

w.f.p. Burton (1886-1971)

by Keith Malcomson

The sermon recounts the inspiring life and ministry of William Burton, a dedicated missionary in Africa who overcame numerous challenges to spread the Gospel and establish a lasting church presence.

Scripture: Mark 16:17, Acts 1:8, Acts 14:3, 1 Corinthians 2:4, 2 Corinthians 12:12

Topics: "Missionary Work", "Holy Spirit"

Description

William Burton, born in 1886, was dedicated to God's work in Africa from birth. After coming to the Lord in 1905, he devoted his life to studying the Bible, winning souls for Christ, and living by faith. His missionary journey to Africa in 1914 led to the establishment of the Congo Evangelistic Mission, where he witnessed miraculous healings and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit among the converts. Despite facing opposition from Catholic priests, Burton and his team planted hundreds of churches, trained native evangelists, and experienced powerful manifestations of God's power akin to the Book of Acts. His ministry continued until 1960, leaving behind a legacy of over 2000 native churches before his passing in 1971.

Transcript

William Burton was born in Liverpool in 1886 he came from a strong Christian background. His parents had dedicated him to God's work in Africa even before he was born and as he grew servants of the Lord had laid hands on him with a prayer that God would send him to preach the Gospel in Africa. It was under the preaching of R.A. Torrey at Evangelistic services in London that he first come under deep conviction of sin and came to the Lord in 1905. From the very beginning he was sold out. His new life started with regular Bible study and the winning of souls to Christ. He was one of Myerscough's young men who was blessed to be taught by him the Word of God for some five years continuously. It was only in 1909 or 1910 that they first heard of the outpouring at Los Angeles, until then he had not understood the meaning of the tongues he had heard back in 1906 in Welsh revival meetings. At the convention in 1910 at Preston he received his much sought for Baptism of fire. After this when the PMU Bible school opened he eagerly joined himself to it. This led to a life of living by faith. He spent the next three years travelling the countryside preaching in homes and the open-air as well as pastoring a little assembly at Lytham and helping Myerscough at the Preston Bible School.

Once while standing in a butcher shop in a small English village, he was prompted of God to lay hands on a deaf lady in Jesus name and she was instantly healed. All the village quickly heard and this led to a revival in two quarrelling Methodist Churches, which had not seen one soul saved in 11 year between

them. In confirming his missionary call, God answered prayer by miraculously giving him a third set of teeth. All this was great preparation for the mission field.

During this time C.T.Studd was planning to go to Congo and suggested Willie go with him, but he had no witness that this was the Lord and so declined. He set sail for Africa in 1914, the following year he was joined by Jimmy Salter (who later married Wigglesworth's daughter). This work would eventually be called the Congo Evangelistic Mission. These were early days of fighting sickness, encountering cannibal tribesmen, learning the language and making the first maps of the country. As they went forth preaching, God confirmed his word with signs following and souls saved. Just after their initial arrival in 1915 the work commenced in the healing of a local native who was badly bent over and walking with sticks, instantly he was healed and continued with a straight back for the next 33 years. In 1918 Burton travelled to South Africa in order to recruit more missionaries, the first and most willing was Hettie who became his wife. A special week of meetings were called in 1920, 160 of the converts gathered. Divisions and disputes were coming in amongst the converts and as yet none had received the Holy Ghost. But at these meetings under strong preaching, great conviction of sin came amongst them and amidst brokenness and repentance the Spirit of God was outpoured, all were filled and empowered for service. The work grew quickly during the 20's and more missionaries came to help.

Over the next decades many missionaries were equipped and sent forth into this land. Many native evangelists were trained in the Word of God who went forth to reach their own people, and hundreds of new churches were planted amongst those who had never before heard the Gospel. Throughout these decades God confirmed His Word with real miracles following and a number of powerful outpourings of the Spirit. Every step of the way Catholic priests opposed and hindered them, but they prevailed in prayer at every hurdle. The Book of Acts came alive in the Congo through this God sent ministry. He was on the field until 1960 when independence for Congo and the following violence meant him leaving. He wondered how these 1000 assemblies would fare the storm. Over the next decade the number of churches doubled.

In some notes from 62 he writes "For 57 years I have been preaching and giving Bible talks. Since escaping from the Congo, two years ago, I have given bible-talks almost every night. I love feeding Gods flock, because I love Him. It is a passion with me to give out the blessed truths that I glean from His Word." By the time of his death in 1971 there had been about 2000 native churches raised up and he could have well said "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." It was on the very same day that both Burton and Howard Carter went to be with the Lord

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