

# A Man to Stand in the Gap

by George Verwer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and faith in world evangelism, and encourages listeners to take action and support young people in their efforts to spread the gospel.*

**Duration:** 20:38

**Scripture:** Isaiah 59:16, Ezekiel 22:30, Matthew 28:19

**Topics:** "Surrender", "Intercession", "World Evangelism"

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## Description

George Verwer emphasizes the urgent need for individuals to stand in the gap for the lost, drawing from Ezekiel 22, where God laments the absence of a man to intercede for the land. He highlights the dire state of the world, where many have become complacent about evangelism, and challenges the notion that world evangelization is impossible. Verwer shares personal testimonies of prayer and the transformative power of God in reaching the unreached, urging both young and old to take action in spreading the Gospel. He believes that God is raising an army of believers to fulfill the Great Commission, and that prayer is essential for this mission. Ultimately, he calls for a renewed commitment to evangelism and intercession, stressing that God is actively seeking those willing to stand in the gap.

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## Transcript

Book of Ezekiel, chapter 22. Book of Ezekiel, chapter 22. Let us read the word of God, verse 23.

The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Said a man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion, revenging the prey. They have devoured souls.

They have taken the treasure and precious things. They have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law and have profaned my holy things.

They have put no difference between the holy and profane. Neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths. And I am profane among them.

Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves, revenging the prey to shed blood, to destroy souls, and to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have dubbed them with untempered murder, seeing vanity and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy.

Yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it. But I found none.

It was Billy Graham who described this verse as perhaps the saddest verse in the word of God. I sought for a man among them that should stand in the gap, or make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it. But I found none.

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 59, we find a similar word in verse 16. Here we read, And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him.

Many ask the question, especially young people who are still, I guess, a bit idealistic, can the world be evangelized? Can the world be evangelized? We're very conscious of the fact, as we speak to many adults, that this question is of little concern to most people. In London, great numbers will gather together, week after week, and discuss the important issues of theology. There will be all kinds of conferences, conventions, and every other form of meeting to present various doctrines, shades of doctrine, and other theological truths.

But to find crowds of people gathering to seriously think about world evangelism is very hard to find in the world today. And yet, many young people, a majority of young people who become Christians, face this question. Did Jesus Christ really mean for us to evangelize the whole world? Did Jesus Christ, when he said, as my father hath sent me, so send on you, excuse me, mean the whole world? This is a very important question.

Thomas Samuel, when sent by a group of Christian leaders in India to Operation Mobilization in 1963, came with the view of a majority of Indians that India could never be evangelized. I think he had good reason in thinking that way. 500 million people, 11 million more every year, 75% of them have never seen a gospel tract.

It wouldn't matter if they could, for 75% of the people in India are still illiterate. The vast areas of Bihar, Rajasthan, Kashmir, it's all unreached. He had a good reason to believe that this couldn't be done.

I know many people who for a while are concerned about evangelism, finally come to the point that it can't be done, and so then develop a theology that will keep them from worrying about it. That's right. You know, so much of our theology is an escape.

Whenever I meet a man who tells me not to be concerned about world evangelism, God will take care of it. God is sovereign. Believe me, I believe and preach the sovereignty of God.

I basically believe I'm speaking to a man who's not facing reality, because no matter how much we emphasize the sovereignty of God, and I could not live without his sovereignty, we must realize that we have been given a command, and Jesus very clearly said, if you love me, keep my commandments. This is all so important tonight, and I'm convinced that Jesus Christ meant what he said, and I'm convinced that in these latter days, God is raising up an army, not just OM, to say the least, but an army of men and women to go forth and reach men like never before in history. I believe he's raised up great evangelists.

He's raised up monstrous radio stations. He's raised up gigantic printing presses, that the task of world evangelism could be a reality in the months, years, and decades to come, and I'm convinced that God tonight wants to convince many of us and give us faith that this can become a reality. World evangelism in

our decade.

That's what Billy Graham says. I haven't got that much faith. Our century, perhaps.

Maybe less, maybe more. Nonetheless, I believe it can come to pass, and I'm convinced that what God has done through this work, which is only four years old, basically, only four years old, is a testimony that God is desirous beyond anything else to reach the world in our generation. The fact that he has taken young people, untrained in some ways, not ready in many ways, and is using them to win thousands to Christ, to plant churches, and to reach up to now at least a hundred million people with the gospel of Jesus Christ, is a testimony that God is concerned.

God is concerned. As it says here in the book of Ezekiel, I sought for a man that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap, and tonight young people, adults, God is seeking for a man. He's seeking for a woman to stand in the gap, to make up the hedge.

I believe it's because of God that a dear old woman, some 30 years ago almost, began to pray in a desperate way for the school across from where she lived. For 18 years she prayed for that school, what's equivalent to a grammar school here in Britain. She prayed that from that school, young men and women would go out to the uttermost parts of the earth.

It was an ungodly grammar school, drunkenness, immorality, it was so rampant, there were so few Christians. She prayed year after year for 18 years that something would happen in that school. When I went into that school in the year of 1952, I was doomed as far as my carnal life was concerned.

And when this woman began to pray for me and specifically ask God to save me, without me knowing about it, without ever having the opportunity to speak to me, as far as Satan was concerned, it was all over. And it was through the prayers of this woman, the Gospel of John she sent me, that I came to know Jesus Christ on March 5th, 1955 in New York City. My life has changed.

It's still being changed. It's a long way to go. Prayers of one woman.

This is why, through the years, our one emphasis for our friends and for those that are interested in this one has been prayer. Prayer. I've been criticized very severely after these meetings each year for not taking an offer.

Very seriously. Some people think I'm mad. Just think of this crowd you have here.

Why, you pass the plate after a red-hot message and you get a couple of hundred pounds. Beloved, money is not the answer to world evangelism. It was Hudson Taylor who said, it's not the lack of money that's hindering God's work.

It's too much unconsecrated money. And I believe that's true today. And OM over these years has operated on a shoestring.

And I can tell you many times, none of us could find even the shoestring. But we've had God's blessing. We've had power.

We've seen thousands come to Christ. We've seen people come into fullness and reality in Jesus Christ, which is the deepest desire in our hearts. And if you think that a majority of the young people that are here tonight will go on a year campaign and drift away, I can only say you're wrong.

I recently looked at a photo of one of the first teams that went into Mexico many years before OM even existed. Every one of the young people in that photo, that was almost seven years or eight years ago, are going on powerfully for God today into Christian work. We now have young people who have been trained in OM as we are a training movement, not a missionary society, serving in more than 25 nations apart from the 20 nations we're in.

We're many different societies and many different churches. And we're convinced that what happens in one year is only the beginning. It's only another step toward a whole life of fruitfulness and reality and joy.

We don't believe everyone who comes on OM should go into missionary work. We have men who have gone back into business. We have men who have gone back to get their PhDs.

We have men who have gone back to work in the factory, teachers, nurses. And it's our conviction that for many people, God's plan includes working. If you not work, you shall not eat, the Bible says.

It's a very good policy. We believe in it heartily on OM. It's one of the reasons we do call portage work and other things.

And I'm convinced you and your office, factory, wherever you are, can be as effective for Jesus Christ as those of us who go. Of course, if God is calling you to go, you must go. And that's such an important thing for you to seek out.

For it does seem that the vast majority all seem to get the calling to stay. It seems to me some are getting them acute in the communications wrong. They would be open to whatever God wants.

How I do praise God is I think back on how that woman prayed for that school. Within two years after I was converted, several hundred in that one school, that ungodly grammar school, had come to Jesus Christ. And there are some people from that school in various parts of the world today.

Shortly after that, as I was in my last year when I was converted, I went into college. There I met a complete fanatic named Dale Roton. I'd heard about him.

I'd heard that I'd better steer clear of him. And this other band of fighting fundies, they were called, who actually believed the Bible to be the word of God. And I was told to be very careful because they were dangerous and they were baptizing people in the showers.

That was interesting because Dale was a Presbyterian at that time. Anyway, four years later he baptized me. I wasn't in the showers.

And there we began to meet together for prayer. And from those prayer meetings, just a small little group meeting daily, things began to happen. God put Mexico on our hearts.

And there's not time tonight to tell you what happened between Mexico and where we are tonight. What God did in Mexico, the seven bookshops were open, the radio broadcasts that went on the air, the hundreds that came to the Lord, the national workers that were raised up and are still going on. And then what happened in Spain, even when the land was closed, the 900,000 people that received the gospel through the post because we couldn't give it to them in the hand. And then what happened in O.M. in Europe in 1962 when 25 million pieces of literature were distributed in two months.

And in 63 when 200 tons, pieces of villages as trucks, 120 of them, most of them bought for 30 pounds, traveled more than 2 million miles to reach a continent, at least to a small degree, the gospel of Jesus Christ. The impact has been so great that every year missionaries, more than we can handle, invite us back. The teams through the summers have been doing follow-up work, helping missionaries to plant churches and spreading the gospel in a marvelous way.

And again this summer, close to 800 moved out in Europe. If you think this is superficial, if you think this is a youthful zeal, I challenge you to come on a team. We've had every once in a while men of God who are known or considered mature, like we're not considered, who are considered men of great spiritual stature.

We've had them come to our conferences. And if I could read you some of the letters of these men, if I could read you some of the letters of William MacDonald, the president of a Bible college, whose life was so completely shaken by a student who went on one of these crusades and had a maturity and a reality that he could not understand. He could not understand.

Who in turn wrote the book, True Discipleship, which was not the cause of OM, but only one of the many products of the movement. And then who later left his presidency, though they begged him to stay, to come to Europe for a year to work in operation mobilization. Many others who have been willing to find out the facts, who have been willing to go beyond the OM echoes.

And oh, how many echoes there are. And I know that many of you will not pray fervently. Many of you will not be fervently concerned for what your son or daughter are doing.

Many of you will not really be burdened for what's happening this year, unless some of these echoes can somehow be put behind. The echo that it's all superficial. You know, if superficiality can plant an assembly of 40 believers in a year and a half in Barcelona, then I want to be superficial.

If superficiality can bring Muslim Turks to Jesus Christ and start the first little band of Turks meeting together, then I want to be superficial. If superficiality can bring to pass what we've seen in country after country, then I think we better have a crusade of superficiality. But praise God, it isn't superficial.

You see, as we've often made a mistake between civilization and Christianity, we have made the same mistake of identifying age with spirituality. And it's not necessarily so. Because God is sovereign.

And when Jesus Christ came to the earth and he looked for a band of disciples, he chose young men. They were probably in their 20s, at the most in their early 30s, as far as all the commentaries I've ever read. And those men shook the world in their day.

And I have seen God take young people in their teens and teach them moral prayer and moral holiness that I've seen him do at times with older people. We are very conscious of the fact that we are young, that we have much to learn, that we can easily make mistakes, that we can easily get led astray. And it's for this reason that on every field we have submitted ourselves to people older than us in the Lord.

We've discovered as we look for older people to work with, we again must look not for age alone, but for spiritual quality. And we've found it. In every land there are spiritual men, like Bucksing in India, like Ralph Shallis in France, and many others, who counsel, who encourage, who pray for, who teach.

This is a vital part of this work. I'm saying this tonight because as we come to the end of this conference, all of us in OM have been conscious of one enormous need, to see prayer partners, adults, others who

live at home, rallying to our side to pray with us as we go forward. You know, when you go out to India, as I was just recently, you visit young men who've been in India laboring for a year, you discover that some of them get maybe one letter a week from their home country.

Would you like to labor in Rajasthan, in the heat, the trials, the difficulties, and get one letter a week from the people who supposedly sent you out or prayed you for? I want to say this. If it hurts, it hurts. But I say it with all sincerity.

The adults of this island have little concern for the youth.

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