

What Is the Supreme Task of the Church?

by Oswald J. Smith

The supreme task of the Church is the evangelization of the world, and we must prioritize this work by investing our resources, time, and energy in the most important work of the church.

Duration: 45:42

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, John 3:16

Topics: "World Evangelization"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the Church's task of evangelizing the world. He highlights the word 'world' and reminds the audience that God's love and Jesus' sacrifice were for the entire world. The speaker encourages the audience to have a global vision and not be limited to their own church or denomination. He also emphasizes that the evangelization of the world is the supreme task of the Church and shares his belief in the importance of spreading the gospel to the entire world. The sermon concludes with a personal anecdote about a successful evangelistic campaign at a famous church in the United States.

Transcript

I will not forget my motto. This is the motto that I want to leave with you tonight. The supreme task of the Church is the evangelization of the world.

I want to take three words out of that motto, and I want to emphasize them one after the other, just as briefly as I can. First of all, I want to take the last word, the word world. The supreme task of the Church is the evangelization of the world.

When God loved, he loved the world. When Jesus Christ died, he died for a world. God so loved the world.

The vision that God wants you and me to have is a world vision, and you'll never be satisfied until we get a world vision. But so many of us are local in our outlook. We only see our own Church.

We only see our own denomination. We only see our own community. Then there are those who have a broader vision.

There are those who see an entire state, and they're ready to give their money and to do everything they can for the evangelization of their state. But their vision also is the local vision. They see their own state.

They never see another. They're not even interested in another. Then there are those who have a broader vision still.

There are those who see an entire country, and they're prepared to do everything they can for the evangelization of their country. But their vision also is a local vision because they only see their own country, and they never see another country. Then there are a few people who have a world vision.

They see North America and South America. They see Europe and Asia. They see Africa and the islands of the seas.

Their vision is God's vision because their vision is a world vision. Now why is it that we're so local in our outlook? Why is it we only see our own Church? Why is it we only see our own denomination? Why is it we only see our own community? Why is it, I say, that we're so local in our outlook? Why is it that we think we're the people? You know that everywhere I go, as I travel around this world, and as I said last night, I've gone already to 71 different countries. Everywhere I go, I hear the sentiment expressed, we're the people.

When I was holding nationwide campaigns in Great Britain, as I traveled through England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and held campaigns in the major cities of those countries, everywhere I went, I heard the sentiment expressed, we're the people. What is the idea? The idea was we're the most important nation on the face of the earth. We're the favorite people of God.

The other nations, they just don't count. We're the people. Then when I got way down under, when I was holding nationwide campaigns in the huge cities of Australia, everywhere I traveled in Australia, I likewise heard the sentiment expressed, we're the people.

Then when I got to South Africa and had the privilege of holding nationwide campaigns among the three million white people in South Africa, the Dutch and the English, and preaching in those great, those huge Dutch churches seating two and three thousand people each, everywhere I went in South Africa, I likewise heard those white people saying, we're the people. Sometimes I wondered whether or not those people knew that there are other nations in the world besides themselves. Then, believe it or not, when I was on a little bit of an island, like a pinpoint on the map in the South Pacific, I actually heard the natives on that island likewise saying, we're the people.

And they used to talk to me like this. They used to say, you Americans, how is it that you live away out there on the outer fringe of civilization? The idea was, you poor, semi-civilized Americans and you poor, semi-civilized Britishers, you live away off on the outer fringe of civilization. And here on this little bit of an island, like a pinpoint on the map, we're at the hub, we're at the center.

Why don't you Americans move over, get a little bit closer to the center of civilization? We're the people. I say, where do we get that idea? Is it because we think we're so numerous? Then I'm afraid some of us haven't traveled very much. When I was traveling through the Dutch East Indies a number of years ago now, today known as Indonesia, with 100 million people everywhere I went in the Dutch East Indies, I preached sometimes to the headhunters, sometimes to others in other islands, until at last I came to the island of Java.

You remember the island of Java? Can you picture it now on the map as I talk about it for a moment? A little bit of an island in the South Pacific. I discovered that I could cross that island from north to west by

car in just four hours. I could cross it from east to west in just 12 hours.

But will you believe me when I tell you that one of the most densely populated spots on the face of the earth is a little island of Java? Do you know how many people live on that island? You'll be amazed when I tell you if you're not in touch with the situation. No less than 60 million people live on that one little bit of an island, like a pinpoint on the map there in the South Pacific. 60 million people.

Three times the population of my country, the Dominion of Canada. About one-third the population of your country, the United States of America. If my God is interested in numbers, then he is more interested in the little island of Java than he is in my country, the Dominion of Canada.

Because whereas we have 20 million people in Canada, they have, as I've already stated, no less than 60 million people in the island of Java. But that isn't the end of the story. For if my God is interested in numbers, then he must be more interested in your country than he is in Java.

Because whereas they have 60 million people in the island of Java, you have more than 190 million people here in the United States. But even that doesn't end it. For if my God is concerned about numbers, then he must be more interested in Russia than he is in your country.

Because whereas you have 190 million people in Russia, they have over 200 million people, the largest white nation in the world. But even that doesn't end the story. For if my God is influenced by numbers, then he is more interested in India than he is in Russia.

Because whereas they have 200 million people in Russia, they have today no less than 500 million people in India, more than twice the population of Russia. But last of all, if God is interested in numbers, then he must be more interested in China than he is in India. Because whereas they have 500 million people in India, they have today no less than 750 million people in China, the largest nation on the face of the earth.

Every fourth baby born into the world is born a Chinese. Someone has said God must love the Chinese because he's made so many of them. 750 million.

And my country, the Dominion of Canada, is only a little pinpoint on the map so far as numbers are concerned. And if the waters of the Atlantic and the waters of the Pacific should rise up overnight and submerge Canada, I suppose next morning there would be a little report in the American newspapers about an instinct. Last night Canada disappeared from the family of nations.

That's all we amount to. We just don't amount. The world wouldn't even miss us.

20 million people is over again 750 million. Lift up your eyes. Look on the field.

See a world for which Jesus Christ gave his life on Calvary. The second word I want to emphasize is the word supreme. The supreme task of the Church is the evangelization of the world.

The most important work of the Church is the evangelization of the world. Now I believe that. I have believed that all the years of my ministry.

But listen to me. There isn't one pastor in a hundred who believes it. There isn't one church in a thousand that believes it.

There isn't one Christian in ten thousand who believes it. You say, how do you know? All I have to do is to look at the financial statement for the year, and if I see that more money has been used here at home than has been sent out to the foreign mission fields of the world, I'll know at a glance that that church considers something here at home as of greater importance than the work in the regions beyond. There are businessmen here tonight.

You businessmen have a business enterprise. Yes, but you have one department in that business enterprise more important than any of the others. Tell me, where do you invest most of your surplus money? In that one most important department.

Why? Because you want to develop the most important department of your business. Now that is true. If missions, if world evangelization is in very deep, the most important work of the Church of Jesus Christ, does it not follow? Is it not logical? Ought we not to be investing most of our money in that most important department? I think we should.

How many of us are doing it? I know churches that don't even go 50-50. They do not even send one dollar to the foreign mission fields of the world when they spend one dollar on themselves at home. They don't even break even.

They don't even go 50-50. I know what you're saying now, Dr. Smith, what about that church of yours in Toronto, Canada, the People's Church, where you've been pastor now for 39 years. Do you really mean to say that your church sends more money to the foreign mission fields of the world than it uses here at home? Some time ago in January, I was able to go to my treasurer and I was able to say, I want two questions answered.

Yes, what are they? First, how much did we spend on ourselves here in Toronto last year? In a little while, I got the answer. Last year, we spent \$65,000 on ourselves here in Toronto, buying, I said, \$65,000 at home, \$65,000 in North America, \$65,000 on ourselves. Now, my second question, how much did we send to the foreign mission fields of the world last year? After a while, I got the answer to my second question.

Last year, we invested \$329,000 in missions. Fine, I said again, \$65,000 in North America, \$65,000 at home, \$329,000 on the most important work of the church of Jesus Christ, missions, five times as much on the foreign work as on the homework, over \$6 million altogether on the regions beyond, 76% of the total income of the church. That's why God has blessed us at home.

That's why I preached to 2,000 people for the last 35 years every Sunday. That's why our ushers have had to carry in extra chairs after we have seated some 2,500. That's why almost every Sunday night, men and women have walked down the aisles and have gone to the inquiry room there to make their decisions for the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's why we've never had a financial problem of any kind in the history of the work. We're putting first things first, missions first. Any church that will put missions first will prosper here at home.

We've been doing it now for all these 39 years. We're today standing back of our 300 missionaries. They're out there in the regions beyond, 300 of them, laboring for the Lord Jesus Christ while we stand back of them financially and by our prayers.

Now you say, Dr. Smith, I can't understand how you can get these great offerings for missions in Canada. If you were in the United States where there's so much money, I could understand it. But you're in Canada where there isn't very much money.

How can you get these offerings in Canada? That's what a Roman Catholic priest wanted to know one time a number of years ago. He got up in the morning, he sat down to his breakfast of bacon and eggs, as Roman Catholic priests sometimes will, and he picked up the morning newspaper, the Globe, Canada's national paper, and he read a little item about the missionary giving of the people's church. It was a back years ago when we didn't know much about giving to missions, and the amount for the entire year was only \$43,000 for four missions.

But this Roman Catholic priest and editor thought it was a large amount. And so before he commenced his breakfast, he put the paper down, he says, that's a lie, that's false. There isn't any church in Toronto that could give that much to missions.

And he went on eating his bacon and eggs. And then when he got through his breakfast, he picked up the paper again, he looked at it once more, when he said, perhaps it is true. But if it is true, then there's only one solution.

That church is made up of multimillionaires. And having solved the problem to his complete satisfaction, he folded up his napkin and he left the table. But you know, his curiosity had been aroused.

He wasn't satisfied, not for one single moment. He sat down, he wrote me a letter. The first letter I had ever received in my life from a Roman Catholic priest.

I answered it just as courteously as I could. My dear father. And I went on.

And I told him all about the missionary giving of the people's church. That we didn't have one single wealthy family in the church, not one. But that our people, some 3,500, had caught a missionary vision.

They were living for missions. They were working for missions. They were giving for missions.

And that we held an annual missionary convention, took up a faith promise offering, and that thus God blessed us, made it possible for us to support some 360 missionaries in the regions beyond. And when that Roman Catholic priest published his newspaper the following week, the leading article was an editorial which he himself had written on the missionary giving of the people's church. I'll never forget how it ended.

It ended like this. We are the true custodians of a faith. And yet we allow one Protestant church to give more money to missions than all our Roman Catholic churches from Ontario to British Columbia combined.

Shame on us. And for the first time in my life, I realized that a Roman Catholic priest and editor was using me, a Protestant missionary, to shame his own Roman Catholic people into giving more money for Roman Catholic missions. Now perhaps if I tell you how we do not get that money, it might help.

Sometimes the negative is more emphatic than the positive. You'll feel sorry for us, but I can't help you. You know, we never have a concert in order to raise money for missions.

We never have a bazaar, even, in order to raise money for missions. But it's much worse than that. We never even have a rummage sale.

Think if you will of a church without a rummage sale. We never even have a rummage sale in order to raise money for missions. Why, we never even have an oyster stew.

Not because I'm against oysters. I'll swallow them if I'll not chew them. I don't object to these methods of raising money.

But listen, every month of my life, month in, month out, whether I'm in Australia or New Zealand or the United States or South Africa or Great Britain, or whether I'm in my own pulpit in Toronto, Canada, and occasionally I am in my pulpit in Toronto, Canada. Every month of my life, I have to get a little over \$25,000 for the support of my some 300 missionaries in the regions beyond. How many of you businessmen have as big an obligation? That has been my responsibility for years upon years now.

And I've had to trust God for that amount every month of my life, year out and year in. You know, God has never failed me. Never once have we had to send a short allowance.

Every year God has answered prayer. Every year God has sent in the money so that we've been able to send out full allowances, year after year, all during the years of our ministry. That's been my responsibility.

Now listen, have you ever in your life known a rummage sale to produce \$25,000? Even in the United States. I never have. What does a good businessman do when he comes across a method that won't work? He scraps a dozen, doesn't he? And he looks for a method that will work.

Now if that method will not work, why should I use it? If I've got to get \$25,000 every month of my life for the support of my missionaries, and if they're depending upon me under God, and if I can't get it by holding a rummage sale, then why should I hold a rummage sale? I've got to find a better method. What is the method? What is the secret? It's so simple that I almost hesitate to suggest it. It is simply the method of the annual missionary convention and a faith promise offering.

And that's all it amounts to. All during the years of my ministry, for over 39 years now, I've held an annual missionary convention and I've taken up a faith promise offering. And I've held these conventions not only in my own church, but all over the country in the United States of America, as well as in Canada, in churches of all denominations.

I've never known one to fail. Every one succeeds because I believe the annual missionary convention and the faith promise offering is God's plan. It increases the missionary giving of the church 10 times over as soon as it is introduced.

Now listen, the secret is getting everyone in the church to participate in the annual missionary convention and the faith promise offering. Let me show you what I mean. I have, I have a little more, I have a few more than 200 elders in my church.

I think more elders than any other church in the world so far as I know. I have over 200 elders in my church. Now no man ever becomes an official in the people's church unless he is backing the worldwide missionary program of the church.

So I go to the files, I look up his name, I find out first of all whether or not he is systematically backing the great worldwide work of the church before I invite him to become an elder. And then we have two other standards that we think are wise. Our elders must be non-smokers, every one of them.

We do not have a single elder who uses tobacco in any way, shape, or form. And our elders must be teetotalers. We do not have a single elder who is addicted to strong drink in any degree whatever.

And we find that if we can get elders, if we can get officials who are backing a great missionary program in a systematic way, month by month, and if they are teetotalers, and if they are non-smokers, we find that as a rule they are spiritual men. And these are the kind of men I like to have around me as officials in the church. You know how much our 200 elders gave to our missionary work last year? Last year our 200 elders gave ninety-eight thousand dollars to our missionary work.

Wouldn't you like to have those kind of officials? Those are the kind of officials I'd like to have in my church. Ninety-eight thousand dollars for my 200 elders. Then we have a Sunday school, not a very large Sunday school for many years.

Now it's growing. It's larger now than it used to be. It has never had more than 400 in it for about 30 years.

We were never able to build it up because our church was a downtown church. And then four years ago we built a brand new church eight miles north in the very center of the residential district of Toronto, seating 2,500 people. And now our Sunday school has increased until we have seen more than 1,800 in the Sunday school.

I know that doesn't compare with the great Sunday schools you have here in the United States. I know that your Sunday schools are much larger than that, but that's the largest Sunday school in Canada. And so that means something in our country.

You know how much our Sunday school gave commissions last year? Our Sunday school gave one hundred and seventy-three thousand dollars. One hundred and seventy-three thousand dollars. We would never dream of allowing a parent to give for a child.

As soon as the child is seven years of age, the teacher instructs the child, showing him how to make out his own faith promise offering permissions. And we see to it that every boy and every girl in every class in the Sunday school makes out a faith promise offering permissions. And we see to it that the entire Sunday school cooperates in our missionary work.

And by having the Sunday school give 173,000 dollars, we have a Sunday school that is at least missionary-hearted and missionary-minded. Now I have a choir. I have almost 100 in the choir.

The choir sings every Sunday morning at 11, every Sunday evening at 7, and every Wednesday evening at 8. We have our choir sing three times every week. And we have a choir, as I've stated, of nearly 100. Now do you know how much that choir gave to our missionary work last year? Last year our choir gave 30,000 dollars.

Now that's the kind of a choir I like to have. I agree with you. It's wonderful if you can have a choir that can sing.

Of course it is. If you can get a choir that can sing, it's worthwhile. I agree with you.

But if I have to make a choice, if I have to make a choice between a choir that could sing and a choir that could give, I would take the choir that could give every time. It's wonderful when a choir can do both, when the choir can not only sing but can also give. We wouldn't dream of having anyone in our choir unless he or she, unless that choir member was giving systematically to missions.

You see, we make missions the basis of everything in our church. If anybody wants to become a member of the choir, he must be giving to our missionary work. He must be interested in the worldwide program of the church.

If anyone wants to be an official in the church, he must be backing the great worldwide program of the church. And when you get everyone backing the program, then you can do wonders and you'll see miracles. I have 3,500 people who have caught a vision, 3,500 people who are interested in missions, 3,500 people who are putting missions first and who are giving to missions in a systematic way month by month.

In other words, God has given me a missionary church, and he is blessed because we have put missions first. And my friend, any church that can do that will prosper. Any church.

Some years ago, I was invited to, I suppose, the most famous church in the United States to hold an evangelistic campaign, 1938. I'm referring to Park Street Congregational Church, Boston, where Dr. Harold Ockengay is the pastor. I held a campaign, an evangelistic campaign, for two weeks and three Sundays.

I saw the aisles filled with young men and young women making their way to the altar to get saved. I saw that church revolutionized by the Spirit of God. During the second week of the campaign, Dr. Ockengay called me into his office.

Now, Dr. Smithy said, I understand that you hold a missionary convention in your church every year. I said, I do. Well, he said, this church is 135 years old.

It has never seen its first missionary convention. I looked at him in amazement. A church without a missionary convention.

I could hardly believe it. But he assured me it was so. Now, he said, would you be willing to come back to Boston next year and to hold the first convention ever to be held in the history of this church? I said, doctor, tell me, how much are you giving to me since now? He was ashamed to answer my question.

Finally, I got the answer. \$3,200 a year. Wealthy Park Street.

Aristocratic Park Street. I knew that he was spending twice as much as that on his quartet and on other secondary interests and only giving \$3,200 a year to the most important work of the Church of Jesus Christ. I said, all right, doctor, I'll come.

The following year, I went to Boston. He told me that he would sit down in the pew. He said, I've never seen a convention.

I don't know the first thing about it. I wouldn't know what to do. He said, I'll hand the church over to you for eight days, Sunday to Sunday.

You can do anything you want to do. I held that first convention. I went back every year for six years, and I conducted the missionary convention in Park Street Congregational Church, Boston.

Do you know how much that church is giving commissions now, year by year? A little more than \$275,000. They have climbed from \$3,200 a year to over \$275,000 a year as a direct result of an annual missionary convention. I've seen that happen all over the country, anywhere it has been tried.

Works in any church, a large church or a small church, a church of any denomination, just so long as it's a spiritual church and the people catch a missionary vision, if they're willing to hold an annual missionary convention and take up a faith farmer's offering, God works and works miracles. Do you know that only a month ago I closed the last convention in the People's Church, Toronto, Canada? I'll never forget the last Sunday night. It has happened time after time now, but it's always fresh and new to me.

I stood on the platform at the last service about a month ago. I looked out at that great audience, and I looked at those people, 2,500 of them seated. Then I watched my ushers as they carried in extra chairs until nearly 200 extra chairs had been brought in.

And at the close of that service, after having taken up the last offering permissions, I was able to stand before that congregation and announce that God had given us \$325,000. And that happened only about a month ago. And you know what happened as soon as I made that announcement? The choir stood and sang the Hallelujah Chorus.

I've heard that again and again. You say, but we have the Hallelujah Chorus here in the southern states. I want to tell you something.

Unless you have heard the Hallelujah Chorus sung just after a church has taken up an offering of \$325,000 permissions, you've never heard it sung. I want to tell you that after those people had poured out their money for God to the amount of \$325,000, they sang the Hallelujah Chorus as I think I've never heard it sung before in all my life. And I want to tell you, my friends, I wouldn't want to be a pastor of a church that didn't put missions first.

I can't tell you the joy that has been mine down through the years of my ministry as I've held missionary conventions and as I've led my people in this great work of world evangelization. You know, it's getting gooder and gooder all the time. God is blessing more and more year after year.

You realize that I'll be celebrating my diamond jubilee next year, 60 years in the ministry. I tell you that's glorious. 60 years in the ministry.

For the last 60 years, I've been proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I'm enjoying it more today than ever in my life before. And you know, I'm feeling better and stronger than I've ever felt in all my life. You know, I haven't always been robust and strong and vigorous and healthy like I am now.

I used to be delicate. But you know, within the last few years, I put on some 20 pounds, and I'm feeling 100% better than I've ever felt in my life before. And you know, I'm traveling more today, and I'm preaching more today, and I'm working harder today than ever in my life.

And God is blessing in a wonderful and glorious way. It's getting better all the time. I don't know whether I'll celebrate my diamond jubilee in heaven or whether I'll celebrate it here upon earth, but it doesn't make any difference.

It doesn't matter where I celebrate it, but I rejoice, and I will rejoice if God gives me 60 years in the ministry, proclaiming the message of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe there will come a day when countless millions from heathenism will march by the throne of God in heaven. You and I will be standing around about the throne, and these people from heathenism will be pointing a finger of scorn at you and at me.

And with their hearts broken, they'll be crying out, no man cared for my soul. And you and I, trying to excuse ourselves, we'll look up into the face of God, and we'll cry out, but Lord, Lord, am I my brother's keeper? Am I my brother's keeper? God will answer, the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from Africa, from India, from Japan, from South America, from the islands of the seas. And you and I will go into heaven, saved, but with blood, human blood on these hands of ours, the blood of those we might have borne, the blood of those we neglected.

Because God's word says, his blood, his blood will I require, will I demand at thine hand. You see now why I'm a pastor second, and a missionary first, why I'm an author second, and a missionary first, a hymn writer second, and a missionary first, an evangelist second, and a missionary first. I do not want to go into heaven with human blood on these hands of mine.

Therefore I want to do everything that lies in my power to evangelize the world, and to give the gospel of Jesus Christ to every country on the face of the earth. That's my responsibility, that's my task, that's what I'm living for, that's what I'm working for, and all my talents are being invested today in worldwide evangelization. I want to see the gospel given to the entire world.

Therefore I say again, the supreme task of the church, and I believe it, the supreme task of the church is the evangelization of the world. Will you let me ask this question as I close? How many young people are there here tonight who are saying, Dr. Smith, I'll pray daily about my life's work. I don't know what God wants me to do, but I'll make it a matter of prayer, and I'll pray daily about my life's work, and if Jesus Christ makes it clear to me that he wants me to go into full-time service for him, at least I can say I'm willing.

I'm willing to go into full-time service if Jesus Christ makes it plain to me that he wants me to go into full-time service. Very quickly, how many young people can stand on that proposition? Will you stand just where you are, all over the congregation? You're saying I'll pray about my life's work, and if Jesus Christ makes it clear to me that he wants me in full-time service, at least I'm willing. How many other young people can say that tonight? Will you stand wherever you are? Young people, I want to say three things to you tonight.

Will you come and stand right in front of me here and face me? Come right down and just stand here and face me tonight. I want to say three things to you tonight that you'll never forget as long as you live. Come as close to the front as you can.

Let me talk to you just for two or three minutes. Now let me say three things to you that I've said to thousands of young people all over the world. First, remember these.

First, there are two kinds of volunteers. There are active volunteers, and there are passive volunteers. Now the passive volunteer says, Lord, here am I. Next year, he comes forward again, and he says, Lord, I'm still here.

Next year, he comes forward once more, and he says, Lord, I'm here yet. Here he always has been. Here he always will be.

I have never known God to use a passive volunteer. The active volunteer says, Lord, here am I. Send me. He puts a goal into his decision.

He puts his hand to the plow. He never looks back. He says, I'm going through, Jesus.

I'm going through. I'll pay the price, whatever others do. He gets a new goal before him, and he heads straight toward that goal.

He gets whatever Bible training he needs. He prepares himself for his life's work so that he's ready when God wants him and needs him, and he presses straight forward toward the goal that God wants him to reach. He's an active volunteer.

God can use active volunteers. Second, no sooner will you become an active volunteer than the devil will do everything that lies in his power to discourage you. First of all, he'll turn your own loved ones against you so that the members of your own family will not want you to become missionaries or to go into Christian service.

If he can't succeed that way, he'll make it impossible for you to get enough money to get through Bible school, to train. If he can't win in that way, he'll do what he has done in the case of hundreds. He'll get you young women interested in some young man who has no idea of ever becoming a missionary.

You marry that young man, and you can say goodbye forever to the mission field. You'll never even see it. He'll get you young men interested in some young woman who has no idea of ever becoming a missionary.

You marry that young woman, and you'll be kept at home. You'll never get to the field. I can't tell you how many have come to me in middle life, and they've said, Dr. Smith, God called me when I was young, but I married a man who wasn't going.

Now we have children. Now it's too late. Now we have to take God's second best, and we might have had God's best, and I've had them break down and weep in my presence.

Listen, young people, if God has called you into full-time service, and you have become an active volunteer, you have no right to even keep company with anyone except someone who is traveling in your direction. And if you keep company with someone who is traveling in your direction, you will both reach the same destination. Be on your guard lest Satan turn you aside.

Third and last, how are you going to know whether or not God wants you in full-time service? Two things. First, start praying about your life's work every day, and pray every day the prayer of the Apostle Paul, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? Second, as you pray, read missionary biography. When I was a young man, 18 years of age, I got a whole shelf of missionary biographies.

I would read two or three chapters a day. Every now and again I'd have to close the book and get down on my knees. It wasn't long until God spoke to me.

By reading missionary biography, you will put yourself in an atmosphere where the Spirit of God can reveal himself to you. But not until you get into that atmosphere will God be able to reveal his will and to

say to you, this is the way, walk ye in it. I guarantee if you pray about your life's work daily, if you read missionary biography, it will not be long until God will show you what he wants you to do.

You young men ought to know all about David Livingstone. You ought to know all about Robert Muppet. You should know all about Hudson Taylor.

You should know all about Judson. You should know about these great missionaries of the past. And you young women, you should know all about Mary Schleser and you should know all about Ann Judson.

And if you become acquainted with those who have been missionaries before you, it will not be long until God will speak to your heart and you'll know what God wants you to do. I have one last thing to say. I ask it of the audience.

How many fathers and mothers are there here tonight? Your children may be babes in arms. It doesn't make any difference. You're saying tonight, I'm willing to lay my children on the altar for God.

God can have them for the foreign mission field if he wants them. I would rather give my children than to have God take my children. I would rather my son would go out to save life than to destroy life.

I'm willing to place my children on the altar for God. God can have them in full-time service if he wants them. How many fathers and mothers can stand on that proposition and back these young people? Thank God for so many.

Do you see what I'm doing? No use getting these young people unless I get you. I want you to encourage them. I want you to pray with them and for them.

I want you to back them in every way you can. And so if I can get the young people and if I can get you, then the Spirit of God can do something through these young people and get them into full-time service for the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I'd like to dedicate you to God.

Will you close your eyes just as you're standing? Lord Jesus, we dedicate the fathers and the mothers first of all. Theirs will be the harder task. Someday there may be a vacant chair, but they'll have the joy of knowing that that son of theirs or that daughter of theirs has been chosen by thee as an ambassador to some foreign country.

And oh God, if thou will so honor them, they'll be able to rejoice and to praise thee. May they never take these children back off the altar. Then Father, we would dedicate these dear young people to thee tonight in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Having put their hand to the plow, may they never turn back. May they never even look back. May they study missionary biography.

May they offer the prayer day by day, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? Will thou lead them and guide them? May they get a new goal in life. May they head straight toward that goal and never turn aside until they find themselves in the place of thy choosing for them. And now our Father, as we sing together the little chorus, where he leads me, I will follow.

May we sing it as a prayer. May we mean it. May we sing it from our hearts.

And will thou speak to us as we take our seats tonight while we're singing together, where he leads me, I will follow. We ask it, our Father, in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16672.mp3>

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