

Whosoever Will

by J. Wilbur Chapman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of personal work in sharing the Gospel and helping others to come to Christ.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:6, Matthew 28:19, John 3:16, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Salvation Testimonies"

Description

J. Wilbur Chapman shares powerful testimonies of personal evangelism encounters, emphasizing the impact of reaching out to individuals from all walks of life with the message of salvation. From a business man to a police officer, Chapman illustrates how simple conversations and invitations to accept Christ can lead to life-changing transformations. He highlights the importance of personal engagement in sharing the Gospel, even in unexpected places like a police station or on the streets during night duty. Chapman's stories demonstrate the profound effect of genuine care and prayerful intervention in leading others to a personal relationship with Jesus.

Transcript

All classes of persons may do personal work if they will. A prominent business man in a Welsh city began to do this work and one morning spoke to eighteen people before breakfast. Several, to whom he spoke, accepted Christ. Making a further report of his work, he said. "An old man, about seventy years of age, whose face was white and who appeared to be very ill, was leaning against the wall of a building near where I have my office. I said to him, 'Have you been to the mission?' 'No,' he said, 'I have not.' I then asked him if he had accepted Christ. 'Well,' he said, 'I have been a believer all my life.' I said, 'Are you saved?' 'I cannot say that,' he replied. 'Why?' I asked; 'God says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. Do you believe that?" He stood staring me in the face for a few minutes, when he said, 'I never saw it in that light before.' I said, 'Will you take him at His word now?' And he replied, 'Yes, I will.'

"An old woman, an office cleaner, was making her way up the steps of a building. As I came up I recognised her, and said, 'Mrs Bell, I have been constrained to ask you if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour.' She looked at me, then setting down her broom she said, 'I want to, but no one has ever asked me,' 'Well,' I said, 'I ask you now. Will you accept Him just here? Will you say, Lord Jesus I accept Thee as my personal Saviour?' But she could not see the way. After some conversation I asked her if she would come to the hall and hear Dr Chapman and Mr Alexander, and she said she would go that evening. I was unable to go to the service myself that night and did not see her until the following Saturday

morning. She came to my office and said, 'Since you spoke to me a few days ago I have had no peace. I am in an awful state, and unless I take Jesus I shall die. I am sure I shall because I cannot live like this.' And right there in the office she knelt down and accepted Christ as her Saviour and had the joy that always comes with this acceptance.

"This morning, the very first man I met, I was constrained to speak to about Jesus. I introduced myself by asking him if he had been to the mission. He said, 'Yes, I was at the Grand Theatre last Sunday afternoon.' 'Well,' I said, 'did you give your heart to the Lord?' 'No,' he replied, 'I did not.' I said 'Why?' 'Because I missed my opportunity,' was his answer. I said to Him, 'Will you do it now?' 'Do it now!' he exclaimed. 'Listen,' I said, 'God says in His Word. As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God. Will you receive Him? It is either one thing or the other--receive or reject. Your sins have been atoned for by His precious blood. Will you take Jesus now?' And suddenly, taking me by the hand, he said, 'I will.'

"From time to time I have been speaking to a young man belonging to a respectable family. At one time he was being brought up for the ministry, but he got into sin and sank very low. I persuaded him to attend one of the mission meetings. When Dr Chapman requested all those who wished prayer offered for themselves or for their loved ones, this poor fellow got up in the balcony and said, 'Pray for me.' Prayer was offered for him, and there, that night, he experienced the joy of salvation. He came to me the other day and said that he had definitely taken Jesus Christ as his Saviour."

One would not expect a police officer to be a personal worker, but many of them are, and notably so in Great Britain. Ex-Sergeant Wheeler of Oldham came to attend one of our meetings, and being asked to speak, he said: "Though an Ex-Sergeant, I am not an Ex-Christian. There are a large number of people who look upon a policeman from many standpoints, but it is very seldom that they see him in the position in which I am placed to-night. They have an idea that a policeman does not exist to preach the Gospel or to tell them about Jesus Christ, and it is Christian people who get that idea sometimes."

"I know a police sergeant in London who is a particular friend of mine and a great Christian worker. A lady went to one of our Provincial Police Conferences in connection with the Police Association and saw this big man who was so enthusiastic in connection with the work that the lady doubted his genuineness, and to satisfy her curiosity she ascertained his private address, travelled by rail from London, visited his home during his absence, and asked his wife what sort of a man he was. That is the way to find a man out. But she found that he was even a better man in the home than he was out of it. If you want to find what a man's character is, you do not ask about it on special occasions when he is on his guard, you ask what it is when he is at home, it is there that he unconsciously reveals it, and this revelation just because of its unconsciousness, proves invariably correct.

"When the Lord Jesus brought me out of darkness into the light, when He broke the fetters and snapped the chains eleven years ago, I went home and said to my wife, 'I am going to live for Jesus, and we will start here, at home. We will have family prayers--we were not a large family, only nine of us, and for the first time in their lives, my children heard their father pray; and there on my knees in all humility I pledged myself before God that I would do anything, make any sacrifice, if by so doing I could help a weaker brother and lift him out of the gutter. That is the way I started. I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I hope to be, but, thank God, by His grace and love, I am what I am and not what I once was. The Lord changed my desires when he put a new heart within me. When I see a drunken man in the streets I do not pass him like I used to. My heart goes out to him and I look beyond the man in the streets to the life in the

home he comes from, and see the misery there; but I thank God that He put the desire in my heart to try to help that brother. And how often opportunities present themselves.

"On one occasion at five o'clock on a Sunday morning in the month of August, a policeman and I were going along the street. There was a man standing at a gate near the corner. As we approached he said to me, 'Sergeant, can you get me a drink of whisky?' I said, 'That is rather a strange thing to ask a Sergeant of Police,' 'Well,' he said, 'I have plenty of bottled ale in my home, but it sticks in my throat.' I said, 'Do you take whisky when you are thirsty?' 'Yes,' he replied. I got into conversation with him and after a while I said to him, 'Do you ever go to a place of worship?' 'No,' he said, 'I don't, I pay a sovereign for a sitting.' 'That won't get you to heaven,' I said, and after a little further talk with him he remarked, 'Sergeant, I am all right financially, but wrong here, in my heart.' And then he said, 'Will you come to my home and pray for me?' 'Yes,' I replied, and we went. It was not far away, a fine home, a palace to mine, I thought, as I walked across the velvet carpet into the drawing-room. He brought a Bible and said, 'Read me something out of that.' And he sat down like a little child, to listen. I turned to Isaiah liii. 6, and read, 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' 'Now,' I said, 'it starts with All and finishes with All, so we are both included.' Then I took him to John iii. 16, and then to the last Chapter in the Book of Revelation, verse 17: 'And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst--I stopped at that--and whosoever ...' 'Now,' I said, 'we will read it again. And after we had read it again we knelt down, and there in that large home I poured out my soul to God over that man. I plead for him, and while I prayed he said, 'Lord, if I am not too bad, save me.' I said, 'Amen.' And the Lord heard his prayer, and before I left the house he was a changed man. When I was leaving he came to the door and said, 'I never bargained for this, this morning, Sergeant.' The man who wanted whisky got Christ. He drank of something different, he drank of the living water which Christ spoke about at the well of Samaria when He said, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.'"

"I left him and went back the following day. I rang the bell and he answered the door himself. I asked him how he was, and he said, 'Grand, I have had no whisky.' I went back a month later and he told me he was never so happy in all his life. He said, 'Do you remember me telling you I paid a sovereign for my sitting in church? Well, I occupy that pew myself now.' And that day he gave me a donation for the Christian Police Association and told me to call again at any time. That is what the Lord does when he changes a man's heart. There are many men to-day who may be all right financially; they may have a seat in God's House; they may be members of a Church and yet not be right at heart. I urge upon you, get right with God and you will have, not the peace of this world, but the peace that passeth all understanding.

"Something like seven years ago I went to some services in Manchester that were being conducted by Dr Torrey and Mr Alexander. At the close of these services I went to the front and took some Gospel literature that was there for distribution. When I got home and commenced my duties I began to give this literature to the policemen. I thought the policemen stood as much in need of it as anybody else. If he is a peacemaker, sometimes he is a peacebreaker, and with all due respect to him he is not always a law-abiding man.

"There were two booklets in which I was specially interested. One which was called 'God's Sure Promise,' asked several questions at the close, and then requested the reader to sign his name. The other was, 'Get Right with God.' I gave the latter to policemen on their beats, and asked them to read them carefully. I went on with my praying. One man received the book with great scorn. About a week after I visited this

particular man, and with a smile upon his face he said, 'You remember those two booklets you gave me?' 'Yes,' I said. 'Well,' he said, 'the one called "God's Sure Promise" I tore up and put into the fire, the other I tore up and threw over the wall, but not before I read them both. Now, I have never got away from that, and about half an hour ago I came to the climax. I got down on my knees in the street, and now I can honestly say that God for Christ's sake has pardoned all my sins.' I felt overjoyed with his testimony, for he was the most scornful and bitter man in the division. I was so overjoyed that I walked round his beat with him, talking with him, and giving him words of encouragement. I can never forget that night. From ten o'clock until six in the morning it was one continual downpour of rain. We were soaked through. As we walked round I said, 'We will have a word of prayer.' We took off our helmets, knelt down on the pavement and there we had a little prayer meeting just about two o'clock in the morning. The showers of rain were nothing compared to the showers of blessing we had. I was so delighted when we went off duty that morning that I could not sleep.

"I came to Manchester when Dr Torrey was holding a meeting, and during the meeting I sent a note up to Dr Torrey saying that a policeman wanted to say something. However, the opportunity did not present itself that night. A week after that another policeman came to me and said, 'Sergeant, do you remember that booklet you gave me, "God's Sure Promise?"' I said, 'Yes.' 'Well,' he said, 'here it is signed.' Seven years have passed away since that time, and those two policeman and I have stood together on the platform many and many a time telling the story of Jesus and His love. We have had some meetings together and I have seen them speaking to hundreds of men and the Lord has blessed them both. If the Lord Jesus Christ can save a policeman, He can save anybody.

"I found that we existed for something more than locking up people. I wanted to arrest people in their sin, and going along the street one night in company with another constable we were called into a little house. The kind people there had taken in a woman off the street. She was lying on the floor in a very drunken condition, unconscious of everything around her. I knew this woman, she was about twenty-seven years of age. I made her acquaintance when I used to be on night duty. Every Saturday night or in the early hours of Sunday morning I used to find her door open--her home was in a little side street, that kind of people generally live in a side street. It was about three o'clock on Sunday morning when I walked in and saw the man lying on the floor and the wife who was also drunk, lying on a sofa. The next time I was on night duty I found the same door open, and this time the wife was lying on the floor and the man on the sofa, and both were drunk.

"These kind people that I spoke of, consented to keep the woman there while I went to see the husband. I got to the house but found that he had removed to a little room in a little back street. There he was lying on a bit of a shake-down. I roused him up and told him where he would find his wife. He said, 'What time is it?' I said, 'Three o'clock in the afternoon.' He had one shilling left and he took a cab and went and brought his wife home.

"A few days afterwards I got them both to sign the pledge. The man was about the same age as his wife. He told me he did not know the taste of tea and coffee, he drank nothing but beer. He only had the clothes he stood up in. Four months passed after he signed the pledge. I met him one night and he had on a black suit of clothes and a watch and guard in his pocket. I was delighted to see him. Some time after that I went to address a very large temperance meeting. The hall was packed, and when I went on to the platform who should be there but this young fellow occupying the chair. What a sight it was to me! He pointed out to me his wife in the audience. There she sat, all smiling and well dressed. Time went on and I was the means not only of keeping them to the pledge but of bringing them to Christ; the Christ of the Gospel; the

Christ that has bridged the gulf between God and the gutter; between the saint and the sot; between the pew and the slum.

"Oh, what a pleasure it has been to see how that man works for Jesus. I went to his house some time after that. It was not in the back streets, although he worked there and got some people to sign the pledge. But he came out into the front street, and there was a knocker on his door. When I knocked, his wife admitted me into the sitting room. She told me that Sunday morning that her husband was out visiting the sick. I know that he brought many men to the Sunday morning Bible Class. He told me this story. 'Do you know,' he said, 'When I used to spend all my money in the public house, oftentimes on the holidays I would take the landlord's luggage to the station for the price of a pint of beer. Not long ago we had our holiday, and instead of taking the landlord's luggage to the station I had a man to carry mine, and as we were going up the street with this man walking in front of us we passed one of the public houses where I had often spent my wages. The landlord was standing at the door. When he saw me passing he said, 'What does this mean?' I said, 'It means that I am going to Ireland instead of thee.' That man is being used to-day in God's service. The blood of Jesus Christ cannot only save but it can keep."

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