

PASSION FOR THE LOST

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Luke 15:10

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

PASSION FOR THE LOST

I want to share a burden that I believe the Lord put in my heart for you.

Passion for the lost cannot be taught. It has to be borne in your heart by the Spirit of God. I trust God to pour the flames of the passion He has for the lost in the world into your heart.

Since the fall of man in the garden, all the operation of God on earth has been with the underlying goal of saving souls. If God will make you wealthy it will be with goal that you will use that wealth to increase your capacity for reaching the lost.

If God will promote you in life, it will be with the goal that you will use the increased influence of that office to extend His kingdom. God will never bless you so you can be more comfortable without doing anything else! That is an unbalanced view of God's blessing. God will bless you to make you a blessing!

I have come to believe that GOSPEL IS NOT TO BE PREACHED BY THE POOR BUT THE GOSPEL IS TO BE PREACHED TO THE POOR! The worst poverty in life is to be without Jesus.

No matter the state of a human being, if he is apart from Christ, he is classified a poor man by God and only the acceptance of the gospel makes him rich. Then he is qualified to take that same gospel to other poor souls.

I want to share with you SEVEN incontestable reasons why every believer should develop a passion for the lost.

REASON ONE: THE INESTIMABLE VALUE OF MAN

The Lord Jesus says in Matthew 16:26, “For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul?” Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” In God’s estimate, a man’s soul is worth far more than all the property on the earth and that’s something sizeable. To properly appreciate the value that God places on man, we only need to consider two factors:

(a) The creation of man

Gen. 1:26-28

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Psalm 8:3-5

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

(b) The cost of man’s redemption

In fact, some translations of Psalm 8:5 says, “Thou hast made him a little lower than God...” If man was worthless, then it would not be necessary to redeem him. But not only is man worth something to God, he is so valuable that the cost of redemption for man could only be paid for by God Himself?

Psalm 49:7-8

None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

The Bible says the only thing that should redeem man is the blood of Jesus, the spotless Son of God.

1Peter 1:18

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

This is the foremost reason to go after the lost. The soul of man is of such value that God was willing to sacrifice His only Son to get man back to Himself. Should we spare any effort or cost to reach such precious souls?!

REASON TWO: THE GREATNESS OF THE HARVEST.

It is a true fact that the Lord Jesus left the earth about 2,000 years ago, yet He made a statement that is as true now as it was then, if not truer!

Matthew 9:36-37

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

Beloved, let us start to consider the second reason from the fact that there are humans on the earth now than they ever were at anytime in the past history of the earth! That is a fact! Now let me show you how great the harvest truly is now:

- (a) The population of the entire world is about 5 billion now.
- (b) About 2.7 billion people HAVE NEVER HEARD THE GOSPEL ONCE in their lifetime.
- (c) There are over 16,000 different and distinct cultures; and people groups where not one single church is in existence.
- (d) There are 7,010 distinct living languages and 5,199 of them with no Bible or portions of scripture in their language.
- (e) An estimated 89,000 unsaved souls die every day – that is every 24 hours period!*

Beloved, this is really serious. Oswald J. Smith asked what right anyone has got to hear the gospel two times while someone has not heard it once! I ask you the same my friend, we must accept one fact – the vast majority of humanity do not live in the big cities of the earth, they live all over and we must reach them wherever they live.

REASON THREE: THE FEWNESS OF THE LABOURERS

Matthew 9:37

“...the harvest truly is plenteous, BUT THE LABOURERS ARE FEW!”

How true today? I do not mean Christians are few! No! But labourers, workers, soul winners are few! It is a fact that worldwide, there is about one missionary to 450,000 unsaved soul. Most white missionaries sent to Africa do not actually get to the interior. They stay in the cities, working among those who have heard the gospel once!

Every member of the Body of Christ has got to develop a vision of the entire enterprise of God. The Kingdom of God is bigger than any individual church or group and we must all pitch in and contribute our quota to the spread of the Kingdom.

Jesus left no one out when He commanded that we should go to the world. **ALL** Christians must go to **ALL** the world with **ALL** the gospel! **EVERY** Christian must preach **ALL** the gospel to **EVERY** creature. Jesus said to pray for labourers. God is raising soul harvesters, why don't you enlist now!

Can you imagine! If every Christian sees the value of each lost soul, we will not have such poor response to the harvest of souls.

REASON FOUR: THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF THE MESSAGE

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Acts 4:12

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Beloved, the gospel of Jesus is the only means of salvation! It can't be plainer than that. And you have that gospel to give! Why hoard it? The Bible says, "How shall they hear except someone tells them? YOU ARE THE ONE TO TELL THEM!"

I wonder if Christians are actually persuaded beyond all reasonable (and unreasonable) doubts that Jesus is the only way; that there is no other name given; that the gospel is the ONLY means by which man is brought to God. If we say we do, then why without earnestness in our sharing this absolutely wonderful news? Angels would gladly preach it – so says 1Peter 1:12. But they are not permitted!

This good news is for all men but only Christians have it. Let us give it to the hungry world.

REASON FIVE: THE SHORTNESS OF THE TIME

1 Corinthians 7:29a

But I say, brethren, THE TIME is short....

John 9:4

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Rev. 12:12

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, BECAUSE HE KNOWETH THAT HE HATH BUT A SHORT TIME.

Even Satan knows that the time is short. Beloved, let me tell you something. Paul said the time was short in his day – how much shorter it must be now! The Lord is coming soon and we will leave. But what will you say you have been doing. I hear that the life expectancy of an African, South of the Sahara is 27 years less than that of a man in the developed country!** “Do you know what that means? It means we have 27 years less to reach an African than an American.

The problems of the African are that severe. There are the diseases; there is occultism, etc., to cut his life short! Let me break it down for you a bit; if we were given two babies born the same day, one in American, the other in the jungles of Africa and you were told that they have 27 years in which to hear and accept the gospel, then it means the American can afford to accept Christ in his 27th year because there is easy possibility that he will be alive in 27 years time!

But the condition of African demands that you reach the African that VERY FIRST YEAR! He has no guarantee of being alive the next year of his birth without the gospel of Jesus! Can you get me! Let me help you a little more. An African has just about 96.3% chance of being dead by the end of each day without the gospel of Jesus when compared to an average American. Better still, you have to reach an African or Third World person with the gospel at a rate of 27 times faster than someone in America. And most of us think there is time left to do this job. And most of the gospel is on in America! What a crying shame!

Let me tell you something else. Just as the time is running out for the unbeliever to accept the gospel, even so time is fast running out for the believer to give them the gospel. We are closer to the return of Jesus now than any other time in the history of the world! We have got to explore all avenues to get the gospel to the world. NOW! NOW IS THE TIME!

REASON SIX: THE HARVEST IS READY

John 4:34-35

Jesus saith unto them, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; FOR THEY ARE WHITE ALREADY TO HARVEST.

This is quite serious! Since the days of Jesus, the harvest has been waiting! God is doing His part by preparing people for the gospel. He is shaking nations, families, individuals; shaking all their truths; getting them to the state of readiness for the gospel. And all it remains is for the Christian to bring them the good news.

Behold, now is the greatest hour for soul harvest. It is so easy, for God has gathered them unto the valleys of decision. The world has had enough bad news. The world is looking to us – the Christians – for some good news for the people’s souls! The radio and television technology make it easy to reach a large number at lesser time! Everything happening on the earth now favours the evangelization of the world.

The hindrance is what the Lord highlighted in that verse, “Say ye there are not yet four months.” We are fond of saying, “When the Holy Ghost moves we will move.” We are saying there is still time! Brother, not so. It is now we must bring in the sheaves of souls and some of the most unlikely individuals are getting born again now, more than ever, and they are being enlisted in the army of soul winners.

Next, we must learn to lift up our eyes beyond what we see physically, beyond our past and present experiences, and allow God to open our eyes to fields around us that are white, ready for harvest. Let God open your eyes to see the fields. They are there waiting. They are expectant! Let us not disappoint the world and God! The harvest is ready!

REASON SEVEN: IF WE DO NOT GIVE THEM THE GOSPEL, THEIR BLOOD WILL BE ON OUR NECK!

Ezekiel 33 (Please read the whole chapter.) I want to tell you that God is very serious in this matter of soul winning.

If you fail to tell them or you fail to tell them earnestly enough or seriously enough of the reality of heaven and hell, one day they will face that reality but they will point accusing fingers at you! Beloved, consider with me for a moment; how sad it will be for a person on the way to an eternity in the lake of fire to turn to you and say, "And you knew of this and had opportunity to tell me but you did not." How will you feel?

Let us read together Jeremiah 8:20, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. This is the cry of all those souls going to a Christians failed to rap their ripened souls!

Dear ones, the Lord Jesus really mean it when He said, "Make disciples of all nations." He did not say, "Make disciples in all nations!" he left you and I to effect that statement. How are you faring? How many souls will go to hell with your name on their lips? How many will get to heaven to thank you for being obedient and faithful? Not only this, Ezekiel chapter 33 makes it very plain that God also will ask their blood on our neck if we fail to tell them.

Look at it this way – I am not suggesting you may not get to heaven if you don't win souls, what I am saying is, how will you feel getting there only to realize that some souls are in the lake of fire because you failed to tell them, about the Saviour? Or, you failed to tell them earnestly enough? For it is not enough to just make a half-hearted attempt at soul winning to soothe your own conscience! You have to go after a soul as if your own entry into heaven depends on it! And it may well be, since the Bible says God will ask their blood on your neck! In fact let us read together

Ezekiel 33:7-9 (RSV).

So you, son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me, if I say to the wicked, o wicked man, you shall surely die, AND YOU DO NOT SPEAK TO WARN THE WICKED TO TURN FROM HIS WAY, THAT WICKED MAN SHALL DIE IN HIS INIQUITY, BUT HIS BLOOD I WILL REQUIRE AT YOUR HAND. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, BUT YOU WILL HAVE SAVED YOUR LIFE!"

I would not say I know the full meaning of these verses since they seem so plain. All I know is that I don't want to face God and have to explain what the blood of anyone is doing on my hand! I believe you understand my explanations.

It is important for you to do something about this message, my friend. It is important for you to take a positive step. What will it be?

Nothing must stop you from giving this soul-harvesting exercise your best shot. Give it all that is in you. Only your best effort will do for God in this case! At least you should be able to stand before God and say – I explored all of the opportunities you gave me to bring the gospel to the world!

Let me round up by telling you what God said to my heart some days ago: the cost of getting this most vital of all messages – the Gospel – to the world is so high (and rising every day) that you cannot afford any longer to just give your tithe or casual offerings. You have to give sacrificially for the kingdom.

And I don't mean only money; we can no more afford to serve God at our conveniences. We have to begin to serve God sacrificially in all realms. Let me tell you what will happen if you do not give of yourself sacrificially and of your substance sacrificially to the cause of the kingdom;

(a) The present wealth of all born again people on the earth put together as of today is not enough to take the gospel to every creature. If you fail to contribute your financial quota, you will increase the burden on the few faithful ones, (since you will one way or the other lose the finance to the devil) and thereby reduce the ability of the church to fulfill the task of world evangelization so much so that even if there are enough people to work, there would not be enough funds to take the gospel round the earth.

(b) The present labour force in the church is grossly inadequate to take the gospel to all the earth. In fact there is no nation on earth that has enough Christians workers (note I didn't say enough Christians) to adequately evangelize their nation.

If you fail to contribute your manpower quota you will increase the burden on the few faithfuls, reduce the life span and make the church poorer in terms of needed manpower so much so that even if the church has the finances there would no more be enough people to take the gospel round!

I trust God I have been able to spread the matter before you as plainly as possible. You cannot be unconcerned can you? What is your response?

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