

A Practical Illustration

by J. Wilbur Chapman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of personal work in soul winning and the power of persistent prayer in leading people to Christ.

Scripture: James 5:20

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Faith Restoration"

Description

J. Wilbur Chapman preaches about the impact of personal work in the Church, sharing testimonies of individuals who were reached through personal evangelism efforts. These testimonies include stories of people returning to faith, overcoming struggles, and accepting Jesus as their Savior, highlighting the power of personal engagement in leading others to Christ.

Transcript

It will be a great day when the Church is aroused to the responsibility and privilege of personal work.

In Swansea, Wales, with Mr Charles M. Alexander, I had the satisfaction of conducting a mission in which I preached for an entire week on Soul Winning. I then urged the people to go forth and labour, and asked them to come back with their reports. These reports were thrilling. Often ten or twelve people would be standing at the one time waiting to speak. The following are only a few testimonies taken from the many:--

A minister said: "I spoke to a bright young fellow, under the influence of drink, as I was going home in the car last night. He got off the car when I did, so I stood at the street corner and talked with him for a few minutes. He told me that he had been a follower of the Lord Jesus many years ago, but had fallen away through bad company. I asked him to pray for himself. He said he could not, but asked me to pray for him. And there on that street corner I put my arm around his shoulder and we prayed together, and he has promised to come to the meeting to-night."

"About three years ago," said another, "I came in touch with a man who has been the biggest and most hardened scoffer I have had to contend with. He had such a sarcastic way of ridiculing the Lord Jesus Christ. But this last fortnight I have seen a distinct change in that young man's life. Last week, as we were working near to one another, I spoke to him and his eyes filled with tears. He said, 'I have decided to come out and accept Christ.' I could hardly credit it, but it has proved to be real, and when I see God moving in such a hard case as this, I have hope for every sinner in this city."

Another said, "I came to the Lord three years ago, one of the worst drunkards in Swansea. Since the Saviour found me, I have spoken to men on their death-beds. I have spoken to drunkards all over Swansea, but I neglected my own charge that God had given to me. Dr Chapman woke me up to approach my own household and children. It was the greatest struggle in all my life. I went to my two boys and put my hands on their shoulders saying, 'I want you to do something for Jesus and for your father.' They said, 'Father, we will do it.' Two of my boys came to the Albert Hall yesterday and gave their hearts to Jesus. This has been one of the most blessed weeks I have had since I was saved three years ago."

"On Thursday night I had been asking the Lord to lead me to the right one to speak to. He led me to a young man of sixteen years of age who was under tremendous conviction. He said, 'I think I will make a clean breast of it. I have done something,' and he told me his story. This young lad, in his employer's service for four years, last week, for the first time, began to steal. He turned out his pocket and showed me what he had. He said, 'What shall I do? I go to bed at night and I cannot sleep, it is haunting me.' I said, 'Look here, laddie, do this. Go to your master to-morrow morning, and make a clean breast of it and get the victory.' 'What about my situation?' said the boy. 'I will pray for you,' I said. 'If your master is so unkind as to dismiss you, come to me and I will see what I can do.' It was a long time before he gave in, but eventually he said, 'I will.' I prayed for him, and last night I got this letter: 'Victorious! Devil conquered; overjoyed. I cannot very well explain what I experienced so will be pleased to meet you on Thursday next in the mission at Albert Hall.'"

A week later this gentleman said: "I have a lot to thank God for these last ten days. I have had a glorious blessing. I can say with all humility, I have been on fire for Jesus. I had a letter yesterday from the young man whom I was talking about last Sunday. He says, 'Dear Friend, My only regret now is that I did not accept Jesus as my Saviour years ago. It would have saved me so much trouble. I explained everything to my master and handed him the article back. Then he gave me two-thirds of this particular article and burned the letter. So that is what I got for owning up.'"

Another said: "I do thank and praise God this morning for the great things He has done in my home. He has brought my children to trust in the Saviour. I have great pleasure in reporting that a brother at the works, to whom I spoke a week ago, has decided for Christ. One of the workers presented me with a Testament to give to that brother, who was in very poor circumstances, and he received it with joy. The following day he came to tell me that he had read a Chapter to his wife. His wife is travelling the wrong way. They have five little children, and on Thursday I took them to the meeting. On Friday morning he came to thank me for taking them there, and told me that during his absence from the house, his eldest boy, of about ten years of age, had got into a Bible Reading Circle, led by a Christian boy, and he asked his father if he could spare sixpence for him to buy a Testament. What joy filled my heart and soul from the fact that I could present that little lad with a Testament, and I sent my own lad back a mile, yesterday, with it.

"I spoke to a dear Christian brother last night at the works. I asked him if his household were saved. 'I have one boy of sixteen not saved,' he said 'Brother, will you promise me to speak to him when you go home?' He went home and put his hand on the shoulder of the lad and gave him the invitation. The boy gladly promised to accept Jesus."

Continuing with the reports, one said: "Last night, in one of our public houses I spoke to a woman about Jesus. Years ago she had lost her husband and instead of going to God for comfort she had turned to drink. She became a drunkard and had separated from her children. When I spoke to her she said, 'I know

I am a sinner. I am the worst woman in Swansea, but I want to be good.' 'Will you decide now?' we asked her. 'Yes,' she said. She came out into the cold biting wind and knelt in the open air, and there she sent up this simple prayer: 'Oh, God, although I am a bad woman, please make me good, for Jesus' sake.' Later she arose in a crowded meeting and told her story, concluding with this remark, 'By God's help I am going to be a child of God.'"

Another said: "On the second night of the mission I was led to speak to a dear brother who was a back-slider. I plead with him that evening to turn to Christ, but he did not come to a decision. The next night I went in and talked with him. I asked him again at the close of the meeting would he come back to the Lord Jesus Christ. He told me he could not come back that night. On the following night I went up and spoke to him again. When we got outside the building I said, 'I may not ever have the privilege of speaking to you again. Will you kindly give me your name? I will give you a guarantee that no one but God shall know about it. I want your name that I may pray for you.' On Tuesday night in the minor hall at the after meeting I searched for him. I had been praying continually every night and morning, and sometimes during the day. When I found him that night I said, 'You have withstood the Spirit of God long enough. Make a definite decision to-night to return to the Lord. If you do not care about coming to the front, fill out this card, but make up your mind to give yourself to Christ.' He took the card and filled it out. Then I said, 'You know the way of salvation because you have been that way before. When you get home tonight, will you kindly make a definite decision at your bedside?' And he told me he would."

Another gentleman rose to give his testimony and said: "I belong, as you know, to another city, but I want to speak a word to the glory of God, and for the encouragement of those who have taken up personal work for Him. Some two years ago in our city I spoke to one who was an inspector in the Police Force, but who is to-day the Chief Inspector of our Police, about the claims of Christ. He told me that I was the first one who had ever spoken to him as to how he stood in relation to these matters for a period of fifteen years. Having once broken the ice and spoken to him, I never gave him up.

"About two months ago I had occasion to go to the Police Court to ask his assistance on behalf of a woman who wanted an ejectment notice against another woman who was living in the same house. When he heard the name of the woman who wished to obtain the notice he refused to have anything to do with the matter. She had been a bad character. He said, 'I tell you candidly, she ought to be drowned for her cruelty to her children.' I said, 'You knew her once, but you do not know her now. How long is it since you saw her?' 'About nine weeks' he replied. 'Well,' I said, 'nine weeks ago she and her husband both came to Christ in our mission hall. For the first time in thirteen years they entered a place of worship. She had a black eye that covered over half her face, but both her husband and she are now Christians, and are faithfully following Christ to-day. And yet you call her a lost soul.' He said, 'Certainly I do. If there is a lost soul she is one.' 'Then Sir,' I said, striking him on the shoulder, 'Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. Jesus has saved that woman. When she comes on Monday night, Inspector, just look at her and see what Christ has wrought. I ask you to grant her request.' He shook himself free. 'Wait a moment, Inspector,' I said, 'I have never given up praying for you. You have risen to the position of Chief Inspector, but I want you not to forget Christ.'

"On the Thursday of the following week he came to my home. When I saw him there I was glad, for he had kept away from me for a long time. I said, 'I am glad to see you in my home.' He said, 'You will be more glad when you know why I have come. In my room the other night I knelt down and gave myself to Jesus Christ, and asked the Lord to save me.' I would ask those of you who are working for souls not to get disheartened and discouraged. When the mission ceases do not give up taking a personal interest in

those for whom you are concerned.

"Some months ago I was sitting in the Assize Court in your city. I sat next to our Chief Inspector. The case that was being tried was one of attempted murder. As I sat there following the case this Chief Inspector turned to me and said, 'Why didn't they know Him on the road to Emmaus?' I said, 'I suppose because their eyes were holden.' He said, 'How did they know Him when they got to the home?' I said, 'Probably in the breaking of the bread.' 'Don't you think,' said he, 'that in the breaking of the bread they saw for the first time the marks of the wounds in His hands and knew Him by them?' What a difference Christ had made in the life of that Chief Inspector."

A man employed in the steel works rose in one of our meetings to say: "I made my covenant with God last Saturday. The burden was laid heavy on my heart on behalf of two souls. One of them was my own little girl. I spoke to her about Jesus, and she told me she would accept Him as her Saviour. I have been working this week on a shift that ran from ten o'clock at night to six o'clock in the morning. On Tuesday night I asked the Lord to pour out His blessing on our workmen. About one o'clock in the morning I had an opportunity of speaking to a young man. I asked him if he had accepted Jesus as his Saviour, and he said he had not. Then I asked him to be honest before God, and I said, 'Will you accept Him now?' With a smile he looked up at me and said, 'Tom, I will accept Jesus as my Saviour now.' I have brought some of my mates with me here to-day and I thank God for what He has done.

"Down at the works the other day there was a young man who came on duty at three o'clock in the morning. I knew he was troubled about his soul, and I spoke to him. I said, 'Are you in trouble about your soul?' He said, 'Yes, I am.' 'Well,' I said, 'Jesus has died to save you. Will you accept Him now?' He said to me, 'But, Tom, I have done this and that,' 'Well,' I said, 'Jesus has died for you, will you accept Him?' As he looked me straight in the face he said, 'Yes, I will.'

"I asked these men who had accepted Jesus and one or two others, to come up to my home at six o'clock when we finished work. As we went through the yard there was a boy about fifteen years of age standing there and we got him to come along with us. In my home we had a small meeting. I asked God to pour down His blessing upon us. I asked one friend who was drifting, if he had ever accepted Christ, and he said at one time during a revival. I said, 'Praise God for that. He is willing to receive you back. Will you come?' and he said, 'At three o'clock this very morning, I came back to the Lord Jesus.' And then I turned to the boy of fifteen and said, 'Are you willing to accept the Saviour?' And he said he didn't think he was ready. I said, 'Well, my boy, if you don't, what will become of you?' He said, 'I will go to hell, I suppose.' Not long afterwards he accepted the Saviour.[1]

"Yesterday I could not sleep. I went home from my work. I was up in the morning with a burden on my heart because of the poor souls who were going to eternity without a Saviour. A young woman came to our house and started to sing 'Lord save Swansea,' and the words kept ringing in my ears. I went back to bed but could not sleep. I had no peace. I said, 'Well, Lord, I believe Thou hast surely started the work.' I went to the works last night. I did not feel very well as I had been up all day. I asked some of the men if they would come to a prayer meeting for the mission. We did not have much time before work commenced, but we went in and I asked one of the young fellows if he would accept Jesus. He replied, 'I must have time to think of it.' The next night I said to him, 'Johnnie, have you thought of what we spoke on last night?' and he said, 'I have been in trouble about my soul.' Before we had tea I asked him if he would accept Christ now. He said, 'I cannot do it now.' I said, 'God will give you strength.' We went into a little shop and I prayed for him. At three o'clock this morning I spoke to him again. 'Johnnie,' I said, 'can you

see the way clear?' 'Yes,' he said, 'I can see the way clear now. I will accept Jesus as my personal Saviour.'"

1. This man worked at night and slept during the day.

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