

Matthew 28:16

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing Christ, loving one another, and actively witnessing to our faith in a world that needs the gospel.

Duration: 37:09

Scripture: Psalm 107:2, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:16, Acts 1:1-2, Acts 1:8, Romans 1:16

Topics: "Gospel Power", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of the gospel and how it can transform lives. He uses the analogy of a hunter who knows the power of his weapon and has trophies to show for it. Similarly, believers should understand and experience the power of the gospel in their lives. The speaker also mentions the importance of proclaiming the gospel to others, as many people may not have heard it yet. He encourages believers to be faithful in sharing the message of Jesus Christ and breaking down Satan's strongholds.

Transcript

In one announcement of what our brother had to say, we were having a week of special meetings, the gospel, oh, not the gospel center, the business. You wouldn't think after 16 years I would sit at Northgate for 16 years and sit at the gospel center. Maybe it was that announcement about welcome, excuse me, that.

No, at Northgate, our brother Linden Sheridan, a brother that is in use of the Lord. I don't know how many of you have heard him. He has a study on the tabernacle that the Lord has certainly blessed, and that will not be the subject.

He's speaking on the church today, and we're looking forward to a good week. If you have an open evening, come along at 730 and be with us at Northgate Chapel during this week. I'd like for us this morning to look in Matthew's gospel, chapter 28, and verse 16.

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Amen.

And just one verse, Acts chapter 1, verse 8. These, incidentally, are the last words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ here upon the earth before he ascended back into glory. But ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost heart of the earth. And may God add his blessing to the reading of his holy word.

It's always nice to remind ourselves of what the priorities for the Church today are when they're found in the word of God. I believe that the first priority for the Church today is the Lord himself. Colossians chapter 1, the Apostle Paul reminds us that God wants the Lord Jesus Christ to have the preeminent place.

He wants him to have first place. And Christians, before you do anything else, before you try to work for the Lord, serve the Lord, witness for the Lord, you be sure that the Lord Jesus Christ is enthroned in your heart. That's so important.

Everything else becomes meaningless unless Christ is Lord of your life. Now, he's Lord of our life when we yield our lives under control of the Spirit of God, and we look for that guidance and direction for our lives in which there can be glory for God in our lives. So many think in terms of service being the most important thing that we can do with our lives as Christians, but it's not.

The first priority for the Church, for the believer today, is the enthronement of Christ in your heart. Let him have first place. I believe the second priority for the Church today, Paul speaking in 2 Corinthians 8, verse 5, refers to the Church of Macedonia.

He says that they first gave themselves to the Lord, that's Christ first, and then they gave themselves to us. And I believe today what the Church needs is a revival of God's people in loving care for each other. That comes even before service.

That comes even before carrying the gospel out to the world. A loving interest that we should have in each other. One number suffers in the body, we all suffer together.

And if there's not that kindred spirit and love for each other within the body of Christ, all else, again, things mean. This divine order is established in the word of God, and once we are sure he is Lord of our lives, and we are sure that indeed the believer in Jesus Christ is a member of our body, and a body that we love because our Lord, he shed his precious blood to purchase the body, the members of the body, those living stones that go to make up that body. And then we are to go out into the world.

We are empowered for a purpose. Now, godly living is one of them, but to be a witness for Jesus Christ is a part of this whole bit of being a Christian. But it's not the first part.

I'll remind you of that, and I would urge you to be mindful that there should be a balance here. One might devote his whole life to a service of carrying the gospel to the world, and omit the first two. And again, it would not indeed be within the scope of God's sovereign will for that life.

So, with those thoughts in mind, I want us to think about the third one this morning, our witness as Christians. The psalmist reminds us, this is Psalm 107, verse 2. He says, "...let the redeemed of the Lord

say so." Now, God's people think there's been quite a revival within the last year or so, especially during the time of the political campaign. A lot of reference has been made to the moral majority, and I suppose encompassed in that is those believers that would be labeled as being evangelical, those that are fundamental in that sense.

So, we are reminded that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ should be vocal. They should speak out and announce where they stand as Christians. Christian witness, sometimes, is such a subdued, passive thing that others can live around us, be in contact with us, and not really know that we're believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They've never told themselves. The psalmist speaks out and says, "...let the redeemed of the Lord say so." I mean, don't keep people in doubt. Let them know where we stand.

So important. I've heard many say, "...I let my light shine." Praise God for that value. Let your light shine, because indeed this is a dark world in which we live.

We have to be careful we don't put it under the bushel, and we don't put it under the bed, we don't hide it. We want it to be right out there where others can see it. We don't want to confuse anyone about where we stand as believers.

But in Acts 1, our Lord says this power that will be resident in every believer in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God, will be there for a purpose. Not to go out and to, in a sense, impress others with what we are, necessarily, but that we might be a witness with our lives. Now, our English word witness comes from a Greek word martyr, from which we get our English word martyr.

And over the years, down through the centuries since these words were written, many men and women have shed their blood as martyrs because they were faithful witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, thank God today we are indeed found in pleasant places. The psalmist says, the lions have fallen unto me in pleasant places.

We have an open Bible, we have the right of assembly, and no one is persecuting us, no one is, in a sense, threatening us with arrest because of our Christian witness. But there's not a lot of Christian witness going on. Individual Christians in this day in which we live too often have taken for granted what they have as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do we really treasure the salvation that we have? The Lord Jesus Christ said, If you love me, you keep my commandments. John 14, 15. Now, if you love the Lord Jesus, how often we sing in our hymns, Oh, how I love Jesus, I love the Lord Jesus.

Are you keeping his words? Are you doing the bidding of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Christian? Are you filled with the Spirit of God? Are you witnessing for Jesus Christ with your lips and with your life? And the two go hand in hand. Without the life to support that testimony, word with lips becomes meaningless. The two must go together.

A godly life and the spoken word, indeed, is what we need in the world today. We need Christian men and women that are committed to serving a risen Savior that is seated at the right hand of God in the glory. So, often we're asked the question, how far should we go in our witnessing? Some people only think in terms of witnessing and going to the mission field, someplace like that.

They're willing to go out to the airport, fly thousands of miles, sit down in some strange place, strange culture, and there they're going to be a witness for the Lord Jesus, and they've never witnessed right where they were living. I don't believe in that person. A man's going somewhere to be a missionary, and he's going somewhere to tell people about the gospel.

I want to know what he's doing right here. And he's out witnessing right here where he is. This verse says, "...at Jerusalem first." Brother and sister, if you don't know how to open your lips and declare yourself to be one of those redeemed of the Lord where you are, don't be thinking in terms of going to some faraway place to tell others about Christ.

There's a cry today, bring our missionaries home. We need them here. If there's any darker place upon the face of the earth, and this land that we live in today, I don't know where it is, the God of this world, He seems to have engulfed America.

And while we're comfortably seated in this building this morning, and we're enjoying the fellowship, one with another, around the word of God, Satan's emissaries walk the streets. They're Russellites, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other cult members going door to door, spreading their evil doctrine and teaching. You know, sometimes these things remind us that perhaps we've forgotten what our mission really is.

In this area of being a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, it's important for us to remember that my field of service may be within the scope of my own family. Are there still unsaved members of our family? Have we done all that we can do? And I know, and it sometimes causes just a tremor of fear to come through my heart, I know that the Spirit of God sovereignly convicts men of sin, of righteousness and judgment, and I can't do that. I can only proclaim a message.

I can only be a witness for Jesus Christ. So, in a sense, we're locked up to God in our witnessing. But when I think about our children, I think about members of my own family, and I do believe every man ought to at least hear the gospel one time before everybody in this world has been witness to, and witness to, and witness to, hears it two times.

You know, people become gospel-hardened. I don't find any comfort in that, because I've got some loved ones, and I love them. They're near and dear to me, and when it comes to the things of God and spiritual things, they're a barn to the bat.

And I know I can't wake them up, but I get out on my knees and I pray to God that he'll open their eyes, and wake them up, and shake them up. But I'll tell you, when you have children, and you have loved ones that are outside of Christ, and you think of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus, and I see them heaping upon themselves so much hurt and sorrow for their lives, it grieves me. It makes me feel so sad within my soul.

Thank God he's still on the throne, and we have a wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus. As the Spirit of God directs, let us be a faithful witness for that Savior. I personally believe that Christians, if you want to have a meaningful Christian life, you must be a witness for the Lord Jesus.

If the Church is to be a meaningful expression of that witness in its corporate members, we must be a witness for the Lord Jesus. Because, believe me, the world is a better place because of our witness. This world is a better place.

The city of Raleigh is a better place because of every Christian that lives in Raleigh. I'm reminded of very sobering words that tell us, when he that is restraining in this world restrains no more, this won't be a fitting place to live. You wouldn't want to live here.

Lawlessness, anarchy, men with all of the seriousness that's bound up in the souls of natural men, it will be unleashed. The Christian will dissolve in it as we present to the world. The fact that the Spirit of God is still here, he is restraining, and he's ever so patient and kind and merciful.

Our God is. He waits. I think about the 15th chapter of Luke's gospel, and we have accounts of some things that were lost there.

There was a lost sheep, and when he went out and he found that sheep and brought it home, everyone rejoiced with him because that which was lost had been found. There's more rejoicing in heaven over one that has been lost than all of the 19 nuns that are safely within the fold. We think about that woman that lost a coin she searched diligently for it, and when it was found, it was rejoicing.

Then we think about the prodigal son, and all of us, in a sense, have been prodigals. We ought to be able to understand this. Went away from home, did so many things that you just detest when you think about it, and finally made his way back home.

That was the father waiting for him. And it was rejoicing. This is my son that was dead, and now he's found.

He's alive underneath. Well, you know, perhaps the reason today there are so many joyless Christians. They're not witnessing.

They're not telling others about the Lord Jesus. I know that David, in Psalm 51, says, "...restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Brother and sister, when you get the joy of God's salvation in your soul, you're not going to tell somebody about it. Then will I go out and I will tell sinners about the Lord Jesus.

You know, this may be some of this limited feeling about being a Christian and being a witness for Christ. Too often there's no more joy associated with it. We're just going through the motions, and we love each other and we love the Lord.

We're not fulfilling this divine commission, the joy of God's salvation. Do you ever savor the sweetness of it? Do you ever say to yourself, oh, thank God I'm saved. I'm on my way to heaven.

It just thrills my soul. I know what I deserve, but I'm not going to get there. I'm already seated together in heavenly places in Christ.

That's how sure I am of my salvation. Positionally, I'm just as good as already there. He sees me there in Christ.

Not because I'm there, not because I deserve it, but do you appreciate it? Does it mean something to you? Is it an expression of gratitude that flows out of that life of yours as a Christian? The Lord Jesus looked out on those fields of wheat that were white under harvest. You look out on those people coming from that village way there on the hill, and he could say, the fields, they're white under harvest. He'd spoken to a woman, met her knees, she'd gone back into that place and she told other men and other people about the Lord Jesus, and they had to come and see for themselves.

Are you excited enough about your salvation to go and share it with someone else? That's the bottom line. You're no longer excited about it? There's no joy in your soul over being saved? It's not likely you'll tell anybody. You'll just say, I accept the status quo.

We meet together, we have lovely Christian fellowship together. We meet around the word of God. We're thrilled by those things that come from the word of God to refresh my soul.

Praise God for that. But we never go out. We never go out into this world.

If we're going to be dependent upon the preaching from the pulpit to carry the gospel to this world, we might as well forget it. I thank God for the media today. Thank God for Brother McNeil on the radio.

My, he reaches many people. You'd be surprised how many people tell me they hear Brother McNeil. And they hear many others on the radio and on television, as much as I dislike television, that there are those that are faithfully proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus over television.

God's using it. In a sense, he's using it because God's people very often are derelict in their responsibility to go out and tell others about Christ, those early disciples. After the Lord had given them their instructions, and they went out, and you can just draw concentric circles around Jerusalem, and they just went out, and they went out, and they went out.

And the Apostle Paul, I'll tell you, he's an example to all of us. That was a fellow that really had that burning joy in his soul, and he knew what he'd been delivered from. He'd been delivered from religion, I'll tell you that.

He'd had enough of that religion, too. He had lived zealously his life as a Jew, as a Pharisee. His commitment to Jesus Christ and his gratitude to God for what he has sovereignly done in his own soul.

I can't say here, I can't say here, I've got to go and tell others about this wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus. He did go, too. You read the book of the Acts tirelessly, and he didn't do it sitting in the back of a cattle like you, often walking along rocky pathways, sailing on stormy seas.

But that desire to fulfill that divine commission that is burnished way into his soul, I must, I must. And the Apostle Paul was a joyous Christian. He had real joy in his soul.

So, if we as Christians want to have the joy of God in our souls, we've got to tell someone else about this wonderful salvation. I want to tell you what the Lord Jesus has done for me since the last time you told anyone about the Lord Jesus. I can't speak to people.

I'll tell you, there's such an abundance of good Christian gospel tracts today. We don't have to say much. The printed page, and that has indeed done a fruitful field of work to go out and to distribute the word of God.

How many testimonies do we hear of people, as I said, quietly reading and meditating upon the contents of that little piece of paper? Well, the Spirit of God came upon me, convicted me of my sins, and I received the only provision that God has ever made for salvation, the Lord Jesus, and I accepted it. How many testimonies have you heard like that? We have many that were saved through reading gospel tracts. Use them! You've got them in your tract rack.

I see them, and use them for the glory of God. The Apostle Paul, when he wrote the book of Romans, he addressed himself, of course, to that which is basic to our faith as Christians, that we are justified by faith in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bless nothing, bless nothing.

You don't need anything else. The Apostle Paul could say, there is no difference. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, but we have to admit there are differences in people.

They look different, they dress different, they have different stations in life. But when it comes to this matter of all being sinners, we are all alike, brother. We are all in the same boat.

You may not admit it, you may not think of yourself as being defiled and unsuitable for the presence of God, but if you've never received Christ, you're not fit for God's presence. The only ones that will ever come into his holy presence and be accepted are those that are accepted in his beloved Son. You see, the provision that Christ has made is so adequate.

When he hung upon that cross, when in the depths of his soul, he that knew no sin, the sinless Son of God, he is our substitute. He bore the brunt of the wrath and judgment of God that I deserve. He did it because he loved us.

He did it to carry out perfectly the will of a holy and a righteous God. He provided salvation for me. The pressure shed blood of the Lord Jesus, shed before sin.

Let us share with others the message of the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Paul says, man, that's the power of God and the salvation. Paul believed the gospel.

He said, I'm not ashamed of it. I've known brethren that you mention the gospel, you talk just a little bit about it in mixed company, and they seem to want to shrink into the corner. I know some people are just naturally timid, but they shrink away from this thought of being openly associated with the gospel.

After all, not everyone is very favorably inclined to believe the gospel. So what? Paul says, it is still the power of God and the salvation for every man that believes it. You just believe it.

What is that gospel? It's the truth that Jesus Christ, God's Son who came from heaven's glory down to this earth, he died upon a cross for our sakes. He was buried and he was raised again, all according to the scriptures, says Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. That's the gospel.

That's the good news. God loved us, Christ died for us. Christians, we have a glorious message to share with the world.

You know, I don't want to absolve myself of any responsibility in carrying that message, but you know I'm not responsible for results. I don't have to keep the book. God writes down.

All I have to do is just do what I'm supposed to do. God keeps the record, and I don't have to say, oh I failed, that person didn't receive the message. I'll leave that with God.

My responsibility is to be a witness for the Lord Jesus, to give him the gospel. I leave the rest with the Lord. I'm not going to fret about it.

I'm not going to worry about it. That's God's part. I'm just doing my part.

Angels could do a much better job, but he entrusts you and me, poor sinners, saved by the grace of God. He entrusts with us that privilege of carrying the gospel to the world in which we live. A wonderful privilege.

It's all bound up. In the gospel, it's Christ. You hear a lot about power.

If you watch as that space ship went out into space just the other day, I don't know how many pounds of thrust that it took to launch that thing, but a whole lot. There it went forward around in space. Tremendous power.

I know a friend of mine that is a great hunter, and he uses a bow. He knows exactly how much to pull, how many pounds to put on that thing that he kills. Well, go to his trophy room, there's bear, there's elk, deer, whatever, all over the place.

And he knows the power of this instrument, his bow, that he kills all these animals with. I don't. I don't want to.

But he knows and he felt that power, and we felt the power of the gospel, and we know what it does. That power that's unleashed by the Spirit of God upon our souls, what it does, it changes, it revolutionizes lives. It takes us out of the fear of death into the fear of life in front.

I'll tell you, that's a dramatic change. But that power, though. Christians know that power.

They experience that power in their own lives. You're going to keep it locked up in your life, your little life? Never be any demonstration of that power as you live day by day in this world that is filled with so much, the greed, so many broken hearts, so many lonely people, so many that are just groping in spiritual darkness. We need to share the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ with this world as never before.

And try it just so in a day. We want a challenge. We want something that'll really thrill you sometimes.

It doesn't hurt Christians to get doors slammed in their faces. It's a good experience. You think about the Lord Jesus? You think about Paul? I think they had that experience of being rejected.

It doesn't hurt us to be rejected once in a while. It does us good. So, we know that we're suffering for righteousness' sake.

Knock on a few doors. Go through the neighborhood. The cults are doing it.

There's some gospel tracts. I just want to let you know, I'm your neighbor. I'm your friend.

I want you to know, I know Jesus Christ is my Savior and share it with that neighbor. You want an exciting experience? You want to have something happen to you, make your heart flutter a little bit? Try that. You'll be fulfilling God's will and way for your life.

Our Lord Jesus says, be a witness in this world. I'm so thankful that the scriptures point out that there's not a multitude of ways to come to God. There may be many, many a pathway, diverse in its meaning, that leads to Christ.

There's only one way to come to God, and that's through the Lord Jesus. He says, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man can come to the Father except by me. If you're going to come to God, you're going to come God's way.

I personally believe you'll come in God's time. That doesn't absolve you of your responsibility to witness for the Savior. But listen, there's only one way to be a Christian.

There's only one way to find acceptance with God and His truth, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is that solid rock. You've heard the old expression, anything else that presents itself as being solid ground is a shamrock.

Christians are men and women that have personally accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Christians that believe and love the Lord Jesus and obey His command are those that go out and witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. And there are no excuses, brother, no excuses.

We've got more spare time, we have more leisure time than we've ever had, or shorter work weeks, and all of those things. And perhaps less and less personal witnessing by evangelical Christians in the world today than ever before. Soft living, a lot of leisure time has not promoted, when in this land we live in, a vital witness for Jesus Christ through God's people.

They become soft. They sit at home and look at television. They run around the countryside.

They do all sorts of things. And I know when they go to the beach and go to the lake and all those other things, I've never seen any of them witnessing for the Lord and passing out traps or doing anything else. A brother told me one time we went fishing and I had some traps and I was going to hand them out.

He said, brother, I didn't come down here to witness, I come down here to fish. And I say, I didn't use a lot of time. Well, think about it.

I believe it's clearly set forth in the word of God. If we want to really rejoice in our souls and enjoy God's salvation, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, O God, when you do, I'll go out and I'll tell others about the Lord Jesus and poor sinners and bring down Satan's stronghold. God of this world has blinded the minds of those that do not believe.

Brother, we've got the weapons. We've got what we need to defeat Satan. Let's use it and use it for God's glory.

Shall we pray? Our Father in Heaven, we do bow in our presence this day and give thanks to thee for the Lord Jesus. We thank thee for that day that you awakened this poor sinner's heart. We thank thee for the day that the Spirit of God came upon me and broke me down and humbled me so thankful today that I bowed my knees and confessed with the tongue that Jesus is Lord.

And O God, help me today and help everyone in this room that knows the Lord Jesus to go out and to share him with this world. For we ask this in his lovely name. Amen.

Father, do you have a hymn?

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