

He Works With Us

by Warren Wiersbe

The Lord commands us to preach the gospel to every creature, and the world needs it, so we must have the motivation to fulfill our responsibility as the church.

Duration: 38:50

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-19, Mark 10:45, Mark 16:15-16, Mark 16:19-20

Topics: "Evangelism", "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spreading the gospel to every creature. He highlights three incentives that should motivate believers to fulfill this task. The first incentive is that the Lord commands it, as stated in Mark 16:15. The second incentive is that the world needs the gospel, as people are searching for satisfaction and security in all the wrong places. The third incentive is that the church is capable of carrying out this mission. The speaker urges believers to prioritize giving and serving rather than solely focusing on their own needs. He also encourages them to overcome fear and rely on the power of God to fulfill their calling. The sermon concludes with the reminder that while Jesus' work of salvation is complete, believers' work of witnessing is ongoing.

Transcript

Reading the scriptures from Mark chapter 16, verses 14 through 20, Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat eating, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not those who had seen him after he had risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned.

And these signs shall follow those who believe. In my name shall they cast out demons, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

And the Lord is still willing to work with those who will go. Our Lord Jesus Christ never promised that the church would win the whole world. When he comes, he's going to have to separate sheep from goats and

wheat from tares.

Nor did our Lord promise that the church would change the world. God is in the business of changing people, and through those people he can change this world, but God never promised that we'd change the world. In fact, Paul said evil men and seducers are going to wax worse and worse.

Now if we're not going to win the whole world, and if we're not going to change the whole world, that could give us a very pessimistic outlook on life, and some saints have that outlook. There are some saints of God who are happy, and they rest content, knowing that the scriptures say we will not win the whole world. And this is a wrong attitude to have.

Because even though the Word of God says we aren't going to win the whole world, and even though the Word of God says we aren't going to change the whole world, it does say we have the responsibility and the privilege to reach the whole world. There's a difference between winning the whole world and evangelizing the whole world, and that's the task that has not yet been completed. It's really kind of an embarrassing thing.

If the Lord were to call a meeting of the board the way corporations do, and if the Lord were to hang on the wall a progress chart the way corporations do, and if he were to explain that chart to us and show us how the graph keeps going down the way corporations do, he'd have every right to fire us the way corporations do. If the average corporation measured its success as the church measures success, they'd be out of business. A very well-known Christian educator in this country, who shall be nameless, said to me one day, you know the church has to be a divine institution.

The way it's running, only God could keep it alive. You see, we have the money. This is one of the most affluent generations in history.

We have the money. Now that money is not being given to the right causes, but the money is there. And the manpower is there.

There are people, we have more Christian schools today than in history. And yet week after week I get letters from churches and phone calls from pulpit committees saying, can you recommend a pastor? We can't find a pastor. We are graduating thousands of Christians from our schools.

We can't find missionaries, can't find pastors. I wonder where they are. We have the manpower.

We have the money. We surely have the methods. Why, you can go to conventions and seminars and learn enough methods to keep you going for the millennium.

Used to be that a missionary, if he had a flannel graph board and some pictures, that's all he was available. Now we have everything you want. We have movies, we have videotape, we can bounce things off of satellites.

We can get to a mission field today by jet plane faster than William Carey was able to pack. So we have the money's there. We have an affluent generation.

Christians have got two and three cars, nothing wrong with that. A couple of TV sets and a stereo, nothing wrong with these things. God gives us richly all things to enjoy.

The money is there. The manpower is there. The methodology is there.

You know what's not there? The motivation. That's what's lacking. The motivation.

Wherever he leads, I won't go. The motivation's not there. And only the Holy Spirit of God can generate motivation in the heart of the believer.

We are a local church. Jesus Christ has said to us, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. This passage in Mark chapter 16 has been a battleground for Bible students, and we'll not get into that.

I was chatting with two of my friends this past week who are very adept in the Greek and the textual criticism, all of which is beyond me. And I said to them, What do you do with a passage like this, where some of the study Bibles say now these verses are not in this text, they're not in that text? Well, they said there's nothing in there that's unscriptural. And it is found in some of the manuscripts.

And I think we have every right to look at Mark chapter 16, verses 14 through 20, and find the kind of motivation we need to get the job done. In fact, as I read these verses, the Lord says to me that there are three incentives that our Lord gives us. To get the job done.

What is the job? Get the gospel out to every creature. Three incentives that ought to motivate us to get this job done. Incentive number one, the Lord commands it.

Incentive number two, the world needs it. Incentive number three, the church can do it. And I trust that the Spirit of God will take these three incentives and wake us up and stir us up and dress us up and send us out.

Incentive number one, the Lord commands it. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Who said this? Verse 19, So then after the Lord had spoken unto them.

The gospel of Mark is the gospel of the servant. You know that each of the gospels has its own emphasis. Matthew's the gospel of the king.

That's why his commission reads, All authority in heaven and in earth is given unto me. That's the king speaking. Mark's the gospel of the servant.

The key thought in the gospel of Mark is service. In fact, the key verse in the gospel of Mark, chapter 10, verse 45, For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. This is the gospel of the servant.

The one word that is repeated over and over again, some 45 times, immediately, immediately, authorized version says straightway, straightway. Here's the busy Jesus, the busy servant. When you open Matthew, you find a genealogy.

You've got to be sure where a king came from. When you open Mark, you don't find a genealogy. Who cares where a servant came from? But this servant came to serve.

He was born as a servant. And he lived as a servant. And he died as a servant.

The gospel of Mark is closely related to those chapters back in Isaiah where the prophet talks about the servant. Isaiah 53 is in that passage. Mark is the gospel of the servant.

Here we have the Lord Jesus working. The Son of Man came not to be served, and he could have done that. He could have said, I am the sovereign God of Heaven.

You serve me. Instead, he came as the humble servant, and he served man. Prostitutes came off the street, and he stopped, and he helped them.

Unclean lepers cried out to him, ten of them at a time, and he stopped, and he helped them. Would you like to be at the beck and call of everyone who has a problem in the city of Chicago? Jesus was in Jerusalem, or Nazareth, or Capernaum, the servant. And when he died, he died as a servant.

And when he arose again, the servant declared himself to be the Lord. That's why the gospel of Mark ends with the emphasis twice upon the Lord. Verse 19, after the Lord had spoken unto them.

Verse 20, they went everywhere, the Lord working with them. This one who was the lowly servant is today the highest sovereign Lord of all. And he commands, go.

Now, if that isn't incentive enough for us to go, there's something wrong with us. One of our problems in the church today is that we do not recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ. God is to us a celestial errand boy who solves our problems for us.

If we have a headache, we pray about it. Nothing wrong with that. If we need money to pay the rent, we pray about it.

Nothing wrong with that. But when God has a problem, and he looks to us, and he commands us, we're not as available. We want God to be available to us.

It's very hard for us to be available to God. I've always admired in the Old Testament this man Samuel. What a godly man.

And Samuel prayed one day, and his prayer accomplished more for the people than all of Saul's fighting. With one simple prayer, he took care of the enemy. Samuel was able to come to God.

He would say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. And God was able to say to him, Speak, servant, for thy Lord heareth. If I am not available with an ear to listen to his voice, why should he listen to my voice? If my hands are not available to do his work, why should his hands be available to do my work? If my mind is not available to think his thoughts, to accomplish his will in this world, why should his mind be available to me, to give me wisdom in the problems of life? That's not fair.

The Lord has commanded it. And these are the orders from headquarters. Now, the Lord Jesus did not drop a hint.

There are some people you have to hint to get things done. Sometimes you can't go to your children and say, I think you ought to mow the lawn, I think you ought to wash the windows, you ought to clean out your room. You start to drop a hint.

God doesn't do that. He doesn't make a suggestion. He gives an order.

The first incentive for the church, and that means us, the first incentive for the church to get the gospel out to every creature is simply the Lord commanded it. Now, what did he command? Go, go. See, the word missionary comes from the old Latin word mitto, which means to send.

A missionary is one who is sent. The word apostle comes from a Greek word, apostello, that means one who is sent with a commission. This is our commission.

Go, we're sent. That applies to all of us. Regardless of where we are.

Now, Matthew said to us in his commission that he quoted from our Lord, while you are going, make disciples. And all of us are going. And so he's saying to us, now wherever you go, share the gospel.

This word that he uses in verse 15, go into all the world, that word all is one of the strongest words for all in the Greek language. It isn't just the everyday word for all, it's kind of a special word for all. He's emphasizing that our sphere of ministry is not just Chicago or the near north side or where North Avenue and LaSalle Street and Clark Street all meet.

That's not just your sphere of ministry. Our sphere of ministry is all the world, every creature. That means that I have an obligation where I am and where I am not.

Now, it's not possible for us to be two places at one time, obviously. It's possible for us to help other people to be where we can't go. And so he commands us to go.

He commands us to go into all the world. And the word that is used for preach is the word for a herald. Back in Bible days, they didn't have television, radio, newspapers.

When the king or the governor had a message to convey to his citizens, he sent out a herald. And the herald would come riding into town and blow the trumpet and say, I have a message. All the people would gather in the town square and the herald would give the message and people would listen to the message because the herald was sent by the king.

Now, that's the word that's used here. Go you into all the world and herald the gospel. This word means loud public declaration.

Now, there are times when it's not good to be loud in public. But what he's saying is don't hide it. Don't whisper it.

Don't pass it along as though it's contraband. Let's not be ashamed of it. Let's declare it.

Let's let people know Christ died for our sins and he was buried. He arose again the third day. He's alive today.

And the bad news is all men are sinners and the good news is Christ died for sinners. Herald the gospel. The way some of us do it, you'd think we belong to God's secret service.

The evangelical CIA. Preach the gospel to every creature going into all the world. The beautiful thing about the gospel is it's not limited by time.

It's not limited by space. It's not limited by government. People say, oh, we have governments today that were against the gospel.

Should have tried Paul's day. The gospel was illegal by the time Paul got to Rome. The Lord commands it.

Now, what are we going to do with the orders? We either obey or we disobey. There's no neutrality. There's no saying I intend to.

We either in the way we pray, in the way we live, in the way we give, we are either obeying or disobey. Incentive number one, the Lord commands that should settle it right there. At this point, each of us could just simply go to the altar and say, dear God, I've been disobedient.

I've been concerned about my little world. I've not been concerned about your great world. I've been concerned about my own comfort, dear God, I confess it.

I'm sorry. Here's my bank book. Here's my checkbook.

Here's all my life. Now, what do you want me to do about this great need? And it would do some of us good to do that. But he goes on to give us a second incentive.

That's in verse 16. Not only does the Lord command it, but the world needs it. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

Now, he's not saying that baptism saves anybody. Charles Spurgeon was quite a fighter. He's known primarily as a great preacher of the gospel.

But you can't preach the gospel without fighting some battles. And one day he preached a sermon on this text against baptismal regeneration, that you have to be baptized to be saved. And he stirred up a hornet's nest in England.

A friend stopped him one day and said, Mr. Spurgeon, I hear you're in hot water. He said, I'm not in hot water. They're the ones that are in hot water.

If baptism is necessary for salvation, nobody in the Old Testament was saved because nobody in the Old Testament ever got baptized. If baptism is necessary to salvation, then Peter made an awful mistake in the household of Cornelius. He was preaching and he got to that portion where he said that whosoever believes in him has remission of sin.

And they believed and the Holy Spirit came down. And they were saved. And Peter said, who can forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit? It's odd that they'd already received the Holy Spirit if you've got to have baptism to be saved.

You see, in the early church, believing and baptism went together. That's not true today. Back in those days, it cost something to be baptized.

It doesn't cost much today. Back in those days, when you went for baptism, you were being buried to the old life and your friends would spit on you and your family would bury you as far as their affections were concerned. It cost something.

You don't find any case in the New Testament of believers in the church resisting baptism. He that believeth, that's what saves you, and is baptized, that's what lets people know you are saved, shall be saved. It doesn't say he that's baptized not shall be condemned.

He that believeth not shall be condemned. And how shall they believe on him whom they've not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be sent? What he's saying here is this, that people are lost apart from the gospel. Why must we carry the gospel to the whole world? Because the Lord commands it and because the world needs it.

Our Lord is not talking about universalism here. We have a brand of theology today that it's not new, it's been around for centuries, but it has a new dress to it, that everybody is saved. The whole world is saved and all that missionaries have to do is go tell people they are already saved.

That's like my going up to the hospital and saying all you people are already healed. No. The world that I look at and the world that you look at and the world that Jesus looked at, that world doesn't look saved.

The world that I see is in darkness. Salvation is light. The world that I see is a graveyard of dead sinners.

The gospel means light. Light. The world that I see is in bondage and the gospel means liberty.

The world that I see is enthralled by sin and the gospel means feeding on holiness and righteousness. Now the gospel is for all. All the world needs it and the gospel suits everybody.

One of my favorite preachers when I was a young Christian was Dr. Walter Wilson. Now it's unfortunate that this present generation did not know Walter Wilson and I don't know of anybody who quite replaces him, but Dr. Walter Wilson had a unique way of taking Bible truth and making it so sane and sensible in a practical way in our lives and I benefited from his ministry. He had a great sermon on John 3.16 and his topic was this.

Can you think of any gift that is suitable for the whole world? Now I don't know about you, but when birthdays and anniversaries and Christmas come along, one of the problems you have is what are you going to get them? What do you get for that brother-in-law of yours who has everything? Can you think of any one gift that is suitable for everybody? Everybody needs it and everybody wants it. Now I enjoy books, but there are people in this world who can't read. Someone says, well food, oh but they might be allergic to it.

Money? What good is it if you haven't got stores to spend it in? Music? What if there's no instrument to play it on? You start naming the things that we give for gifts and you'll find that not a one of them is suitable for the whole world. There are vast reaches of people who would say I don't want that and I don't need that. When it comes to the gospel, said Walter Wilson, that's the one gift that everybody needs and everybody wants.

Now they don't know they want it. That fellow who's carousing around in lust, his real craving is for satisfaction. The trouble is he's trying to find it in the pigsty.

That person who's amassing money, his real concern is for security. He doesn't realize you don't trust in uncertain riches, you trust in the living God. Everything men are craving for, really God is the answer.

The gospel is the answer. So here we have a message, a gift that's suitable for everybody. Suppose you had a chance to speak to the whole world.

Suppose someone put a microphone in front of you and said we're going to bounce this off of a dozen satellites and the whole world is going to hear you. Now tell them something they all need to hear. What would you tell them? The Sox won? What would you tell them? The stock market went down? What message would you ever give to the whole world that they need and that they want? I only know of one message.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He arose again.

He's alive today. He was seen by witnesses. He can change your life.

You see we have the one commodity that the whole world needs and we refuse to invest it. We refuse to spread it. We had better get the gospel out to the whole world because the Lord commands it and because the world needs it.

That word condemned, condemned, condemned. I wonder what would happen to our local churches if on a Saturday night every one of us dreamed that we were in hell. There wouldn't be people sleeping in on Sunday mornings.

There wouldn't be Bibles collecting dust. There wouldn't be missionary offering envelopes thrown in the wastebasket. Condemned, condemned.

That word in the middle of John 3.16 that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. Perish. You can almost hear the hiss of hell in that word.

Perish. Jesus looked out on the multitudes and he didn't see pious Jews. He looked in the multitudes and saw sheep, wandering sheep having no shepherd.

He saw people who were harassed and burdened and broken and living on substitutes and he wept over it. And we look out upon a lost world and we see people who are harassed and burdened and broken and we pull our pious skirts around ourselves and say I thank you God, I'm not like other people. There's a third incentive to world evangelism in this passage.

The Lord commands it, that's verse 15, and the world needs it, the church can do it. Alexander McLaren is one of my favorite preachers. If you ever want to just sit and read some good preaching, just pull down a volume of Alexander McLaren, a great Baptist expositor of the word.

He calls this passage the divine audacity of Christianity. What's he mean by that? Jesus looked out and he looks at this motley group of people, a half a dozen fishermen, a few other people, the phrase the eleven doesn't just mean the eleven apostles who were left after Judas' suicide, it means the gathering of believers. He looks at them and says you can reach the world.

He didn't say you can change the world. He didn't say you can win the world, he said you can reach the world. They didn't have any Hondas, didn't have a bank account, no visas, no passports, no atlases, no slides.

They didn't have any of the modern accoutrement of missions. And they were just audacious enough to believe that Jesus said they could do it and they went out and did it. Did you ever notice that whenever a Christian wants to do something the devil sends somebody to a meeting in Great Britain.

He said I believe God would have us form an association to take the gospel to the heathen and some theologian stood up. One of God's sanctified obstructionists. A man with a long beard and a short mind.

And he said young man when God wants to convert the heathen he'll do it without your help. I'm glad William Carey didn't listen to him. I'm glad D.L. Moody when Moody went to preach at Cambridge they laughed and said well here comes this man with his nasal twang his Yankee twang the only man in the world who says Jerusalem in one syllable.

Fifth grade education he's going to go turn Cambridge upside down. They quit laughing. They quit laughing.

Out of that came great and mighty missionary outreach. Somebody said that it should be done. You know the church today is pictured in verse 14.

Instead of giving they were eating. Nothing wrong with eating. Jesus established the Lord's Supper that's eating.

During his resurrection sojourn on earth he ate with his disciples. It says of Moses and the Jewish elders they saw God and they sat down and ate and drank. Nothing wrong with eating.

Providing your eating is preparation for giving. You can't have a meeting in a church without eating. You announce a Bible conference or a missionary conference a few come out.

You announce a banquet and people come crawling out of the woodwork. The church today is so busy taking in we don't give up. We are overfed and under exercised.

They were behind locked doors. Here they were confined instead of going out isolated and insulated and unbelieving. Oh it can't be done.

It can't be done. Hardness of heart. Now I realize verse 14 describes people in the pre-resurrection appearance they had not yet seen the Lord but they should have believed the message.

Their unbelief made them selfish and afraid. Afraid to step out and do something. We might make a mistake.

We've never done it that way before. And Jesus says it can be done. The church can do it.

Now how can the church do it? Well the answer is down in verse 20. The Lord working with them. Even though he is the sovereign Lord seated on the throne of heaven Jesus is still the servant who is working with us.

Now it doesn't say he's working instead of us. If God wants to save the heathen he'll do it without your help. Oh no he won't.

Oh no. Because he has the same God who has ordained the end ordains the means to the end. And the church is the means to the end.

The same God who says people shall be saved in Africa is going to get someone there to give them the message because no one is saved apart from the message. And some of these ultra-elect people who sit in their chairs and fold their theological arms and complacently say well God will get it done in his own time. I'd better read what it says here.

It doesn't say the Lord working instead of them. It says the Lord working with them. Nor does it say the Lord working in spite of them.

God's going to get his work accomplished if he has to smash us to get it done. He was going to deliver Israel from Egypt if it meant sending Moses out to the wilderness for 40 years to get ready. He was going to get the message to Nineveh if it meant a great fish swallowing Jonah to get it done.

God's going to get it done. But not in spite of us and not instead of us. With us.

Which says to me the bottleneck isn't in heaven. The bottleneck is on earth. How can he work with us if we are not with him.

If we're not walking with him. If we're not talking with him. If we're not sharing with him.

The Lord worked with him and he confirmed the word. Now these things that are mentioned in Mark 16 are apostolic signs. You'll read them in the book of Acts.

Wherever they went to preach God confirmed the word. How did people know that this word was from God? He confirmed it. Now we have a complete Bible.

We don't have to have these things. Any saint or sinner who takes Mark 16, picks up a poisonous snake is a fool. He is not saying to me today these are signs that I perform.

These were the apostolic signs that confirmed the word of God during the book of Acts. But the principle still applies. God is saying don't be afraid.

Don't be afraid. If you go out there and there's danger I can take care of you. If there's a price to pay don't worry about it.

The Lord working with them because the power is available to us today if we'll just drop on it. But instead of praying, instead of going, instead of paying, instead of heralding, we're living in verse 14 enjoying fellowship with one another, eating and drinking and all the while the world goes to hell. And so the last thing our Lord says to us in the gospel of Mark, the gospel of the servant is my work is not done.

Oh my work of salvation is done. But my work of witness is not done. And your work is just getting started.

My finished work on earth initiates your unfinished work on earth. And I'm going back to heaven and I have an unfinished work up there to intercede for you and to work with you and through you to get the job done. The battle is the Lord's and let's not say that he's speaking here to some ethereal, idealistic, abstract church.

He's talking to men and women and young people and boys and girls in the city of Chicago right now. And he is saying there is a gospel that's been placed in your hands, in your hearts. We have this treasure in this earthen vessel.

Now what shall we do with it? Bury it? No. Waste it? No. Share it? Why? The Lord commands it.

The world needs it. The church can do it. The Lord working with them.

Let's pray. Gracious Father, we know these things in our minds. We respond to them with our hearts.

But the thing you're looking for is the will. You're waiting for us to say, Lord, I will. I will.

Forgive us for being disobedient when you have commanded us to go. Forgive us for being uncaring when the world is crying for the one message, the only message that can save. Forgive us for limiting the very church for which you died.

O gracious God, we will not argue. We will submit. We will not rationalize.

We will obey. We will lay before you, Father, our bodies, our substance, our loved ones. We will hold nothing back, for truly your Son held nothing back.

He who gave his all for us has every right to command us. But, oh, may our obedience not just be the command from above. May there be that constraint from within.

May the love of Christ constrain us. Help us as a church family and help us as individuals to do the part we have to reach the world. And I pray for that one here in this meeting who needs to be reached, who has never trusted Christ, who is already condemned.

Oh, may that one trust him. For Jesus' sake, amen.

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