

# A True Witness #2

by Ernest C. Reisinger

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of literature in evangelism, the role of sovereignty in evangelism, and the need for human responsibility in sharing the gospel.*

**Duration:** 1:10:38

**Scripture:** Proverbs 11:30, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:14-15, 2 Corinthians 5:14, 2 Timothy 2:2

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses his initial plan to talk about evangelism and its various aspects. However, due to time constraints, he focuses on the motives behind evangelism. He emphasizes the importance of directing people to the Bible rather than diverting them from it. The speaker also shares a personal experience of evangelism, highlighting the need to teach and instruct individuals about the message of salvation and to present the claims and promises of God as their only hope.

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## Transcript

I wanted to say a few words this morning, if I may, about a couple books, because I believe that literature is one of the best ways of evangelizing. And I think it's particularly true for busy laymen, busy doctors, lawyers, people in business. If they learn to use literature, first of all, it opens up a lot of discussion.

I wouldn't know how to witness, hardly, without literature. And I have a three or four or five page, all the time, I have to keep remembering which book which fellow has. And I found it a great help myself in personal evangelism and personal ways to use good literature.

And we have some things. For instance, there probably wouldn't be a man here that doesn't have a friend that we speak of in his absence, something like this. Well, you know, Joe is a wonderful fellow, he's moral, he's a good family man, he's honest, nice fellow, but he's not a Christian, he has nothing to do with Christ and the Church.

Now, probably every man has a friend, something like that. I know I have a lot of friends like that. They just have nothing to do with Christ and the Church, but as far as the world is concerned, they're honest, reputable, some of the people I do business with.

Here's a little tract called Almost a Christian, ideal for that kind of a person. And easy to give out. I've given it out like this in a conversation to say that, you know, you're so much like a Christian, I wonder if you've

ever considered what a Christian is.

You're almost a Christian. And incidentally, it's by what I consider the greatest evangelist who ever put his feet in American soil, George Whitfield. The almost Christian.

I commend it to you for, you ought to have a half a dozen of them to use for your friends, like that, your neighbors. A lot of times a woman or a man will come to me and say, my husband's a wonderful, wonderful husband, a wonderful father to our children, he's a wonderful provider. I couldn't ask anything else, but he's not a Christian.

I say, have you ever talked to him about it? Well, it's a good place he is, something like that. Say, John, you know, I love you, and you're a wonderful husband. You're almost a Christian.

Have you ever considered it? It's easy to witness like that. So I commend that Another one for the same kind of a purpose, people who are seemingly moral, but they're dead spiritually. J.C. Ryle wrote this little track, Alive or Dead.

Excellent for that kind of witness. And then a little book, one of our later books, in fact, it's one of our best, it's on the top five in the gym. By the way, Mr. Eckerman is back at the book table.

Jim is not a book salesman by trade. He's an electrical engineer, graduate of Penn State. But he loves literature work and loves to use this way of witnessing and serving Christ.

He's working for about one-third of what he could be making as an electrical engineer to do this work. So he's making quite a contribution every week, just what he doesn't get in pay to do this work. I hope you'll, I hope you'll visit his bookstall.

This is an excellent little book, and I'll tell you what for particularly, another way of evangelizing, home Bible studies to call in one or two families, even one or two families, people that you meet with and spend a lot of time just on baloney conversations. You could direct that and say to Mary and Joe, what do you say we have a little Bible study for four weeks, five weeks, six weeks, and take some book like this and go through it. The Bible Tells Me So by R.B. Kuyper.

And they'll not only be Christians in a general sense of the word, but if they really embrace all this, they'll be the right kind of Christians doctrinally. And that might give you some problems, give you some good things to talk about as you go through. Another book that I want to especially say a word about back there, probably many of you have this book, at least I hope you do, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God.

Now I come from an Arminian background, so do you probably, because we're born Arminian, in case you didn't know it. Somebody asked me if I believed in the second blessing once. I said, yes, I've had it.

I was an Arminian and I became a Calvinist. Personal evangelism and witnessing to people. I used to use a little verse or half a verse, John 6, 37.

I used a half a verse that all that the Father is cometh to me, I mean, he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. And I used to show that to sinners regularly and hope that they didn't read the part that was before it, because it starts right in the middle of the verse. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.

And I skipped the other half of the verse and didn't want them asking me too many questions about it, in fact. Well, one day when I had the second blessing, I used both parts of the verse because it's all there. All

that the Father giveth me shall come to me.

That's true. He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. That's also true because it's in the Bible.

Uh, but I used to have a little problem. And some people, you see, there's two kinds of evangelism that I see. It's kind of the people who are heavy on sovereignty and correct on it.

A lot of times there's no evangelism. There's no outreach to the world. They try to evangelize their children and all that sort of thing, but there's little outreach.

Sometimes, not in every case, thank God. And there's a real moving in another direction, I think, now for some of these things. Very encouraging to me.

But the idea that these people over here are the active people. Oh, if you believe in sovereignty, it kills evangelism. Well, they don't know much about sovereignty.

And, you know, this is the thing that brings that, I don't know, any book that brings those two halves of verses together and solves at least as much as it can be solved on a human side. That great truth of the Bible that the Bible is pregnant with, that God has a people and he has a predetermined plan and there is the doctrine of election. That the Bible's pregnant with that truth.

But it's also just as pregnant with the responsibility of man that we are to take the gospel, we're to pray and all that. I don't know any book that helps you with those two seemingly dilemmas to the human mind because you are not God. I say so much in this book that I'll tell you, I have given personally about 3,000 copies or more away to Bible school students, preachers, and Sunday school workers.

That's what I think of it. And I highly commend it to you, particularly on that particular area that we touched. So much for the books.

I want to encourage you strongly to use literature. I've written a little track on books to fight ignorance with a few suggestions in. There's nothing profound, but it might be a helpful suggestion how you can use some literature to evangelize.

Now I think we better get down to the book of books instead of talking about it. Incidentally, my motive in giving out these books is to get people to this book. And I hope that would be your motive too.

Not to divert people from the Bible, but to direct people to the Bible. Now I had a wonderful plan when I came here last night. My plan was to talk about evangelism, the men of evangelism, the man himself, that was supposed to be last night.

And then this morning I was going to talk about the message of evangelism and consider some of the doctrinal aspects of our message. And then this afternoon I was going to talk about the methods and motives of evangelism. Well, my little plan is kind of shot because I only got halfway finished last night and Bob Dendoff is going to fire me if I don't finish this message, finish the other two points that I wanted to share last night.

So I'm in quite a dilemma. But I think I don't want to get fired because he hadn't paid me yet. And I wouldn't like to get fired at this point.

So I think I'm going to try to listen to Bob Dendoff. And after spending some time in prayer this morning, I really feel that the Lord would have us just to continue on those two things. Because most of the evangelism conferences and the symposiums and the councils and the articles, usually it's on methods.

About nine out of ten times, if you go to these congresses and conventions on evangelism, you'll find that the main focus is on we've got some new method, we've got some new gimmick, we've got some new way of approach, we've got some new way to approach people or something like that. And very little is said about the message of evangelism, method. Well, there's lots on methods, but I'm talking about motive.

Little about the message and little about the motive. This morning, I do want to try to finish what we started last night. And before we do, let's just bow and a word of prayer.

And I want to say a word of review before we begin. Let us pray. Oh, Holy Father, Righteous Father, Father of our Lord Jesus, we're here this morning as men because Thou hast first loved us and called us by Thy grace.

And we say with the songwriter, Oh, to grace, how great a debt it is. And Lord, we long to obey You, but we find we're so impotent that we need Thy power, Thy wisdom, Thy strength. And as we're gathered this week, Lord, to consider that which You've made so plain in Your Word to go to all the world, assist us, speak to hearts about this grave, clear command of Your Word.

Hear us now and help us. For Jesus' sake, Amen. Could you share it in your Bible this morning, please? I want to read another passage.

This is not the message, but I want to read another passage because, you know, I'm trying to kill a snake as I go along. Sometimes I go places and I'm only there a week and a preacher says, boy, you sure caused a lot of problems. I said, well, I just chase out the snakes and you can spend a year killing them.

But I do want to try to kill a snake as I go along. Last night I read that passage. It ought to be enough.

If there was nothing else in the Bible to show that witnessing is not for the spiritual admirals and generals, but for us. Today I want to bring you another passage that's very clear on that same point before we get to the message, but it's very apropos to what we want to consider this week of evangelism. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, if you'll turn to it.

And I want you to, I want to particularly call your attention to the us's and the we's in the passage. When we come to the word us and we, I want you to notice this. And the thing I want you to notice particularly about that is this, that the same us's who've been reconciled, that's the ones who have been committed the word of reconciliation.

So watch that as we read it. I'll call your attention to it as we come down the line. 2 Corinthians 5, 14.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, holds us in. Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh. Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know him no more. You and I don't know him after the flesh.

We have not, we know him after the spirit, but not after the flesh. And all things are of God who hath reconciled us. Now if you claim to be here, you say, I'm reconciled.

All right, now watch it. All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath committed unto, class, us to work the ministry of reconciliation. That does away with spiritual admirals and spiritual generals.

That's us, if you're reconciled. And I'm amazed to find as I go from church to church, the people who claim to have heard Jesus say come, but how few seem to hear him say go. How few.

And I say this morning that the same crowd that he says come to, that's the crowd that he says go to. Same one, he hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation, to which that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto, class, us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, and so God did beseech you by us.

We pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. I said last night that I'm here on the human side because somebody obeyed Christ. Somebody obeyed Christ.

Somebody believes that Christ, when he said all the world, going into all the world, wasn't speaking of, that's not a foreign mission text necessarily. I know you think of it as foreign and home missions, but you show me that in the Bible and I'll learn something at this conference. I don't find that great distinction in the Bible, home missions and foreign missions.

I don't find that. I haven't found it yet. The only kind of home missions I know is when you get somebody between the front door and the back door and you start telling them about Jesus, that's home missions.

Everything else is foreign. Some of it's just farther than others, that's all. It's just a matter of distance.

It's not homes and home missions and foreign missions. I know we use that, but I don't see that. When Jesus said, go ye into all the world, as I mentioned last night, you have a world, and I have a world, and that's the world that he sent me to.

Thank God the man that he sent to me had a world. It wasn't very big. It was a construction job.

Then I hear somebody say, oh, but it takes a special kind of people. May I remind you tonight that my dear friend Elmer that pointed me to the Lamb of God. As far as this world was concerned, he was a little nobody.

Couldn't speak in public, could hardly pray in public. Hadn't taken Dale Carnegie's course on how to make friends and influence people. Oh, there's nothing wrong with that course, but he hadn't taken it.

Didn't have any of those things that draw off to men naturally. No natural attraction whatsoever. Didn't have all his hair, didn't even have all his teeth, but God used him.

God can use you. I remember I went to his funeral. I'll tell you about this.

After the Lord in his mercy saved me, I corresponded with my friend all the rest of my life while he lived. I remember one day I got that telegram from his little town in the coal region, not so far from here, that he

had gone on to be with his reward. I said to my wife, even though it was very busy, I said, we must go and pay our last respects.

So that day we left. We had about a hundred miles to drive or something like that. And that day when we left, it was very quiet.

My wife and I didn't talk much the way to that funeral. And I'm sure that she was thinking about some of the things that I was thinking about, namely this, all the blessings that had accrued to us because somebody told us about Jesus. Well, we were early at the funeral director's home.

In fact, we were the first ones there. And in that, I remember going up to the chapel, lifting my heart to God in prayer. There was no one there.

It wasn't the case of advertising piety, but just thank God that he sent somebody my way with the gospel. It was about 20 or 24 chairs at the most. They didn't expect many people to come to that funeral.

I suppose it was obvious to me. But as we sat there, soon those chairs were filled. And the assistant funeral director brought in more chairs and more chairs.

And finally that room was filled. It wasn't a great big auditorium, but it was a decent sized room. They took back a sliding door and there was another room and they filled that.

There were chairs in the hall. And before the service started, I reached over and whispered to my wife, I said, honey, I said, something's happened here that they have not anticipated. It's obvious to me.

And so after the service, Elmer didn't have any children, but he raised two boys. And I'd only ever met one of them. But the one that I met, the one that I knew, I went to him directly and I said to him, Jack, I said, are these Elmer's relatives, friends? He said, Ernie, I don't know most of these people.

And I started to mill through that crowd. And as I milled through that crowd, just getting skips of little conversations, I found others there like myself that he had told about Jesus. Today, I'm sure that I could take you to mission fields where there's men on the mission field.

I could take you to churches where there's men in the pulpit. I could take you to churches built and being built as a result, yes, of his witness, which goes on, of his witness. So don't tell me you don't have the personality.

There's something else wrong with you. Don't tell me you don't have the formal education. You don't know much about the Bible.

He wasn't a great theologian. He didn't know the difference between eternal security and social security. Hardly.

But he knew God. He knew what Jesus had done for him. So when I was on that mountain that day, it's only natural that I would be praying such a prayer.

Lord, what did he have? What did he have that caused me to want to know you? Because I wanted to emulate that aspect of Elmer. Last night, I got the two things that I put on my summary sheet that day after a day on the mountain. The first thing that I could say, and this was on the top of my list after I reminisced for almost a day, just bringing to mind the thoughts I had, the things I said, the things I did, the things he

said, the way he acted.

Believe it or not, on top of that list was what I told you last night, the power of a holy life. The second thing was a passion for my soul. I'm amazed at the Christians who don't care about sinners.

I'm amazed at the Christians who have no love for sinners, a little bit. Because I truly believe that evangelism at its best, witnessing at its best, at its purest, is nothing less and nothing more than an overflow of a man's devotion to Christ. That's the purest witness.

Well, I remember talking about the lack of Christian concern. I remember in our town, I told you about the lawyer I used to pray with. Well, several mornings after I'd leave him, I'd go to my office, and there was a fellow, he had a little old cart with two wheels on, and the spokes were wired together.

And what he used to do was get the rubbies back to the restaurant. He'd get about 75 cents or a dollar to haul that to the dumps for the restaurant. And I'd pass this fellow.

And you know, getting off your knees, praying for God to help you to care for sinners, and then passing this fellow every day, it started to get with me. And I'd say, yeah, I just now prayed, God help me to care, and here I go by this fellow every morning. So one morning, what he did with it, he bought wine.

And some of the winos were too lazy to even, he was something to admire about this fellow, at least he earned his wine. So the winos would wait up at the place, up at the liquor store, and he'd get back with his 75 cents or a dollar. Now they'd mix something with it, I'm not sure what.

And so he'd come back, and they'd wait. So this morning, it was in the fall. The reason I remember it was in the fall, because when I got him in the car, he didn't have a hanky, and I had to give him my hanky.

And I got him in the car, and I said, come here, Pop. I said, I want to talk to you. I said, you know, I've been past you every morning, and I said, I'm a debtor to you.

The boy thought I was going to give him some money, because he seemed to spark up. I said, I'm a debtor to you. I said, I've got his name and everything.

I told him how God in his mercy had mercy on me, and talked to him about Jesus. I let him out and went on to work. About two days later, in the evening paper, I saw on the paper, Jim Cameron in the hospital.

Somebody hit him with a car and broke his leg. So I thought, well, let's give me another shot at him, and I live near the hospital. So I go over to the hospital, and I find him in the hospital, and he needed to shave.

And so the next time I go back, I shave him, and I'm talking about Jesus to him while I'm shaving him. He listened, and I got to visit him. There was another man in the room, and as I entered the door, he said, come in.

I went down, and he said, you're a Christian, aren't you? He said, so am I. He said, I'm trying to get out of this room. He said, I've asked the nurses, I've asked them. He said, I don't even want to go to the hospital.

He said, I want to get away from that fellow. He said, he swears, and he cursed. Too bad.

I said, God put a mission field at the foot of your bed. You're a Christian, and you want to get away. Oh, there must be some passion.

I said that last night. The third thing I put on my summary sheet, and that brings us up to the day, was Elmer prayed for me. Elmer prayed for me.

The first time I ever met his wife. The first time. This is what she said.

She said, I didn't know who this Ernie Reisinger was, but she said, I hope he would soon move, or get converted. I said, Mrs. Albright, I said, that deserves a little explanation. I said, tell me about it.

And then she told me this. She says, on many occasions, my husband, before he would eat his warm meal, when he'd come home from work, we both rode in the same car. She said, he'd go off to his bedroom.

And she said, I'd go off to the bedroom and listen outside the door. She said, I'd hear him cry out to God for somebody called Ernie Reisinger. You see, somebody prayed for me.

I don't know the relationship between a sovereign God and the cry of his people, nor do you. And don't bother trying to get the theologians to tell you that relationship, because I don't understand it. But the fact that I don't understand that relationship does not mean that the Bible's not clear that there is some relationship between a sovereign God and the cry of his people.

I look in the Old Testament, and I see without exception, the men of the Old Testament prayed. Daniel prayed three times a day. David, the Psalms, is just all praise.

Nehemiah, that great worker of praise. You name the servant of God in the Old Testament, you'll see without exception they prayed. I find in the New Testament, I move on to the New Testament, I find that our Lord Jesus prayed no less than 17 references in the New Testament to Christ's praise.

The great apostle, Paul, there's almost in every epistle recorded some of his prayers, recorded what he prayed. And then we have those cases where he requests prayer. Brethren, pray for me, said the great apostle.

And if he needed it, how about little penis like you and me? And it wasn't just kind of verbiage, and we say, well, pray for me, I'll pray for you. Amen, brethren, pray for me. Not only do I see it in the Old Testament, and I see it in the New Testament, though I don't know that relationship, I know what it is.

I see it in the New Testament. Let me say something else. I look at the church history, and I read those men that you and I long to emulate.

Those men we esteem as giants of our faith. Those great men like Calvin and Knox, why the queen feared John Knox's prayer more than she did the army. Luther, without exception, the man who left any marks on the sands of time for Jesus that we have a record of, our men that pray.

I move on one more step. For a couple years, I've been going around from church to church, trying to encourage laymen to witness, and giving some little exhortations. Best I know how, I meet a lot of preachers, a lot of laymen.

And let me tell you, not only in the Old Testament and the New Testament as I look at church history, but the men who are making any marks on the ice for Jesus today. The churches where I've been in are places where somebody's praying. Why did he pray for me? Well, he had a Bible.

Old Elmer had a Bible. And thank God he hadn't taken any of these personal evangelism courses, where you run up to somebody, and in three minutes, you got them saved. Twelve, eight, fellas in my house.

Two, three, three weeks ago, he said, I want to tell you this. He said, we got an eight-minute approach and a 20-minute approach. I'm not joking.

I'm serious about that. He said, what do you want me to give you? I'm not sure about the minutes. It might have been 12 and 20 or 8 and 12.

But that was it. I read in another great period article where it says you ought to be able to do this in three minutes. Well, I thank God he hadn't taken any of those courses.

But he had a Bible. And he got his course of evangelism from the Bible. That's why he prayed.

And he had a Bible that told him something about me. In fact, he learned more about the Bible from me than I knew about myself. That's why he prayed.

He had a Bible, and what the Bible told him about me was not so good. Because the Bible told him that I was deaf and couldn't hear. And the Bible told him that I was blind and couldn't see.

And he learned from the Bible something worse than that, that I was dead in the trespasses of sin. That's why he prayed. He didn't have any confidence in me.

He didn't have any confidence in his salesmanship evangelism. But he had a confidence in a God who was able to take the wax from dead sinners' ears. He had confidence in a God who was able to take the scales from their blinded eyes.

And he had confidence in a God who was able to raise the dead. That's why he prayed for me. Don't you tell me you're Calvinist if you don't pray.

There's anybody in this world that believes what they're meant to believe about sinners? Anybody in this world that's meant to believe what they're meant to believe about God converting sinners? I'll tell you, that man ought to be the greatest man on prayer. Don't you tell me Calvinism kills prayer. You don't have it right.

You might have a theological, academic acquaintance with Calvinism, but you don't have acquaintance with Paul's Calvinism. It drove him to pray. Don't you tell me about your Calvinism if it doesn't drive you to pray.

Don't talk to me about it. It's academic. It's a theological, intellectual ascent to certain great biblical truths, but you don't have that kind of Calvinism that Paul did.

Is anything in this world that ought to drive you to intercede for when you pick up this Bible and learn about their condition? He prayed for me. He knew that if ever I'd be saved, God, God, God, not some hyper salesmanship was going to convict me, but God had to convict me of sin. He knew from the Bible that God had to convince me who Jesus is.

How do people learn who Jesus is? How did Saint Peter learn who Jesus was? By some tricks, some evangelistic tricks or gadgets. That's not how Peter learned how, who Jesus was. And let me tell you, every sinner outside of hell can only learn who Jesus really is.

Same way Peter learned. Want me to read it to you? Matthew 13, Matthew 16 rather, beginning of verse 13. We have a record how Peter learned who Jesus was.

This is how Peter learned it. Listen. When Jesus came to the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, whom do men say that I, the son of man, am? Good question.

Who do they say that I am? What do they say? They, disciples answered, and this is what they said, verse 14. Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, for one of the prophets. He said unto them, but whom say ye that I am? That's bringing it a little closer home.

Not what other people say, what you say. And then we have that classic answer of Peter. People usually stop here.

We have that great answer. Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. How did you find out, Peter? Are you a little more intellectual than the other people who said I'm Jeremiah, Isaiah, for one of the prophets? Are you more intellectual? Are you a little sharper? Are you a little keener? Are you a little better morally that they could all miss me and say I'm Jeremiah, one of the prophets, or something else? How are you so keen that you can come up with an answer like that? Next verse tells you.

Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee. You can't get that revealed by flesh and blood. Flesh and blood can't reveal, that's a fact.

You didn't learn it like that, Peter. But my father, that's how Peter found out. Oh, you say that's just an isolated text.

No, it's not an isolated text, that's exactly how Saint Paul found it out. And I'm not going to take time to turn to it this morning, but if you want to find out how Saint Paul found out who Jesus was, read Galatians 1, 14, 15, 16, right in along there, and you'll find something like this. When it pleased God to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him.

You can know all about Christ, you can know all about theology, and still be a stranger to Christ in your heart. I say he that Elmer prayed so that he knew that I had to be convinced who Jesus was, and only God could do that. That's why he prayed for me.

And so he knew that only God can convict me, only God can bring conviction on people. He knew that only God could convince me who Jesus was, and he knew that only God could convert me. That's why he prayed.

That's why I prayed. You know, you could learn a lot from John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress on Evangelism. I've learned an awful lot from Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress on Evangelism.

I just love to see the way that Bunyan's Evangelist dealt with a seeking sinner. You remember, here's a seeking sinner, burdened with that burden of conviction. That's the picture on his back.

And he meets Bunyan's Evangelist, and he said to Bunyan's Evangelist, I see by the book in my hand that I'm going to die. He said, I see that after this is a judgment, and I'm not willing to do the first, to prepare to do the second. Bunyan's Evangelist's pointing to what he called the wicked gate.

He said, see yonder wicked gate? That's the way to get in. The pilgrim said, no, I don't see it. He couldn't see.

He said, you see yonder shining light? And all Bunyan is saying, God has put a little light in his path, and if he puts a little light on your path, follow the light you have. He said, it'll lead you to that gate. But you see an all beautiful picture of conviction.

Now I'm not, Bunyan didn't say everybody went through the slough of the spawn. One of the wonderful things about Pilgrim's Progress, when you get to the second generation, Christians, they were catechized. They were catechized.

They all had to be converted. And he's a beautiful picture of his four sons. So what's the third thing I put on my list? What did Elmer have on the human side? He prayed for me, and I just shared with you why he prayed.

One more thing I put on my list that day on that big old legal pad, and that is patience. Patience. He had patience with me.

Now I wish I could tell you how much patience I have this morning, but I'd be like the seller who wrote the book on humility and how I change it. I pray for it, and I need it. But when I was first converted, I had less patience, spiritually, with people than I do now.

You know, I had so little patience that I thought, boy, when I get home, I'm going to get my mother, my brothers, my sister, I'm going to get them all in a living room. I was a few miles away from home, a couple hundred miles away from home, and I thought, I'm going home, and I'm going to tell them what happened, and they're all going to become Christians. Some of you know what I mean, don't you? I didn't even get them all in the living room, let alone all tell them.

See, I didn't want to waste them. Well, I got a couple of them in there, and it didn't take me very long to tell them, because I didn't, you know, I told them everything I knew, and it didn't take me very long. But I knew that something happened down here that changed me outside, too.

Changed my habits, and changed a lot of things. I was sure of that. And I was sure who did it, God did it.

And I was telling them about being saved, you know. They didn't really say it, but they started to look at one another, and they didn't do this, but I'm sure that they thought, boy, he has a few bricks less than a full load. You know what hurt me so much, Lloyd? You know, I lied to my mother a good bit when I was a teenager.

You know, when I'd come in about two or three in the morning, I always lied about where I was, and what happened, you know, all kind of things happened. I missed the bus, and a thousand things. I suppose she didn't believe me, but I used to think she did.

And when I'd come in smelling like a tobacco factory, and she'd say, are you smoking? No. And I had my cigarette kit in the rain spot. And all those lies, and it seemed like she believed me.

Now I'm telling her the truth. Telling her the truth about Jesus. And you know, it seemed like even she didn't believe me.

Right. Fact is, after a couple of days, this is lack of patience. I'm not blaming mother, that's me.

I'm talking about patience now. She got with my wife. See, I thought they were all going to be converted in about three minutes.

She got with my wife, and she said, I'm really sorry about Ernest. I said, if I lost it, just leave me to sleep on it. I said, I'm sleeping well at night.

I'm not coming home, or going to the hospital, because of drunken brawls, and all that stuff. I said, I'm feeling great. I said, and if I've lost it, please leave me alone.

Don't send me to any head thinkers, or anything like that. Just leave me alone. No patience.

My one brother said to me, in that same period, within a few days there, my one brother said to me, I heard there was a meeting going on, where somebody was preaching. I couldn't, I couldn't try to get, I didn't know what kind of preacher it was, but I know he had to get under the sound of some preacher. Tried to get into that preaching.

At the end of the day, I made him late for a date. We did everything together. Here to forth, shot fat together, chased girls together, drank together, everything we did together.

Now he said to me this day, Ernie, he said, I've had enough religion today to last me the rest of my life. Don't ever talk to me about this. Well, I had to honor his request, but he didn't say, don't talk to your father about me.

And so, all over the South Pacific, I prayed for my mother, my family, but I didn't have patience yet. I remember when I got back, he was out there too, longer than I was. I remember when we got back from the South Pacific, he was softened up a bit, and he was willing to talk.

I'm not going to tell you all the story, but he started to see God. I can tell you this, tonight he's an elder, in the Bible believing presidency. My other brother, he wasn't bad, he was kind of a Joe College type.

He was a zipper. He was a Joe College type. And boy, when we got converted, my other brother and I got converted, he said, I'm really glad for you fellas.

He said, you really needed something. And I'm glad you got straightened out. And we were in business together, this one.

He went to trade school after he went to high school. He went three years to Stephen's trade, and he had great ideas, and we had great ideas about the construction business. He was going to take the technical side, and I was going to go out in the field, learn the field side, and we're going to go in business, and all this.

We had this all in mind for years. So we went in business. He married a little Catholic girl.

I want to encourage some of you men that are in bad family situations, but I don't want you to miss my point. You got to be patient. I'm going to turn you to a passage and talk to you about it in a little while.

That's my point. Elmer was patient with me. Patient.

He invited me to Sunday school every week for 52 weeks. And I told him 52 lies. But my brother married a little Catholic girl, Rosemary.

And one day, we had a little office there, just in the top of a barn. There was only two chairs in there. And every morning, I'd get there before my brother.

I kneeled. That wasn't very hard, but I'd get there. I'd get down on my knees where he was going to sit.

I'd get down on my knees, literally. Every morning, I'd say, Oh Lord, save John. Make him a Christian.

And the more I prayed, seemingly the farther away he got. He started taking these lessons to go in a Roman Catholic church at one period in his life. The farther away he got.

Finally, one morning, he said to me, and I remember it like it was yesterday. He said, Ernie, I don't think I'm ready to settle down like you are yet. He said, all you want to do is work and go to church.

He said, I was out there from school. I went straight to the South Pacific, 27 months on one golf. And he said, I'm not ready to do that.

He said, I've got to be honest with you. He said, I think we ought to separate the partnership. Well, that was very easy too.

There wasn't much to separate. We didn't fight. We weren't mad.

He wasn't mad at me. I wasn't mad at him. But I remember that day we sat down, he took this car and I took the truck.

And he said he was going to St. Louis. So he left Pennsylvania. And I thought to myself, a couple of days later, he took off.

I thought to myself, thousand miles away. How's God going to save him now without me? I acted like God was dead. I'm going to tell you something.

I didn't quit praying. My brother got to St. Louis. He got a job with a construction company.

They were building a Catholic high school. And my brother was up on a roof with another carpenter. He got put with sheeting on a circular roof.

And on top of that roof, a man talked to him about his relationship to his maker. And my brother said, there's only two nuts in the world, you and my brother. You know something? When I read that verse in Isaiah 59, it says, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save.

Neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear. I'm just bleeding. Within one year, my brother was converted to God.

He came back and went to work. By then, I'm learning a little bit. I said, don't beat Mary over the head with religion now.

I said, go slow. Get her a Catholic Bible and tell her to take it to the priest and get it blessed. Show her what the infirmature and the Nilo status and explain all that.

And I said, then read the Bible together. She was converted. And one day John came to me and he said, Ernie, he said, I think God's called me to preach.

And he's been preaching now for about, he went back to school, three more years of seminary. And he's been preaching for about, I guess, 18 years. You know, people's always asking me when I, sometimes when I talk about witnessing and evangelism, they say to me, lots of times this happens, men will come to me and say, this is serious.

You know, well, that's fine. Oh, nice message, brother. Nice message.

Yeah. But does this really work? Does this really work? I mean, are you talking about things that happened in 1970, you know, day to day activities with businessmen? I usually don't, don't always talk about experiences, but in order to encourage you, I'm going to just tell you a couple in business. Patience.

Patience. When Mr. Eckerman and Mr. Hurley, on our way up here, I'd called before, about an hour from here, there's a seller by the name of Mike Pecora, he's in the real estate business. He went to law school in our town, came to law school in our city.

He said, well, how does it work with people like this? Well, let me share this with you. But I say again, it's patience. That's one of the ingredients.

When Mike Pecora, we stopped there, they gave us dinner. Wonderful Christian couple. They're starting a real Reformed church there.

They've got a young preacher, young doctor, and there's, I guess, about a half a dozen families, and they've got plans ready for, actual building plans. They've been meeting in the bank for, how long, Jim? Two years? A year and a half? A year and a half. Bank doesn't charge them anything.

They've got air conditioning and wall-to-wall costing, and the bank doesn't charge them anything. What a deal. I said, why build a church and stay here? Let me tell you about Mike, because I want to tell you, I'm telling you so you know that when I'm talking about this, this is not something I read in a book, some theory that doesn't work.

I'm talking about the power of the gospel, but I'm also saying you got that patience. Mike came in my office one day, and I had then some little Holstein cattle, you know, about that high, and I had a bull and a whole herd of cattle on my desk. He came there on business.

While he was in law school, he was doing some real estate work for one of the real estate brokers, and he came there to interest me in some development program. The broker had sent him there, and he saw these cows, and his people were dairymen over in Hazleton. They had dairy farms, good dairy cattle, good Holstein cattle.

There isn't any other kind. So he started to talk about these cows, and how he wasn't going back to farm, and this and that thing, and I started to talk to him. Then I invited him to a hockey game.

He said, how? Well, I could have given him a three-minute deal. It would have been very convenient if I could have just given him that three-minute pitch, or that 12-minute pitch, or that 20-minute pitch. Just think how simple it would have been, and he would have been converted and be all over, except he'd probably be living like hell right now.

I invited him to a hockey game. He was a law student, so that night I didn't say much to him. I talked to him about Simon Greenlee.

He's a great lawyer who wrote a book on the testimony of the evangelist. I asked him if he ever read it. He said no.

He wanted to read it, so he read it. I took him out to dinner in about a week, and I gave him my testimony over a steak. Talked to him about Christ.

No direct appeal to his emotions or his will. I was giving his mind some facts, what Christ did. I tell him, Jim, come on over.

People will hardly believe it, but after a while we started to read the gospel together, and it wasn't long. It's the only case in all my history where I've had anybody come to the door and say, what's the next step? He was at my door and said, what's the next step? Well, he became a Christian, started on this mercy of Satan. I don't know when.

I wasn't there. I didn't get him to put his name in John 3 16 or anything like that. I wasn't there, but he became a Christian.

His wife got awful angry because she was a devout Catholic, so devout that they used to hold hands to say the rosary every night. She got awful mad, not only with him, but me, for God's sake. Do you know how long that was? That was over a period of about a year, about a year, and that's not even very long.

The leading broker in our town, at least he used to be the leading broker. I don't know who he is now. The leading broker in our town is a Christian.

If you went in his office today, I'm sure you'd find his track record. I'm sure if you look in his pocket, you'd find gospel tracks right today. Do you know how long I talked to him about Jesus? 10 years.

10 years. May I come back to my family? I'm talking without patience. Know what happened to my mother? She saw her voice change.

She was a good mother, not a Christian, but she saw her voice change. She somehow attributed it to the church, and unfortunately, she thought she was going to get some religion too, and she joined a great big ecclesiastical morgue, and she was harder to talk to then after she did that than before, because every time she opened her mouth about religion, she said the wrong thing. At least she used to not say the wrong thing.

It was very difficult. 15 years. 15 years.

I was in with my wife, and I got this letter. She said, son, I'm writing to be good. I can tell you now I know what you boys mean.

She said, I didn't think I had what you had. She said, last year, I read the Bible through. I read the Bible through.

She said, I believe I'm a Christian. She was quoting Psalms. She cooked me some dandelion this week, and she was telling me I just finished reading Pilgrim's Progress.

She said, it's wonderful. God of His mercy saved me. What am I saying? I'm saying, I'm talking about the messenger.

The messenger. The man. The person.

Patience. That's what I'm talking about. There isn't any two ways.

Everybody's different. Of all the people I've ever seen God save in a real way, I don't think there's two cases alike. It's bad.

One of the dangers of testimony. One of the dangers of this stereotype of evangelism is people are different. They have different understanding already.

They're at different stages. They're at different intellectual levels. I'll tell you about one more.

This is what Bob Dendroff knows about this. He's a close friend of mine. You know, my lawyer and I, we built some apartments together one year back in 1950.

I think it was 1952. So he said to me, asked me in the summer, would I give his boys a job? One of them was in law school and one of them was in college. Well, the best way to lose friends is either go on somebody's note or give them a job or lend them some money.

That's a good way to lose friends. But I said yes. So this one fellow had heard about me, and he kind of heard that I was all right in business, but I sure was, I sure had a bug on religion.

So he was the aggressive type, and he couldn't wait to try me the first day. I think it was the first day on the job, everybody's gone, I'm over this little work shanty, he starts to engage me about what I believe. And when he left, we kind of ended up the conversation like something like this.

He kind of pitied me because I hadn't really studied Darwin, and if I had, he's sure that it would knock all the religion out of me that I had. He was telling me nice, but he just kind of pitied me. And so I asked him if he ever read a book on apologetics, and he hadn't read that.

So I asked him if he would. Sure, because he's a great reader. So I got him three books the next day, and I gave him these three books on apologetics.

Mark Hopkins, I think, I forget what I gave him, but this was in the summer. And so I'm anxious that he'd tell me about it, talk to me about it, more conversation. Well, we'd meet sometimes, not a word about the book.

At the law school's Christmas vacation, doorbell rings, here's my friend, my law student friend with an armful of books, you know. I said, oh boy, you know, he's going to tell me about, we're going to talk again. I said, what do you think? Well, he said, I really didn't have time to read them.

He said, Katie's tired of moving dust in these things and moving them around. He said, she wanted me to bring them back. I said, you know, a little pain.

I said, the next time I want a job again. Fine. I said, I said, you know, I'd like to put you in office this summer.

I said, and all you have to do is answer the phone, but I've got a couple of books. I'm busy doing some speaking, and I'd like you to do a little research in a few books. And I didn't have to pay him much, I think \$50 a week there, and that wasn't bad for a law student, sitting there reading his books.

I'd come in, he was really reading too. And first thing you know, he's checking in the Bible to see if what the fellow said in the book was really in the Bible. I said to myself, oh, but that's a long time.

God saved him. You'll find him in church. I saw him in prayer meeting last Wednesday.

I saw him in prayer meeting. That wasn't yesterday. No two of us alike.

A friend of mine wanted to go to Canada to buy cows, and I'd been up there buying cows a few times. So I said, sure, John, so long. He said, he wanted to buy a load of cows too.

So we got in the car, you know, we're going to Canada, and I wanted to start talking to him about the gospel right away. But you know, I was afraid if I talked to him right away, I'd kill myself and I'm learning a little patience. I don't have enough yet, but I'm learning a little.

So I didn't say anything all day long, and boy, I just wanted to talk to him the worst. That's the dearest subject to my soul. But I restrained myself until we went to bed.

I said, John, I said, I don't want to embarrass you. But I said, I usually read the Bible and pray before I go to bed. Now I said, I can do it in the bathroom and not embarrass you.

Or I said, I'll let you read and I'll pray, or we'll do it together. I said, anything you want, but I don't want to embarrass you. I said, I can go in the bathroom.

He said, no, that's all right. He said, I'll even read. I don't know what to read.

He'd been a Presbyterian Elder, not in the church for years, but he had been a Presbyterian Elder. So he said, I don't know what to read. So I picked appropriate passages, you know, like John 3, some passages to read, and that's all.

And I prayed, went to bed, no more conversation about religion or the gospel. And then the next morning I thought, now what am I going to do now? So I said, John, I said, I usually read the Bible and pray before I start out. I don't know how this is going to go this time.

So I said, would you like to do like we did last night? He said, that's fine. When we prayed, I prayed for his wife and his kids. So we left.

No more. We did that every night. That's all.

No more talk. Not that I didn't want to talk, but he went back and told his wife what kind of a cell he was in. You know what happened? It wasn't long until we were having a Bible study in his home.

You know what we started to study? We started to study the larger catechism on the Ten Commandments. He and his wife are Christians today. But let me tell you, it was a long time.

It was that Bible study. I took tapes to him, got him out to hear speeches, into the church, his teamwork. That's why it's important that your preacher preaches the gospel.

That's why it's important you abandon these ecclesiastical mores. Because when you're witnessing to a man the same way with all these people that I mentioned, when you're witnessing to him, you take him to church. I remember that lawyer was telling me I was in the wrong church then.

I was in an apostate ecclesiastical morgue myself. And I used to take them other places so they'd hear the gospel. Finally, one of them said to me, Ernie, why don't you ever take us to your church? Dang it.

What am I saying? Will you turn in your Bible, please? I want to explain by showing you what I think is very, very... 2 Timothy chapter 2. Two years ago, I was in a seminary speaking to students on one of their mission days or something like that. A young fellow came running up to me after me. He said, Mr. Reichinger, you've been around in the church a long time.

He said, could you give a young fellow a couple verses to stick out to you and be helping in the ministry? And I started to walk away. I said, well, it's a pretty big Bible, son. I don't know.

And I started to walk away. And I thought, no. I said, wait a minute.

I will give you a couple verses. I'll give you a couple verses that have been a great help to me. And these are the verses I gave him, and I'm going to tell you why in a minute.

Can you turn to 2 Timothy chapter 2? I want to read three verses. Let me just recap what I've said about a true witness. Let me recap what I put on my summons this afternoon.

I'm talking about a true witness. The Bible says a true witness delivers souls. The Bible says the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise.

Proverbs 11.30. And the other reference is Proverbs 14.25. I said, I believe these are very important elements of a true witness. The power of the Holy Light. God-given, Christ-given passion for souls.

Prayer to the only God who can save us, and patience as we go about His work. Now look at these verses with me, will you? And we're finished this morning. I do have something to say about them.

I'm the servant of the Lord. We're talking about the witnesser. We're talking about not the ministry.

We're talking about the minister, whether you be a lay minister. I'm talking about ministering to sinners. You call yourself a servant of the Lord.

The servant of the Lord must not strive with your wife, with your children, or anyone else. Let me read it and give you a little outline and a little rough exposition of it, please. Be gentle unto all men.

Have to teach patience in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves. If God, for adventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who was taken captive by him and his will. Let me tell you why I think these verses are important.

Because in these verses, you have the state of the unconverted. And if you would be a witness for Christ, you must know the state of the unconverted. What is it? Why they're, it's in verse 26, they're in Satan's prison house.

They're in death row. They're hopeless and helpless. You learn in verse 25 that they're ignorant of the truth.

That's the state of the unconverted. They're in Satan's prison house. And let me tell you, I'm, the Arminian, he'll say that too.

He says, yes, they're in Satan's prison house, but you got the key in your pocket. You just, you do this and you do that and you do the other thing and God will save you. Well, who minds being in prison if you got the key in your pocket? I want to tell you today that sinners are in prison and they don't have the key in their pocket.

If anybody's going to get them out, it'll have to be God. That's the difference. Arminian says, yes, they're in prison, but they got the key in their pocket.

You do this and you do that and you do the other thing and God will save you. You're in prison and you're in death row and you don't have the key in your pocket. If anybody's going to get you out, it'll have to be God.

You better call on Him. You better speak Him. You better come after Him.

You better cry out to Him to do something for you that you can't do for yourself. That's the difference between man-centered and God-centered evangelism. Any evangelism that says, sinner, you do this and you do that and you do the other thing with Jesus.

Well, you know what you wind up with? You wind up with a poor little effeminate, innocent, pathetic Jesus that couldn't save a mosquito or dam a flea. No power. And they got this sinner doing something with Jesus.

Won't you do this with Jesus? Won't you accept Him? Won't you do this? And you finally wind up with a great big sovereign sinner and a little wee pathetic Christ. God-centered evangelism is saying this. Sinner, there's a Christ who has all power.

He's been exalted as Lord. And if anybody saves you, it'll have to be Him. Apply to Him.

Speak Him. Go to Him. Do something.

Cry out to Him. That's just a different way of saying it. No.

That's a whole different theology of evangelism. One's man-centered and the other's God-centered. You want to see the picture? Look at it in Luke 5.12. That's what I'm talking about.

I think it's important to know the state of the unconverted. Luke 5.12. Here you see it. This is the picture.

It came to pass when he was in a certain city, that is Jesus, beholding a man full of leprosy. If anybody else got these recorders, it's going to go off when you shut them off. That's all.

Luke 5.12. And it came to pass when he was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leprosy, who hearing Jesus, who seeing Jesus, what did he do? He fell on his face and he besought Him saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. That's the picture. Doesn't have to be in those words, but that's the theology.

Cry out to God to do something for you that you can't do for yourself. Not hockstern off this mamby-pamby, pathetic, effeminate, weak Jesus. That's why I say when you see this verse, you see the state of the unconverted.

He's in Satan's prison house. He's hopeless, he's helpless, and he's ignorant of the truth. Verse 25.

There's something else you see in these three verses that's important. The effort to the servant of Christ. That's you, that's me.

What's our effort? What do we learn from this? Well, we're meant to teach and instruct as to that which pertains to the everlasting peace. Teach and instruct. The Great Commission does not go out and decision everybody you meet.

The Great Commission says, go in and teach all men. Teach them. That may take a minute.

It's a little hard to do in three minutes. Probably do it in eight. Go in and teach.

The appeal to men's will and the appeal to a man's emotion must be through his mind. How can he savingly and grace and savingly receive what he hasn't considered? The effort to the servants of God in that verse. Teach and instruct.

Then you see this rescue men as possible from the power of Satan. The third thing I see that the effort to the servant of God is this. Set before them the claims and the promises of God as their only hope.

That puts the sinner to a crime to God. Set before him the promises. Set before him the truth of God as their only hope.

That's the effort. What's the instructions to the servants of God? What's the instructions to the servant of the Lord in this verse? Look at it carefully. One, don't strive, or quarrel is another translation.

Don't strive with people about religion, especially your children. Those of you who have unsaved relatives, don't strive with them. Don't quarrel with them over that.

Second instruction to the servant of the Lord is in the verse. One, don't strive. Be gentle.

Apt to teach. You see, there you have it again. Consistent with the Lord's commandments.

Teach truth. How? In meekness. That's our instructions.

In meekness, instructing those, or correcting, correcting the error of their mind and so on. That's there. There's one more thing I see.

Not only the state of the unconverted, the efforts of the servants of Christ, instructions for the servants of the Lord, but there's something else. Not only must we teach the sinner that his only hope is in the Lord, but the servant of God must know that too. The servants must depend on God.

Verse 25. If God, if God, if God, if God. You know, if I was going to start a new cult, you know what cult I'd start? I would start a but God cult.

When everybody started to tell me about all the bad situations in the hippies, a thousand other things, I'd say, but God could do something about it. And I'd go to somebody else and they'd start giving me all the blues and I'd say, but God might do something about it. And every time they opened their mouth, I'd just say, but God, but God, but God.

Would you like to join my cult? But God, but God did in Ephesians 2, but you see it here too. If God. That's the servants must depend on God.

Must be straight on the cause and the means. Now, if I was to be a good preacher, I'd have three points and a poem, but I didn't have many. I had four points and no poem.

We're talking about evangelism. We're talking about lay evangelism, but particularly talking about the evangelist. You're a layman and you're a Christian.

You ought to be doing the work of an evangelist. We're talking about his person. What is a true witness? Somebody that knows something about the power of a holy life.

I trust God would search your heart on these things. Somebody that knows a little bit of the compassion of Christ for the sinners that know not our God. Somebody that knows how to lay hold of the horns of the altar in intercession.

Somebody that has at least a mate of the patient. Oh, I wonder sometimes how our dear ministers really make it. I'll say something to you laymen.

Be patient with ministry. If you'd be in a minister's study like I've been sometimes, within the course of two hours, somebody's dying, somebody else's daughter's pregnant, somebody else is getting married, and that kind of a thing just is hard to fit into our being all in a short time. Ah, the patience that ministers have with people.

I pray that we'll have some of them. I pray that they'll have it too. Especially in this business of evangelism.

Patience. You know that's why I always like to have a couple, three or four people that I'm witnessing to. Because when you're real discouraged with one, the other one may be bringing you up.

Instead just have one fish because I tell you, you'll just be up and down like him. You get about three or four fish, you know, when you're down with one, you're up with the other. O Holy Ghost, sanctifier of the faithful, thou alone can teach our hearts.

We can speak to men's minds, but O Holy Ghost, thou alone can speak to men's hearts. We ask thee to do it for the sake of Jesus Christ and his church. Amen.

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