

Soul Winning

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of soul winning and the various methods Christ uses to bring people to Himself, including preaching and personal work.

Duration: 12:21

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 1:35-49

Topics: "Evangelism", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the word of God in the salvation of sinners. He highlights four cases of conversion described in the chapter, where the first two individuals were saved as a result of a preacher proclaiming Christ as the Lamb of God. The third case involved personal work by a believer, and the fourth case was also the result of personal work. The preacher emphasizes that despite the different personalities and backgrounds of these individuals, they all found what they needed and had their hearts satisfied in Christ. The sermon concludes by reminding listeners that Christ is ready to save every guilty sinner who puts their trust in Him, and that personal work and preaching the word of God are both important in the salvation of souls.

Transcript

The subject that I want to call to your attention tonight is that of soul winning, and I read from John's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 35. Again the next day after, John stood and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! One of the two which heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted the Christ.

And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he saith, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonah. Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is thy interpretation of stone.

The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophet did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

In John's Gospel we see the Saviour taking up one sinner after another, attracting them in amazing grace, drawing them out of the world into the circle of his love, leaving all for him they find, all they need in this

newfound Saviour. There are seven persons in our chapter. They are Christ the Gatherer and six others who were attracted and gathered to him.

John the Baptist was attracted to Christ, and it was his work to point him out to others as the Lamb of God. The central truth in this passage is the methods Christ used to bring souls to himself. It is deeply interesting and instructive to notice the manner in which these first disciples found the Saviour.

They did not all come to him in the same way, for God does not confine himself to any particular method. Some have propagated the idea that God only saves people at the mourner's bench, and unless you are saved at the altar, it will not be a good conversion. This is absolutely unscriptural and is limiting God, for he is pleased to save people anywhere.

I know of some who were saved alone in the bedroom, in the kitchen, on the porch, on the street, in the car, in the basement, in the barn, in the field. Paul was saved on the road. Nathaniel was saved under a tree.

In fact, if you will observe closely, you will find that there is not one mourner's bench conversion to be found in the Bible. God can save people there. Of the four cases of conversion described in our chapter, no two are alike.

The first two heard a preacher proclaiming Christ as the Lamb of God. Simon Peter was brought to Christ by his brother. Philip seemed to have no one who cared for his soul, and Nathaniel was brought to the Savior by Philip.

Putting the four together, we notice that the first to be saved was the result of a preacher. He was preaching a message, and the second and the fourth are the result of personal work of a believer. In the third, there was no human instrument employed by God.

The fact that the first two came to Christ as a result of the ministry of one of God's servants puts the preaching of the Word of God of great importance in the saving of sinners. The fact that God honored the personal witnessing of these early converts shows He is pleased to give a prominent place to the personal work as a means of saving souls. The fact that Philip was saved apart from human instrumentality should teach us that God has not reached the end of His resources, even though preachers should prove unfaithful to their calling, and even though those who are saved fall down on the privilege of personal work.

There are no doubt times when the human agency may stand in the way of sinners receiving Christ, for the seeker may become occupied with the soul winner rather than with the Savior. However, the very fact that he has given the least prominence to souls finding the Savior without human instrumentality would indicate that he more often prefers to use one of the former methods. It is surely his way of dispensing two blessings at one time, for the soul winner who has just pointed the soul to Christ receives of much joy in so doing as the sinner who receives eternal life.

When Christ ascended to heaven, He gave gifts to men. According to Ephesians 4, verse 8, He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. These are recognized by God and by man.

He has not called everyone to preach, and the greatest demonstration of a misfit is when a person gets the preaching itch without being called or gifted by our risen head in heaven. That's why we have some

blacksmiths who ought to be preachers and some preachers who ought to be blacksmiths. Those who have this seemingly incurable preaching itch have forgotten that God has placed the earnest soul winner on exactly the same plane as the preacher, and so far as God is concerned, there is no difference whether a soul is brought to Christ through preaching or through the personal contact of visitation.

The missionary accomplishes more through personal work than through preaching while he is in the pioneer district. If you can lead souls to Christ during the week, at work or at home, there is no reason for you to envy the preacher, for there is no honor in being a preacher apart from the fact that he has the unspeakable privilege of leading souls to Christ through his ministry, and the soul winner or personal worker has the same honor and privilege. The two must work harmoniously together.

The soul winner finds it helpful to bring his interested souls under the sound of the gospel, and the preacher finds his preaching difficult and without results apart from the cooperation of the personal worker. There are certain people who would never accept an invitation to hear the gospel from the preacher, but they will accept that invitation from the personal worker, and you do not need to be especially gifted to show an interest in a friend or a loved one. The secret of this is found in the measure in which you enjoy your own salvation.

If you are not saved, personal work will become a difficult duty, but if you are saved and certain of it and enjoying your salvation, you will find witnessing spontaneous. I think I should remind you of the tremendous responsibility of undertaking to lead a soul to Christ, for unless you are absolutely certain of the way of salvation, you may mislead souls and become a blind leader of the blind, and to mislead a soul is a serious thing. There are many confused souls who have been led into even deeper confusion by well-meaning but unqualified personal workers.

One of the essential things of a soul winner is a good knowledge of the Scriptures. You can only lead a soul to Christ with an open Bible, for you must show him direct from the Scriptures how to be saved. If you are to expect a permanent conversion, it must be through the reading of the Scriptures.

The soul winner must be patient and do his work thoroughly. He must avoid rushing souls and begging them when there is not sufficient conviction. You cannot push a soul to Christ.

You must lead him, and to accomplish anything for God you must lead him to Christ, not to a happy feeling, not to a mere reformation, but to a person, not to a creed, but to Christ. The successful soul winner must have his activity balanced with prayer. That is, he must talk to God about the seeking soul on his knees before he can talk to the soul about God.

His day must begin with a little prayer, Lord, lay some soul upon my heart and love that soul through me, and may I nobly do my part to win that soul for Thee. It was D.L. Moody's prayer, Lead me to some soul today and teach me, Lord, just what to say. Friends of mine are lost in sin and cannot find the way.

Few there are who seem to care. Few there are that pray. Melt my heart and fill my life.

Give me one soul today. I am persuaded that the record in heaven will prove that more souls are won by prayer than through any other means, and God in His infinite grace has made this provision so that those who are naturally too timid to speak to souls can win a soul by praying for that one daily. In the case of Philip's conversion in our chapter, without any human instrumentality, we have something that should be a source of encouragement to you who are a bit discouraged because those souls that you've been longing

to reach for Christ have not been saved.

Remember this. You must lead souls to Christ. You cannot push them.

Thirsty horses are easily led to the water and drink voluntarily. It's wonderful to observe in this passage the suitability of Christ to all the kinds of men. The Savior drew to Himself men of such widely different types and temperaments.

There are some superficial skeptics who sneeringly declare that Christianity only attracts those of a particular type, the effeminate, the emotional, the intellectually feeble, but such an objection is easily refuted by the fact of common observation. Christ has been worshipped and served by men and women of every variety of temperament and calling. Those who are enjoying His salvation have been drawn from every walk of life as well as from every nation and tribe under the sun.

Kings and queens, statesmen and soldiers, scientists and philosophers, poets and musicians, lawyers and physicians, farmers and fishermen have been among the number who have cried, This truth is illustrated in our chapter tonight. John was a devoted, affectionate character. Andrew seems to have been a man with a calculating mind.

It was he who first observed a lad with a five loaves and two small fishes. Simon Peter was hot-headed, impulsive, full of zeal. Philip was materialistic.

It was he who replied, 200 pennyworth is not sufficient to feed such a multitude. Nathaniel, of whom least is known, was evidently a meditative and retiring disposition. Each one of these, though radically different, found in Christ that which met his need and satisfied his heart.

That same Christ that saved these in the early days, when Christ was upon the scene, is ready to save every guilty sinner who will put his or her trust in Him. I wonder if I have some out in my radio audience today. You have been called by the Savior, but you have never come to Him.

You have ignored that call, and that's a very sad thing. Your history is a dark history, because a loving Savior in Heaven is interested in you. He proved that interest by dying for you on Calvary's cross.

And how sad if we should read in our chapter that there were some whom Jesus called, and they ignored that call, and they would not follow the Savior. Such is the sad commentary of your life if you have never trusted the Savior. And I beg of you to stop right where you are, and to consider the importance of answering the call of a loving Savior who has provided salvation for you, and desires that you might be with Him in glory for all eternity, rather than to pay for your sins in a dark and in a fearful eternity.

May God help you to trust Him this very hour, for His name's sake. Amen.

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