

Holiness and Evangelism

by James Blaine Chapman

To be effective in evangelism, we must have a holy heart and a Spirit-filled life, and we must be insulated, but not isolated, from the world.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:30, Matthew 5:13, Mark 2:17, Acts 11:24, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:17, Ephesians 5:8, James 1:27, 1 Peter 1:16, Revelation 2:14

Topics: "Personal Holiness", "Effective Evangelism"

Description

James Blaine Chapman emphasizes the importance of holiness and separation from the world while still being actively engaged in evangelism. He warns against the dangers of mixing worldly practices with evangelism, as it can lead to the corruption of the Church. Chapman highlights the need for Christians to be insulated but not isolated, following Jesus' example of being holy yet engaging with sinners to bring healing and salvation. He stresses the necessity of maintaining purity and concentration in evangelism, focusing on influencing a few deeply rather than many superficially. Chapman underscores that a burden for the salvation of souls, rooted in personal holiness, is essential for effective soul winning.

Transcript

Holiness implies separation from the world, and yet it does not imply the canceling of our debt to the world. We are yet in the world, even though we are no longer of the world. Jesus described His disciples as "the salt of the earth," and salt is worthless if it is isolated. It must be brought into contact with that which it preserves. Likewise those who withdraw from the company of men and live in monasteries or in social seclusion have little value as evangelizing agents. Personal separation from the world must be consistent with the Master's command, "Go ye into all the world, and make disciples."

In Rev. 2:14, "the doctrine of Balaam" is roundly condemned. By reference to the Old Testament account of this prophet's activities and counsels we find that his doctrine was "evangelism by mixing." Balak could not win over Israel in out and out conflict, so Balaam said, "Go along and intermarry with these people and win over them by absorbing them." The results were disastrous, not to the heathen, but to the people of God. And yet there are those who still think the way to save the world is for the Church to become worldly. But when the world and the Church mix, it is the world that captures the Church and not the Church that captures the world.

How then can men be holy and still be saving agencies in a sinful world? The answer is that they must be insulated, but not isolated. Our Master's example is in point. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and

even His enemies reported they found no fault in Him. Yet He met men on the streets, in the markets, in their homes, and at their own tables. It is true that some criticized Him as being the Friend of sinners, but He accepted this as a compliment and adopted this as one of His favorite roles. Ordinarily to touch a leper was to become defiled, but when Jesus touched a leper the leper was cleansed. And this is the key to the whole matter. The healing touch does not defile. But the agreeing touch does defile. And everyone must keep his own soul from the saturating effect of sin and worldliness by keeping alive the inner protest against all that is wrong. Still he must limit his touch only at that point where healing and agreeing meet. It is an honor to eat with publicans and sinners when to do so is to heal and save them, and every man must know and observe his own limits, not to be overcome of evil, even in the sense of prevailing influence, but to overcome evil with good.

Dilution almost always means weakness, and strength practically always requires concentration. This is true whether the subject is a state, a home, a church, or an individual life. Men who are known too well as "good mixers" are seldom also effective soul winners. The nucleus of the individual life must be kept pure if the impact of evangelism is to be effective. We must ourselves be thoroughly evangelized before we can succeed markedly in evangelizing others. Men readily become exercised over the subject of widening their scope of influence, whereas the greater need is to wield an effective influence. When the choice is between influencing many people a little or influencing a few people much, the instant choice should be the latter. Bringing people near to the kingdom of God is not enough; we must bring them in and introduce them to the King.

The principle of soul winning is divinely inherent in all truly born-again people, although the method by which the lost are sought and found varies as much as the number of Christians in the world. The principle is indicated by that early desire to see one's loved ones and friends brought to Christ. One of the first and best evidences of conversion is the desire to see others converted. But it is always a bad thing to be stirred and then do nothing about the stirring. If one does something about it, the stirring will increase until soul winning becomes a passion. And there is nothing more fundamental in the whole task of evangelism than that of burden for the salvation of souls. If that burden is real and heavy, ways and means will be found. And nothing encourages a burden for others more than getting genuinely through for yourself. Holiness of heart is therefore a great boon for soul winners.

The description of a soul winner requires but a few lines, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11: 24) . It is as though the cause and the effect were stated. Nothing is said of the pedigree, breeding, education, gifts, or talents of Barnabas, for such things do not enter into the qualifications of soul winners. He was simply a man in the fullness of the blessing of Pentecostal sanctification and, as the oasis gathers about the palm tree, souls followed him into the kingdom of God. There is no indication of strain or effort. He had the blessing and followed the leadings of the Lord and his work was fruitful.

Dr. A. M. Hills wrote that during four years in college, it being known that he planned to be a preacher, and three years in the theological seminary, although he was told many things that would help him in the pursuit of his calling, he was never told the simple thing that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is the one indispensable qualification for success in the divine art of soul winning. Much of the intellectual training given to divinity students and those preparing for Christian work has almost as little direct connection with the task to which the students are called as a course in gymnastics would have. For the task is not primarily intellectual, but spiritual, and the greatest need is not a full mind, but a full heart.

But even if the expressional life in the business of soul winning is to be considered, the great need here is for the anointing of the Spirit upon song, prayer, testimony, and sermon. Even personal evangelism makes heavier demand for immediate inspiration and direction than for knowledge in psychology and sociology. If you would be a soul winner, seek and obtain a holy heart and then walk in the light of the true Spirit-filled life. This is the apostolic way.

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