

The Three-Fold Vision of Evangelism

by Rolfe Barnard

The message of evangelism is to awaken people to their need for God, exhort them to seek the Lord, and plead with them to repent and be saved.

Duration: 32:55

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3-5, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher expresses his frustration with the hatred and lack of belief in the Bible that he sees in the world. He emphasizes the need for preachers and churchgoers to truly act like they believe in the word of God. The preacher then turns to the book of Isaiah and reads the first nine verses of the fortieth chapter. He discusses the importance of evangelism and the message that everything man relies on is ultimately worthless. The preacher urges his audience to look to God and seek salvation through Him.

Transcript

...conference here in our church and Brother Barnard was the principal speaker. In one of the morning sessions he brought a message on evangelism that I would have given anything if all of you could have been present to hear that message. I said to myself at the time he was preaching, I wish that could be on Sunday morning and I wished that my congregation could hear this message on evangelism.

So often those who believe the doctrines of grace are accused of not being evangelistic. How false and erroneous and unfair it is to us to make such an accusation. If you want to know what the Bible teaches about evangelism, please listen to Brother Barnard as he speaks this morning.

By special request, my request, he has come back to this pulpit to repeat the message that he brought that morning in the Bible session, Bible conference session. Brother Barnard, you come and may God bless your heart as you speak to us. Be happy if you turn to the book of Isaiah if you have your Bible, Isaiah chapter 40.

May I while you are turning to the scripture express my great delight that your fine young pastor is getting acquainted over the country. I had a little something to do with getting him out in Texas in February and he so graciously ministered to the conference out there that the brethren who will be in their 14th annual conference on the grace of God in Ashland, Kentucky, they liked your pastor so well they invited him to

come and be one of the speakers beginning this next week. I'm so happy about that and wanted you to share my joy for your young pastor.

All over the country there is a sound of going. It's small yet, but thank God for it. Just since coming into your auditorium, I was told by a young man about how the central truth of the Bible, that God takes the initiative in salvation, that he is sovereign, that his spirit blows where he wills, and that he shows mercy to whom he wills, and thus salvation is kept in the hands of God.

And I sure am glad it is because I believe a God working on purpose will save more people than if he left it up to man. And he told me how another one of our fundamental schools that believes everything except the gospel is now being invaded by young men whom God has revealed the gospel to. And now the powers that be that have determined that in the name of fundamentalism we preach everything except the truth, they've clamped down.

But it won't stay clamped down down in that school. It will break out. And I say glory, hallelujah.

I appreciate this opportunity and you will understand that I'm a little bit embarrassed. But you have enough confidence in your pastor to believe with all of your heart that he would not try to put something over on you. But what I am to talk about this morning is so near and dear to my heart, I might get excited.

I just feel I wish under God I could get an atomic bomb or a hydrogen bomb and place it under myself first, and then us nice little church people that wouldn't hurt a flea and haven't any power to disturb the devil or anybody else. And watching a world tear itself literally to pieces, if you don't think so, you haven't read the paper or heard the radio or listened to the television this week. The hatred, the hatred in this world.

Oh, I wish under God that preachers and church people would go to acting like we believe the Bible. I wish we could shake ourselves. I am so desperately tired of what we call serving the Lord.

So you'll pardon me, I'm going to let you out if I can on time. And will you read with me the first nine verses of the 40th chapter of Isaiah. I think in order to crowd the message into the time allotted, I'll ask a series of about three questions about evangelism.

What's its message? First, who's to do the preaching? Second, and what shall be the vision behind our ministry and message? In Isaiah chapter 40, we have a prophecy of the ministry of John the Baptist. And if you'll study your Bible, you'll find out now that the ministry that was given to John the Baptist has now been given to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. His job was to get somebody to where they felt their need of a Lord and a Savior.

And that's exactly the job of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, to prepare a way in the desert and to remove the mountains and fill up the valley so somebody would feel their need of being embraced and empowered by a power greater than themselves who could take them out of themselves and make them superhuman and supernatural beings, peculiar people living in a missionary situation where every child of God, wherever he lives now, rubs shoulders with men and women who are utterly indifferent to, or downright hostile to the claims of God for his son. Here in the ministry prophesied for John the Baptist, we read these words.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.

Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain. And verse 5 is one of my shouting passages of Scripture, and if I didn't believe it, I'd have been out of the ministry 41 years ago, the day after I started, and I couldn't stand it today unless I soaked my soul about five times every day in the wonderful promise of the next verse, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

Hallelujah. We're not always going to have to put up with this stuff that we call serving the Lord and watch the world go to hell while we sit in the spectatorship and rock our nice little doctrines and our cozy little beliefs to sleep. Someday God's going to take charge and intervene, and the glory of the Lord's going to be revealed, and it's going to be in such a way revealed, not in a hidden corner, but on the housetop it'll be so revealed that all flesh shall see it together.

And the reason I believe this, and it's the only thing that keeps me going this far, the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Now what shall I say? The voice said, Cry, and he said, What shall I cry? And here is the message, two things. First, everything that man hears and does and touches is no good.

Robbed men, especially in this day, went from pulpits and papers and radio and propaganda and schools. We have dethroned God and elevated man, until now God is just a milk cow to help us when we get in trouble. And we know nothing about the fact that the chief end of man is to serve and glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

What is the message that I shall cry? Tear into the philosophy of this hour in the churches and hours, and rob this generation of its self-satisfaction of what it can do. Take every foundation out and strip men. Say unto the men, All flesh is grass.

A-double-L, all religious and everything else ain't worth a hill of beans. All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. Tell men and women of this generation that the grass withereth and the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord glows upon it surely.

The people is grass, the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever, and that is all that will. O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up to the high mountain. O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up.

Be not afraid, say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God. A friend of mine says that the Bible teaches that God has obligated himself that every generation of mankind shall have revealed to it a touch at the glory of his Son. I hope he knows what he's talking about.

This generation, there isn't a person here old enough, none of you have ever seen God intervene in our day and take charge. And I live in the hope. I'm 62 years old.

I spent 41 years in evangelism. Oh, I still live in the hope. I want to die tonight if I couldn't hope that maybe tomorrow he'll come to the rescue and get the attention of this self-satisfied generation of so-called Christians and rivet the attention of mankind.

Behold your God, the God that's going to judge us whether we like it or not. Look at it! See it go in the face of the Son of God, whose face is revealed in the pages of the gospel. What is the message of evangelism? Simple.

All flesh is grass. Behold your God. The doctrines of what they call the doctrines of grace, they're not the issue today.

I can remember in Winston-Salem when I began to talk about the doctrines of grace, perhaps the first one in this section. My, it's an unpardonable sin to mention some Bible doctrines, but not so now. But the doctrinal aspect is not the issue.

The issue is what those doctrines call for, and that is that this generation that face for the fact that its position is so helpless and so hopeless that unless a God of purpose does come to the rescue and do for men what they cannot do for themselves, that there is absolutely no hope. That in the best laid plans of mice or men or zealous preachers or anybody else, everything that is touched by the flesh is going to wither away and nothing's going to stand except that which God Almighty accomplishes. That's the battle that's been raging.

And I want to publicly thank this dear young pastor. The boy took a little courage for him to have a conference on the grace of God in this city that so hates the very mention of the sovereignty of God in saving sinners. Oh, my soul, what is the message? It's simply that the best of man profits nothing.

That everything a man puts his trust in, that is, of man, will come to naught. It is simply an effort to strip men and women of all hope in themselves of what they will do or ever hope to do. Get them to look up and behold your God.

Now, that's what the battle's all about. That's the message of evangelism. You and I have lived nearly all of our day in a day when we have refused to bring the first message of evangelism, which is to tear out the props that men depend on now, and thus they feel no need of seeking Christ to do for them and in them what God Almighty demands.

Who is to do the preaching? Well, first of all, hear me quickly. It's God Almighty. The voice of one crying in the wilderness.

In the third chapter of Matthew, this is repeated, and there are two persons here mentioned. I found this forty years ago. Others have found it, of course.

I'm always the last to know. But I found that there are two persons. One is a voice.

That's John the Baptist. The other is God. He's the one doing the crying.

John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Who's doing the demanding? It's Almighty God. He uses a voice.

But men do not call men to repentance. God calls men to repentance through men. I wish we believed that.

We're not around electioneering, trying to drum up votes to help out a piteous and pitiful God who's at wit's end corner. But if we have any right to name the name of Jesus Christ as Lord and Master, we are His voice. And through our voice comes God speaking to men.

No man has been saved yet apart from hearing God speak to him. One hundred and sixty-seven times in the New Testament alone, salvation, the boom from heaven, the gift of God, is said to come to men and women as God calls them. My, how that knocks into cock-robbing.

This day, when the voices of preachers all over the country are seeking to brand and label so that they may continue to place salvation in the hands of men who by their big decisions enable a little bitty God to come to the rescue. No, no. The church of Jesus Christ is the voice, and God speaks through the voice and calls, Dead man, Lazarus, come forth.

And Lazarus does. Now, a dead man can't raise himself from the dead. I don't care what preachers say today.

There is just one power that can bring a man out of a spiritual or a physical grave. And that's the power of the voice of the Son of the living God. That's how men are saved.

Who's to be the voice? One hundred and sixty-seven times through which God calls men and women. And I repeat, I'm glad it's that way. If we preach what's called the gospel of whosoever will, isn't it silly to preach it in a world of whosoever won't? For unless God takes the initiative, nobody will.

Nobody will. And since nobody will, I'm glad that salvation isn't in whosoever will. It's in whosoever God calls.

I believe he'll do a better job of it. And I'd rather stand on the call of God than any decision of the best of the decisions I ever made. For when my little decisions are petered out, the call of almighty God with all their power behind it will still stand.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, listen to Brother Barne just a minute. I ought to have an hour and a half to what I want to say now in two minutes. Listen to me.

It is high time. I'm not fussing with anybody. I lay most of the blame on us lazy preachers, Brother Wilson, myself included.

We are products of the awful, complacent atmosphere of this day. Under God, when are we going to quit hiring somebody else to do what God gave his people, the church, to do? Who's to be the voice of God, robbing me of all hope in themselves and then pointing them to him? It's the church. Your pastor has decided convictions about a church.

You listen to me. Why don't you folks start paying a little attention to him? Listen to me. How many of us have the slightest conception of what it means to be under the authority of Jesus Christ as he has delegated that authority to his church? What is ruining and fixing to put every church like this one out of business in the next five years? You better listen to me.

You can't go on like we're going. Is the fact that we're all a bunch of spiritual outlaws and every man does that which is right in his own sight? And we know nothing about being under the discipline of the head of the church as that discipline is exercised in the church. Let me give you one illustration.

I've been going up and down American Canada and old Mexico for these many years, and I've been to hundreds of so-called solid Orthodox churches where the people bring me in to do the work of evangelism and where they feel no responsibility. But brother, you can't hire off Barnett of somebody and get him preaching ten times to do what God Almighty gave the church. And the church isn't this building.

The church is this simple people here with the names on their roll. And we're to be under discipline, the discipline of the commander-in-chief who's given the church the marching orders to go into all the world

and preach the gospel. Now, God knows I wish I knew how this could come to pass.

Aren't you, dear people, so tired of listening to Brother Wilson putting a little money in the pot and going out once in a while, inviting somebody to come to church? Aren't you ready to begin to listen to the fact that the day God saved you, if he did, he gave you a mission and he gave you a ministry, and nobody on God's shining earth can perform your mission and perform your ministry in the will of God. Let me see if I can illustrate it. How many people here? 150? 200? I don't know.

Suppose there were 200 people here this morning absolutely dedicated to the proposition that when God saved you, he didn't call you to a banquet, he called you to a war. You better listen to Rothbard. The only way on earth a church can be at peace with the spirit of this godless age is just not to be a church.

If you settle down to where Christianity is a matter of attendance and services and supporting the church, brother, you are disgraced to Christianity. And yet most of us are guilty. Most of us are.

Who is to speak for God? Herbert Wilson or Rosemont Baptist Church? Huh? Who is to witness? Your pastor or you? To who did God give the charge to evangelize? Rothbard? Herbert Wilson? Or his church? In the name of God! When is this church going to start doing what the Sovereign Redeemer has called us to do? I get excited here a little bit. I'm a little older than I used to be. My soul is getting awful serious with me.

I just hate to see this generation go smack-damp to hell while the churches are playing church and hiring somebody else to bring God's message to this generation. What shall be the vision? How we need it. It's threefold.

My time's up. Let me mention it. The Church of Jesus Christ, every member of it.

You can't do this by supporting somebody else. You've got to be in this battle, brother. Down where you work and where you live.

This is it, bud. This congregation needs you to worship. Put your witnesses out yonder.

That's where our lips are sealed. Where in God's name is the holy zeal and holy fire and holy enthusiasm and holy expectancy of our fathers who were not ashamed to open their mouths and declare the greatest truth between heaven and hell that Jesus Christ is alive, that there's a man in glory to whom God has turned the destiny of civilizations and individuals over to. That's the greatest thing between the sun.

God help us to get on fire with it again. If that's true, we ought to boil over. Instead of the fact, hey, if you folks will stay home and look at television tonight, instead of being on the firing lines for Christ.

Shame on us. We are disgraced to the name of Christ. The Church must have the message of alarm.

And awaken men. Not sit in, count numbers, and raise budgets. Well, this generation of people has made it.

That the world's on fire. That hell's popping. And that men and women still have to meet a holy God.

This generation must be awakened. And it can be awakened not by nice little messages and by nice little services. Somebody's got to take this thing seriously.

I wish about 2,000 preachers in the South could get fired tomorrow for getting on fire about this. And just bubbling over until we get fired a shot or something. Until all of us together could get some grit in our gumption and begin to cry aloud and spare not to this lawless, rebellious generation that the gay didn't up.

That men and women still have to face God and this holy law. And it will tear them to pieces at the judgment if they do not have a mediator. The threefold vision of evangelism.

First, awaken. Awaken. If you skip that, no use to go on with the other.

Second, exhort. Exhort men and women who awaken something to their felt sense of their need. That they need to become supermen.

Changed on the inside and outside. Apprehended of, laid hold of by a sovereign God. Made new creatures.

Made members of the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ. Entered into the warfare between Christ and Antichrist. Exhort them to seek the Lord.

Beg them to seek the Lord. Plead with them to seek the Lord. Three times in my ministry in Western Salem, I've seen hundreds and thousands in this one little city in just a single meeting, gravely concerned.

The preachers were always able to put out the fire. I tell you, it's heaven when somebody said, Oh, Brother Wilson, you've got just a minute. Yeah.

Brother Wilson, do you suppose that God would show mercy to me? Oh, if I could see that one more time, like old Simeon, I'd say, Now thy servant ready to go. I'm so tired of this foolishness trying to get people to accept Jesus they don't have any need for. Oh, to have somebody say, Oh, do you suppose there's mercy for me? Instead of this blasphemous stuff we've got now, because this generation's heard the preaching it's heard.

People say, well, I tell you what, I'll make up my mind what I'm going to do with Jesus. But I'll let him in. Now, isn't that blasphemous? I'd break the heart of the devil if he had one.

But to hear men and women say, Depths of mercy, can there be? Mercy yet reserved for me. Exhort this generation. Who? From this pulpit now.

It's out yonder where they are. They ain't here. Exhort them to a faithful seeking of the Lord through this book.

For faith still cometh by hearing. Hearing by the word of God. And then when some are awakened and begin seeking the Lord, then there's a comfort in ministry.

Don't speak peace when there is no peace. Don't convince a fellow he's saved until, until there's a consciousness inside that a union of peace has been cemented between God's Son and the sinner. Until there's a vital marriage and Christ becomes the Alpha, the Omega, the altogether lovely one, the beginning and the end, the altogether.

Until men shall be comforted. As Mr. Finney used to say, Many went away, saying Christ had comforted them. Don't you do it.

Let Christ do it. Samuel Rutherford wrote a friend from his prison cell, Today Jesus Christ came into my cell and every stone flashed like a ruby. A living Lord! Behold! A living Lord.

That's evangelism. Let it stand.

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