

Evangelism and the Layman #2

by Ernest C. Reisinger

Ernest C. Reisinger's sermon encourages laymen to utilize literature and personal relationships in their evangelistic efforts while emphasizing the importance of prayer and genuine concern for the lost.

Duration: 1:10:32

Scripture: Proverbs 11:30, Proverbs 14:25, Romans 9:16, 1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 3:12, 2 Timothy 2:2, 2 Timothy 2:24

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of directing people to the Bible rather than diverting them from it. He had a plan to talk about evangelism, focusing on the man of evangelism, the message of evangelism, and the methods and motives of evangelism. However, he only got halfway through his plan and feels pressured to finish the message. The speaker emphasizes the need to understand that people are different and have different levels of understanding, and that evangelism should involve teaching and instructing rather than simply making decisions. The sermon also highlights the importance of appealing to a person's mind and emotions in order for them to truly embrace and receive the message.

Transcript

I don't know, I told one of these fellas, if I blow up up here this morning, please, please come and get me, will you? If we start having some electrical problems, please come and get me. 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 fish all the time, I have to keep remembering which book which fella had.

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 fella, he's moral, he's a good family man, he's honest, nice fella, 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 track 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, they say, 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 that ever put his feet in American soil, George Whitefield. 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. I say, have you ever talked to him about it? Well, it's a good place to use 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? Easy to witness like that.

So I commend that to you. 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. Eshelman is back at the book table. Jim is not a book salesman by trade.

He's an electrical engineer, a 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 visit his bookstore. This is an excellent little book, and I'll tell you what, home Bible studies to call in one or two families, even one or two families, people that you meet with and spend a little time with.

You could direct that and say to Mary and Joe, what do you say we have four weeks, five weeks, six weeks? And take some books in a general sense of the word, and that might give you some problems and give you some good things to talk about. Another book that I want to especially say a word about back there, probably many of you have this book. Now I come from an Armenian background, so do you probably, because we're born Armenian, in case you didn't know it.

He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. That's also true. But I used to have a little problem, and some people, you see, there's two kinds of evangelism that I see.

There's no outreach to the world. They try to evangelize their children moving in another direction. And, you know, this is the thing that brings that, and solves the, at least, the predetermined plan.

The Bible's price, seemingly, dilemmas to the youth. And I highly commend it to you, particularly on that. So much for the books.

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

Now, I think we better get down to the book of books instead of talking about. Incidentally, my motive in giving out these books is to get people to this book. And I hope that would be useful 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 man of evangelism, the man himself. That was supposed to be last night.

Then this morning, I was going to talk about the message of evangelism. Well, my little plan is kind of shot because I only got halfway finished last night, and Bob Dendock's 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 hasn'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 Dendock, 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... Very little is said... O 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, O 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, and Thy strength. And as we're gathered this week, Lord, to consider that which You've made so plain in Your words, to go to all the world and speak to hearts about this great, clear command of Your words.

Hear us now and help us for Jesus' sake. Would you turn 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. But last night I read that passage that ought to be enough. 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 to 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 we're 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 us 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, 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, the same one. You see it right here.

He has 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 us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ as though 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 do 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 obeys Christ. Somebody obeys 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. 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.

Jesus said, go ye into all the world. As I mentioned last night, he wasn't very big. 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 as far as this world was concerned, he was a little nobody. Speaking in public, could hardly pray. 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 up to men naturally. No natural attraction.

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 ought to 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, the coal region, not so far from here, that he had gone on to be with his reward. And 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 100 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 on 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 that day at the funeral director's home. In fact, we were the first ones there. And in that, I remember going up to the casket and 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 a gunstone.

There was about 20 or 24 chairs at the moment. 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, more chairs. And finally that room was filled.

It wasn't a great big auditorium, but it was a decent size room. They took back a sliding door and there was another room and they filled that. There were chairs in the hall.

Before the service started, I reached over and whispered to my wife. I said, Honey, I said, something's happened here that they had not anticipated. It's obvious to me.

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 can take you to mission fields where there's men on the mission field.

I can take you to churches where there's men in the pulpit. I can take you to churches built and being built as a result, yes, 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. 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 him.

Last night, I got the two things that I put on my summary sheet that day after a day on the mountain. 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 the Holy Light.

The second thing was the fact that 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 the evangelism had 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 several mornings after I'd leave him, I'd go to my office and there was a dog.

He had a little old cart with two wheels on and the spokes were wearing together and what he used to do was get the rubbish back to the restaurant. He'd get about 75 cents or a dollar to haul that to the duck for the restaurant. And I'd pass this fella.

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

Some of the winos were too lazy to even, he was something to admire about this fella. At least he earned his wine. So the winos would wait up at the place.

So this morning, it was in the fall. The reason I remember it was in the fall was because when I got him in the car, he didn't have a 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. I got his name and everything.

I told him how God talked to him about Jesus. 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, this will give me another shot at him and I live near the hospital. So I go over to 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 listens and he says, you're a Christian, aren't you? You're a Christian and you want to get away. Oh, there must be some passion. The third thing I put on my summary sheet and that brings us up to today was Elmer Prate.

Elmer Prate. 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 hoped he would soon move or get converted. 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 is not true. 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 praying Daniel prayed three times a day. David's, the Psalms are just all prayers. Nehemiah, that great worker of praise.

You name a servant of God in the Old Testament and you'll see without exception they pray. 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 the great apostles. Paul, there's almost in every epistle recorded some of his 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 penance like you and me. And it wasn't this kind of verbiage and we'd say well pray for me, I'll pray for you.

He meant it. 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 it exists.

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 who had a queen spirit John Knox's prayer more than she did the armies. Luther, without exception, the men who have left any marks on the sands of time for Jesus that we have a record of are 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 some giving some little exhortations. The best I know how is 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, we got an eight-minute approach and a twenty-minute approach. I'm serious about that. But he had a Bible.

And he got his course of evangelism from the Bible. That's why he prayed. Told him something about me.

In fact, if he learned more about the Bible from me, that's why he prayed. He had a Bible and what the Bible told him, 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. 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 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 raise the dead. That's why he prayed. Don't you tell me you're Calvinist if you don't pray? There's anybody in this world who believes what they're meant to believe about sinners? Anybody in this world who's meant to believe what they're meant to believe about 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 an 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, ascent to certain great biblical truths, but you don't have that kind of... Is there anything in this world that ought to drive you to intercede 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 who Jesus was.

And let me tell you, every sinner outside of hell can only learn who Jesus really is, the same way Peter learned. Want me to read it to you? Matthew 13, Matthew 16 rather, beginning in verse 13. We have a record of 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 am the son of Moses? Good question.

Who do they say that I am? The 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. And 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 do 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 sharper? Are you a little keener? Are you a little better morally? How are you so keen that you can come up with an answer like this? The 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 fact.

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

No, not an isolated text. That's exactly how St. Paul found it out. Read Galatians 1, 14, 15, 16, right along there, and you'll find something like this.

When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach it. You can know all about Christ and you can know all about theology, and still be a stranger to Christ in your heart. I say to you this because I know you know it.

know it. know I just love to see the way that Bunyan's Evangelist dealt with the 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 pointed to what he called the wicked gate. He said, see under the wicked gate? The pilgrim said, no, I don't see it.

He couldn't see. He said, you see under the shining light? And oh, 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 will lead you to that gate.

But you see an all-beautiful picture of conviction. Now, I'm not sure Bunyan didn't say everybody went through the sloth's 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. 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 legal pad, and that is patience. Patience.

Patience. He had patience with me. Now I wish I could tell you how much patience I had this morning, but I'd be like the fellow who wrote the book on humility and how I painted.

I prayed for it, and I needed 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 brother, my sister, I'm going to get them all in the living room.

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. You know what I mean, don't you? 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. And I sure who did it, God did it, and I was telling them about being saved.

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, when I come in about where I was, and what happened, you know, but I used to think she did. She said, you smoke that now? It seemed like she believed me.

Now I'm telling her the truth, and you know, it seemed like even she didn't believe me. She yelled at my wife, see, I thought they were all going to be converted to Christianity, and I said, I said, I I said, said, I said, I said, I said, I My other brother, he wasn't bad, he was kind of a Joe College type, you know, he was a zipper, and he was a Joe College type. And, boy, when we got converted, well, it wasn't three years since Stephen's trade, and he had great ideas, and we had great ideas about the construction business for years.

So we went in business. He married a little Catholic girl. I don't want to encourage some of you men that are in bad family situations, but I don't want you to miss my point.

Elder 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 it. And every morning, I'd get there before my brother, I kneeled, that wasn't very hard, but I'd get there, every morning I'd get, and I'd say, Oh, Lord, save God, make him a Christian.

And the more I prayed, seemingly, the farther away he got. He started to take these lessons to go into 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, he said, 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 dock.

And he said, I'm not ready to do that. He said, that was very easy too, because 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. He took this car, and I took the truck, and he said, he's going to St. Louis. So he left Pennsylvania, and I thought, a couple days later, he took off, and I thought to myself, a thousand miles away, how's God going to save him now without me? I didn't quit praying.

My brother got to St. Louis, he got a job, they were building a Catholic high school. And my brother was up on a roof with another carpenter, 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, that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy, that he cannot hear. I'm just bleeding. Within one year, my brother was converted.

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

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

Read the Bible together. She was converted, and one day John came to me and he said, Ernie, 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've said to me, lots of times it's happened.

Men will come to me and say, this is serious, you know. Well, that's fine, it's nice. Oh, nice message, brother, nice message.

Yeah, sure, yeah, yeah. But does this really work? Does this really work? I mean, are you talking about faith? Why, sure. 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 of bits.

Witnessing, patience, patience. When Mr. Eshelman 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 LaCour, he's in the real estate business.

He went to law school in our town. He 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 LaCour, 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.

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 carpeting, and the bank doesn't charge them anything. What a deal. I said, why throw a church this thing here? Let me tell you about Mike.

Because I want to tell you, I'm telling you some theory that doesn't work. I'm talking about the power of the gospel. But I'm also saying you've got that patience.

Mike came in my office one day, and I had some little Holstein cattle, about that high, and I had a bull and a whole herd of cattle. He came there on business. While he was in law school, he was doing some real estate work.

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. So he started to talk about these things, and how he wasn't going back to the farm. And I started to talk to him.

Then I invited him to a hockey game. You say, how? Well, I could have given him the three-minute deal. It would have been very convenient if I could have just given him that three-minute pitch, or that twelve-minute pitch.

I invited him to a hockey game. I talked to him about Simon Greenley, the great lawyer who wrote a book on the testimony of Andrew Sebastian, if you ever read it. 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. I 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 was telling him, Jim, come on over. People will hardly believe this, but after a while, we started to read the gospel together.

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. God in his mercy saved him.

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. But God saved her.

Do you know how long that was? That was over a period of about a year. And that's not even very long. He's 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.

He went in his office today. I'm sure you'd find a 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? Ten years. Ten years. May I come back to my family? I'm talking about faith.

Do you know what happened to my mother? She saw her voice change. She's 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 them 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. Fifteen years. Fifteen years.

I was in Florida with my wife and I got this letter. She said, son, I'm writing it because 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 weekend. She was telling me yesterday, I just finished reading Tilghman's Proverbs.

She said, it's wonderful. God have his mercy saved. 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 saved 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 a Bob Dendroff note about this. He's a close friend of ours. You know, my lawyer and I, we built some apartments together one year back in 1950, I think it was, or 52.

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, he engaged me about what I believed. And when he left, we kind of ended up a 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. Now, he was telling me nice, but he just kind of pitied me. And so I asked him if he ever read a book on him 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.

And I said, well, not to worry about the book. At the law school's Christmas vacation, doorbell rings and 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 it.

We're going to talk again. 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, do you want me to bring them back? I said, you know, a little pain. So the next time I want a job again, fine. I said, you know, I'd like to put you in the office.

I said, 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. I saw him in prayer meeting last week.

Saw him in prayer meeting. That wasn't yesterday. No two alike.

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... But I'm learning a little. So I didn't say anything all day long. And boy, I'm just a dear subject to my soul.

But I restrained myself until we went to bed. 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. I said, I can go to 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. No more.

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

Not that I didn't want to talk. We had a... It wasn't long until we were having a Bible study. He and his wife are Christians.

It was a long time. It was that Bible study. I took tapes to him, got him out to hear speakers, into the church.

See, it's teamwork. That's why it's important that your preacher preaches the gospel. That's why it's important if you have bandies, at least he has to go more.

Because when you're witnessing to a man, the same way with all these people that I mentioned. When you're witnessing to a... I remember that lawyer's son. 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, hey, why don't you ever take a seat? And I started to walk away, and I said, well, it's a pretty... 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... The Bible says, the fruit of the righteous is the tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise. Proverbs 11.30. The other reference is Proverbs 14.25. The power of the Holy Light.

God's given prayer to the only God who can save us. Be patient as we go about His work. Now, look at these verses with me, and we're finished this morning.

I do have something to say. The servant of the Lord. We're talking about the witnesser.

We're talking about, but not the ministry. We're talking about the minister. You call yourself the 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, a little rough exposition of it, please. Let me tell you why I think these verses are important.

Because in these verses you have the stage of the unconverted. What is it? 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's the stage of the unconverted. They're in Satan's prison house. And let me tell you, the Arminian, he'll say that too.

He says, yes, they're in Satan's prison house, but you've got the key in your pocket. You do this and you do that and you do the other thing and gobble. I want to tell you today that sinners are in prison and they don't have the key.

If anybody's going to get them out, it'll have to be God. The Arminian says, yes, they're in prison. But 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. It better be 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. No power. Sinner, he's been exalted as Lord.

And if anybody saves you, it'll have to be Him. 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 recorded, it's going to go off.

Will you shut them off? 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? Fell on a stage. And he besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. It doesn't have to be in those words, but that's the theology.

Crying out to God to do something for you that you can't do for yourself. Not huckstern off this man of eminence, 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 efforts of the servants 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 men as to that which pertains to their everlasting peace. Teach and instruct. The Great Commission does not go out and decision everybody you meet.

The Great Commission says, go ye 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 ye and all the world teach.

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

And then you see this, rescue men as possible from the power of Satan. The third thing I see that the efforts of the servants of God is this. Set before them the claims and the promises of God as their only hope.

That puts the sinner to apply 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 servants 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 servants of the Lord is in the verse. One, don't strive. Be gentle.

Ask to teach. You see there you have it again. Consistent with the Lord's commandment.

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

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.

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 telling me about all the bad situations, 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! See it in Ephesians 2. That's the servants must depend on God. Must be straight on the cause and the means. Now if I'd 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. About the evangelist.

If 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 but no not our God. Somebody that knows how to lay hold of the horns of the altar in intercession.

Somebody that has at least a measure of the patience. Oh I wonder sometimes how our dear ministers really make it. I'd say something to you laymen.

Be patient with ministers. If you'd be in a minister's study like I've been sometimes within the course of two hours somebody's died, 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. I have a patience.

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. It's bad just to have one fish because I'll tell you, you'll just be up and down like this.

Thou alone can teach our hearts. We can speak to men's minds. But oh holy dove, thou alone can speak to men's hearts.

We ask thee to do it for the sake of Jesus Christ and his church. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29991.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-c-reisinger/evangelism-and-the-layman-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net