shoes. And we arrive at these tents, so-called, chariots of steel, rubber and glass, aluminum, plastic, powered by the finest of V6 turbocharged engines, silky-smooth automatic transmissions, surrounded by quadraphonic sound of the finest state-of-the-art digital stereophonic music.

Arriving at our tent, to all of the fine appliances and luxuries that we enjoy here in America, and we, we are actually to believe and understand, to see as eyewitnesses, that this American life is nothing but a tent, nothing but an old ragged cloth spread over a thorn bush? Impossible. And God knew that, and so we read in verse 2, that He said about to help us, For we, in this, we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked.

For we that are in this tent do groan. We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened. Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. You see how He went to help us. With the baptism of the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, and with the new birth of the Holy Spirit into the family of God, He also, beloved, placed the Holy Spirit within our very being to teach us, as one of His ministries, to groan.

To groan for the things of eternity. To groan for a real house. To groan for real clothing.

To groan for real profit. To groan for the souls of men. To groan for His purpose.

To groan for His mission. To groan for His glory. To groan for eternity.

And because of that, someday He's going to call us to account. Because we're going to meet that heavenly tribunal, as we read in verse 10, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Seeing as eyewitnesses, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

Beloved, you and I are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ one day. And I believe a major part of that judgment is going to be the turning of the blazing, fiery, scintillating, pulsating gaze of a fiery God upon my life and upon your life to determine whether or not we groan for the things of eternity. And the Holy Spirit of God dealing in our hearts, ministering to us to cause us to groan, causes us to see, beloved, that this tent is not worth pursuing, not worth coveting, simply because by the definition of the reality of God, because it does not last for eternity, it is not real.

It's a will-o'-the-wisp. It's a waste of your life. It's a waste of the opportunity God has given us, by his grace, to reach three billion who have never once heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, some will deny that, and they'll pray the yuppies prayer. Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray my casein art to keep. Pray my stocks are on the rise, and that my analyst is wise.

That all the wine I sip is white, and that my hot tub's watertight. That racquetball won't get too tough, that all my sushi's fresh enough. I pray my cordless phone still works, and my career won't lose its perks.

I pray my microwave won't radiate, and my condo won't depreciate. I pray my health club doesn't close, and that my money market grows. And if I go broke before I wait, God forbid, I pray my Volvo they won't take.

The tent, the tent, and the yuppie would have it, because he fails to recognize that it's nothing but an old ragged cloth spread over a thorn bud. I can't preach the whole message to you. The time's gone, but let me give you the last point.

For if the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead. Oh, beloved, when we see that love, we're transformed. Heavenly time, earthly tent, heavenly tribunal.

And the reality transformation that comes from seeing his love, that word constrained is a wrestling term. When I was a boy in Salt Lake City, Utah, growing up, there was a family down the road from us named Caputo. Caputo, an Italian family.

They had a big brother. He was huge and fat. We called him Big Lard.

His little brother, same shape, but our size. We called him Little Lard. Now, my dad was a professional boxer before he was married.

He said, if you hit a man with a good right hand, he didn't go down, he'd go around behind you and see what's holding him up. He taught me to box in the living room, to my mother's horror, with big gloves on. Now, son, I'm 12.

Now, son, I'm going to faint with a left. I faint with a right cross. Here we go.

Boom, I'm in the corner. The world's dead. The whole world's just nothing but starving.

Now, get up, son. Let me show you. Let's go through that again.

Don't watch my fist. Watch my chest. You'll see the telegraph right here.

Watch my chest. Here we go. Didn't have any trouble with bullies when I was a boy.

Not even with Little Lard until we wrestled. And he got me down. And he weighed 50 pounds more than I did.

And he's sitting on my chest. And he's wagging his finger in my face. Say, uncle.

Say, uncle. Champlain never says uncle. Off he goes.

On he comes. Off he goes. On he comes.

Finally, beloved, I'm dead. Absolutely dead. Say, uncle.

One time in my life, I looked up. I said, uncle. Beloved, if we ever meet again, there's going to be a rematch.

Even today, there's going to be a rematch. But you know what happens when we see our Lord? When we see him torn and bruised and broken upon Calvary's cross. When we see his back torn to ribbons.

When we see his face so beaten that Isaiah proclaims he did not even appear to be human. When we cry out with a songwriter, man of sorrows. What a name for the Son of God who came.

Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah. What a savior.

And he puts his arms around us and gets us in a great godly bear hug. And he crushes us until we cry out, uncle Lord. Uncle Lord.

Anywhere. To anyone. Uncle Lord.

And then all things old pass away and everything becomes new. Heavenly time, beloved. If we measure not our lives by the yardstick of what is eternal, we've wasted our lives.

No matter what degree you have. An earthly tent, beloved. Nothing but an old ragged cloth spread over a thorn bush.

Not to be coveted. Not to be pursued. Not the something upon which we will devote our lives and the glorious opportunity we have to live for God.

Forget the tent. A heavenly tribunal that's going to test the groaning by the Spirit of God that helps us to put the tent in its proper place. And the bear hug of the love of Jesus that has us crying, uncle Lord.

Uncle. Now I invite you to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ. Father, bless now this portion of thy word to our hearts for Jesus' sake.

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