

William P. Nicholson

by David Smithers

True passionate preaching is the flower and fruit of passionate praying, and prayer is the secret to revival power.

Scripture: Psalm 85:6, Matthew 3:2, Luke 11:1, Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Passionate Prayer", "Revival Preaching"

Description

David Smithers preaches on the powerful connection between passionate praying and true passionate preaching, using the life of W. P. Nicholson as a profound illustration. Nicholson's fearless and unique preaching style, fueled by his deep prayer life, brought about both revival and resistance among his hearers. His fervent preaching on God's love and God's hell stirred deep conviction and forced communities to confront the question of what to do with Jesus, reminiscent of past revivals like the Ulster Revival of 1859 and the work of D. L. Moody.

Transcript

True passionate preaching is the flower and fruit of passionate praying. The fiery preaching that transforms the Church and the market place is first kindled in the secret place. This truth is powerfully illustrated through the life of W. P. Nicholson. In the early 1920's, Northern Ireland passed through a period of great strife and bloodshed. These were times of great despair and apprehension. Fear gripped the heart of many and even spread to the churches and religious community. "In the mercy of God, an intervention came from an unexpected source. There began a series of evangelistic campaigns, which in the course of the following years had a profound effect upon the religious and communal life of the Province." The evangelist used of God during these meetings was W. P. Nicholson. He was a fearless individual, peculiar to some and offensive to others. Nicholson didn't care what others thought of his manner of speech or methods. He had been taught by God Himself in the secret place and as a result was quite unique in his preaching and dealings with men. To be all-out for the Kingdom of God and it's interests was his passion. Burning zeal was the chief characteristic of Nicholson's whole life and ministry.

"Nicholson used to say that when a mission was begun it was not long before they had either a riot or revival. Sometimes we had more riot than revival, but never a revival without a riot." Nicholson wielded the Sword of the Spirit with a fury. His hearers were always affected one way or another. Some through his preaching were brought to humble repentance, while others resisted God's Word with indignation. Two favorite themes of Nicholson were "God's love" and "God's hell." W. P. Nicholson always preached the

love of God with all the warmth and tenderness he could muster; but for those who rejected this Good News, he offered the only alternative, GOD'S HELL. He preached on every aspect of hell with such zeal and passion that his hearers claimed to be able to almost smell the burning sulphur. Still others, under deep conviction and anxiety, dripped with sweat and unconsciously shredded the hymn books they held in their laps. Through this kind of fervent preaching, God brought entire communities face to face with the question, "What shall I do with Jesus?" One elderly man who had recollections of the Ulster Revival of 1859 said that some of the effects of Nicholson's meetings even exceeded what happened in '59. Another commentator on Nicholson's work said that he had seen nothing like it since the days of D. L. Moody.

Apart from prayer such revival power is unattainable. Mr. Nicholson was always a man of deep prayer. "Prayer might be called his habit, for he loved to pray. His campaigns had nights and half nights of prayer. Praying in the Spirit kept him in the spirit of prayer. From the prayer closet he mounted the pulpit - endowed." Mr. Lindsay Glegg wrote of W. P. Nicholson, "The secret of his power was no doubt in his prayer life. He stayed at our home . . . and he was up in the morning at six o'clock but he never appeared until twelve noon; he spent the hours wrestling with God in prayer. By his own special request he was not disturbed by telephone or visitor, however urgent." On another occasion the sheets of his bed were found to be torn to shreds. Mr. Glegg again commented; "What had happened was that he unconsciously, agonizing in prayer had ripped the sheets into strips . . ." Yes prayer was surely the secret of his powerful life and ministry.

Perhaps the sweetest fruit of Nicholson's prayer life was the deep familiarity that was produced between himself and the person of Christ. In Nicholson's book, *On Towards the Goal*, he writes, "I do not know anyone in the world that I know better than the Lord. I do not know my wife or my mother the way I know the Lord. I do not know the best friends I ever had the way I know the Lord. We walk together, my Lord and I, because we are in fellowship, and there is nothing that I have but is His." Truly this is the essence and heart of revival, an intimate visitation and fellowship with Jesus Christ. Lord, will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice and delight in You? (Psa. 85:6).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-smithers/william-p-nicholson/>

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