

# New Testament Evangelism in a Modern World

by Peter Brandon

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*Peter Brandon emphasizes the urgent need for revitalized New Testament evangelism in a modern world, calling for repentance and genuine engagement with the community.*

**Duration:** 49:44

**Scripture:** Luke 5:1

**Topics:** "Evangelism", "Return to First Love"

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## Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the urgent need for New Testament evangelism in today's world, highlighting the decline of assemblies and the necessity for believers to return to their first love. He stresses the importance of understanding the Gospel, the Trinity's role in salvation, and the reality of a lost eternity, which compels Christians to take their evangelistic responsibilities seriously. Brandon calls for a cleansing of the church and a return to authentic, impactful preaching that reaches out to the lost, urging believers to 'launch out into the deep' and engage with their communities. He illustrates this with the story of Peter's miraculous catch of fish, underscoring the need for depth in evangelism and the importance of humility and brokenness in the face of God's blessings.

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## Transcript

Tonight we're going to speak on New Testament Evangelism in a modern world. Now this is really vital. I think we must face up to the fact that in London and in many parts of Britain so many assemblies have closed.

We used to have 120 assemblies in London. We only have 15 now and it's quite obvious that we have left our first love. We need to repent and return to the Lord.

Now tonight is a vast subject. I shan't be able to deal with it fully but we're going to look at this subject of modern evangelism in this hour. Now I've been asking myself some questions.

Do I really believe in the Gospel of God? Do I really believe in the Great Trinity? The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Do I believe that that Trinity is transcendent outside of time and space and looks upon all created matter as a small thing? Do I believe that that glorious Trinity is imminent? You say, what do you mean by that? Everything that God makes he stamps his glory upon it. So that the heavens declare the glory of God and the expenses show forth his handiwork.

Do I believe in the Trinity's work in salvation? Yes, it's absolutely vital. Why? It was the Father that sent the Son. It was the Son that died upon the cross and bore our sins in his own body on the tree that we might have a once and for all forgiveness.

And then it is the Holy Spirit that comes into our life so that we have the experience of not being born again but born anew. So it's absolutely vital that we believe in this Great Trinity. But how do we preach it? Do I believe that man is a damaged person? Do I believe in the creation story of the fall of man? Do I really believe that man has a sinful nature from birth? Do I believe that he has broken the commandments and therefore he is guilty before God? Here it comes.

Do I really believe in a lost eternity? Do I believe that there is a literal heaven and there is a literal hell? And immediately I believe that a great responsibility is placed upon me. I cannot play about with the gospel. Thirdly, do I believe in the great cost of salvation? Am I really convinced in the incarnation that the word was made flesh and dwelt among us? Do I really believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ was a perfect man and at the same time the perfect Son of God? Do I believe that he died on the cross so that sin may be put away once and for all? Do I really believe in the fact of the mighty resurrection of Christ? Do I believe in his ascension that all power has been given unto him? All power.

Now the moment I believe that I'm under a great responsibility. But more. As we look at the world situation we can see it is in serious trouble.

I wish some of you dear people would be in Western Europe at this moment. We are totally bankrupt and they are looking for a superman. They don't know it but they're looking for what the Bible has prophesied, the man of sin.

Now the coming of the Lord is right on us. These are not just the last days, they're the last seconds of the last days. All Christians are going home.

Therefore because of the imminence of the Lord's return a great responsibility is upon us. Now I have been in homes where children play at gospel meeting. Someone gets up on a chair and he asks the other children to sing a hymn and would you believe it they beat time.

Then another child will get up and preach the gospel for about five minutes and then someone else will give the last hymn and would you believe it the little rascals will even pray. But it's a charade. It's not real.

It's a game. They're playing at it. Now let's face it many of our gospel meetings are a charade.

About 40 or 50 Christians will meet and there may be one unsaved and the gospel is preached as though everyone there was unsaved. And it's taking 50 people one hour to preach the gospel to one. Last year the JW's, I don't call them the Jehovah's Witnesses, baptized more people in Britain than all the evangelicals put together.

How did they do it? Shall I give you a demonstration? What's happening? The devil is copying Christian propagation and he's doing it in a very successful way in order to propagate his poison. And you see evangelicals can be asleep. Now let me share this with you before I read the scriptures.

When I first went into the Lord's work, and that would be in 1947, the assemblies and evangelical churches were on fire. We had a 3,000 seater tent in Cardiff. A 2,000 seater tent in Liverpool.

The music hall was hired once every three years for the preaching of the gospel in Aberdeen. In London a 1,000 seater tent. In the south of England another 1,000 seater tent.

And the nation was being shaken by the preaching of the gospel. That's all gone. I remember when I first started out in the Lord's work you would go to a gospel hall and there would be at least 15 on the street inviting people in.

That's all gone. Last night we were talking about the God that answers by fire. Let him be God.

And somehow we've lost our fire. But we need to get it back. Now the principles of God never change.

Can I repeat that? The principles of God never change. But his practices do. And we mustn't just turn a handle and go round and round with gospel meetings and they're not successful.

We must get back to the scriptures, back to the word of God so that we preach the first century gospel to a 21st century society. Now what scripture am I going to give you tonight? Well it's Luke chapter 5. It's a marine miracle and nearly all the marine miracles have an evangelical lesson. Let's start from verse 1. And it came to pass that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God he stood by the lake of Janezareth and saw two boats or two ships standing by the lake but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets and he entered into one of the boats which was Simon's and asked him that he would thrust out a little from the land and he sat down.

Now that's quite significant. He sat down and taught the people out of the boat. First of all you will notice the people pressed upon him.

You will never find that in the Old Testament. You remember when the law was given on Mount Sinai the great call was come not near even if an animal came near it had to be shot through with a dart. Now why? God is infinitely holy and just.

Man is unclean because of sin. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags and that word filthy is a word that I'm almost ashamed to speak of but it does mean a filthy rag and therefore the people had to see the holiness and the glory of God and in the light of that glory they couldn't draw nigh. For instance if just a glimpse of the glory of God came into this building every one of us would be bowed in his presence.

Such is the majesty and the holiness of God. Now here we find the people pressing upon him. Why? When John the Baptist introduced the Lord Jesus to the world he did it in a remarkable way.

With probably a loud voice he said behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world and therefore right at the commencement of our Lord's ministry there was the cross. And in view of the fact that he came in this world to die the people now were able to press upon him. Why? Because the cross was always in mind.

Another lesson when it's rumoured that the Lord Jesus is in the house you will always have a congregation and therefore it's rumoured that the Lord is there and what happens the people press upon him to hear the word of God. Now you notice that they were pressing upon him not to see the miracles, not to hear a wonderful oration but they were pressing upon him to hear the word of God. Now why? Miracles were spectacular but they only affected the body not the soul.

When the word of God is propounded it doesn't change the body but it does have a complete direct objective in the soul. And when a soul is saved he's saved for the whole of eternity and that comes through the preaching of the word. And therefore the Lord who gave us the scripture was expounding the book and it must have been wonderful to have heard him expounding the word of God and the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God.

Now may it be that God will make a specialist in propounding the word of God in the power of the spirit. And then you will notice the pulpit. It was probably the hinder part of a small boat, fishing boat.

Now this is interesting. In the time of Maccabees it was registered unclean but you will never find that in the Old Testament. Admittedly sometimes a fishing boat could smell as you all know and it needs to be cleansed.

But the Lord uses a boat and when the Pharisees saw him using a boat they would shake their heads like that. That's not right. But it was right for the Lord Jesus.

Why? He always took the pulpit to the people. You don't find the people coming to him. Here they did.

But sometimes you find him by the bedside, sometimes by the seaside, sometimes by the hillside and sometimes by the fireside again. And he is constantly taking the word to the people. And here he gets in Peter's boat and says just launch out a little and he sits down.

Now that's amazing. There must have been hundreds of people listening to him. And when you sit down your voice is not always as strong as when you stand up.

But his voice must have been so powerful and clear that even in a sitting position all the people would hear him. What a lesson. And then we read something very special.

When he had closed speaking. Now in preaching don't be too long. People are used to watching the television.

They are not used to lectures. And therefore in gospel preaching don't preach for an hour. Martyn Lloyd-Jones could do it.

But he was one in a million. And when he had closed or ceased preaching he knew when to start and he knew when to stop. And that's an important lesson in preaching.

And then immediately we have that beautiful principle and you see the people pressing, preaching the word and the unique pulpit of the master sitting and declaring the glad tidings. Then we read this. Peter was washing his net.

Now why was he washing his net? Because they had toiled all night and caught nothing. And when a person catches nothing the best thing to do is to wash the net. Don't go year by year, year by year telling the Lord you're faithful if you're not catching anything.

Be honest about it. When there's betterness tell God. If you keep telling God you're faithful in just sticking in a little gospel hall, shall I call it claustrophobic preaching, please don't imagine that you're faithful.

You're faithful when you take the word of God to the people. Now here is Peter washing his net. Now in my own experience, and I shall never forget this, God showed to me that was absolutely imperative.

If there's going to be blessing we need to wash the net. Now how should we do it? If we had the washing just before the breaking of bread in our own private homes we wouldn't need washing when we speak about the gospel. If we all lived the great truth of baptism, dead to sin and alive to God, you wouldn't need a message like this.

But we go on for years and we hardly see a soul saved and we think this is normal so that we've got used to barrenness. Never do that. If you get used to barrenness God will allow you to be so barren that eventually the lampstand will be removed.

What we need is the washing of the net. Now I'm not going to speak about you, I'm going to speak about myself. First of all when there's barrenness in my ministry I must get alone and say Lord search me.

I have besetting sins and so do you. And when those besetting sins are functional you're barren in your own private lives. And we need a time when God washes us thoroughly through individually.

Then husbands and wives must get together so that there must be a love relationship. And if there is friction between husband and wife that should be repaired and we need washing there. With our boys and girls who are Christians they must ask themselves the question, am I being obedient to my parents? And the parents must ask another question, am I showing them Christ? So that in the family there is a washing process.

Now this is vital. Then we should go over our business lives. Now may I say this with care, make sure we're not invading income tax.

All Christians should pay their share. Now this is vital. And in everything in business life it must be brought under the scrutiny of the Lord and our business lives must be straight.

Now sometimes our business lives are not straight. Now it's vital that the business speaks for the glory of God. And then our assembly life needs to be washed.

We must look across the room and we must say this, can I really shake hands with everyone? Am I in love with everyone? Have I been saying something about a certain brother that is gossip? And we need to look around and say well my heart is pure. I love them all. Now why do I say? I was in the north of England having a mission and it was a great week.

And the whole assembly was coming to prayer. About 300 people were there in the hall each night. And many unsaved were coming.

But there was no blessing. It was a Monday night. There were many prayers going up from those who were present of friends that they were bringing who were unsaved.

And as I was in that prayer meeting the Lord clearly said to me speak on a can. And I said to the Lord I can't speak on that. It's a gospel meeting with all the unsaved people there.

Speak on a can. It's a gospel meeting Lord. I can't speak on that.

It would cause confusion. Speak on a can. And I went up on the pulpit gave out the opening hymn and didn't know really where I was.

I prayed an evangelical prayer. Then quickly I asked a person to give the notice. As I was sitting there bowed in his presence speak on a can.

If you want my presence you must speak on what I tell you to. I've never preached on a can in my life. I preached on a can.

Finished 10 minutes before time. And I said this at the end and I will never say this again. If you're on a can and you're covering sin and you're determined to cover remember this.

God can deal with you in judgment. I stood at the back and 300 people shook me by the hand like this. Good night.

Good night. Good night. I went home and the man I was staying with was a very godly man.

And he says Peter the whole assembly was being blessed but tonight you've thrown a bomb among us. You've destroyed it all. I don't think you'll ever recapture what you've lost.

I went home and had a good grumble with the Lord. I said you kept on telling me to do it and look at the trouble how wrong I was. The next night half the congregation was missing and I preached the gospel with all my heart.

And as I was standing at the back the leading teacher in the whole area came and said Brother would you call the elders? I'm the Acan. Well I was very pleased. I said I'm glad someone has taken it seriously.

He said Brother Brandon would you call the elders? I said what do you mean? I'm the Acan. The elders were called and he had been living with another woman for five years. I've never been in a gathering like it.

He says Brother I want you to come home with me. I was reluctant but that night a soul was saved in that meeting. I went home and when he told his wife what was happening it was worse than bereavement.

But he got through and he's been restored to the Lord and he was used by God to bless many. He's now in heaven with his dear wife. But you see there was moral sin there and you will never see blessing where there's a moral sin.

I hope that comes to us in power. We need the net washed when we're going to see blessing. Why? How can we condemn sin in the lives of the unsaved and condone it among ourselves? That's downright hypocrisy.

But we need the net washed. And then what was next? The Lord Jesus gave them their marching orders and when he had ceased speaking he said unto Simon launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft. Two things.

Launch out into the deep. Depth. Let down your nets for a draft.

Let's reverse that. First of all it's distance. Secondly it's depth.

Now this is very important. You see we must remember this that the Lord is not only the Lord of his servant. He's the Lord of the harvest.

And sometimes a shawl of fish will move and he's the one that knows the movement. And if we're going on just turning a handle he'll pass us by. We've got to learn to launch out.

Now have you noticed in Acts chapter 1 when all the disciples failed the Lord gave them a massive program. It was a program to launch out. You shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses both in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth.

Launching out. Not claustrophobic evangelism. All shut up in a gospel hall.

If they had done that they would have died in two years. But they were launching out. Acts chapter 1 Jerusalem.

Acts chapter 2 Jerusalem. Acts chapter 3 Jerusalem. Gen.

Judea. Then Acts chapter 8 Samaria. Then God saves Saul.

And what happens? He takes the gospel all over the Roman world and a small group of people took the gospel all over the world in one generation. In 1923 God brought a group of people together from various denominations and they broke bread. Just a little group of people about a piano shop in Dublin.

And the glory of heaven filled that room. And that little group started to spread. It spread all over England.

And in less than one generation there were missionaries all over the world. One generation. Here we are in Australia and the Lord is saying to us launch out.

Get into the place where the people are. I wonder if I can share this with you. After being 10 years in the Lord's work my wife and I got low before God.

And this is what my wife said to me. She said when you're there preaching there's a good number and a few get saved. But when you go it all goes back to the original thing.

Do you think a fortnight's mission is the answer? I said no. What's the vision the Lord has for us? We need to think in terms of three years. And then what? All those who are able should go into the area with little booklets and visit 20 houses for three years.

Get some get well cards. Get some bereavement cards. Get some birthday cards.

So you get to know the people in those 20 houses. Don't give them one full gospel book because people are not readers. Split it up.

So we had 10 booklets. The first can I rely on the Bible? Could be read in five minutes. The second book who is God? The third book what's wrong with the world? The fourth who is Jesus Christ? Why did he die on the cross? Evidence of the resurrection.

And then the last two books faith and repentance. Oh and one more sure. And it would take a worker two years to get all those books in.

And probably after three years you'll be only visiting 10 people. But that's better than preaching to yourselves isn't it? Each person going out in the area evangelizing. Launch out into the deep.

You see we must get away from mere gospel. What struck me was this in the first year of the Lord's work in Tick Hill. I saw some men outside a pub and I went to give them a leaflet.

And one man said to me in Broad Yorkshire. You people expect us to come and play on your wicket. You never come and play on our wicket.

That shook me. I said would you let me come and play on your wicket? He says I'll go and see the barman. He said yes no more than five minutes.

And we had a wonderful time. And the people came. And that's why I'm going out in all kinds of places to preach the gospel.

Now I've never mentioned this at all in a public meeting. But they invite me now into the bingo. What the bingo? Yes.

They're all unsaved and a few backsliders. And I say this something like this. 323 and they take it off Romans.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That's me. That's you.

623 Romans. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. If you die in your sins you're lost.

And he doesn't want you to be lost. He wants you to have eternal life. 58 Romans.

God commends his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. And I talked to him about the cross. In 1013 Romans.

Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And then they call me to their tables. And then they come to the gospel meeting.

And sometimes about 20 people will come in. Why? Because you've gone out. You see we've got to get into those people.

Launch out into the deep. And then let down your nets for a draught. Now we must have preaching with depth.

Now unfortunately in Australia. And you'll forgive me saying it. You know I love the people.

And I love coming over. I've never yet seen deep conviction. Never.

When we have the big tent about 70 professed. But I never saw one night when we had that big tent of deep conviction. Now why? Is it the sovereign work of God? Yes up to a point.

But there's only deep conviction when God's people are cleansed. When the church is filled with the Holy Ghost. When all sin is dealt with.

And what I believe. And I say this to you from my heart. We need that cleansing now.

And when that cleansing takes place. The Spirit of God begins to work. And you see deep conviction.

Well when you see it what happens? Sin becomes personal. Sin becomes painful. Sin becomes problematic.

And you begin to see people trembling in their seats. Then we need divine enlightenment. This is lovely.

You may preach the cross every night. But that doesn't mean to say enlightenment's going to come. It's a wonderful thing when you're preaching the cross.

And you see God giving light to the mind. And you see tears. They see that Christ died for their sins.

And brokenness. And when you see that conviction and that real brokenness. Be sure of this.

You're in the presence of God. This is revival. Launch out into the deep.

Note and let down. We don't want shallow fish. We want to get deep in the things of God.

And Peter says we've toiled all the night and caught nothing. Now why? He was a professional fisherman. He knew that you couldn't catch fish in the daytime when the sun was on the water.

And the fish would go to the bottom of the sea. You only catch fish at night time. So he says we've toiled all night and caught nothing.

Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And they lure it. And then they start pulling it in.

And it's got stuck. And then they pull harder and it's not stuck. It's full of fish.

Why? They've gone out into the deep. And they look at the net and it's all alive. The Lord told them let down the nets.

They just let down the net. Must have been a big one. Because the net was not only breaking they leaned over the gammel of the boat and says Peter and John come we've got an overload here.

They weren't exclusive. Keep it to ourselves. They leaned over the boat to their friends and told them to come.

You see that's a beautiful thing. He dealt with the disciples here and they obey the Lord and look at the blessing. Beloved we've got to get out in the deep.

We've got to see the deep work of God. Now can I say this to you as a friend? Never play a gospel meeting. Take it seriously.

The unsaved are out there and somehow we've got to get out there and really meet the people. And you'll be surprised that people with a broken heart out there and they need our help. And sometimes when you send a little get well card to an old lady or some of the young men will do a bit of gardening for a poor old lady.

That speaks volumes to the people. We need to get out. Listen to it.

Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft. Never play a gospel meeting. It's too serious.

And when they had this done they enclosed the great multitude of fishes and their net break and they beckoned unto their partners that they should come and help them. And they came and it filled both the ships. And would you believe it both the ships were beginning to sink too.

So what a net of fish. And then when you catch a big catch of fish don't boast. Don't put it in the Christian papers.

Don't exaggerate. You know that's one thing we evangelicals do that's so wrong. We boast about the blessings.

Don't do that. Don't exaggerate. If five souls profess say just five.

But when they got this great blessing Peter was broken. So were all the others smashed up because of their unbelief. And they said depart from me for I am a sinful man O Lord.

You see if God gives us a great harvest and I think he can. I believe that in Sydney there are those who want to really see God working. And when God blesses you don't boast about it.

Don't exaggerate. Get broken. And you know it's easier to get a broken net than a broken seine.

And Peter was broken. The disciples were all broken. And then they left their net and followed him fully.

Real consecration. May God give you a net full of fish. And two boat loads full.

But may it cause humiliation and brokenness. And may we see God working so that we shall fully follow him right to the end. And soon we'll hear the shout.

Experience the change. And we'll meet him in the end.

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