

Fishers of Men

Series 1-25

By Paul Tackett

VerseQuest Ministries

Series Introduction: Fishers of Men

Fishers of Men is a 25-part series on soul winning, personal evangelism, gospel witness, and the forgotten burden of reaching sinners with the saving message of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a series about church growth gimmicks, shallow decisionism, religious salesmanship, emotional manipulation, or getting people to repeat words they do not understand so somebody can brag about numbers. This is a Bible-believing field manual for saved people who need to get the gospel out of the sanctuary and back into the streets, homes, workplaces, restaurants, doorsteps, mailboxes, checkout lines, family conversations, and ordinary places where lost souls actually live. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). That is not poetry for a church sign. That is a calling. That is a charge. That is a command that takes a man who has been saved by grace and turns him into a witness for the Saviour who saved him.

The burden behind this series is simple: most Christians today have never been taught how to deal with souls. They have been taught how to attend church, invite people to church, talk about church, argue about church, support church programs, and sometimes even defend doctrine online, but many of them could not sit across from a lost sinner and show him plainly from the Bible how to be saved. That is a disgrace. A believer ought to know how to explain sin, judgment, the cross, the blood, the burial, the resurrection, grace, faith, and eternal life. He ought to know the difference between leading a man to Christ and leading him to a prayer. He ought to know how to ask, "Are you saved?" without being a fool, and how to turn a natural conversation toward eternal truth without being awkward for the sake of being awkward. He ought to know how to hand out a gospel tract, give a testimony, answer excuses, deal with religious confusion, and follow up with a new believer. This series is written to put that old Bible burden back into the bones of Christians who have grown too quiet.

The series begins where real soul winning must begin: with real conversion. A man who has never been changed by the gospel will not carry the gospel with any true burden. The opening essays show that personal evangelism is not born first out of a program, but out of a changed life. When a sinner gets saved and knows Christ has delivered him from hell, he

naturally wants somebody else to know. A testimony is not the gospel, but a testimony can become a loaded weapon when it opens the door to the gospel. That is why the early part of the series deals with the new creature, the burden for lost souls, the value of one soul, and the simple truth that after fellowship with Jesus Christ, the greatest thing a saved man can do is point another sinner to the Saviour. “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30).

From there, **Fishers of Men** lays the doctrinal foundation. The gospel is the seed, not the personality of the worker, not the church program, not the testimony, not the religious invitation, and not the emotional appeal. The seed is the Word of God, and the saving message is that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The series emphasizes that the Holy Spirit does the inward work. We do not convict, draw, regenerate, or seal the sinner. God does that. But we are commanded to preach, witness, testify, warn, persuade, sow, and carry the gospel. That balance keeps a soul winner from pride when someone is saved and from despair when someone refuses. Paul planted, Apollos watered, “but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

This series also warns strongly against unclear evangelism. A sinner needs to know what he is believing. He needs to understand that he is lost, that sin has condemned him, that Jesus Christ shed His blood for sinners, that He rose again, and that salvation is by grace through faith, not works, ritual, baptism, church membership, sacraments, moral improvement, or religious effort. There is a whole section exposing the danger of leading people to trust a prayer instead of Christ. Prayer may accompany faith, but prayer is not the object of faith. A man is not saved because he repeated words. He is saved because he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). That distinction matters because false assurance can harden a soul for years.

The series then moves into practical soul winning. It covers giving your testimony, using personal experience without replacing the gospel, learning from imperfect early witnessing efforts, going door to door, saturating towns and neighborhoods with gospel seed, mailing tracts, handing out literature, and using printed witness in a way that is biblical and wise. It teaches that a tract can go where your voice cannot go, but it also warns not to hand out a tract you have not read. If the tract does not clearly present sin, Christ’s blood, the death, burial, resurrection, grace, and faith, then it is not good seed. The goal is not paper distribution for its own sake. The goal is getting gospel truth into the hands and hearts of sinners.

Another major part of the series deals with openings. Some openings are direct. Sometimes the right question is, “Are you saved?” “Do you know where you would go if you died?” or “Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how to be saved?” Other openings are indirect. A checkout line, restaurant table, elevator ride, store counter, phone call, workplace conversation, or casual remark can become a gospel opportunity when the Christian is alert. The point is not to be obnoxious. The point is to be awake. A soul-conscious believer hears words differently. When someone says, “I am lost,” “I need hope,” “I am afraid,” “This world is getting crazy,” or “Pray for me,” he hears an opening. He has a chance to turn ordinary talk toward eternal truth.

The series also teaches how to deal with different kinds of people. Some are uninterested, cold, distracted, mocking, or indifferent. They need conscience stirred without the soul winner becoming a pest. Some are religious and self-righteous, trusting Catholic sacraments, Campbellite baptism, Adventist Sabbath systems, Mormon authority, Jehovah’s Witness organization, Islamic works, Calvinistic confusion, or ordinary churchgoing morality. Those people often need to be brought back to sin, righteousness, judgment, Christ, blood, grace, and faith. The question is not, “What system do you defend?” The question is, “What are you trusting for your soul?” The gospel cuts through religious fog and brings the sinner face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The later essays deal with fear, excuses, objections, persuasion, drawing the net, and follow-up. Christians make excuses: “I do not know enough,” “I am not gifted,” “They will reject me,” “It will not do any good,” and “I am too busy.” Sinners make excuses too: “There are hypocrites,” “Nobody can know,” “I am a good person,” “All religions lead to God,” or “I will think about it later.” This series answers both. It teaches biblical persuasion without manipulation, urging sinners to believe on Christ without emotional trickery, pressure tactics, or fake numbers. It also teaches that there comes a time to draw the net and ask the sinner what he will do with Christ. But it warns that follow-up matters after a profession. A new believer needs assurance, Scripture, prayer, church fellowship, baptism rightly understood, discipleship, and grounding in eternal security.

The final burden of **Fishers of Men** is eternal. Soul winning is not about building a name, winning applause, or keeping a church program alive. It is about souls standing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” and then answered, “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19). That is the crown of rejoicing. Not money. Not popularity. Not followers. Not buildings. Souls. Some seed will not show fruit immediately. Some seed may not be traced until the judgment seat of Christ. But no faithful gospel

witness is wasted. If one soul is worth more than the whole world, then every honest effort to get the gospel to a sinner matters.

This series is important because churches have largely forgotten that evangelism belongs outside the sanctuary and that every believer is Christ's witness. The gospel was never meant to be locked inside a pulpit and guarded by professionals. It belongs in the mouth of the saved man, in the hand of the tract-giver, in the Bible of the personal worker, in the testimony of the changed sinner, in the prayer of the burdened saint, and in the daily path of ordinary believers who are willing to speak. The world is full of souls. Hell is still real. The blood still saves. The Book still speaks. The Holy Ghost still convicts. Jesus Christ still receives sinners. And the command still stands: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Fishers of Men is a call back to that work. It is a rebuke to silent Christianity, a warning against fake conversions, a correction to shallow evangelism, and a field manual for believers who want to carry the gospel faithfully. The field is the world. The seed is the Word of God. The message is Christ crucified, buried, risen, and able to save. The worker is the believer. The increase belongs to God. The reward is eternal. And the time to get back into the field is now.

1 of 25: Fishers of Men – When a Changed Man Starts Talking

Introduction

The first thing a saved man wants to do, if he really understands what God just saved him from, is tell somebody else. That is not a church program. That is not a committee decision. That is not a denominational slogan printed on a glossy pamphlet and laid on a table next to the coffee pot. That is the natural cry of a man who just found out he was headed for hell and that Jesus Christ stepped between him and the fire. You do not have to beg a drowning man to warn another man about deep water after he has been pulled out of it. You do not have to hold a seminar to convince a man who escaped a burning house that fire is dangerous. And you do not have to manufacture evangelism in a man who has just been born again and finally sees that the world around him is packed full of souls staggering toward eternity. When a man gets saved, really saved, scripturally saved, Bible saved, washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, the gospel does something to him. It does not just change his religious label. It changes his mouth. It changes his burden. It changes his direction. It changes the way he looks at people. He used to see a coworker, a neighbor, a relative, a waitress, a cashier, a stranger on the street. Now he sees a soul.

I got saved on October 31, 1993. I had been under conviction for a long time before that. God had been dealing with me. That is something a lot of shallow modern religion does not understand anymore. They think salvation is a cute little decision, a religious handshake, a membership transfer, a sentimental moment, or repeating a few words to get a preacher off your back. No, sir. When the Holy Ghost starts dealing with a man, He does not tickle him with a feather. He puts the spotlight on him. He shows him his sin. He shows him his lost condition. He shows him the judgment of God. He shows him that religion will not save him, good intentions will not save him, reform will not save him, baptism will not save him, church attendance will not save him, and the only hope he has is the Lord Jesus Christ who “died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). I went to church, heard the gospel message, and went forward. And when I got saved, I did not get a new hobby. I got a new life. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

After that, one seasoned brother got hold of me and did one of the best things any older Christian can do for a young believer: he got me into the Book. He did not hand me a stack of psychology books. He did not tell me to chase experiences. He did not tell me to become a religious entertainer. He told me to read the Word and keep reading it. Read it over and over. And I took his advice. That Book started working in me. The people who knew me before saw it. The people I worked with saw a new man, and some of them could hardly believe what they were looking at. Some people had been afraid of me before. Some old friends did not know what to do with me afterward. A few stayed around at a distance. A lot of them avoided me. That is how it goes. When a man gets saved, the old crowd suddenly finds out he has become bad company for sin. But I had a burden. I preached to everybody I worked with. I wanted everybody to know what had happened. I did not know all the methods. I did not have all the answers. I had not been polished by a soul-winning class. I just knew I was saved, Jesus Christ had changed my life, and other people needed what I had found. That is where personal evangelism begins. Not in a program. Not in a gimmick. Not in a script. It begins when a changed man starts talking.

Chapter One: Real Soul Winning Begins With Real Conversion

The reason so much so-called evangelism today is dead is because a lot of the people trying to do it have never been born again themselves, or else they were never taught what happened to them when they got saved. A man who thinks salvation is joining a church will invite people to join a church. A man who thinks salvation is turning over a new leaf will tell people to clean up. A man who thinks salvation is religious activity will drag sinners into religious activity. But a man who knows he was a lost, guilty sinner headed for hell, and that

Jesus Christ saved him by grace through faith, has a different message altogether. He does not go out offering sinners a better lifestyle first. He does not go out offering them moral improvement first. He does not go out offering them political conservatism, church culture, a family program, a music style, or a cleaner vocabulary. He goes out telling them Christ died for sinners. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). That is the message. Not Christ came to help good people feel better about themselves. Not Christ came to decorate the world with religious language. Christ came to save sinners.

When I got saved, I knew something had happened to me. Nobody had to convince me that I had been changed. Nobody had to follow me around with a clipboard asking me if I had noticed any spiritual improvement. The change was there. It was visible. The old appetite began to get crossed. The old crowd began to feel strange. The old direction got interrupted. The Word of God became alive. The gospel was not a theory anymore; it was a fact that had struck me personally. That is what gives a witness weight. A man can argue with your doctrine. He can mock your Bible. He can roll his eyes at your preaching. But when he knew the old man and now sees the new man, he has to step over a living testimony to keep rejecting the truth. That does not mean your testimony saves anybody. It does not. The gospel saves. But a testimony can put a hook in a sinner’s conscience. It can make him ask, “What happened to you?” And when he asks that, you had better not start mumbling about turning your life around. You tell him the truth: Jesus Christ saved you.

That is why this first essay has to start here. If soul winning starts anywhere else, it becomes machinery. Modern churches love machinery. They love programs, slogans, campaigns, branded outreach cards, social media graphics, and little safe phrases that never offend anybody. But the New Testament did not start with a marketing department. It started with men who had seen the risen Christ, men filled with the Holy Ghost, men who opened their mouths and preached. When the Lord Jesus found Peter and Andrew, He said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). Notice the order. First, “Follow me.” Then, “I will make you fishers of men.” A man who is not following Christ will not fish for men scripturally. He may fish for numbers, attention, applause, a church report, or a denominational certificate, but he will not fish for souls the Bible way. The first qualification for a soul winner is not a personality. It is not a sales pitch. It is not charisma. It is a real conversion and a real walk with the Saviour.

Chapter Two: Conviction Comes Before the Cry

Before I got saved, God had been dealing with me. That matters. A man does not truly flee to Christ until he sees there is something to flee from. You can get a sinner to repeat words while he is still laughing at sin, still trusting himself, still indifferent to judgment, still

completely unconvicted, and you may write his name in your little soul-winning tally, but heaven did not necessarily write his name in the Lamb's book of life. The Holy Ghost convicts. Jesus said of the Comforter, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). That is not modern soft soap. That is not religious therapy. That is God putting a sinner on trial inside his own conscience. Sin. Righteousness. Judgment. That is the courtroom of the Holy Ghost. A sinner has sinned. God is righteous. Judgment is coming. Now what is he going to do with Jesus Christ?

This is one place where personal evangelism has been ruined by shallow methods. People want results without conviction. They want professions without repentance. They want decisions without understanding. They want sinners to feel comfortable while they are being warned about hell. They want to explain salvation without mentioning wrath, blood, judgment, sin, or the cross in any serious way. Then they wonder why their converts disappear like smoke. A man who has never been wounded by the Word of God has no reason to look for the Balm of Gilead. A man who has never seen himself guilty has no reason to plead for mercy. A man who has never understood that he is lost has no reason to be found. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Not the self-improved. Not the religiously curious. Not the socially adjusted. The lost.

That does not mean every sinner has the same emotional experience before salvation. Some weep. Some tremble. Some sit quiet. Some fight it. Some are under conviction for months. Some get hit like a lightning bolt when the gospel is preached. But the truth must get in. The sinner must understand that he is a sinner before God and that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. When I finally heard the gospel message and went forward, it was not because I needed a new club. I needed a Saviour. That is what must be restored in soul winning. We are not out there trying to make people religious. We are not trying to get people to admire our church. We are not trying to win arguments for sport. We are dealing with souls, and a soul is worth more than the whole world. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). You can win every debate and lose the soul standing in front of you if you forget what you are there for.

Chapter Three: A Changed Life Opens the Door

After I got saved, the people at work saw the change. That is important because there are some people you will never reach first with a sermon; you will reach them first by becoming living evidence that the gospel is not a fairy tale. They saw a new man. They saw that something had happened. Some did not like it. Some were uneasy around it. Some avoided it. Some were curious. A changed life is not the gospel, but it gives the gospel a witness stand. Paul wrote, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2). People read you before they listen to you. That does not mean you wait

until you are perfect before you speak. If that were the case, nobody would ever witness. But it does mean your life ought not be giving the lie to your mouth. If you preach Christ on Thursday and live like the devil on Friday, do not be shocked when sinners think you are a joke on Saturday.

The problem with a lot of modern witnessing is that it has been separated from a holy life. The Bible does not separate them. “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1:27). Your conversation in that verse is your manner of life. It ought to fit the gospel you claim to believe. If Jesus Christ saved you from sin, then your life ought not be advertising sin. If He saved you from darkness, quit decorating the darkness. If He saved you from hell, quit laughing with the crowd that is going there. A man does not have to become a monk to be a witness, but he ought to become clean. There is something wrong when a man wants to be a soul winner but does not want to be separated from the same filth that is damning the souls he claims to care about. “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Timothy 2:19).

Now, when a man gets changed, he will lose some people. That is one of the first shocks of the Christian life. You get saved and think everybody is going to rejoice. You think the old friends are going to say, “That is wonderful! Tell me how I can know the Lord too!” And a few may. But many of them will act like you caught a disease. They liked you better when you were lost. They liked you better when you laughed at sin, ran with them, talked like them, drank like them, cursed like them, chased what they chased, and never reminded them of judgment. But when Christ changes you, your very existence becomes a rebuke to the old crowd. “Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you” (1 Peter 4:4). Let them think it strange. Let them talk. Let them avoid you. Let them whisper. A changed man with an open Bible is more dangerous to hell than a hundred respectable church members who never disturb anybody.

Chapter Four: The First Burden Is Usually Personal

When I got saved, I started preaching to everybody I worked with. That is usually how it happens. The first field God gives you is not Africa, China, or the citywide crusade. It is the people already around you. Your family. Your coworkers. Your friends. Your neighbors. The people who knew the old man. They may be the hardest ones to reach because they remember what you were, but they are also the ones who can see what God has done. The Lord told the maniac of Gadara, after He had delivered him, “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee” (Mark 5:19). That is a good place to start. Go home. Tell your friends. Not because they are easy. Because they are yours.

That early burden is a precious thing, and the devil works hard to beat it out of a young Christian. He will use embarrassment. He will use mockery. He will use fear. He will use older dead Christians who say, "Calm down, you are getting a little too zealous." He will use theological nitpickers who want to argue you into silence before you ever learn to witness. He will use your own ignorance against you. You will think, "I do not know enough." Good. Then learn. But speak while you are learning. A man does not have to know every verse in the Bible to tell a sinner that Christ died for sinners and rose again. A newborn baby does not know much, but he knows how to cry. A newborn Christian may not know much, but he ought to know how to say, "I was lost, Jesus Christ saved me, and He can save you."

Now, that does not excuse laziness. After you get saved, get in the Book. Learn the gospel. Learn the verses. Learn how to answer. Learn how to use Romans, John, Acts, Ephesians, Galatians, and 1 Corinthians. Learn how to explain sin, judgment, grace, faith, blood, resurrection, and eternal life. But do not wait until you think you are an expert. Some Christians have been "preparing" to witness for thirty years and still have not opened their mouths. That is not preparation. That is cowardice wearing a study Bible. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). A believer ought to grow in knowledge, yes, but he ought to witness with what light he has while he is growing. The first disciples did not know everything, but when they found Christ, they went and told somebody. Andrew found Peter. Philip found Nathanael. That is how it starts. One changed man tells another man where the Saviour is.

Chapter Five: The First Soul Teaches You Something

About a week after I got saved, I helped lead my first person to the Lord. She was a Russian woman living here in the States, married to a U.S. serviceman. She spoke broken English, and there we were trying to witness with a dictionary, struggling through words, trying to get the truth across. That is not the way the polished boys would draw it up in a classroom. That is not the neat little demonstration with two chairs and a whiteboard. That is real life. A new Christian, a friend, a Russian woman, broken English, a dictionary, a testimony, and the gospel. After about an hour, she trusted Christ. She started coming to church. And I thought, that is one person. One soul. One eternal being who heard enough gospel through all that broken communication to call upon the Lord by faith. That will do something to you.

That experience taught me something that a lot of Christians never learn because they never try: God can use a willing witness even when the witness feels completely inadequate. You may stumble. You may not know the perfect phrase. You may have to slow down. You may have to explain a word. You may have to open a Bible and point. You may have to use a tract. You may have to say, "Let me show you." You may have to admit, "I do not know the answer to that, but I know what Christ did for sinners." But if you are willing to

speak, God can use you. “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). That verse ought to encourage every believer who feels unqualified. You are the vessel. The treasure is not you. The treasure is the gospel of Christ.

And there is nothing like seeing a sinner understand. That moment when the light comes on, when the argument drops, when the fear of man fades, when the soul sees Christ as the answer, when the sinner stops trusting himself and rests in the finished work of Jesus Christ — there is no thrill like that in the world. The world has its thrills. The flesh has its entertainments. The devil has his counterfeit fires. But to be there when a sinner passes from death unto life, when a lost soul believes on the Lord Jesus Christ — that is eternal business. “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10). Not over a building program. Not over a polished choir special. Not over a denominational award. One sinner. One soul. One person who was lost and is now saved.

Chapter Six: Door to Door Teaches Discipline

One of the first things I started doing was knocking on doors. I did not really know how to witness like a trained man. I just knew I wanted other people to know. So we went. Every Thursday. Every Saturday. Door after door. We covered the whole town where I was saved two times. Then another town where I lived two times. Then another town where I helped a friend as an assistant pastor once. That kind of work will teach you things that no book can teach you. It will teach you rejection. It will teach you patience. It will teach you how different people are. It will teach you how to get to the point. It will teach you that some people are lonely, some are angry, some are religious, some are indifferent, some are hungry, some are looking for an excuse to slam the door, and some have been waiting for somebody to come by with the truth.

Door knocking is not magic. It is not the only way to witness. It is not even always the most fruitful way in every place or season. But it does something to the Christian who does it. It forces him out of the pew and into the field. It puts a Bible or a tract in his hand and a real sinner in front of his face. It burns off some of that church-house fantasy where everybody talks about outreach but nobody reaches out. It makes you confront the fact that the field is not theoretical. There are names on mailboxes. There are families behind doors. There are old men, young mothers, teenagers, widows, drunks, church members, atheists, Catholics, Baptists, skeptics, and backsliders. And every one of them has a soul. “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” (John 4:35).

You also learn that you do not always know what to say. That is good for you. It teaches dependence. Sometimes you say too much. Sometimes you say too little. Sometimes you walk away and think of the perfect answer five minutes too late. Welcome to the work. Keep going. A soul winner is not made in one afternoon. He is made by prayer, Scripture, practice, failure, correction, boldness, compassion, and more practice. You learn to carry tracts. You learn to keep your Bible ready. You learn to ask better questions. You learn to listen. You learn when to press and when to leave. You learn that some people are not rejecting you; they are rejecting Christ. You learn that some seed goes into hard ground and some into good ground. Your job is not to control the soil. Your job is to sow the seed.

Chapter Seven: Saturate the Field With Seed

The way I learned soul winning was simple: keep planting seed. If someone did not want to listen, fine. Leave a tract. If someone gave you a minute, give them the gospel. If a conversation opened at a store, take it. If a waitress came to the table, speak kindly, leave a tract, and tip right. Do not be the kind of cheap religious hypocrite who leaves a gospel tract and a lousy tip. That is not a witness; that is an embarrassment. Talk to the checkout clerk. Talk to the coworker. Talk to the man in the waiting room. Talk to the neighbor. You do not have to make every conversation a theological wrestling match. Sometimes you are just putting a hook in the water. Sometimes you are just dropping seed. Sometimes you are just letting someone know there is a Saviour and someone still cares enough to say so.

I used to get a phone book, buy stamps, put gospel tracts in envelopes, and mail them out with no return address. Just seed. Nobody clapping. Nobody counting. Nobody saying, "What a ministry." Just seed. That kind of work is good for the soul because it kills the showman. The flesh wants credit. The flesh wants to know who responded. The flesh wants to post numbers. The flesh wants a testimony service where everybody knows what it did. But the Spirit-filled worker can send out seed and let God keep the records. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1). You may not find it today. You may not find it this year. You may not find it until the judgment seat of Christ. But no honest gospel seed is wasted.

That is what churches have forgotten. They want quick results, visible results, measurable results, marketable results. God tells farmers to sow. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow" (Matthew 13:3). Some seed fell by the way side. Some fell upon stony places. Some fell among thorns. Some fell into good ground. The sower did not quit because some seed was rejected. He kept sowing. That is the soul winner's life. Saturate the town. Saturate the workplace. Saturate the family. Saturate the restaurant. Saturate the street. Saturate the mailbox. Saturate the conversation. Saturate the internet if God gives you that platform. Get the seed out. The gospel is not fragile. The Word of God is not weak. "So then faith

cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). You cannot make anybody believe, but you can make sure they have something to believe.

Conclusion

This series is needed because we are living in a generation of Christians who have been trained to be spectators instead of witnesses. They know how to attend. They know how to watch. They know how to share opinions. They know how to complain about the world. They know how to argue politics. They know how to critique churches. They know how to talk about prophecy, culture, corruption, conspiracies, and the collapse of society. But many of them do not know how to sit across from a sinner and show him from the Bible how to be saved. That is a disgrace. The Bible does not say, “He that discusseth headlines is wise.” It says, “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). If a man can talk for three hours about everything wrong with the world but cannot give a clear gospel witness to a lost soul, something is badly out of order.

Soul winning begins when a changed man starts talking. That is the first lesson. Not when the church launches a program. Not when the pastor announces a campaign. Not when somebody prints matching shirts. It begins when a saved sinner realizes that the people around him are still lost, still blind, still guilty, still headed for judgment, and still loved enough by God that Christ died for them. It begins when that saved sinner opens his mouth. Maybe he stumbles. Maybe he trembles. Maybe he uses a tract. Maybe he uses a dictionary with a Russian woman who speaks broken English. Maybe he knocks on a door and gets rejected. Maybe he mails a tract and never knows what happened. Maybe he speaks to a coworker and gets avoided. Maybe he talks to a waitress and she reads the tract later. Maybe he thinks he failed, but someone else waters the seed ten years down the road. That is not failure. That is farming.

So let the dead churches keep their programs. Let the polished professionals keep their religious sales pitches. Let the cowardly Christians keep their excuses. A Bible believer has a better way. Get saved. Get in the Book. Get clean. Get burdened. Get bold. Get the gospel clear. Get some tracts. Get your mouth open. Get your eyes off yourself and onto the souls around you. This world is not a playground; it is a field. Men are not merely bodies; they are souls. Hell is not a metaphor; it is a place. The gospel is not advice; it is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16). And the first sound that ought to come out of a changed man’s mouth is not religious small talk. It is witness. It is warning. It is testimony. It is the old, old story of Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, risen, and able to save any sinner who will trust Him.

2 of 25: Fishers of Men – The Greatest Thing You Can Do After You Are Saved

Introduction

After a man gets saved, the first and greatest matter in his life is his fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Get that down first, because if you miss that, you will turn soul winning into a mechanical performance, a religious sales pitch, or a fleshly contest to see who can count the most heads. A saved man's first business is to walk with God, love the Lord, feed on the Book, pray, stay clean, and keep his heart right. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). If a man is not walking with God, he can still hand out tracts, knock doors, quote verses, and talk religion, but he will dry up inside while doing it. There are men who can explain salvation and still have no tears, no burden, no compassion, no fear of God, no tenderness toward sinners, and no trembling over eternity. They have the mechanics, but they lost the heart. So before anything else is said, let it be said plainly: the greatest thing in the Christian life is not public service, private reputation, or outward labor. It is knowing Jesus Christ, walking with Him, staying in fellowship with Him, and letting His Word abide in you.

But after that, after a man is saved and has begun walking with the Saviour, the greatest thing he can do in this life is point another sinner to Jesus Christ. Not build a name. Not win an argument. Not gather applause. Not become known as a great speaker, writer, teacher, debater, preacher, or online voice. Those things may have their place if God uses them, but they are not the main thing. The main thing is souls. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). God did not say, "He that winneth followers is wise." He did not say, "He that winneth debates is wise." He did not say, "He that winneth admiration is wise." He said, "he that winneth souls is wise." The wisdom of heaven does not measure greatness by the same crooked yardstick this world uses. The world measures a man by money, degrees, fame, influence, beauty, titles, property, crowds, and reputation. God measures eternity, and one soul is worth more than the whole pile.

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Now stop and let that thing hit you. If a man could own the whole world, not just a house, not just a business, not just a bank account, not just a country, not just a continent, but the whole world, Jesus Christ said that man still makes a bad bargain if he loses his soul. That means one human soul is worth more than the combined wealth, power, pleasure, kingdoms, industries, banks, governments, armies, entertainment, gold, silver, real estate, and fame of this entire world system. If that is true, and it is true because the Lord said it, then winning one soul to Jesus Christ is greater work than winning the whole world's applause. A man who points one sinner to Christ has

handled something more valuable than empires. The world may never notice him. The newspapers may never print his name. The universities may never honor him. The religious crowd may never invite him to the platform. But heaven knows what happened when that sinner passed from death unto life.

Chapter One: The Value of One Soul

The first reason soul winning is the greatest work after salvation is because of the value of the soul itself. The soul is not an animal instinct, a psychological label, a personality profile, or a religious metaphor. The soul is the real man. When the body goes into the ground, the soul keeps going. That is why the Bible says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Death is not annihilation. Death is not escape. Death is not the last page. Death is the door through which a man steps into eternity, and the thing that goes through that door is the soul. Men spend their whole lives dressing the body, feeding the body, entertaining the body, pampering the body, photographing the body, exercising the body, medicating the body, decorating the body, and obeying the body. Then one day that body drops, and the soul goes out to meet God.

That is why Jesus Christ valued the soul above the world. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:37). There is no exchange rate high enough. You cannot buy it back with money. You cannot rescue it with education. You cannot bribe God with religion. You cannot trade fame for it. You cannot hand God a list of respectable deeds and say, "This ought to cover the account." The soul is eternal, and sin has put it under judgment. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). That is the trouble. Not lack of culture. Not lack of therapy. Not lack of opportunity. Sin. A man's soul has sinned against a holy God, and that soul must either be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ or face God in its own guilt. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). That is not just a verse for a soul-winning chart. That is God's verdict on the whole race.

Now if one soul is worth more than the whole world, then the Christian who wins souls is handling the most valuable business on earth. A surgeon may operate on a body and extend a man's life for a few years. That is good. A lawyer may save a man from prison. That has value. A fireman may pull a man from a burning house. That is noble. A soldier may rescue a man from an enemy. That is honorable. But a soul winner, with an open Bible and the gospel of Christ, deals with eternity. He points a sinner to the One who can save him from the second death. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Revelation 20:14). You want important work? There it is. You want meaningful work? There it is. You want something that matters after the flowers wilt, the checks are cashed, the trophies gather dust, and the cemeteries fill up? Win a soul to Jesus Christ.

Chapter Two: The Wisdom of Winning Souls

The Bible says, “he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). That means a soul winner is wise by God’s definition, whether the world thinks he is smart or not. A man can have three degrees, a polished vocabulary, a successful business, a respectable name, and a head full of facts, and still be a fool if he lives for time and forgets eternity. The Bible says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7). You do not become wise by learning how to impress men. You become wise by learning how God sees things. And God sees a lost soul as a being so valuable that He sent His only begotten Son to die for it. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16). That is the price God put on souls.

The world thinks a wise man is the man who can make money, manage people, manipulate systems, and climb ladders. But the ladders are leaning against a burning building. The whole system is on its way out. “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof” (1 John 2:17). That is the world’s obituary written before the funeral. It is passing away while men are bragging about owning pieces of it. A man gets proud because he owns land, but the land will still be here when his carcass is under it. A man gets proud because he has money, but he will leave every penny behind. A man gets proud because people know his name, but a generation after he is dead, most of them will not remember him unless they stumble across his picture in a box. But a soul won to Christ is eternal fruit. That soul will still be alive ten thousand years from now. That soul will still be rejoicing when the world’s celebrities are forgotten and its billionaires are ashes.

That is why soul winning is wisdom. It is investing in what cannot die. Paul said, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19). There it is. People. Souls. Converts. Those reached with the gospel. That is what rejoices at the coming of Christ. Not your car. Not your house. Not your fishing boat. Not your social media account. Not your diplomas. Not your hobbies. Not your religious arguments. The souls you reached, the people you pointed to Christ, the sinners who heard the gospel because you opened your mouth, those are connected to eternal rejoicing. That is wisdom. The man who wins souls is not wasting his life. He is spending it on something that will survive the judgment.

Chapter Three: The Greatest Work Is Not Always the Most Applauded Work

One of the devil’s tricks is to make Christians think that if something is not visible, public, famous, or applauded, it is not important. That is how he gets believers chasing platforms instead of souls. A man can stand before thousands and still never deal with one sinner personally. A woman can sing in front of a church for twenty years and never once sit

across from a lost soul and point her to Christ. A believer can be known online, respected in a church, followed by many, admired by friends, and still have no fruit in the matter of soul winning. That is a sobering thing. It is possible to be busy around Christianity and still not be busy in the work that God calls wise.

Soul winning often happens in places where nobody is watching. At a door. At a break table. In a hospital room. Beside a kitchen table. At a gas station. In a restaurant. In a car. On a sidewalk. Through a tract handed to a stranger. Through a Bible verse spoken to a coworker. Through a letter mailed to someone who may never write back. Through a conversation that nobody records. That kind of work does not satisfy the flesh much because the flesh likes attention. But God sees it. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love" (Hebrews 6:10). That verse ought to put steel in a soul winner's backbone. God is keeping better records than men. You may forget half the tracts you handed out. God did not. You may forget the conversations you had. God did not. You may never know what happened after the seed was sown. God knows.

That means the Christian must stop measuring his work by immediate applause. You may witness to ten people and see no visible result. You may hand out fifty tracts and never get one phone call. You may preach to family members for years and feel like you are talking to a brick wall. Keep sowing. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand" (Ecclesiastes 11:6). The sower does not dig up the field every fifteen minutes to see if the seed is working. He sows and waits. Some of the greatest work you ever do may not show up until years later. Some of it may not show up until heaven. That is all right. The issue is not whether people applaud the work. The issue is whether God told you to do it. He did. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Chapter Four: Every Saved Man Owes the Gospel to Somebody Else

Paul said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" (Romans 1:14). That is a strange thing. Paul was not saying he owed them money. He owed them the gospel. He had received the message of salvation, and now he was obligated to carry it to others. That is one of the missing truths in modern Christianity. Saved people act like the gospel came to them so they could sit on it. No, it came to you so it could go through you. You are not the final destination. You are a carrier. The gospel that saved you is supposed to move from your mouth, your hands, your testimony, your witness, your Bible, your tracts, your prayers, and your life into the path of somebody else.

That debt is not paid by simply living a quiet moral life. A clean life matters. A consistent life matters. A kind spirit matters. But nobody gets saved by silently admiring your manners. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). At some point,

words have to come out. At some point, Christ has to be named. At some point, sin has to be identified. At some point, the cross has to be explained. At some point, the resurrection has to be declared. At some point, the sinner has to hear that salvation is not in his church, his works, his sacraments, his sincerity, his family, his morality, or his intentions, but in Jesus Christ alone. “Neither is there salvation in any other” (Acts 4:12). That cannot be lived silently. That has to be said.

If a man had the cure for a deadly disease and kept it in his pocket while people died around him, you would call him cruel. If a man saw a bridge out ahead and sat quietly while cars drove into the river, you would call him wicked. If a man knew a house was on fire and walked past because he did not want to disturb the family inside, you would call him a coward. But Christians know there is a hell, know there is a judgment, know there is a Saviour, know there is a gospel, and still many of them say nothing because they do not want an awkward moment. That is not spirituality. That is fear dressed up in polite clothing. Paul said, “knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). If the terror of the Lord does not move a man to persuade sinners, something is wrong with his heart.

Chapter Five: The Devil Fights Soul Winning Because It Robs His House

The devil does not mind religion. He has plenty of it. He does not mind churches as long as they do not preach the gospel clearly. He does not mind sermons as long as they entertain, soften, confuse, or distract. He does not mind Christians talking about politics, health, money, prophecy charts, church history, cultural decline, and personal opinions all day long if they never get around to dealing with souls. But when a Bible believer opens the Book and starts showing a sinner how to be saved, the devil gets interested. Why? Because that is a rescue mission. That is an invasion. That is walking into enemy territory with the sword of the Spirit and dragging a captive toward the light.

The Bible says lost people are blinded. “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not” (2 Corinthians 4:4). That means soul winning is not merely human persuasion. It is spiritual warfare. The sinner may think he is neutral, but he is not. He is blind. He is bound. He is dead in trespasses and sins. “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). That is why cleverness alone will not do it. You need the Word of God. You need prayer. You need the Holy Ghost. You need patience. You need boldness. You need compassion. You need to keep the issue on Christ, because the devil will try to drag the conversation into anything else. Religion, politics, hypocrites, denominations, science falsely so called, family grievances, personal tragedies, church scandals, anything but the sinner’s need of Christ.

And the devil will fight the soul winner from the inside too. He will whisper, “You do not know enough.” “You will look foolish.” “They will reject you.” “This is not the right time.” “Someone else can do it better.” “You might offend them.” “You might lose the friendship.” “You might not answer their question.” “You might make things awkward.” And many Christians obey the devil’s whisper more quickly than they obey Christ’s command. That is the ugly truth. The Lord says, “Go.” Fear says, “Wait.” Christ says, “Speak.” Pride says, “Protect your image.” The Bible says, “Preach the word.” The flesh says, “Stay comfortable.” At some point, a Christian has to decide whether he is going to be a servant or a coward. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

Chapter Six: The Gospel Is Not a Professional’s Job

One of the worst lies ever smuggled into church life is the idea that soul winning is mainly the preacher’s job. It is his job, but it is not only his job. It is every Christian’s responsibility to be a witness. In Acts 8, when persecution scattered the believers, the Bible says, “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). It does not say the apostles only. It does not say the ordained clergy only. It says they that were scattered abroad. Ordinary believers carried the Word. Men and women who had been saved opened their mouths and preached the gospel wherever they went. That is New Testament Christianity. What we have today in many places is a religious audience watching one man do what the whole body ought to be doing.

A preacher should preach. A pastor should teach. An evangelist should evangelize. But the man in the pew should not use that as an excuse to become a spiritual spectator. The woman at home, the worker at the office, the mechanic in the shop, the student at school, the mother with her children, the businessman in his daily dealings, the old saint in the nursing home, the young believer with a pocket full of tracts — all of them have a field. Your pulpit may be a kitchen table. Your mission field may be a break room. Your congregation may be one cashier having a hard day. Your open door may be a relative who finally asks, “What happened to you?” Do not despise that. God does not need a stained-glass window for the gospel to work. He needs a believer willing to speak.

This is why many churches are weak. They have turned the Great Commission into a paid position. They hire a man to preach, then sit back and say, “That is what we pay him for.” No, that is what Christ saved you for. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20). An ambassador represents a king in foreign territory. This world is foreign territory for the Christian. Our conversation is in heaven. We are strangers and pilgrims here. But while we are here, we represent the Lord Jesus Christ. An ambassador who refuses to speak the king’s message is useless. He may dress nicely, attend meetings, and

have an impressive title, but if he will not deliver the message, he has failed his office. The Christian who will not witness has forgotten why he was left here.

Chapter Seven: The Joy of Seeing a Soul Saved

There is a joy in soul winning that cannot be explained to the Christian who never does it. It is like trying to explain light to a blind man or music to a deaf man. He can hear the words, but he does not know the experience. When you sit with a sinner, open the Bible, show him Christ, watch the truth begin to land, and then see that soul trust the Saviour, there is nothing like it. The world has no substitute for that. Money cannot buy it. Entertainment cannot produce it. Religious performance cannot imitate it. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4). That joy applies in many ways, but anyone who has had a part in seeing a soul saved knows the sweetness of it. A sinner who was lost is now found. A soul that was under condemnation now has eternal life. A person who was headed for hell is now seated in Christ.

That joy does not mean every witnessing encounter ends that way. It does not. Some reject. Some mock. Some delay. Some argue. Some pretend interest. Some make excuses. Some listen politely and walk away lost. That is heartbreaking. But even then, the witness has not failed if he gave the truth faithfully. The gospel is a savour of life unto life to some and of death unto death to others. Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). The increase belongs to God. That keeps the soul winner humble. When someone gets saved, you cannot strut. You did not regenerate him. You did not wash his sins away. You did not seal him with the Holy Spirit. You did not write his name in heaven. You just carried the seed. God did the miracle.

But what a mercy that God lets us have any part in it at all. The Lord could have used angels to preach the gospel, but He did not. He could write the gospel in the sky every morning, but He did not choose that method. He chose saved sinners to tell lost sinners where the bread is. He chose earthen vessels. He chose witnesses. He chose ambassadors. He chose fishermen. That ought to humble a man and stir him at the same time. The greatest thing you can do after you are saved is not because you are great. It is because the message is great, the Saviour is great, the soul is valuable, eternity is real, and God in His mercy allows a redeemed sinner to point another sinner to redemption.

Conclusion

So here is the issue plainly: after fellowship with Jesus Christ, the greatest thing a saved man can do in this life is win another soul to the Saviour. That is not preacher talk. That is Bible. "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). One soul is worth more than the whole world. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his

own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Put those two verses together and let them burn through all the fog. If one soul is worth more than the world, then the man who wins souls is working in the most valuable field under heaven. No wonder the devil fights it. No wonder the flesh fears it. No wonder dead religion replaces it with programs. No wonder modern churches would rather train greeters, musicians, media teams, and coffee volunteers than train believers how to deal with sinners about eternity.

This series is not about turning Christians into pushy religious pests. It is not about pressuring people into fake professions. It is not about counting heads, bragging on numbers, or manipulating emotions. It is about recovering the old Bible burden that a saved man owes the gospel to lost men. It is about seeing people as souls. It is about getting the Word of God into the conversation. It is about being willing to look foolish for Christ’s sake. It is about handing out the tract, opening the Bible, giving the testimony, asking the question, warning the sinner, pointing to the blood, preaching the resurrection, and leaving the results with God. It is about refusing to let fear make you useless.

The world is dying. The churches are sleeping. Sinners are passing into eternity. Families are lost. Coworkers are lost. Neighbors are lost. Religious people are lost. Respectable people are lost. Educated people are lost. Poor people are lost. Rich people are lost. Young people are lost. Old people are lost. And God has put the gospel into the hands of saved people. What a thought. What a responsibility. What a privilege. Get in fellowship with Christ. Stay in the Book. Keep your heart clean. Then open your mouth. There is no greater work after salvation than pointing another sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise.

3 of 25: Fishers of Men – The Burden for Lost Souls

Introduction

A man will never be much of a soul winner until God gets him past seeing people merely as people and makes him see them as souls. That is where the burden begins. The average Christian walks through a grocery store and sees shoppers. He sits in a restaurant and sees waitresses. He goes to work and sees coworkers. He drives through a neighborhood and sees houses. He stands in line and sees clerks, cashiers, mechanics, nurses, delivery drivers, schoolteachers, old men, young mothers, teenagers, and strangers. But the Bible believer who has had eternity burned into his conscience starts seeing something else. He sees souls. Souls wearing uniforms. Souls pushing carts. Souls behind counters. Souls sitting in cubicles. Souls laughing at filthy jokes. Souls raising children. Souls building

careers. Souls hiding pain. Souls trusting religion. Souls ignoring God. Souls heading toward the grave. Souls that will live somewhere forever. That is not poetry. That is Bible truth. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).

This is one of the hardest lessons for Christians to learn because the flesh sees the outside first. It sees faces, clothes, habits, personalities, race, class, money, education, manners, speech, and appearance. It sees the rude man, the worldly woman, the tattooed teenager, the polished businessman, the religious grandmother, the sharp-tongued coworker, the Muslim clerk, the Catholic neighbor, the atheist professor, the drug addict, the drunk, the proud church member, the quiet widow, the angry relative, and the waitress who looks too busy to hear anything. But the soul winner has to learn to look past the wrapper and see the eternal being inside. That man who annoyed you in traffic has a soul. That cashier who barely looked up has a soul. That waitress who forgot your refill has a soul. That neighbor who mocked your Bible has a soul. That family member who avoids spiritual conversation has a soul. And one day that soul will either be with Christ or in hell. You can dress that up, soften it, apologize for it, or avoid saying it, but you cannot remove it from the Bible without gutting the whole purpose of the gospel.

That is why the burden for lost souls is not a sentimental mood. It is not a temporary emotional high after a stirring sermon. It is not pity in the shallow modern sense where you feel bad for a person but never warn him. It is not human niceness. A burden for lost souls is a Bible-shaped, Holy Ghost-produced awareness that men without Jesus Christ are lost, condemned, blind, guilty, dying, and headed for judgment. “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already” (John 3:18). Already. Not someday maybe. Not if he becomes unusually wicked. Not if he fails to become religious. Condemned already. If that truth does not move you, something is wrong. If hell is real and Christ is the only Saviour, silence is not kindness. Silence is cowardice. Silence is unbelief wearing a polite smile. A soul-conscious Christian cannot look at the world the same way anymore. He knows every person he meets is going somewhere, and he has the only message that can point him to the right place.

Chapter One: A Soul Is More Than a Body

The first thing we have to get straight is that man is not merely a body. The modern world has done everything it can to reduce man to chemicals, urges, biology, psychology, appetite, environment, and social conditioning. That is why the world treats people like animals with paperwork. Feed them, entertain them, drug them, educate them, manage them, classify them, manipulate them, and bury them. But the Bible does not begin with man as an animal climbing out of slime. It begins with God forming man and breathing into

him the breath of life. “And man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). That one statement is enough to blow up every God-hating philosophy that has crawled out of a university sewer. Man is not a beast with a bigger brain. Man is a living soul made by God, accountable to God, and destined for eternity.

That means every person you meet carries more eternal weight than the whole visible world around him. A man may be poor, dirty, broken, and forgotten, but he has a soul. A woman may be dressed in designer clothes, drive a luxury car, and sit behind a desk with her name on the door, but she has a soul. A child may not understand much yet, but that child has a soul. An old man in a nursing home may be weak, confused, and ignored by the world, but he has a soul. That is why Jesus said, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). The Lord did not say, “What shall it profit a man if he loses his career?” or “loses his savings?” or “loses his reputation?” Those losses may hurt, but they are not final. Lose the soul, and the loss is eternal.

Once that truth settles into a Christian, it changes the way he walks through life. He does not merely see bodies moving from one errand to another. He sees eternal beings passing him by. That is why the soul-conscious believer cannot be satisfied with church attendance as a substitute for witness. It is not enough to sit in a pew, sing a hymn, nod at the sermon, go home, and never think about the souls all around you. There are people you will pass this week who may be in eternity next week. There are people you work with who may never hear the gospel clearly unless you open your mouth. There are people in your family who may be one funeral away from sealing their rejection of Jesus Christ forever. A soul is more than a body. And if you believe that, then you have to ask yourself why you are so casual around souls that are walking toward judgment.

Chapter Two: Hell Makes the Burden Serious

You cannot have a biblical burden for souls if you are not willing to face what the Bible says about hell. This is where modern Christianity gets weak in the knees. It wants evangelism without hell, salvation without wrath, the cross without judgment, grace without guilt, and Jesus as a life coach instead of a Saviour from damnation. That kind of religion may fill seats, but it will not produce soul winners. If hell is not real, soul winning is just religious recruitment. If hell is not eternal, the gospel is not urgent. If hell is only a metaphor, then the apostles were overexcited, the martyrs were overdramatic, and Jesus Christ used the strongest warnings in the Bible for something that was not really that serious. No, sir. Hell is real. The Lord Jesus Christ warned men about it plainly. “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments” (Luke 16:23).

That rich man in Luke 16 was not in a parable about low self-esteem. He was not experiencing a temporary inconvenience. He was not being rehabilitated. He was in torments. He had memory. He had thirst. He had concern for his brothers. He had no escape. He had no second chance. He had no priest coming to say mass for him and move him into glory. He had no baptismal certificate to pull out. He had no church membership card. He had no good works account that could transfer him out. He was in hell. And the terrible thing is that he still had enough sense in hell to care about lost souls on earth, while many Christians on earth do not have enough sense to care about lost souls headed to hell. That is a hard statement, but it is true. A damned man in Luke 16 had more evangelistic concern for his brothers than many saved people have for their neighbors.

Hell makes soul winning serious because it removes all the games. If hell is real, then witnessing is not optional religious decoration. It is rescue work. If hell is real, then the gospel tract in your pocket is not junk paper. It is seed. If hell is real, then the Bible in your hand is not an accessory. It is the sword of the Spirit. If hell is real, then your silence around lost family members is not a small matter. If hell is real, then your fear of being thought strange is pathetic. What is somebody's awkward look compared to eternal fire? What is a little rejection compared to the lake of fire? Jesus said, "fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Christians today fear embarrassment more than they fear God. That is why they keep quiet. A burden for souls begins when the fear of God becomes stronger than the fear of man.

Chapter Three: Compassion Is Not Silence

The world has redefined compassion until it means never making anybody uncomfortable. That is not Bible compassion. Bible compassion tells the truth. Bible compassion warns. Bible compassion risks offense to save a soul. A man who sees a child walking toward a busy road and says nothing because he does not want to upset the child is not compassionate. He is wicked. A man who sees a house burning and refuses to wake the people inside because he does not want to disturb their sleep is not kind. He is a coward. And a Christian who knows men are lost, knows judgment is coming, knows Christ died for sinners, knows the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and says nothing because he wants to be liked is not compassionate. He is protecting himself.

The Lord Jesus Christ was moved with compassion, but His compassion did not make Him soft on sin. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them" (Matthew 9:36). Why? Because they were scattered, fainting, shepherdless. He saw their condition. He did not flatter them. He did not tell them they were fine. He did not say, "You are all on your own spiritual journey, and I affirm your process." That is the language of apostasy, not compassion. Real compassion sees the wound and brings the remedy. It

sees the disease and brings the cure. It sees the lost condition and brings the Saviour. Christ's compassion did not avoid truth; it delivered truth. He could weep over Jerusalem and still say their house was left unto them desolate. He could love sinners and still warn them about hell. He could receive publicans and harlots and still command repentance.

A soul winner must learn this kind of compassion. Not harshness for harshness' sake. Not fleshly meanness. Not a proud spirit that enjoys beating people down. That is not soul winning; that is carnality with a Bible under its arm. But neither is compassion this modern jellyfish religion that smiles people into hell because it cannot bear to speak plainly. The Bible says, "of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 22–23). Sometimes compassion is gentle. Sometimes it is urgent. Sometimes it is patient. Sometimes it grabs a man by the collar, spiritually speaking, and says, "Wake up. You are lost. Christ died for you. Do not go to hell trusting your religion, your baptism, your works, your feelings, or your excuses." That is not hate. That is love with backbone.

Chapter Four: Becoming Soul-Conscious

A Christian has to become soul-conscious. That means when he meets people, he learns to think beyond the surface and remember eternity. This does not come naturally to the flesh. The flesh classifies people by whether they are pleasant, useful, attractive, annoying, important, unimportant, rich, poor, educated, foolish, likeable, or unlikeable. The Holy Ghost teaches a man to see deeper. That person is a soul. That soul is either saved or lost. That soul is either in Christ or in Adam. That soul is either under the blood or under condemnation. That soul is going to die. That soul will stand before God. That soul needs the gospel. Once you begin thinking like that, everyday life becomes a mission field.

This is where the burden gets practical. A waitress is not just someone bringing food. She is a soul. Treat her right. Speak kindly. Leave a good tip. Give her a tract. If God opens the door, say a word for Christ. A cashier is not just someone scanning groceries. He is a soul. A coworker is not just someone sharing a shift. He is a soul. A neighbor is not just someone whose yard touches yours. He is a soul. The mechanic, the nurse, the delivery man, the barber, the woman at the front desk, the man standing beside you at the gas pump, the person sitting next to you on a plane — souls. Souls everywhere. "The field is the world" (Matthew 13:38). Not just the church building. Not just the missions conference. Not just the Sunday school class. The world.

Now, becoming soul-conscious does not mean becoming obnoxious, foolish, or socially blind. Some Christians think boldness means having no wisdom. That is not right. "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). Wisdom knows when to speak, how to speak,

when to ask, when to listen, when to press, and when to leave a tract and move on. But wisdom never becomes an excuse for permanent silence. Some people are always “waiting for the right time,” and the right time never comes because they are not really waiting on God; they are hiding behind caution. Pray for openings. Look for openings. Make openings when needed. Carry tracts. Keep verses ready. Ask God to make you aware of souls. You will be surprised how many doors open when you start looking for them.

Chapter Five: The People Closest to You Are Still Souls

Sometimes the hardest people to see as souls are the people closest to us. We see them as family, friends, coworkers, and familiar faces. We know their habits, their personalities, their history, their jokes, their weaknesses, their moods, and their excuses. Because they are familiar, we forget the eternal issue. But your father has a soul. Your mother has a soul. Your wife, husband, son, daughter, brother, sister, cousin, aunt, uncle, and grandparent have souls. Your old friends have souls. The people who knew you before you got saved have souls. Familiarity must not make eternity disappear.

This is also where the pain is sharpest. It is one thing to think about strangers being lost. It is another thing to think about your own family under condemnation. Paul said, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1). That is burden. He did not merely disagree with Israel doctrinally. He wanted them saved. Earlier he spoke with such heaviness and sorrow for his kinsmen according to the flesh that you can feel the ache in the passage. That is not dry theology. That is a man who knows truth and bleeds over those who are rejecting it. A real burden does not make you cold. It makes you earnest. It makes you pray. It makes you look for another opportunity. It makes you speak again when your flesh would rather avoid the tension.

But with family and close friends, wisdom is especially needed. You cannot nag someone into salvation. You cannot badger a soul into grace. You cannot force faith. You can warn, testify, pray, answer, give Scripture, show consistency, and be ready when God opens the door. Sometimes they will avoid you. Sometimes they will mock. Sometimes they will say, “Here he goes again.” Let them. Do not become hateful. Do not become a coward. Keep the burden. Keep the door open. Keep the gospel clear. Keep praying. The person who laughs today may call you in desperation tomorrow. The one who avoids you now may be listening more than you think. The seed may be lying under the dirt longer than you prefer, but God knows how to bring conviction when the time comes.

Chapter Six: Eternity Is Closer Than Men Think

One reason the burden for souls grows cold is that Christians forget how close eternity is. We live as if everyone has plenty of time. We assume we will see them again. We assume

there will be another conversation, another family gathering, another workday, another chance, another invitation, another Sunday, another year. But the Bible does not talk like that. “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1). Men are one heartbeat from eternity, one accident from judgment, one phone call from tragedy, one medical report from the grave. Life is not a guarantee. It is a vapor. “For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14).

Think about how many people you have known who are gone now. Some expected. Some sudden. Some old. Some young. Some sick. Some perfectly fine until they were not. Every funeral is a sermon, whether anybody listens or not. The casket says, “You are next.” The graveyard says, “This is where the body ends up.” The Bible says, “after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). That ought to make a Christian sober. Not morbid, not gloomy, not paralyzed, but sober. We are dealing with people who are running out of time. A man may laugh at the gospel in the morning and be in eternity by night. A woman may postpone salvation for years and find that the last opportunity passed while she was still making excuses. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

This urgency does not mean panic-driven manipulation. It means faithful warning. It means the Christian stops acting as though witness can always wait. If God opens a door, step through it. If a name is on your heart, pray and reach out. If you have a tract, hand it out. If the conversation turns spiritual, do not steer it back to weather and sports because you are nervous. If someone asks a question, answer with Scripture. Eternity is too close for endless hesitation. There are people in hell who planned to think about it later. There are people in cemeteries who thought they had more time. A soul-conscious believer knows that every opportunity is a mercy, and he does not presume on another one.

Chapter Seven: The Burden Must Move the Mouth

A burden that never moves the mouth is either weak, dying, or imaginary. That may sound hard, but it is true. If a man says he has a burden for souls but never speaks to souls, never hands out a tract, never gives a testimony, never prays for openings, never invites a gospel conversation, never warns anyone, and never points anyone to Christ, what kind of burden is that? A burden in the Bible moves people. Jeremiah said, “his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones” (Jeremiah 20:9). Paul said, “necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:16). When the Word gets in and the burden gets hot, silence becomes harder than speech.

Now, not every Christian will witness the same way. Some are bold in direct conversation. Some are better one on one. Some write letters. Some hand tracts. Some teach children. Some speak to coworkers. Some go door to door. Some witness in hospitals, jails, streets, homes, workplaces, or online. The methods may vary, but the mouth must open somehow. The gospel is news, and news has to be told. “How shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). Do not get hung up on the word preacher there as though it only means a pulpit man in a church building. A preacher is a herald, someone announcing a message. Every saved person can tell what Christ has done. Every saved person can say, “Let me show you what the Bible says.” Every saved person can give out the gospel seed.

And when you speak, keep the main thing the main thing. Do not get sidetracked into endless arguments. Do not try to prove every doctrine in one conversation. Do not let the sinner drag you into politics, hypocrites, denominations, Bible versions, church scandals, or philosophical rabbit trails if he is using them to dodge Christ. Bring it back to the soul. Bring it back to sin. Bring it back to death. Bring it back to judgment. Bring it back to the cross. Bring it back to the blood. Bring it back to the resurrection. Bring it back to faith in Jesus Christ. The burden for souls must become a clear witness. A man is not saved by your burden. He is not saved by your personality. He is saved by believing the gospel of Christ. So give him the gospel.

Conclusion

The burden for lost souls begins when a Christian starts seeing people the way the Bible reveals them: not merely as bodies, personalities, professions, relatives, customers, coworkers, strangers, or annoyances, but as living souls. That waitress is a soul. That clerk is a soul. That neighbor is a soul. That old friend is a soul. That family member is a soul. That enemy is a soul. That religious person is a soul. That atheist is a soul. That child is a soul. That dying man is a soul. And every soul will live forever somewhere. Heaven or hell. With Christ or without Christ. Saved or lost. Washed or condemned. There is no third place, no neutral ground, no comfortable middle category where men can avoid the Son of God and still come out all right.

If that truth does not put a burden in a man, he needs to get alone with God and ask what has happened to his heart. We have had enough lifeless Christianity. Enough safe religion. Enough church talk with no gospel witness. Enough believers who can discuss every controversy under the sun but cannot weep over a lost soul. Enough polite silence while men go to hell. The Bible still says, “he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). The Bible still says, “knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). The Bible still says, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Those verses did not expire because Christians became timid.

So ask God to make you soul-conscious. Ask Him to help you see past the flesh and into eternity. Ask Him to give you openings and enough courage to take them. Carry gospel tracts. Learn the Scriptures. Pray for names. Speak to people. Treat them kindly, but do not flatter them into hell. Be wise, but do not use wisdom as an excuse for cowardice. Be compassionate, but remember compassion tells the truth. Eternity is coming fast, and the field is full of souls. The saved man who understands that will not be content to sit in religious comfort while the world burns. He will get the seed in his hand, the Book in his heart, the gospel in his mouth, and the burden of lost souls before his eyes.

4 of 25: Fishers of Men – The Gospel Is the Seed

Introduction

If a man is going to be a soul winner, he had better learn what seed he is supposed to be sowing. That sounds simple, but it is one of the places where modern Christianity has made a wreck of the field. Men are out there sowing church invitations, religious opinions, personal philosophies, self-help talk, moral improvement, conservative politics, emotional stories, denominational loyalties, baptismal arguments, and little religious sales pitches, and then they wonder why nothing eternal grows. You do not get wheat by sowing gravel. You do not get corn by sowing sawdust. You do not get apples by planting plastic fruit. And you do not get Bible salvation by sowing everything except the gospel of the grace of God. The seed is not your personality. The seed is not your clever approach. The seed is not your church building. The seed is not your favorite preacher. The seed is not your testimony, though God can use your testimony to open the door. The seed is the Word of God, and more specifically, the gospel of Jesus Christ given in that Word.

The Lord Jesus said, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). That is plain enough for a child and too plain for a theologian. The problem with many Christians is they do not trust the seed anymore. They trust presentation, marketing, atmosphere, music, mood, programs, charisma, entertainment, lighting, branding, coffee, psychology, and social pressure. They act like the Word of God is too weak to do the work unless man dresses it up and makes it attractive to the flesh. That is unbelief with a church smile on it. The Bible says the Word of God is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Hebrews 4:12). It does not need your perfume. It does not need your apology. It does not need your scholarship to make it alive. It is already alive. It cuts. It pierces. It divides. It exposes. It convicts. It reveals Christ. It gives faith something solid to stand on. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

Here is the proper order in soul winning: the gospel is the seed, the believer is the carrier, and the Holy Ghost does the inward work no man can do. Get that order right and you will be spared a lot of confusion. Get it wrong and you will either become proud when someone gets saved or discouraged when someone rejects the truth. You cannot regenerate anybody. You cannot convict anybody in the spiritual sense. You cannot open a blind heart by your own power. You cannot produce the new birth with a script, a prayer formula, a handshake, a card, or a church aisle. But you can carry the seed. You can open the Bible. You can quote the Scriptures. You can give the gospel. You can hand out the tract. You can speak the truth. You can pray. You can plead. You can warn. You can persuade. Then God does what you cannot do. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). That one verse would save a lot of soul winners from strutting and a lot of discouraged Christians from quitting.

Chapter One: The Seed Is Not Religion

The first thing to understand is that the gospel seed is not religion. Religion is one of the devil's favorite substitutes for the seed because it looks close enough to fool people who do not know the Bible. Religion talks about God, church, prayer, morality, service, tradition, charity, rituals, sacraments, and spiritual feelings. But a man can have all that and still die lost. The Pharisees had religion stacked to the rafters, and Jesus said to them, "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). That is the trouble. Religion can point to itself all day long while refusing the Saviour. It can wash the outside of the cup and leave the inside full of death. It can make a man proud of his devotion while he remains dead in trespasses and sins.

When a soul winner goes out, he must not confuse sinners by offering them religion instead of Christ. Do not make the issue your church first. Do not make the issue your denomination first. Do not make the issue turning over a new leaf first. Do not make the issue baptism first. Do not make the issue cleaning up habits first. The issue is Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, risen, and trusted by faith. Paul said, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). That does not mean Paul knew no other doctrine. Of course he did. It means when it came to the foundation, the message, the center, the issue, the saving truth, he put Christ crucified in front. A sinner does not need a religious makeover. He needs redemption.

The devil will let a man become religious if he can keep him from the gospel. He will let him join a church, sing hymns, light candles, take communion, get baptized, say prayers, attend meetings, carry a Bible, and learn religious language, as long as he does not rest his soul on the finished work of Jesus Christ. That is why you must keep the seed pure. The gospel is not "come to my church and become like us." The gospel is not "try harder and God will

accept you.” The gospel is not “repeat these words and now you are safe.” The gospel is not “get baptized and your sins are gone.” The gospel is “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). Sow that seed. Keep sowing that seed. Do not replace that seed with religious gravel.

Chapter Two: The Seed Is the Gospel of Christ

The gospel that saves a sinner is not vague religious optimism. It is not “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,” although God’s love is certainly involved. The gospel is a specific message about a specific Saviour doing a specific work for specific sins and rising again with specific victory. Paul said, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved” (1 Corinthians 15:1–2). Then he tells you what that gospel is: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. There is the seed. Death. Burial. Resurrection. According to the Scriptures. Not according to Rome. Not according to tradition. Not according to a church board. According to the Scriptures.

When you sow the gospel, you are telling a sinner what God did for him in Jesus Christ. Christ did not die as a moral example only. He died for our sins. He did not faint on the cross. He died. He did not remain in the tomb. He rose again. His blood was not decoration. It was the price of redemption. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7). You cannot preach the gospel properly while hiding the blood. The modern pulpit has tried to sanitize Christianity until the cross looks like a piece of jewelry instead of an altar of sacrifice. But sinners are not forgiven by moral influence. They are forgiven through blood redemption. “Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22).

The gospel also excludes boasting. If Christ did the saving work, then the sinner cannot brag. If salvation is by grace, then works are not the cause. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8–9). That must be clear when you sow the seed. A sinner naturally wants to contribute something. He wants to bring his good deeds, his sincerity, his church attendance, his baptism, his sorrow, his promises, his religious background, his charity, his tears, his reformation, or his intentions. The gospel knocks all of that out of his hands and points him to Christ alone. That is why men hate grace. Grace gives all the glory to God and none to the sinner. But that is the seed that saves. Sow it plainly.

Chapter Three: The Believer Is the Carrier

Now if the gospel is the seed, then the believer is the carrier. That is humbling because it means the power is not in the carrier. The power is in the seed. A farmer may have rough hands, old boots, patched clothes, and a weather-beaten face, but if he carries good seed and puts it in good ground, life can come up. Another man may have a polished suit, soft hands, expensive tools, and a university degree in agricultural theory, but if he sows dead seed, he gets nothing. The same thing is true in soul winning. A polished talker with a corrupt gospel is dangerous. A trembling believer with the true gospel is useful. The vessel may be weak, but the treasure is mighty. “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).

This ought to encourage every Christian who feels inadequate. You may not be eloquent. You may not know every answer. You may get nervous. You may stumble over your words. You may feel like Moses saying, “I am slow of speech.” Fine. Carry the seed anyway. The issue is not whether you can impress sinners. The issue is whether you can give them the Word of God. Some of the best witnessing you will ever do may be very simple: “Let me show you what the Bible says.” That is not weakness. That is wisdom. A sinner does not need your cleverness. He needs truth. He needs Scripture. He needs the gospel. If all you do is tell stories and never get to the Word, you may stir his emotions but leave him without the seed that produces faith.

But being a carrier also means responsibility. The seed does not walk itself to the field. The tract does not leap into the sinner’s hand by miracle. The Bible does not open itself in front of your coworker. The gospel does not float out of your mouth while you keep it shut. God uses human instruments. “How shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). Again, do not hide behind the word preacher as though it only means the fellow behind a pulpit. The issue in that verse is a herald, someone delivering the message. You can deliver the message. You can carry the seed to your home, workplace, town, family, friends, and daily path. You cannot make it grow, but you can carry it. And if you will not carry it, do not pretend you have a burden for the field.

Chapter Four: The Holy Ghost Does the Inward Work

A soul winner must never forget that the Holy Ghost does the inward work. This keeps a man from two destructive errors: pride and despair. Pride says, “I got him saved.” No, you did not. If he got saved, God saved him. You may have preached. You may have witnessed. You may have prayed. You may have opened the Bible. You may have explained the gospel. But you did not regenerate him. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). The new birth is not a human production. It is not the result of a clever closer. It is not the product of emotional pressure. It is not a salesman getting a signature. It is the work of God by the Spirit through the Word.

Despair says, "I failed because they did not get saved." Not necessarily. Did you give the seed? Did you speak the truth? Did you point to Christ? Did you pray? Did you deal honestly? Then you did your part. The sinner may reject. The ground may be hard. The devil may snatch away the seed. The cares of this world may choke it. The heart may not yet be ready. That does not mean the Word was weak. It means you are not God. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). Sometimes you plant. Sometimes another man waters. Sometimes you reap where another man labored. Sometimes you sow seed and never see the harvest in this life. The Holy Ghost knows what He is doing.

This also means you do not have to force anything. There is a kind of soul winning that tries to do the Holy Ghost's job for Him. It pressures, manipulates, corners, flatters, and rushes a sinner into saying something so the worker can count him. That is not spiritual. That is fleshly. You can urge a sinner. You can warn him. You can plead. You can persuade. Paul said, "we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). But persuasion is not manipulation. You are not trying to trick a man into heaven. You are not trying to get him to repeat words he does not understand. You are not trying to make him trust your assurance instead of Christ's finished work. The Holy Ghost must bring the truth home to the heart. Your job is to present the truth clearly and faithfully.

Chapter Five: The Seed Must Be Sown Plainly

Seed kept in a barn does not produce a harvest. Seed admired in a bag does not feed anyone. Seed studied, labeled, discussed, and stored still has to be sown. Many Christians know more gospel than they ever use. They can define grace, quote verses, defend eternal security, argue against false gospels, and explain dispensational differences, but they never put the seed into the field. That is like a farmer bragging on his seed while his fields are empty. The gospel must be sown. Spoken. Handed out. Mailed. Preached. Explained. Written. Shared. Carried to sinners. "They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). They did not merely possess the Word. They preached it.

And when you sow it, sow it plainly. Do not hide the point under religious fog. A sinner needs to know he is a sinner. He needs to know Christ died for his sins. He needs to know Christ rose again. He needs to know salvation is by faith, not works. He needs to know religion cannot save him. He needs to know baptism cannot wash away his sins in this age. He needs to know church membership cannot make him born again. He needs to know Mary cannot save him, the priest cannot save him, the preacher cannot save him, the pope cannot save him, the baptistry cannot save him, and his own righteousness cannot save him. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). Plain seed. Plain gospel. Plain Christ.

Some people think plainness is unkind. It is not. Confusion is unkind. Vague religion is unkind. Letting a sinner think he is safe because he has done something religious is unkind. If a doctor knows the disease and hides it because he wants to sound positive, he is a criminal in a white coat. If a preacher knows the sinner's condition and hides it behind soft phrases, he is worse. The gospel is good news, but it only makes sense after the bad news is understood. The sinner is guilty, condemned, helpless, and unable to save himself. Christ died for him, shed His blood, rose again, and offers salvation freely by grace through faith. That is plain. Sow it that way.

Chapter Six: The Seed Is Incorruptible

Peter said believers are born again “not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:23). That is a tremendous statement. The new birth is connected to incorruptible seed. Not corruptible human philosophy. Not church tradition. Not religious ceremony. Not emotional experience. The Word of God. Living. Abiding. Eternal. That means when you put Scripture into a sinner's heart and mind, you are putting something there that can outlive the conversation, outlive the mood, outlive the moment, and keep working after you leave. He may forget your face. He may forget your name. He may forget half of what you said. But that verse may stick like a barb in his conscience.

That is why Scripture memory matters in soul winning. You should know verses. You should know where to turn. You should be able to show a sinner Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:1–4, Ephesians 2:8–9, Acts 16:31, John 3:16, John 5:24, Romans 10:9–10, and other clear passages. Not so you can show off. So you can sow seed. A man who goes soul winning without Scripture is like a soldier going to war without ammunition. You may talk loudly, but you are not armed. “The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). Use the sword. Do not wave the scabbard around and call it fighting.

The incorruptible seed also gives hope. You may hand a tract to a man who laughs. He may put it in his pocket and read it later. You may quote a verse to a coworker who shrugs. That verse may return at midnight when he cannot sleep. You may mail a tract to someone you never meet. The Word may reach a kitchen table, a prison cell, a barracks, a motel room, a hospital bed, or a lonely apartment. The seed can travel where you cannot. The seed can speak after you are gone. The seed can rise in the memory years later. That is why you keep sowing. The seed is incorruptible, and God knows where every grain falls.

Chapter Seven: The Seed Must Not Be Mixed With Another Gospel

The gospel seed must not be mixed with another gospel. Paul was not gentle about that. He said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). That is not the language of modern ecumenical mush. That is a curse on false gospels. Why so strong? Because a false gospel damns souls while sounding religious. That is why a soul winner must know what he is sowing. If you mix grace with works, you corrupt the seed. If you tell a sinner he must trust Christ and keep sacraments to be saved, you corrupt the seed. If you tell him the prayer saves him instead of Christ, you confuse the seed. If you tell him baptism regenerates him, you replace the seed. If you tell him he must endure faithfully to the end in order to know he is saved in the body of Christ, you poison the seed.

The gospel of the grace of God is Christ's finished work received by faith. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5). That verse is a shotgun blast into the face of works salvation. "To him that worketh not." Not to him that works hard enough. Not to him that promises enough. Not to him that joins enough. Not to him that reforms enough. Not to him that performs enough. To him that worketh not, but believeth. That is grace. The sinner brings his sin; Christ brings salvation. The sinner brings his guilt; Christ brings blood. The sinner brings helplessness; Christ brings finished redemption. The sinner believes; God justifies.

This is why soul winning must be doctrinally clean. A man with zeal and a corrupt gospel is not harmless. He is dangerous. He may travel land and sea to make one proselyte and leave him twice dead. If your message leaves a sinner trusting what he did instead of what Christ did, you have not helped him. If your message leaves him looking at his prayer, his baptism, his church, his confession, his tears, his surrender, his promise, or his performance as the ground of assurance, you have muddied the water. Point him to Christ. Keep him at the cross. Show him the empty tomb. Preach the blood. Press faith. Salvation is not in the seed carrier. Salvation is in the Saviour revealed by the seed.

Conclusion

The gospel is the seed. That truth must be settled before a man tries to do the work of a soul winner. If he does not know what the seed is, he will sow the wrong thing. If he does not trust the seed, he will dress it up with fleshly methods. If he does not sow the seed, his knowledge will sit in the barn while sinners perish. The seed is the Word of God, and the saving message in that Word is the gospel of Jesus Christ: His death for our sins, His burial, His resurrection, His blood, His grace, and salvation by faith apart from works. That is what must be put into the field. Everything else may have its place, but nothing else can replace the seed.

The believer is only the carrier. That ought to humble you and encourage you. It humbles you because you cannot save anybody. You are not the Holy Ghost. You are not the Saviour. You are not the one who gives life. It encourages you because the power never depended on you in the first place. A weak believer can carry strong seed. A trembling witness can quote a living Book. A nervous Christian can hand out an incorruptible tract filled with Scripture. A new convert can tell an old sinner what Christ did. The treasure is in earthen vessels so the excellency of the power may be of God, not of us.

So carry the seed. Sow it plainly. Sow it often. Sow it with prayer. Sow it with tears when God gives them. Sow it in conversation. Sow it in letters. Sow it through tracts. Sow it at doors. Sow it at work. Sow it at home. Sow it to strangers. Sow it to family. Sow it when you see fruit and when you do not. Do not corrupt it. Do not apologize for it. Do not replace it with religion. Do not hide it under church talk. Do not trust your method more than the message. The Holy Ghost does the inward work, but He has chosen to use the Word. The seed is alive. The field is the world. The carrier is the believer. The increase belongs to God.

5 of 25: Fishers of Men – The Holy Spirit and the Human Instrument

Introduction

One of the first things a soul winner has to get settled is the difference between God's work and man's work. Confuse those two and you will make a mess out of personal evangelism. If you think you can do God's part, you will become proud, pushy, manipulative, and dangerous. If you think God will do your part without you, you will become lazy, passive, pious-sounding, and useless. The Bible gives both sides. God convicts. God draws. God gives light. God opens the heart. God regenerates. God seals. God saves. But man is commanded to preach, witness, testify, warn, persuade, reason from the Scriptures, carry the gospel, sow the seed, and open his mouth. "For we are labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). That is a shocking statement when you stop and think about it. God does not need us because He lacks power. He uses us because He chose to. He could have written the gospel across the sky every morning in letters of fire. He could have sent angels to preach at every street corner. He could have made the rocks cry out with John 3:16. Instead, He put the treasure in earthen vessels and told saved sinners to go tell lost sinners how to be saved.

That balance is where many Christians lose their footing. Some become fatalists. They say, "Well, if God wants them saved, He will save them," and then they sit there like a bump on a log while souls go to hell around them. That is not spirituality. That is disobedience dressed

up in doctrine. Other people go the opposite direction and act like salvation depends on their technique. They pressure, corner, count, flatter, rush, and push sinners into saying words they do not understand so they can brag that they “won” another one. That is not soul winning. That is religious salesmanship. A Bible believer ought to reject both ditches. The Holy Ghost must do the inward work, but He uses the outward witness. The sinner must be born again by the Spirit, but he must hear the gospel. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). You are not the Saviour, but you are not excused from being a witness.

This truth will keep you sane in the work. When someone gets saved, you do not strut around as though your charm, intelligence, argument, or method did the miracle. God saved him. Christ bought him. The Holy Ghost sealed him. The Word reached him. You were just the messenger. And when someone refuses, mocks, delays, argues, or walks away, you do not crawl into despair as though you failed because you could not force life into a dead soul. You cannot raise the dead. But you can preach to them. Ezekiel preached to dry bones, but God had to make them live. Lazarus came out of the grave when Christ called him, but men still rolled away the stone. There is God’s part and man’s part. Learn the difference. Do your part. Trust God with His.

Chapter One: The Holy Spirit Convicts the Sinner

The first work that belongs to God is conviction. Jesus Christ said of the Comforter, “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). That word “reprove” has teeth in it. The Holy Ghost does not merely suggest improvement. He brings the sinner under divine reproof. He shows him sin, righteousness, and judgment. He deals with the conscience. He presses truth into the inward parts. He turns the lights on in a room the sinner has been trying to keep dark. You can explain sin to a man, but you cannot make him feel the weight of it in his soul. You can tell him judgment is coming, but you cannot make eternity tremble inside him. You can show him Christ’s righteousness, but you cannot make him see his own righteousness as filthy rags unless God deals with him.

That is why soul winning must be soaked in prayer and Scripture. The soul winner is not just delivering information to a neutral mind. He is dealing with a blind, guilty, spiritually dead sinner whose heart naturally resists God. “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Romans 8:7). That sinner may be polite, religious, educated, respectable, emotional, curious, or even interested, but without the work of God, he will not see the truth savingly. This does not mean you sit quietly and wait for lightning. It means you understand that when you speak, you must depend on the Holy Ghost to drive the truth deeper than your words can reach. You can put the verse in the ear. God must put the arrow in the conscience.

This also explains why two people can hear the same gospel and respond differently. One hardens. One trembles. One mocks. One believes. One shrugs and walks away. One cannot sleep that night. The same sun that melts wax hardens clay. The Word of God is living and powerful, but the heart condition matters, and the Spirit's dealings are not under your command. You do not carry the Holy Ghost around in your pocket like a tool to use at will. You are the tool. He is God. So when you witness, do it humbly. Speak plainly, but pray inwardly. Warn boldly, but depend wholly. Tell the sinner the truth, but remember that conviction is not produced by the volume of your voice, the sharpness of your wit, or the heat of your personality. Conviction is the work of the Spirit of God using the Word of God.

Chapter Two: The Holy Spirit Draws and Reveals Christ

No man naturally comes to Christ on his own terms, in his own wisdom, at his own convenience, by his own goodness. The Lord Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Now do not let some Calvinist run off with that verse and build a theological prison around it. The verse says what it says. A man needs divine drawing. That does not cancel the command to preach to every creature. That does not erase human responsibility. That does not mean you sit around wondering who is secretly elected while ignoring the lost world in front of you. It means salvation is not a natural human achievement. A sinner must be drawn, enlightened, convicted, and brought face to face with Christ by the work of God.

The Holy Ghost reveals Christ. He does not glorify the soul winner. He does not glorify the denomination. He does not glorify the evangelistic method. He does not glorify the preacher's personality. Jesus said of the Spirit, "He shall glorify me" (John 16:14). That ought to settle the direction of your witness. If your soul winning leaves people impressed with you but unclear about Christ, you failed. If they remember your clever illustrations but cannot explain the gospel, you failed. If they walk away thinking your church is friendly but still do not know what Christ did on the cross, you failed. The Holy Ghost's work is to glorify Christ, and the human instrument ought to line up with that work. Point to Christ. Keep pointing to Christ. When the sinner wanders into religion, bring him back to Christ. When he talks about his works, bring him back to Christ. When he brings up hypocrites, bring him back to Christ. When he gets tangled in feelings, bring him back to Christ.

This is where the witness must learn to get out of the way without shutting up. That may sound strange, but it is exactly right. You get out of the way by refusing to make yourself the issue, but you keep speaking because God told you to bear witness. John the Baptist had the right attitude: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). That is soul-winning wisdom. The human instrument should decrease in importance while Christ increases before the sinner's eyes. You are not trying to win a personality contest. You are trying to

show a sinner the Lamb of God. The Spirit of God takes the Word of God and reveals the Son of God to the heart. Your job is to put the truth on the table and keep the spotlight where it belongs.

Chapter Three: The Holy Spirit Regenerates

Regeneration is God's work. A man can make a profession and still not be born again. A man can pray words and still not be born again. A man can walk an aisle, shake a hand, sign a card, get baptized, join a church, cry at an altar, and still not be born again. Jesus did not say to Nicodemus, "Except a man becomes religious, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Nicodemus was not a drunk in the gutter. He was not a pagan idol worshipper. He was a ruler of the Jews, a religious man, a moral man, a teacher, and he still needed the new birth. That ought to scare the paint off every religious hypocrite who thinks church involvement is salvation.

The new birth cannot be manufactured. That is where shallow soul winning gets dangerous. Some workers think if they can get a sinner to repeat the right words, they have produced a birth. No, they have produced words. A parrot can repeat words. A Muslim can say "Jesus" with his mouth and still reject the biblical Christ in his heart. A Catholic can say "grace" and still trust sacraments. A Baptist can say "saved" and still be trusting a prayer he repeated when he was five years old with no understanding of the gospel. Regeneration is not verbal mimicry. It is a spiritual birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). You can produce fleshly results with fleshly pressure. Only the Spirit produces spiritual life.

This should make a soul winner careful. Not timid. Careful. You should want a sinner to understand the gospel, not merely repeat after you. You should want him to trust Christ, not trust you telling him he is saved. You should want him to rest on the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, not on the memory of a religious moment. You can ask him questions. You can explain. You can urge him to believe. You can show him the promises. You can say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). But do not pretend you can produce the birth. You are not the mother, the father, the doctor, and God all rolled into one. You are the witness. The Holy Ghost regenerates.

Chapter Four: The Holy Spirit Seals the Believer

When a sinner believes the gospel, the Holy Spirit seals him. That is God's work, not man's work. Ephesians says, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). Notice the order. They heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. They believed. They were sealed. That sealing is not performed by a church, a

preacher, water baptism, a sacrament, or a religious institution. It is performed by the Holy Spirit. “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). A saved man is sealed unto the day of redemption, not until the next time he has a bad day, not until he forgets to confess one sin, not until he fails to live up to somebody’s denominational checklist.

This matters in soul winning because the assurance we give must be biblical assurance. If a person believes the gospel, his assurance rests on God’s promise, Christ’s finished work, and the Spirit’s sealing. It does not rest on the emotional intensity of the moment. It does not rest on the preacher’s personality. It does not rest on whether he cried enough. It does not rest on whether he remembers the exact words he prayed. It does not rest on whether he joined the church immediately afterward. Salvation is not a mood. Salvation is not a performance. Salvation is not a religious receipt handed out by man. Salvation is God saving a sinner who believes on Jesus Christ. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3:36). Hath. Present tense. Not hopes for it if he behaves. Hath it.

At the same time, do not give false assurance to someone who has not believed the gospel. That is another place where man tries to do God’s part. A preacher or soul winner will say, “Now you are saved,” when the person does not understand sin, Christ, the cross, the resurrection, grace, or faith. That is spiritual malpractice. You cannot seal anybody. You cannot certify what God has not done. You can show the promise of Scripture. You can say, “If you believed on Christ, God says this.” But do not give assurance based on your authority. Give assurance based on God’s Word. The Holy Ghost seals the believer. The Bible gives the believer assurance. The soul winner points him to both and keeps his own hands off God’s throne.

Chapter Five: The Human Instrument Must Preach

Now after saying all that about God’s work, let nobody hide behind it. The human instrument must preach. God’s sovereignty never cancels human obedience. The Spirit convicts, but you are still commanded to speak. The Spirit draws, but you are still commanded to preach. The Spirit regenerates, but sinners still need to hear the gospel. Paul asks, “how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). That question has never been answered by silent Christians. How shall they hear if you never speak? How shall your coworker hear if you only talk about weather and paychecks? How shall your family member hear if you avoid the subject because you do not want tension? How shall the waitress hear if you treat her like a food machine and walk out without leaving a word of witness?

Preaching does not always mean standing behind a pulpit. It means heralding the message. Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch in a chariot. Paul reasoned in synagogues and marketplaces. Believers scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. A mother can preach Christ to a child at a kitchen table. A worker can preach Christ to a coworker during a break. A man can preach Christ to a neighbor across a fence. A customer can leave a gospel tract with a kind word. A Christian can open a Bible in a living room and show a sinner the way of salvation. Do not let formal church language rob you of your responsibility. If you are saved, you have something to tell.

And the message must be preached clearly. Not hinted at. Not buried under religious fog. Not reduced to “God loves you” without explaining sin and the cross. Not “come to church with me” as though attendance saves. Preach Christ. Preach His death for sins. Preach His burial. Preach His resurrection. Preach His blood. Preach grace. Preach faith. Preach the sinner’s need. Preach the danger of rejecting Him. “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:5). If your witness does not get to Christ, you have not given the gospel. If your testimony does not move from “what happened to me” to “what Christ did for sinners,” you have not sown the saving seed. The human instrument must preach, and he must preach the right message.

Chapter Six: The Human Instrument Must Persuade and Warn

Some Christians think that because the Holy Ghost does the inward work, we should never press the matter with sinners. That is not Bible. Paul said, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Persuasion is biblical. Warning is biblical. Pleading is biblical. Reasoning is biblical. The apostles did not mumble religious suggestions and hope someone took the hint. They preached, warned, reasoned, disputed, testified, and persuaded. On the day of Pentecost, Peter did not say, “Here are some ideas for your spiritual journey.” The Bible says, “with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). That is pressure, but it is Bible pressure. It is truth pressing against the conscience.

There is a difference between persuasion and manipulation. Persuasion gives truth and urges the sinner to respond to God. Manipulation uses tricks to produce a visible result. Persuasion says, “Here is what God says. Here is your condition. Here is Christ. Believe on Him.” Manipulation says, “Say these words, raise your hand, come forward, make me happy, give me a number, and I will tell you that you are saved.” Persuasion respects the reality that the sinner must personally believe. Manipulation treats the sinner like a customer to be closed. A soul winner should be earnest, not crooked. Urgent, not deceitful. Direct, not dishonest. Loving, not flattering. You do not have to choose between boldness and integrity. You need both.

Warning is also part of the work. If a man is lost, tell him. If he is trusting religion, warn him. If he is trusting works, warn him. If he thinks he has time, warn him. If he believes all roads lead to God, warn him. If he is hiding behind intellectual excuses, warn him. If he is playing games with conviction, warn him. Paul said he warned “every man” (Colossians 1:28). A witness who never warns is not following the apostolic pattern. The gospel is good news, but it is good news against the backdrop of terrible danger. A man does not understand rescue until he understands peril. Do not preach hell gleefully like a brute. Preach it soberly like a man who believes it. Do not warn to show superiority. Warn because the soul in front of you is in danger.

Chapter Seven: The Human Instrument Must Leave the Results With God

After you have preached, testified, persuaded, warned, prayed, and given the gospel, you must leave the results with God. That does not mean you stop caring. It means you stop pretending you are sovereign. Some sinners will believe. Some will refuse. Some will say, “Not now.” Some will argue. Some will become angry. Some will smile politely and remain lost. Some will act uninterested, and the Word will trouble them later. Some will seem close and then back away. Some will get saved after someone else waters the seed you planted. Some will get saved years later. You will not understand all of it. That is fine. You were not asked to understand everything. You were commanded to be faithful.

Leaving the results with God protects you from pride. If someone gets saved, praise God. Do not start polishing your soul-winning badge. Do not become one of those fellows who talks more about how many he has won than about the Saviour who saved them. Numbers can become a snare. Reports can become a snare. Testimonies can become a snare. The flesh can take holy work and use it to build an idol called self. Remember what Paul said: “neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:7). The planter is not nothing in the sense of being unused; he is nothing in the sense of being powerless to create life. God gives the increase.

Leaving the results with God also protects you from despair. A rejected witness is not always a failed witness. Noah preached righteousness and the world still drowned. Jeremiah preached and got rejected. Stephen preached and got stoned. Paul preached and some mocked. Even the Lord Jesus Christ Himself was rejected by men. So do not measure truth by response. Measure your work by faithfulness. Did you give the gospel? Did you speak truthfully? Did you point to Christ? Did you avoid deceit? Did you pray? Did you obey? Then leave it with God. The same sun that melts one heart may harden another. Keep sowing. Keep witnessing. Keep warning. Keep carrying the seed. God knows what He is doing.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit and the human instrument must not be confused. The Holy Ghost convicts, draws, reveals Christ, regenerates, and seals. The believer does none of those things. You cannot save a soul by force of personality, clever argument, emotional pressure, religious ceremony, or repeated words. You cannot open the heart like Lydia's heart was opened. You cannot create the new birth. You cannot seal a believer unto the day of redemption. Those works belong to God. Forget that, and you will become proud when men respond and crooked when they do not. You will start trusting methods instead of the Spirit, and numbers instead of truth.

But the human instrument is not unnecessary. God commands saved people to preach, witness, testify, warn, persuade, reason from the Scriptures, carry the gospel, and sow the seed. The fact that God must do the inward work does not excuse your silence. The fact that the Spirit convicts does not mean you do not speak. The fact that God gives the increase does not mean you do not plant and water. A farmer who believes God sends rain still gets out and sows. A soldier who believes God gives victory still takes his weapon into battle. A soul winner who believes the Holy Ghost saves sinners still opens his Bible and gives the gospel.

That balance will keep you straight. When someone gets saved, give God the glory. When someone refuses, leave him with God and keep praying. When you feel inadequate, remember the power is not in you. When you feel afraid, remember the command still stands. When you are tempted to manipulate, remember only the Holy Ghost can regenerate. When you are tempted to stay silent, remember God uses human instruments. The gospel is the seed. The field is the world. The Holy Spirit does the inward miracle. The believer carries the message. So carry it. Speak it. Preach it. Warn with it. Persuade with it. Sow it everywhere. Then let God do what only God can do.

6 of 25: Fishers of Men – The Gospel Must Be Clear

Introduction

If a sinner is going to be saved, he must hear a clear gospel. Not a foggy gospel. Not a sentimental gospel. Not a churchy gospel. Not a watered-down gospel. Not a religious sales pitch dressed up with Bible words. A clear gospel. The devil does not mind a man talking about God as long as he never makes the gospel clear. He does not mind a church using the word "Jesus" if they never tell sinners what Jesus Christ did for them at Calvary.

He does not mind a preacher talking about love, hope, purpose, family, morality, healing, community, and better living if he never tells a guilty sinner that Christ died for his sins, was buried, rose again the third day, shed His blood, and saves by grace through faith without works. The devil is perfectly willing to let people be religiously confused. Confusion is one of his best soul-damning tools. A sinner can sit under religious talk for years and never once understand the gospel that saves.

That is why vague evangelism is dangerous. It sounds kind, but it can leave a sinner lost. Telling someone, "Give your heart to Jesus," may sound spiritual, but what does that mean to a lost man? Telling him, "Ask Jesus into your heart," may sound sweet, but where is that the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15? Telling him, "Make a decision for Christ," may be useful if it is explained, but if he does not know who Christ is, what Christ did, why he needs Him, and how salvation is received, you may have gotten a decision without faith. Telling him, "Come forward," "repeat this prayer," "join the church," "turn your life over," "get baptized," "surrender all," or "start living for God" may produce religious motion, but religious motion is not regeneration. A man can move his feet, move his lips, move his emotions, and still never trust the finished work of Jesus Christ. The issue is not whether he had an experience. The issue is whether he believed the gospel.

The gospel must be clear because eternity is at stake. We are not selling vacuum cleaners. We are not recruiting volunteers. We are not trying to get a man to sign up for a club. We are dealing with a soul that will live forever somewhere. If a doctor gives unclear instructions about a deadly disease, he can kill a patient. If a pilot gives unclear instructions in an emergency, he can kill passengers. If a preacher gives an unclear gospel, he can leave souls trusting the wrong thing and thinking they are safe when they are still condemned. Paul said the gospel is the message "by which also ye are saved" (1 Corinthians 15:2). If that is the saving message, then we had better not muddy it. The sinner needs to know he is lost. He needs to know Christ died for his sins. He needs to know Christ was buried. He needs to know Christ rose again. He needs to know the blood of Christ is the payment for sin. He needs to know salvation is by grace through faith, not by works, rituals, water, sacraments, self-reformation, or religious performance. A cloudy gospel is not harmless. It is a fog bank on the edge of hell.

Chapter One: The Gospel Is a Definite Message

The gospel is not whatever a preacher wants it to be. It is not a religious mood. It is not a general feeling that God is nice and everything will work out. The gospel is a definite message revealed in Scripture. Paul said, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you" (1 Corinthians 15:1). Then he tells you what he preached: "how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was

buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). That is not complicated, but it is specific. Christ died. For our sins. According to the Scriptures. He was buried. He rose again. According to the Scriptures. That is the foundation. If your witness never gets there, you have not given the gospel clearly.

Notice also that Paul says Christ died “for our sins.” That little word “for” carries substitution. He did not die for His own sins. He had none. He did not die as a failed reformer, a political victim, a moral example only, or a tragic martyr. He died for our sins. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). There is the exchange. The sinless One took the sinner’s place. The Just died for the unjust. The Lamb of God bore the wrath that guilty men deserved. If you do not explain sin, the death of Christ becomes sentimental. If you do not explain substitution, the cross becomes a symbol instead of a sacrifice. If you do not explain the resurrection, the sinner is left with a dead religious figure instead of a living Saviour.

That definite message must be guarded. Paul warned against “another gospel” in Galatians 1:6–9, and he did not treat it like a minor difference of style. He pronounced a curse on those who preached another gospel. That ought to sober every man who handles the gospel. You do not have liberty to improve it. You do not have liberty to trim it down until it no longer cuts. You do not have liberty to mix it with works because your tradition demands it. You do not have liberty to replace it with psychological language because modern sinners are easily offended. The gospel is already God’s message. The job of the witness is not to reinvent it; the job is to declare it clearly. A foggy trumpet does not prepare men for battle, and a foggy gospel does not prepare men for eternity.

Chapter Two: The Sinner Must Understand His Condition

A sinner will not understand the good news until he understands the bad news. Modern evangelism often skips this because it wants to be liked. It wants to begin with self-esteem, purpose, fulfillment, emotional healing, and personal destiny. But the Bible begins with man’s guilt. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). That verse does not need a committee to explain it. All have sinned. All have come short. Not just criminals, prostitutes, drunkards, drug addicts, murderers, and atheists. All. The polite sinner. The church sinner. The baptized sinner. The educated sinner. The conservative sinner. The generous sinner. The moral sinner. The religious sinner. All. If a man does not know he is a sinner, he will not understand why he needs a Saviour.

The sinner must also understand the wages of sin. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Not the inconvenience of sin. Not the psychological discomfort of sin. Death. Physical death, spiritual death, and the second death if he dies without Christ. The Bible

says, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20). That is God’s verdict. This is where shallow evangelism gets nervous. It wants to talk about heaven, but not hell. It wants to talk about grace, but not guilt. It wants to talk about God’s love, but not God’s holiness. But if the sinner is not in danger, salvation becomes a decoration. If there is no judgment, the cross becomes unnecessary. If sin is not deadly, Calvary becomes religious theater. No, the sinner must know his condition. He is guilty before God.

This does not mean you spend the whole conversation beating a sinner over the head until he hates you. It means you tell the truth plainly. A doctor does not hate a man when he says, “You have cancer.” He hates him if he knows it and hides it. A witness does not hate a sinner by saying, “You have sinned against God, and the wages of sin is death.” He loves him enough to tell him the truth. The gospel is not good advice for decent people. It is good news for condemned sinners. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). If a man will not take the place of a sinner, he cannot properly receive the Saviour of sinners. The ground is level at Calvary, but every man must come there guilty, helpless, and in need of blood.

Chapter Three: Christ’s Blood Must Not Be Hidden

A clear gospel includes the blood. You cannot preach Bible salvation while hiding the blood of Jesus Christ. The modern religious world wants a clean cross, a bloodless cross, a decorative cross, a cross that can hang on a necklace or sit on a church steeple without offending anybody. But the Bible cross is bloody. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14). Redemption through His blood. Forgiveness through His blood. Not through water. Not through wafers. Not through candles. Not through penance. Not through church membership. Not through self-improvement. Through His blood.

The blood matters because sin requires payment. “Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). That is not Baptist tradition. That is Bible. From Genesis onward, God teaches that sin brings death and that blood is required. Abel’s sacrifice had blood. The Passover lamb had blood. The sacrifices under the law had blood. And all of it pointed to the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. John said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). He did not take away sin by giving a lecture. He did not take away sin by starting a movement. He took away sin by dying and shedding His blood. If you remove the blood, you remove the payment.

This is why the sinner must not be left with vague talk about Jesus. Which Jesus? The Jesus of the Bible died for sins and shed His blood. The Mormon has a Jesus. The Jehovah’s Witness has a Jesus. The Muslim talks about Jesus as a prophet. The Roman Catholic has a

Jesus continually offered in the mass. The liberal has a Jesus who was a moral teacher. The charismatic circus has a Jesus who exists to give people signs, money, and emotional experiences. But the saving gospel points to the crucified, buried, risen Son of God whose blood paid for sin. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Make that clear. Do not just say “Jesus” like a religious password. Tell them what Jesus Christ did.

Chapter Four: The Resurrection Must Be Preached

A clear gospel does not stop at the death of Christ. It includes the resurrection. Paul says Christ “rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:4). The resurrection is not an optional doctrine for advanced Bible students. It is part of the gospel by which sinners are saved. A dead saviour cannot save anybody. A dead martyr can inspire men, but he cannot justify them. A dead prophet can leave teachings, but he cannot give eternal life. Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead, and that resurrection declares that the payment was accepted, death was conquered, and the Son of God is alive for evermore. “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25).

The resurrection also separates the gospel from every dead religious system on earth. Buddha is dead. Muhammad is dead. The popes die. The priests die. The gurus die. The philosophers die. The professors die. The skeptics die. The cult leaders die. Jesus Christ rose from the dead. That is not a small difference. That is the difference between life and death. The sinner must not be invited merely to admire Jesus as one teacher among many. He must be confronted with the risen Christ. Paul told the Athenians that God “hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained” and gave assurance “in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). The resurrection proves Christ is not a religious option. He is the coming Judge and the only Saviour.

When you witness, do not treat the resurrection like an Easter decoration. Preach it as victory. Christ died for sins, but He did not stay dead. He was buried, but the grave could not hold Him. He rose again, and because He lives, salvation is offered to sinners through Him. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him” (Hebrews 7:25). Able to save. Able now. Able completely. Able eternally. A clear gospel gives the sinner a living Saviour to trust, not a dead religious memory to admire. The cross without the resurrection would be tragedy. The resurrection shows the cross was triumph.

Chapter Five: Salvation Is by Grace Through Faith, Not Works

A clear gospel must make plain that salvation is by grace through faith, not works. This is where most false religion shows its teeth. Man wants to contribute. He wants to help pay. He wants to bring something to the table. He wants salvation to be partly Christ and partly himself. But the Bible shuts that down. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8–9). Not of works. That is about as clear as words can get. If salvation is not of works, then works cannot be the cause, price, root, basis, or guarantee of salvation. Good works have their place after salvation, but they are not the payment for it.

Romans 4:5 is one of the clearest verses in the Bible against works salvation: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly.” Read that again slowly. “Worketh not.” The man being justified is not working for justification. He is believing on Him that justifieth the ungodly. That means God justifies the ungodly by faith, not the religious achiever by performance. That one verse blows Romanism, Campbellism, sacramentalism, self-righteous Protestantism, and every works-based counterfeit sky high. The sinner does not come to Christ offering his improvements. He comes as ungodly and trusts the One who justifies the ungodly.

This must be clear because sinners naturally misunderstand grace. If you ask people why God should let them into heaven, many will talk about being a good person, doing their best, helping others, going to church, being baptized, keeping commandments, loving people, or trying hard. That proves they are not thinking gospel. They are thinking works. The soul winner must kindly but firmly knock that foundation out from under them. Not because he wants to be rude, but because a false foundation will drop a soul into hell. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Titus 3:5). The gospel must be clear: Christ saves. Grace saves. Faith receives. Works do not purchase salvation.

Chapter Six: Rituals Cannot Replace the Gospel

A clear gospel must also separate salvation from religious ritual. Millions of people are trusting water, wafers, confessionals, candles, ceremonies, altar calls, church membership, confirmation, catechism, religious heritage, or some childhood ritual they barely remember. That is a tragedy. Religion has trained them to trust an outward act instead of the finished work of Jesus Christ. Baptism has its place after salvation as a testimony, but water cannot wash away sin in the soul. Church attendance has its place, but sitting in a church building does not put a man in Christ. Communion has its place for believers, but bread and juice do not regenerate a dead sinner. Ritual without faith in Christ is just religious motion.

The thief on the cross is a standing rebuke to sacramental salvation. He had no baptism, no church membership, no communion, no confirmation, no religious life to brag about, no time to perform good works, and no chance to turn over years of new leaves. He looked to Christ in faith, and Jesus said, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). That does not mean believers should despise obedience after salvation. It means obedience is not the ground of salvation. The thief was saved by the Lord Jesus Christ, not by a religious system. Any gospel that cannot save a dying thief is not Paul's gospel.

This is important because unclear evangelism lets people keep trusting rituals while adding Jesus vocabulary. You can ask a man, "Are you saved?" and he may say, "I was baptized." That is not the answer. Ask again. "What are you trusting to get you to heaven?" If he says, "I go to church," he has not answered with the gospel. If he says, "I try to live right," he has not answered with the gospel. If he says, "I took communion," he has not answered with the gospel. If he says, "Jesus Christ died for my sins, shed His blood, rose again, and I am trusting Him alone," now you are hearing gospel light. Do not let ritual language pass for salvation testimony. The gospel must be clear enough to expose false trust.

Chapter Seven: Do Not Pressure a False Profession

A clear gospel also means refusing to pressure someone into a false profession. This is where many modern soul-winning methods have done great damage. They rush through a few verses, ask leading questions, get the sinner to repeat a prayer, then declare him saved whether he understood anything or not. That is dangerous. A prayer does not save. Christ saves. Faith in Christ saves. A prayer may express faith, but the words themselves are not magic. A man can repeat a prayer with his mouth while his heart remains dark. Jesus said of some, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). Lip movement is not heart faith.

This does not mean you should never lead a sinner in prayer or never encourage him to call upon the Lord. The issue is not whether prayer can be involved. The issue is what the sinner is trusting. If he believes the gospel and calls upon the Lord from the heart, praise God. But if he thinks the prayer itself is the saving act, he may leave trusting something he did instead of what Christ did. That is the danger. Romans 10:10 says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The heart matters. Faith matters. Understanding matters. The sinner must not be manipulated into saying religious words just to satisfy the worker.

A real soul winner would rather leave a man under conviction than give him false assurance. Think about that. If a sinner is troubled, thinking, convicted, and wrestling with the truth, do not smother that work by forcing him into a shallow profession just so you can

feel successful. Give him the gospel clearly. Urge him to trust Christ. Answer his questions with Scripture. Warn him not to delay. But do not lie to him. Do not tell him he is saved because he repeated after you if he has no idea what he is trusting. False assurance is a cruel thing. It vaccinates a sinner against the truth by making him think he already has what he never received. Better to have a sinner honestly lost and under conviction than falsely comfortable and twice as hard to reach later.

Conclusion

The gospel must be clear because souls are at stake. A cloudy message can produce cloudy professions, and cloudy professions can fill churches with people who know religious language but do not know Christ. The sinner needs more than a feeling, more than a prayer formula, more than an altar call, more than a church invitation, more than a ritual, and more than a moral improvement plan. He needs the gospel. He needs to know he is a sinner. He needs to know the wages of sin is death. He needs to know Jesus Christ died for his sins, shed His blood, was buried, and rose again. He needs to know salvation is by grace through faith, not of works, not of rituals, not of religion, and not of himself.

This is not splitting hairs. This is the difference between life and death. The devil has buried millions under religious confusion. Some trust baptism. Some trust church membership. Some trust sacraments. Some trust a prayer. Some trust feelings. Some trust sincerity. Some trust morality. Some trust family tradition. Some trust a preacher telling them they are fine. The soul winner must cut through all of that with the sword of the Spirit and make the issue plain: What are you trusting for salvation? If the answer is anything other than Jesus Christ and His finished work, the sinner is standing on sand. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

So do not be vague. Do not be cute. Do not be ashamed of the blood. Do not hide hell. Do not replace the resurrection with religious sentiment. Do not rush a man into words he does not understand. Do not give assurance where God has not given it. Open the Book. Preach Christ. Explain sin. Show the cross. Preach the blood. Declare the resurrection. Press grace through faith. Warn against works and ritual. Tell the sinner plainly that Jesus Christ saves guilty sinners who believe on Him. That is not complicated, but it must be clear. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but a sinner must hear it clearly enough to believe it.

Introduction

One of the most dangerous things a soul winner can do is lead a sinner to trust a prayer instead of Jesus Christ. Now get that straight from the start. Prayer is not the enemy. Calling upon the Lord is not the enemy. A sinner crying out to God from a believing heart is not the enemy. The enemy is when some careless worker, preacher, Sunday school teacher, youth worker, or door-knocking zealot takes a lost sinner who does not understand the gospel, pressures him to repeat a few religious words, then tells him he is saved because he said the words. That is not soul winning. That is spiritual counterfeiting. A prayer may accompany faith, but the prayer is not the object of faith. A man is not saved because he prayed perfectly. He is saved because Jesus Christ died for his sins, shed His blood, was buried, rose again, and that sinner believed on Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). The verse does not say, "Repeat after me and thou shalt be saved." It says believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

This issue matters because thousands upon thousands of people have been given false assurance by shallow evangelism. They were not led to Christ. They were led to words. They were not shown clearly what the Lord Jesus did for sinners. They were hurried through a religious formula. They were not pressed with the question of faith. They were pressured into a response. Then when someone asks them, "Are you saved?" they say, "Yes, I prayed a prayer." That is not the right answer. The right answer is not, "I prayed." The right answer is, "Jesus Christ died for my sins, shed His blood, rose again, and I am trusting Him." Do you see the difference? One answer points to what the sinner did. The other points to what Christ did. One points to the mouth. The other points to the Saviour. One points to a moment. The other points to Calvary. One may be nothing more than religious memory. The other is faith resting in the finished work of the Son of God.

The Bible never teaches salvation by incantation. God is not sitting in heaven waiting for a sinner to pronounce the right verbal formula like a magic spell. Salvation is not a Baptist rosary bead. It is not Protestant penance. It is not evangelical sacramentalism where the sinner's prayer replaces Rome's wafer and water. Salvation is by grace through faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). Faith has an object. The object is not the prayer. The object is Christ. The sinner must understand enough gospel to know who Christ is, what Christ did, why he needs Him, and that salvation is received by faith apart from works. If a prayer comes from that faith, fine. If a prayer expresses that faith, fine. If a sinner cries, "Lord, save me," from a heart believing the gospel, praise God. But do not dare substitute the prayer for the Saviour. Do not lead them to a sentence. Lead them to Christ.

Chapter One: The Prayer Does Not Save

The first thing that must be nailed down is this: the prayer does not save. Jesus Christ saves. That sounds so plain that you would think nobody could miss it, but modern religion has missed it by a country mile. People have been trained to say, “I got saved because I prayed the sinner’s prayer.” No. If you got saved, you got saved because you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The prayer may have been the moment your faith expressed itself, but the prayer itself did not wash away your sins. The blood did that. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Ephesians 1:7). Not through your prayer. Through His blood. If your confidence is in the fact that you said something, you may be standing on your own religious act instead of the finished work of Christ.

Now some folks get nervous when you say that because they think you are attacking Romans 10:13. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). Nobody is attacking that verse. Believe it exactly as it stands. But do not rip it loose from the context and turn it into a mouth-only ritual. Romans 10 also says, “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness” (Romans 10:10). It also asks, “how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” (Romans 10:14). Did you catch that? Calling is connected to believing. A man cannot truly call on Christ in the saving sense while not believing the gospel concerning Christ. He may say words. He may repeat phrases. He may move his lips. But the issue is whether he believed from the heart.

That is where shallow soul winners become dangerous. They take a sinner who does not understand the gospel, push him through Romans 10:13, get him to say words, and then declare him saved because he called. But did he believe? Did he understand Christ died for his sins? Did he understand the blood? Did he understand the resurrection? Did he understand grace apart from works? Did he know he was lost? Did he stop trusting himself? Did he trust Christ? If not, what did you just do? You got a lost man to say a religious sentence. A Catholic can do that. A Muslim can do that. A Jehovah’s Witness can do that. A drunk can do that to get you off his porch. A child can do that to please an adult. Salvation is not sound waves coming out of a mouth. Salvation is a guilty sinner believing on the Son of God.

Chapter Two: Faith Must Have the Right Object

Faith is only as good as its object. A man can have strong faith in rotten ice and drown. Another man can have weak, trembling faith in a solid bridge and cross safely. The strength is not in the emotion of faith; it is in the object of faith. The saving object is Jesus Christ and His finished work. “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). Not looking unto your prayer. Not looking unto your tears. Not looking unto your sincerity. Not looking unto your memory of an altar. Looking unto Jesus. The soul winner’s job is to point the sinner’s eyes away from himself and onto Christ.

This is why the question, “What are you trusting?” is so important. A man may say, “I prayed.” Ask him, “What are you trusting?” He may say, “I asked Jesus into my heart.” Ask him, “What are you trusting?” He may say, “I went forward when I was a kid.” Ask him, “What are you trusting?” He may say, “I got baptized.” Ask him, “What are you trusting?” Eventually, if the light is there, the answer ought to come back to Christ. “I am trusting that Jesus Christ died for my sins and rose again.” That is where you want the sinner. Not trusting a method. Not trusting a memory. Not trusting a man’s assurance. Trusting Christ.

The devil loves misplaced faith. He does not care if a man has faith in church, faith in Mary, faith in a priest, faith in baptism, faith in good works, faith in sacraments, faith in religion, faith in an emotional experience, or faith in a sinner’s prayer. As long as that faith is not resting in Jesus Christ, the devil is satisfied. He will let a sinner be very sincere about the wrong object. Sincerity cannot make falsehood true. A man can sincerely drink poison thinking it is medicine and sincerely die. A sinner can sincerely trust a prayer and go to hell because he never trusted Christ. That is why the gospel must be clear and the object of faith must be clear. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Chapter Three: Do Not Confuse the Mouth With the Heart

The Bible puts great importance on the heart. Modern shallow evangelism often puts the emphasis on the mouth. Now the mouth matters. Confession matters. Calling matters. Testimony matters. But the mouth without the heart is worthless. Jesus Christ said, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Matthew 15:8). There are plenty of people who can say religious words while the heart remains untouched, unbelieving, proud, blind, and lost. Lip service is not salvation. A parrot can repeat Bible words. A lost man can repeat a prayer. A child can repeat after an adult. A sinner trying to end an uncomfortable conversation can say whatever you want him to say.

The issue is not whether the sinner can be talked into saying something. The issue is whether he has heard the gospel and believed from the heart. Romans 10:10 says, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” That verse needs to be rescued from the soul-winning shortcuts. With the heart. Not merely with the lips. Not merely with the emotions. Not merely with the memory. The heart is where the sinner stops arguing with God and rests in Christ. The heart is where he sees himself guilty and Christ sufficient. The heart is where he believes the record God gave of His Son. The mouth may confess what the heart believes, but the mouth cannot replace heart faith.

This is where pressure tactics can produce terrible confusion. A worker may say, "Would you like to go to heaven?" Most people will say yes. "Would you like to pray?" Some will say yes just to be polite. "Repeat after me." They repeat. "Now you are saved." But what happened in the heart? Did the sinner believe the gospel, or did he merely cooperate with the worker? Did he understand Christ, or did he just want the conversation over? Did he trust the Lord, or did he trust the person telling him what to do? If you do not care about those questions, you are not dealing faithfully with souls. You are collecting words, not converts. The mouth can say anything under pressure. The heart must believe unto righteousness.

Chapter Four: False Assurance Is Cruel

Giving false assurance to a lost person is one of the cruelest things a religious worker can do. It is worse than saying nothing in some cases, because now the sinner thinks he already has what he never received. Before, he was lost and might know he was lost. After shallow dealing, he is lost but vaccinated against conviction. He says, "I already did that." Did what? "I prayed." And there he sits, trusting an old religious moment instead of the living Christ. That is not a small mistake. That is a spiritual disaster. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). A sinner's prayer can become one of those ways if it becomes the object of trust.

False assurance also hardens people against future witness. Try dealing with a man who was told as a child that he got saved because he repeated a prayer, but he has no understanding of the gospel, no present faith in Christ, no testimony of the new birth, and no interest in the things of God. You ask him about salvation, and he says, "I took care of that when I was little." Took care of what? "I said the prayer." That man may be harder to reach than a drunk who knows he is lost. Why? Because the drunk may still know he needs mercy, while the false professor thinks he has a paper shield against hell. That is the bitter fruit of careless evangelism.

A faithful soul winner must be willing to leave a sinner under conviction rather than rush him into false peace. That sounds strange to people who worship numbers, but it is true. If God is dealing with a man, do not short-circuit the work by slapping a label on him. Give him the gospel. Urge him to believe. Show him the promise. Make Christ plain. But do not tell him he is saved unless his assurance is rooted in Scripture and faith in Christ. You are not the Holy Ghost. You do not seal him. You do not write his name in heaven. You can show him what God says to the believer. You can say, "If you are trusting Christ, here is what the Bible says." But do not become the source of his assurance. God's Word must be the source. Christ must be the foundation.

Chapter Five: Calling Upon the Lord Is Not a Magic Formula

Romans 10:13 is a blessed verse: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Thank God for it. But it must be preached in its Bible context, not abused like a magic formula. A man calls upon the Lord because he believes the message concerning the Lord. Romans 10:14 says, “how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” That question is fatal to the repeat-after-me crowd when they use calling as a substitute for believing. The Bible order is not meaningless words first and faith later. The man hears. The man believes. The man calls. The man confesses. The heart and mouth are connected, but the heart is the issue of faith.

Think of Peter sinking in the water. He cried, “Lord, save me” (Matthew 14:30). That was a real cry because he knew whom he was calling upon and what he needed. Think of the publican in the temple: “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). That was not an empty recitation. That was a guilty man casting himself on mercy. The problem is not sinners calling on the Lord. The problem is religious workers training people to call without understanding, without faith, without conviction, and without Christ being clear. A cry from faith is one thing. A repeated formula from confusion is another thing entirely.

Do not turn “calling” into evangelical bead-counting. Rome has its beads. Some Baptists have their repeated prayer. Both can become ritual if the heart is not believing Christ. A sinner does not get saved because he pronounced the correct phrase. He gets saved because he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. If he calls upon the Lord from that faith, amen. But if he merely says words to please you, escape pressure, satisfy curiosity, or finish a religious transaction, you have not helped him. You may have made him twice as hard to reach later. Handle Romans 10:13 reverently. It is a promise to the believing caller, not a license to manufacture professions.

Chapter Six: Lead Them Through the Scriptures to Christ

The right way to deal with a sinner is to guide him through the Scriptures to Christ. Philip did that with the Ethiopian eunuch. The man was reading Isaiah and did not understand. Philip asked, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” (Acts 8:30). The eunuch replied, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” (Acts 8:31). Then the Bible says Philip “preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:35). There is soul winning. Not manipulation. Not a religious shortcut. Not “repeat this before you understand it.” Philip used the Scripture and preached Christ. He guided the man from the Word to the Saviour.

That is the pattern. Open the Bible. Show the sinner sin. Show him the wages of sin. Show him Christ’s death for sins. Show him the blood. Show him the burial and resurrection. Show him grace. Show him faith. Show him the promise of eternal life. Let the Word of God

do the cutting. “The entrance of thy words giveth light” (Psalm 119:130). Your opinions cannot give that light. Your personality cannot give that light. Your emotional stories cannot give that light. The Word gives light. The Scriptures are able to make one wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. So use them. If you are trying to win souls without Scripture, you are trying to farm without seed.

This also means you must learn the verses yourself. Do not be lazy. A soul winner should know where to go in the Bible. Mark your Bible. Carry tracts that use Scripture. Memorize key verses. Learn how to explain them plainly. Do not just fire verses like bullets with no aim. Use them to bring the sinner to Christ. Ask questions. “Do you see what that says?” “What does God say the wages of sin is?” “According to this verse, what did Christ do for sinners?” “Does this verse say salvation is by works?” “What does God promise the believer?” Let the sinner deal with the words on the page. You are not asking him to believe you. You are asking him to believe God.

Chapter Seven: Prayer May Express Faith, But Christ Must Be Trusted

Now let us be balanced. A sinner may pray when he trusts Christ. There is nothing wrong with a sinner crying out to God. There is nothing wrong with a sinner saying, “Lord, save me.” There is nothing wrong with a believing heart expressing itself in prayer. The danger is not prayer. The danger is making the prayer the ground of salvation. If a man hears the gospel, understands his lost condition, believes Christ died for his sins and rose again, and calls upon the Lord from the heart, praise God. But when he asks later, “How do I know I am saved?” you do not point him to the wording of his prayer. You point him to the promise of God and the finished work of Christ.

That is important for assurance. Suppose a man says, “I do not know if I said the right words.” Wrong foundation. Suppose he says, “I do not know if I was sincere enough.” Wrong foundation. Suppose he says, “I did not cry like someone else did.” Wrong foundation. Suppose he says, “I cannot remember the exact date.” Wrong foundation. Assurance is not in the perfection of your prayer, the strength of your feelings, the clearness of your memory, or the drama of your experience. Assurance is in God’s Word. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3:36). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). Hath. Not might have. Not will have if he said the prayer exactly right. Hath.

So if prayer is used, keep it in its proper place. It is not a sacrament. It is not magic. It is not the Saviour. It is the soul’s expression to God. The object remains Christ. The ground remains the blood. The promise remains the Word. The means remains faith. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans

5:1). Not justified by repeating. Not justified by emotional intensity. Not justified by walking an aisle. Justified by faith. A good soul winner will make that so clear that the sinner walks away thinking about Christ, not the worker; Calvary, not the prayer; the Bible, not the method; the Saviour, not the sinner's own words.

Conclusion

Do not lead them to a prayer instead of Christ. That sentence needs to be written across the top of every soul-winning lesson in the country. Prayer can accompany faith, but prayer is not the object of faith. Calling upon the Lord is biblical, but calling without believing is empty noise. Confession matters, but confession without heart faith is lip service. A sinner may pray when he gets saved, but he is not saved by the prayer. He is saved by the Lord Jesus Christ when he believes the gospel. Christ died for our sins. Christ shed His blood. Christ was buried. Christ rose again. Christ saves. Christ keeps. Christ is the foundation.

The danger of shallow evangelism is that it turns salvation into something the sinner did. "I prayed." "I went forward." "I repeated the words." "I asked Jesus into my heart." "The preacher told me I was saved." That is not where assurance belongs. Assurance belongs in what God said about His Son. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). Written. Believe. Know. The Bible gives assurance to those who believe on the Son of God, not to those who merely repeated a formula without understanding or faith.

So be careful with souls. Be plain. Be urgent. Be compassionate. Be scriptural. Guide sinners through the Word to the Saviour. Let them see their sin. Let them see the cross. Let them see the blood. Let them see the empty tomb. Let them see grace. Let them see that works and rituals cannot save. Urge them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If they call upon Him from a believing heart, rejoice. But never give them a prayer as a substitute for Christ. Never make your words the foundation of their peace. Never pressure a false profession just so you can count another number. Lead them to the Lamb of God. Lead them to the crucified and risen Saviour. Lead them to Jesus Christ, and leave the saving to Him.

8 of 25: Fishers of Men – Believing From the Heart

Introduction

There is a difference between hearing words with the ear and believing truth from the heart. That difference is the difference between a religious professor and a born-again believer. A

man can hear a sermon, repeat Bible phrases, agree with certain facts, walk an aisle, pray a prayer, get baptized, join a church, and still never believe from the heart. That is not hard to understand unless a man has been trained by shallow religion to confuse every outward motion with inward faith. The Bible does not say, “with the mouth man believeth unto righteousness.” It says, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). There it is. The heart. Not merely the lips. Not merely the head. Not merely the emotions. Not merely the memory of a religious moment. The heart. The sinner must believe from the heart the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that gospel has content: Christ died for our sins, He was buried, He rose again the third day, and salvation is by grace through faith in His blood and finished work.

This is where many soul winners get careless. They are so eager to get a response that they do not take time to find out whether the sinner understands what he is responding to. They rush him. They pressure him. They ask three leading questions, get three nods, have him repeat a few words, and then they write his name down as a convert. But what did he believe? What did he understand? What was he trusting? Was he trusting Christ, or was he trusting the worker? Was he trusting the blood, or was he trusting the prayer? Was he trusting the gospel, or was he trusting a feeling? Did he see himself as a lost sinner, or did he just want to be polite? Did he understand grace, or did he think he was adding Jesus to his own goodness? These questions matter because the Bible connects salvation to believing the right message from the heart. Paul said the gospel is “by which also ye are saved” (1 Corinthians 15:2). If a man does not know the gospel, what exactly is he believing?

The object of faith matters. Faith is not a mist floating around in the air. Faith has an object. A man can believe sincerely and be sincerely wrong. A man can believe strongly and be strongly deceived. A man can believe emotionally and still believe a lie. The saving object is Jesus Christ as revealed in the gospel. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:25). There is the object: Christ and His blood. Not faith in faith. Not faith in feelings. Not faith in religion. Not faith in the church. Not faith in baptism. Not faith in turning over a new leaf. Faith in His blood. The sinner must be brought to the point where he stops resting in himself and rests in Jesus Christ. That is believing from the heart. It is not mental assent to a few facts while the soul still clings to self-righteousness. It is not mouthing words while the heart remains untouched. It is the sinner hearing the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and trusting Christ alone. “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Ephesians 1:13).

Chapter One: The Heart Is the Issue

The Bible makes the heart the issue because God is not fooled by religious speech. Men are fooled by speech all the time. Churches are fooled by speech. Preachers are fooled by speech. Parents are fooled by speech. Soul winners are fooled by speech. A sinner says the right words, and people assume the right thing happened. But God looks past the lips and sees the heart. Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). That verse ought to terrify every shallow religious worker who thinks lip movement is salvation. A man can draw nigh with his mouth and still have his heart far from God. That means the mouth can say the right thing while the heart remains in the wrong place.

Romans 10:10 says, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The heart is where the sinner comes to rest on Christ. The heart is where he stops arguing with God about his guilt. The heart is where he stops excusing himself, justifying himself, comparing himself, and promising to improve himself. The heart is where he sees Christ crucified for him and trusts the Saviour. That does not mean the heart is some mystical feeling divorced from understanding. In the Bible, the heart involves understanding, trust, will, affection, conscience, and inner confidence. A sinner does not need to understand every doctrine in the Bible to be saved, but he must understand enough gospel to know whom he is trusting and why. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Not believe on a church. Not believe on a rite. Not believe on a prayer. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is why a soul winner must deal carefully with people. Do not be satisfied merely because someone agrees that Jesus existed. Plenty of lost people believe Jesus existed. Do not be satisfied merely because someone believes Jesus died. Millions believe He died as a historical fact and are still lost. Do not be satisfied merely because someone believes in God. The devils believe and tremble. The issue is whether the sinner is trusting the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work for salvation. Has the truth reached the heart? Has he believed the gospel? Has he stopped trusting anything else? Has he received the word of truth as his only hope? You cannot see the heart infallibly, but you can ask questions that expose the object of faith. "What are you trusting to get you to heaven?" That question cuts through a lot of religious smoke.

Chapter Two: Understanding Comes Before Trust

A sinner cannot trust a gospel he does not understand. That statement should be obvious, but apparently it has become controversial in an age of religious shortcuts. How can a man believe Christ died for his sins if he does not know he is a sinner? How can he trust the blood if he does not know the blood was shed for remission? How can he rest in the resurrection if he has never heard that Christ rose again? How can he believe the gospel if

he does not know what the gospel is? Paul said, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Faith does not come by pressure. Faith does not come by atmosphere. Faith does not come by music swelling in the background. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

Ephesians 1:13 gives the order: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” They trusted after they heard. What did they hear? The word of truth, the gospel of salvation. That is Bible order. Hearing comes before trusting. The message comes before faith. Light comes before response. The sinner must hear something true before he can believe something saving. This is why “just repeat after me” evangelism is so dangerous when it bypasses understanding. It can get a man to say words before he has heard and understood the gospel. It can give him a religious memory without giving him Christ. It can produce a professor without producing a believer.

Now, understanding does not mean a sinner must pass a theology exam. Do not twist this into foolishness. The dying thief did not have a seminary degree. The Philippian jailer did not enroll in a four-year Bible institute before he believed. But they had enough light to turn to the right Person. The jailer asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” and the answer came, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:30–31). That man knew he needed salvation, and he was pointed to Christ. The gospel must be clear enough that the sinner knows he is not saving himself. He must know Christ is the Saviour. He must know the death, burial, and resurrection are the saving work. He must know salvation is received by faith, not earned by works. That is not complicated, but it must be understood.

Chapter Three: Conviction Opens the Wound

Before a man believes from the heart, God often wounds the conscience with conviction. The Holy Ghost reproves the world “of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). Conviction is not the same as salvation, but it often prepares the soul to see its need of salvation. A man under conviction begins to realize he is not as fine as he thought. His excuses start sounding hollow. His religious cover begins to tear. His conscience starts speaking. The Word of God gets inside and starts cutting. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Hebrews 4:12). That sword does not just stroke a man’s feelings. It divides, discerns, exposes, and lays bare.

Modern evangelism often tries to avoid conviction because conviction is uncomfortable. It wants sinners smiling all the way to the altar. It wants them to feel accepted before they ever feel guilty. It wants to talk about purpose before sin, blessing before blood, heaven before hell, and relationship before righteousness. But the Bible does not flatter sinners

into salvation. It tells them the truth. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). “He that believeth not is condemned already” (John 3:18). Those verses are not hate speech. They are spiritual diagnosis. A man who does not know he is sick will not value the physician. A man who does not know he is guilty will not flee to the Advocate. A man who does not know he is lost will not care about being saved.

But conviction must lead to Christ, not despair. The soul winner is not there merely to make people miserable. He is there to show the sinner why Christ is necessary and sufficient. A preacher who exposes sin but never points clearly to the Saviour is like a doctor who diagnoses a deadly disease and then walks out without mentioning the cure. Conviction opens the wound; the gospel shows the remedy. The sinner must see himself lost, but he must also see Christ able to save. He must see guilt, but also grace. He must see judgment, but also the blood. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). That is the blessed turn. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. There is the hope for a convicted heart.

Chapter Four: Persuasion Is Not Manipulation

The Bible says, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Persuasion is biblical. Do not let some timid modern Christian tell you it is wrong to press the truth upon a sinner. Paul persuaded. He reasoned. He testified. He warned. He pleaded. The issue is not whether we should persuade. The issue is how. Biblical persuasion uses truth to urge the sinner toward Christ. Fleshly manipulation uses pressure to force a visible response. Those are not the same thing. Persuasion says, “Here is what God says. Here is your condition. Here is Christ. Believe on Him.” Manipulation says, “Say this now so I can count you.”

A soul winner should be earnest. Eternity is too serious for casual mumbling. A sinner headed to hell should not be handled like a customer browsing a shelf. There ought to be urgency in the witness. There ought to be sobriety. There ought to be warning. There ought to be a real desire to see that soul saved. But urgency must not become trickery. Do not ask manipulative questions designed to trap a person into agreement. Do not tell him he is saved because he gave you the answer you wanted. Do not rush past his confusion. Do not ignore clear evidence that he does not understand the gospel. Do not treat him like a sales target. Deal with him as a soul for whom Christ died.

Persuasion also respects the reality that faith cannot be forced. You can force words, but you cannot force faith. You can pressure a man to bow his head, but you cannot pressure him into believing from the heart. You can get him to sign a card, but you cannot sign him

into the Lamb's book of life. You can tell him to repeat a prayer, but you cannot make him trust Christ. The Holy Ghost must deal with the heart. The Word must be believed. The sinner must personally receive the truth. That is why good soul winning is both bold and honest. It presses the sinner with the truth but refuses to fake the result. It would rather leave him thinking seriously about Christ than send him away falsely assured in a prayer he did not mean and a gospel he did not understand.

Chapter Five: Faith Rests in the Blood of Christ

Romans 3:25 says God set forth Christ "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." That phrase is loaded. Faith in His blood. The blood of Jesus Christ is not a side issue. It is not an old-fashioned word that can be retired for modern ears. It is central to redemption. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). The sinner must not be left with a vague admiration for Jesus. He must be brought to see that Christ shed His blood as the payment for sin. The cross was not a religious decoration. It was a sacrifice. Christ bore sin. Christ satisfied divine justice. Christ paid the price.

Faith in His blood means the sinner stops trusting anything else as the payment for sin. He does not trust baptismal water. He does not trust church membership. He does not trust his sorrow. He does not trust his promises. He does not trust his moral record. He does not trust a priest, preacher, sacrament, confession booth, altar call, or prayer formula. He trusts the blood of Jesus Christ. That is offensive to self-righteous religion because it strips man of boasting. It says your best cannot pay. Your tears cannot pay. Your rituals cannot pay. Your works cannot pay. Only Christ's blood can pay. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

This is why the gospel must keep bringing the sinner back to Calvary. The heart that believes unto righteousness is not merely believing that God exists or that Jesus was a good man. It is resting in the crucified and risen Saviour. It is believing the record God gave of His Son. It is trusting the blood as sufficient. Some sinners will want to add something. They will say, "Yes, I believe in Jesus, but I also think you have to..." and there comes the poison. Have to keep the commandments. Have to be baptized. Have to take sacraments. Have to endure. Have to join. Have to live it. A soul winner must be ready to say, "No, salvation is by grace through faith. Good works follow salvation; they do not purchase it." Christ's blood is enough, or nobody can be saved.

Chapter Six: Grace Through Faith Excludes Boasting

Ephesians 2:8–9 is one of the clearest passages in the Bible on salvation: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." A man who believes from the heart is not boasting in himself. He is not

presenting his works to God as a partial payment. He is receiving a gift. Salvation is by grace. Grace means God gives what the sinner does not deserve and could never earn. Faith is the hand that receives what grace provides. It is not a meritorious work. It is not the sinner contributing his part to help God finish the job. Faith simply rests on Christ.

“Not of works” is hard on religion. It is supposed to be. God wrote it that way. If salvation were by works, men would boast. One man would boast that he was baptized correctly. Another would boast that he kept the sacraments. Another would boast that he lived cleaner than his neighbor. Another would boast that he surrendered more, gave more, prayed more, suffered more, endured more, or performed better. God shut the whole bragging operation down. “Where is boasting then? It is excluded” (Romans 3:27). The only boast left is in the Lord Jesus Christ. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14).

This is a test of whether a person understands grace. Ask him, “Why should God let you into heaven?” If he says, “Because I try to be good,” he does not understand grace. If he says, “Because I was baptized,” he does not understand grace. If he says, “Because I go to church,” he does not understand grace. If he says, “Because I asked forgiveness and try my best,” he may still be resting in himself. But if he says, “Because Jesus Christ died for my sins, shed His blood, rose again, and I am trusting Him alone,” now you are hearing the sound of gospel faith. Believing from the heart gives Christ the glory and leaves the sinner with nothing to brag about but the Saviour.

Chapter Seven: Trust Follows Hearing the Word of Truth

Ephesians 1:13 gives a beautiful order: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” That verse should be marked in every soul winner’s Bible. The sinner hears the word of truth. That truth is the gospel of salvation. After hearing, he trusts. Then, having believed, he is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That is clean Bible order. It protects against mysticism, sacramentalism, and shallow decisionism. The sinner is not saved by an undefined feeling. He is not saved by a ritual. He is not saved by a pressured response. He hears the gospel and trusts Christ.

That also means the soul winner must make sure the “word of truth” is actually being communicated. Do not assume people understand Bible words. Many do not. You may say “saved,” and they think you mean becoming religious. You may say “faith,” and they think you mean trying hard to believe in God. You may say “grace,” and they think you mean God helps those who help themselves. You may say “repentance,” and they think you mean doing enough penance. You may say “Jesus died for you,” and they may not understand substitution, sin, or blood atonement. Explain the words. Make the message plain. Ask

questions. Do not talk over the sinner's head and then congratulate yourself for being doctrinal.

When the sinner hears the word of truth and believes, assurance must be directed to God's promise. Ephesians 1:13 says that after believing, the believer is "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." That is God's work. You do not seal him. The church does not seal him. Baptism does not seal him. The Holy Spirit seals him after he believes. That truth gives real assurance. Not "I know I am saved because I repeated the prayer just right." Not "I know I am saved because the preacher told me." No. "I heard the gospel, I trusted Christ, and God's Word says the believer is sealed." That is Bible assurance. The heart believes Christ; the Word confirms the promise; the Spirit seals the believer.

Conclusion

Believing from the heart is not a religious slogan. It is the Bible's way of distinguishing real faith from empty profession. A sinner may speak with the mouth while the heart is far from God. He may agree with facts while still trusting himself. He may pray a prayer while not understanding the gospel. He may join a church while never resting in Christ. The issue is the heart. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10). That heart faith is not blind emotion. It comes after hearing the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. It rests in the Lord Jesus Christ, His death for sins, His blood, His burial, His resurrection, and His promise of salvation by grace through faith.

This is why the gospel must be clear and why soul winners must be careful. A sinner needs understanding, conviction, persuasion, and faith in the right object. He must know enough truth to trust Christ. He must see enough of his guilt to stop excusing himself. He must be pressed with the claims of the gospel without being manipulated into a false profession. He must be pointed to the blood, not to a ritual; to Christ, not to a prayer; to grace, not to works; to the Word of God, not to a man's assurance. The soul winner is not trying to produce religious echoes. He is trying to bring the sinner face to face with the Saviour.

So deal honestly with souls. Open the Bible. Show them Romans 10. Show them Acts 16:31. Show them 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Show them Romans 3:25. Show them Ephesians 1:13. Show them Ephesians 2:8-9. Ask what they believe. Ask what they are trusting. Ask whether their hope is in Christ alone. Do not be satisfied with vague religion. Do not be impressed by lip service. Do not hand out false assurance like candy. A soul is too valuable for that. The sinner must believe from the heart, and the heart must have the right object: the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, risen, and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

9 of 25: Fishers of Men – Your Testimony Is a Loaded Weapon

Introduction

A Christian testimony is not the gospel, but it can be a loaded weapon in the hand of a Bible believer who knows how to use it. Get that distinction nailed down at the start. Your testimony did not die for anybody's sins. Your changed life did not shed blood at Calvary. Your story was not buried and raised again the third day. A sinner is not saved by admiring what happened to you. He is saved by believing what Jesus Christ did for him. Paul said the gospel is "how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). That is the gospel. Not your background. Not your emotions. Not your reform. Not your experience. The gospel is Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for sinners. But do not let that truth make you despise the weapon God put in your hand when He changed your life. A testimony cannot replace the gospel, but it can open the door for the gospel, put a hook in a sinner's conscience, and make the truth harder to dismiss.

When I got saved on October 31, 1993, the people around me saw something happen. I did not merely adopt a religious opinion. I did not just start attending church. I did not hang a Bible verse on the wall and keep living like the same old man. God changed me. The people I worked with saw a new man, and some of them could not believe it. Some of my old friends became uncomfortable. Some people who had been afraid of me before did not know what to do with me afterward. A few stayed social, but timid. A lot just avoided me. That is what happens when real conversion walks into the old crowd. You become a living interruption. The old crowd can ignore a tract on a table, but it has a harder time ignoring a man it used to know who is not the same man anymore. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). That verse is not decoration. It is an explosion.

A testimony is powerful because sinners may not know the Bible, but they know whether they knew you. They may not understand justification, sanctification, imputation, redemption, propitiation, reconciliation, and eternal security, but they know if the man standing in front of them is not what he used to be. That does not mean every changed life is automatically understood. Lost people will misread it, resent it, mock it, fear it, avoid it, or try to explain it away. But it still speaks. Your testimony puts flesh and bones on the claim that the gospel changes sinners. It says, "This is not theory. This happened." But then you must move from what happened in you to what Christ did for them. That is where many believers fail. They tell their story and stop short of the gospel. Do not do that. Use your

testimony like a door opener, not a substitute Saviour. If God changed you, say so. Then tell them how He saves sinners through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Chapter One: A Changed Life Gets Attention

A changed life gets attention because real conversion disturbs the normal order of sin. People are used to sinners acting like sinners. They know how to handle that. They know how to joke with that, party with that, work with that, and tolerate that. But when a sinner gets saved and starts acting like a new creature, the old crowd suddenly gets uneasy. They may not have the vocabulary for it, but they feel the rebuke. The man who used to curse now speaks differently. The man who used to laugh at filth now will not laugh. The man who used to run with them now cannot run the same way. The man who used to be careless about God now talks about Christ, the Bible, sin, judgment, heaven, hell, and salvation. That kind of change does not stay invisible.

When my coworkers saw a new man, that became part of the witness. It did not save them, but it got their attention. Some listened. Some avoided. Some remained timid. That is Bible. Peter said lost people will think it strange when you no longer run with them “to the same excess of riot” (1 Peter 4:4). The old crowd thinks you are strange because you stopped being useful to their sin. You used to confirm them. Now you convict them. You used to be one more voice in the chorus. Now you are off key to the world and in tune with heaven. You used to make them comfortable. Now your existence makes them wonder whether they are wrong. That is not because you became better than they are. It is because Christ interrupted you, and now your life interrupts them.

This is why a Christian should not be ashamed of being changed. The world wants you apologizing for conversion. It wants you to say, “I am still the same person.” Well, in one sense you are still you, but in the Bible sense, no you are not. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Quit trying to reassure the world that Jesus did not do too much to you. If Christ saved you, let the change show. Not in a phony, self-righteous, plastic way, but in a real way. Let them see that the Book has got hold of you. Let them see that the old sins do not own you the same way. Let them see that you care about souls. Let them see that your mouth has changed, your habits have changed, your friends have changed, your desires have changed, and your direction has changed. A changed life gets attention, and attention can become an opening for the gospel.

Chapter Two: Your Testimony Is Evidence, Not the Gospel

A testimony is evidence. It is not the gospel. A lot of modern Christianity gets this wrong. They tell people to “share their story” and then never train them to explain the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So a sinner hears a moving story about addiction,

depression, loneliness, marriage problems, anger, fear, or emptiness, and then he is told Jesus can make his life better. That may stir emotions, but it may not give him the gospel. If all he hears is that Jesus improved your life, he may come to Jesus as a therapist, not a Saviour. He may want relief without redemption, comfort without conviction, blessing without blood, and purpose without propitiation. That is not salvation.

Paul gave his testimony more than once in Acts, but he never let the testimony replace doctrine. He told what happened to him, but he always brought it back to Christ, sin, resurrection, witness, and obedience to the heavenly vision. The testimony was a bridge to truth. That is how it should be used. "I was lost, and Christ saved me." "I was blind, and the Lord opened my eyes." "I was under conviction, and the gospel showed me Jesus Christ." "My life changed, but the change is not what saved me; Christ saved me." That is the right direction. The testimony points away from self and toward Christ.

This distinction keeps your witness clean. If you make your testimony the gospel, then a sinner may think he needs to feel what you felt, go through what you went through, or have a dramatic story like yours. That can confuse him. Not everybody has the same background. Not everybody gets saved out of the same visible sins. Some are saved out of gutter wickedness. Some are saved out of respectable religion. Some are saved young. Some are saved old. Some cry. Some do not. Some are under conviction for months. Some get hit quickly. The gospel is not your emotional pattern. The gospel is Christ. Your testimony is evidence that Christ saves, but then you must give the sinner the same Saviour who saved you. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Chapter Three: The Old Crowd Will React

When a man gets saved, the old crowd reacts. Do not be shocked by it. Some will mock you. Some will avoid you. Some will test you. Some will try to pull you back. Some will say, "This is just a phase." Some will act nervous around you. Some will get angry because your change makes them feel exposed. Some will ask questions when nobody else is listening. That is normal. You upset the arrangement. Before, everyone knew the script. Now you are not reading your old lines anymore. The old friends may still want the old man, but the old man is dead in the reckoning of God. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11).

This reaction can hurt. Do not pretend it cannot. A new believer often thinks everybody will rejoice. He gets saved and wants to tell everyone. He thinks, "This is the greatest thing in the world. Surely they will want to know." Then he finds out some people liked him better lost. They liked him better in darkness. They liked him better laughing at sin. They liked him better under the devil's thumb. When he starts talking about Jesus Christ, they act like he

betrayed them. In truth, he did betray something. He betrayed the world, the flesh, and the devil by switching sides. That is a good betrayal. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:13).

Use the reaction wisely. Do not become bitter because people avoid you. Do not become proud because you make them uncomfortable. Do not become obnoxious just to prove you are bold. Be steady. Be clear. Be available. The old crowd may avoid you publicly but think about your words privately. The coworker who jokes in front of others may ask serious questions later. The friend who mocks today may call you when his life falls apart. The relative who rolls his eyes may remember your testimony at a funeral. Keep the door open without compromising truth. You are not responsible for how everyone reacts. You are responsible to keep pointing to Christ.

Chapter Four: A Testimony Opens Doors in Daily Life

A testimony often opens doors because people are curious about change. “What happened to you?” is one of the best questions a sinner can ask. When he asks that, do not waste the opportunity. Do not say, “I am just trying to be a better person.” That is weak. Do not say, “I found religion.” That is worse. Say what happened. “Jesus Christ saved me.” That may sound too direct for modern ears, but it is honest. Then explain it. “I found out I was a sinner, Christ died for my sins, He was buried and rose again, and I trusted Him.” There it is. Testimony to gospel. Door to seed. Experience to Scripture. That is how the weapon is used.

Daily life is full of possible openings. At work, people notice what you do not do anymore. At family gatherings, people notice what you do not laugh at anymore. In conversations, they notice your language has changed. In trials, they may notice you have peace they cannot explain. When you apologize for wrong, they may notice humility they did not expect. When you refuse to join old sin, they may ask why. Each one of those moments can become a door. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6). Salt has bite. Grace has kindness. You need both.

But do not wait forever for the perfect opening. Sometimes you need to make one. A testimony can begin with a simple sentence: “Before I got saved, I did not think this way.” Or, “When the Lord saved me, He changed my life.” Or, “I used to be different before I trusted Christ.” That is not complicated. It plants a hook. The other person may ask a question, or he may not. He may change the subject, or he may listen. Either way, you put Christ into the conversation. Learn to speak naturally, not mechanically. A testimony is not

a memorized commercial. It is the truth of what God did for you, used as a bridge to tell what Christ did for sinners.

Chapter Five: Do Not Polish the Sin, Magnify the Saviour

When giving a testimony, do not spend all your time polishing the sin. Some people tell their testimony like they miss the old life. They describe the wickedness in vivid detail, make it sound exciting, and then tack Jesus on at the end like a religious footnote. That is backward. The point of a testimony is not to make sin entertaining. The point is to magnify the Saviour. Paul did not hide what he had been. He said he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious. But then he magnified mercy: “But I obtained mercy” (1 Timothy 1:13). That is the note. Not, “Look how wild I was.” Rather, “Look how merciful Christ is.”

This matters especially in an age addicted to drama. People think the more wicked the background, the better the testimony. That is foolish. A man saved from drunkenness has a testimony. A man saved from religion has a testimony. A child saved before he destroys his life has a testimony. A respectable sinner saved from self-righteousness has a testimony. The greatness is not in how filthy the pit was. The greatness is in the One who saves from the pit. If you make sin the star of your testimony, you are using your past like bait for attention. If you make Christ the star, you are using your testimony properly.

So tell enough of the old life to make the change understandable, but do not glorify it. You do not need to drag your audience through every sewer you crawled through. Some details are not useful. Some things should be left dead and buried. The Bible says, “it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret” (Ephesians 5:12). A testimony should be honest, not pornographic. Clear, not sensational. Christ-centered, not self-centered. The point is not, “I was worse than you think.” The point is, “Jesus Christ saves sinners.” Keep the spotlight on the blood, the mercy, the grace, the Book, and the new creature Christ made.

Chapter Six: A Consistent Life Keeps the Door Open

A testimony spoken with the mouth must be backed by a life that does not make the mouth look ridiculous. Nobody lives sinlessly perfect, and if you pretend you do, you are already lying. But there ought to be a real, visible difference. “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1:27). Your manner of life should fit the gospel you claim. If you tell coworkers about Jesus and then cheat, gossip, lie, flirt with filth, curse, lose your temper like a fool, and act lazy on the job, do not be surprised when they treat your testimony like noise. Your life does not save them, but your hypocrisy can give them an excuse to ignore you.

That is why young believers need the Word early. The seasoned brother who got me into the Bible did something more important than he probably realized at the time. He pointed me to the thing that would shape the testimony. The Bible cleans a man up. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9). A testimony is not sustained by emotion. It is sustained by walking with God, feeding on Scripture, staying in prayer, keeping short accounts with sin, and growing in grace. The old crowd watches. They may pretend they are not watching, but they are. They want to see if this thing is real or just another phase.

Consistency does not mean you never fail. It means when you fail, you deal with it honestly. If you wrong someone, apologize. If you speak harshly, make it right. If you stumble, do not defend the sin. A humble Christian who owns wrong can sometimes strengthen his testimony more than a proud Christian who pretends he never does wrong. The lost world has seen plenty of religious phonies. Do not become another one. Be real. Be clean. Be honest. Be steady. Let them see that Christ did not merely give you religious words. He changed the direction of your life. That kind of consistency keeps the door open for gospel witness.

Chapter Seven: Turn the Testimony Into a Gospel Witness

The final purpose of a testimony is to get to the gospel. If your testimony ends with you, it stopped too soon. If it ends with “my life is better,” it stopped too low. If it ends with “I found peace,” it stopped too vague. The testimony must move to Christ crucified, buried, and risen. Paul said, “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:5). That verse should govern every testimony. We do not preach ourselves. We may tell what happened to us, but we preach Christ. The sinner does not need to admire our change. He needs to believe the gospel.

A simple structure helps. First, what you were before salvation. Second, how God dealt with you and brought you to the gospel. Third, what Christ did according to Scripture. Fourth, how you trusted Him. Fifth, what changed afterward. Then bring it back to the person listening. “That same Christ can save you.” That is how a testimony becomes a witness instead of a religious autobiography. You do not have to make it long. Sometimes a two-minute testimony is better than a twenty-minute ramble. Know the point. Get to Christ. Give Scripture. Ask the person where he stands.

And do not be afraid to make the issue personal. A testimony is not just a story for the air. It is a bridge to a soul. “Has anything like that ever happened to you?” “Do you know for sure you are saved?” “What are you trusting to get you to heaven?” “Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how to be saved?” Those questions turn testimony into personal dealing. Be

wise. Be kind. Be direct. The testimony opened the door; now walk through it with the gospel. If they shut the door, leave seed. If they listen, give them Christ. If they argue, keep the issue clear. If they ask, answer from the Book. Your testimony is loaded, but it must fire toward the right target: the sinner's need of the Saviour.

Conclusion

Your testimony is a loaded weapon, but it must be aimed properly. It is not the gospel, and it must never replace the gospel. A sinner is not saved because your life changed. He is saved because Jesus Christ died for his sins, shed His blood, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. But your changed life can make him listen long enough to hear that message. It can disturb his excuses. It can make him curious. It can make him uncomfortable. It can make him ask questions. It can prove, in living color, that the gospel is not just religious talk. The Lord still changes sinners.

When God saved me, people saw a new man. Coworkers saw it. Old friends felt it. Some avoided it. Some got timid around it. Some could not believe it. That change opened doors. It gave me a reason to speak, and it gave them a reason to wonder. That is how testimony works. It takes the invisible work God did inside and lets people see the fruit outside. But the testimony must always move from "what happened to me" to "what Christ did for sinners." Otherwise, it becomes a story without salvation.

So use your testimony. Do not be ashamed of it. Do not glorify the sin in it. Do not exaggerate it. Do not polish it into a performance. Just tell the truth. Tell what you were. Tell how God dealt with you. Tell how you heard the gospel. Tell how Christ saved you. Tell how the Book changed you. Then open the Bible and show the sinner that the same Saviour who saved you can save him. A testimony is not the seed, but it can open the gate to the field. Once the gate is open, sow the gospel.

10 of 25: Fishers of Men – The Russian Woman and the Dictionary

Introduction

One of the biggest lies the devil tells a new Christian is that he is not ready to witness. He tells him he does not know enough, has not studied enough, has not memorized enough verses, has not been saved long enough, cannot answer every objection, cannot explain every doctrine, cannot handle every cult, cannot refute every philosopher, and therefore ought to sit down, keep quiet, and wait until some imaginary day when he feels qualified. That day never comes for the coward. He will still be "getting ready" twenty years later while

sinner pass him on the road to hell. The truth is, a brand-new Christian may not know much, but if he knows he was lost, knows Jesus Christ saved him, and knows Christ died for sinners and rose again, he knows enough to start pointing somebody else to the Saviour. He needs to grow, yes. He needs doctrine, yes. He needs Scripture, yes. He needs wisdom, yes. But he does not need to wait until he becomes a walking Bible encyclopedia before he opens his mouth.

About a week after I got saved, I helped lead my first soul to the Lord. She was a Russian woman living here in the States, married to a U.S. serviceman. She spoke broken English, and I was a new Christian with more burden than polish. That is a good combination if a man will stay humble. I did not have a perfect presentation. I did not have years of experience. I did not have a seminary-trained delivery. I had a testimony, some gospel light, a burden, a friend with me, and a dictionary. A dictionary. That is almost comical when you think about it. Here we were trying to get the greatest message in the universe across a language barrier with broken English and a dictionary. But after about an hour, by the grace of God, she trusted Christ. She started coming to church. And I learned something right there that no classroom could have taught me the same way: God can use a willing witness who does not feel ready.

That story belongs in this series because it strips soul winning down to the bone. No stage. No pulpit. No polished sermon. No evangelistic campaign. No clever system. No emotional music swelling at the right time. No crowd watching. Just a soul, a Saviour, a witness, a language barrier, and enough truth to get the gospel across. That is real personal evangelism. The gospel does not require a perfect messenger. It requires a true message. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Earthen vessels. Clay pots. Cracked containers. Weak carriers. That is what we are. The treasure is not the vessel. The treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ. A new believer with a burden and a Bible truth in his mouth is more useful than a polished coward with fifty verses marked in his Bible and no intention of using them.

Chapter One: God Uses Willing Men, Not Perfect Men

God has never needed perfect men to do His work because there are none available. If He waited for perfect vessels, nothing would ever get done. Moses had excuses. Gideon was hiding. Jeremiah thought he was too young. Peter opened his mouth too fast. Thomas doubted. Mark quit and later had to be restored. Paul called himself the chief of sinners. The Bible is not the record of perfect men doing perfect work. It is the record of a perfect God using weak, flawed, redeemed men to accomplish His will. That ought to encourage every believer who feels unqualified. You are unqualified in yourself. Welcome to the club.

The question is not whether you are sufficient in yourself. You are not. The question is whether God's Word is sufficient and whether you are willing to carry it.

When I was one week saved, I was not polished. I was not seasoned. I did not have years of soul-winning wisdom. I had more zeal than training. But I was willing. That matters. Willingness is not a substitute for truth, but without willingness, truth stays locked in the barn. A farmer can own the finest seed in the county and starve if he never goes to the field. A Christian can own the right Bible, believe the right gospel, attend the right church, and still never see fruit because he is not willing to open his mouth. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah answered, "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). That is willingness. Not "send someone better." Not "send someone smoother." Not "send someone older." Here am I.

The devil will always point to what you lack. He will say, "You do not know enough Greek." Fine. Use English. He will say, "You cannot answer every question." Fine. Answer the ones you can and point to Christ. He will say, "You might stumble." You probably will. Keep going. He will say, "You might look foolish." You have looked foolish for worse things in your life. Look foolish for Jesus Christ once in a while. God uses willing men, not self-satisfied experts. A willing man will learn as he goes. A willing man will ask questions. A willing man will study harder after a conversation exposes his ignorance. A willing man will grow. But an unwilling man will sit in religious comfort, always preparing, never sowing, always criticizing others, never reaching anybody himself.

Chapter Two: A Burden Will Push You Past Your Excuses

A real burden for souls pushes a man past excuses. Not because excuses disappear, but because the soul in front of him matters more than his comfort. If you wait until witnessing feels easy, you will rarely witness. If you wait until you are never nervous, you will keep quiet. If you wait until the setting is perfect, you will miss half the doors God opens. Soul winning often happens in awkward situations. There may be noise, distractions, interruptions, limited time, resistance, confusion, or even a language barrier. The burden says, "Say something anyway." Not something foolish. Not something reckless. Something true.

That Russian woman did not speak clear English. I did not speak Russian. That is a pretty large obstacle when you are trying to explain eternal truth. But there was a dictionary, and there was a willingness to struggle through it. Think about that. We live in a generation with smartphones, translation apps, printed tracts, online Bibles, audio, video, and more tools than any generation before us, and many Christians still will not witness because they are afraid of a little awkwardness. We were working through broken English with a dictionary.

That ought to shame some of this soft Christianity that cannot hand a tract to a cashier because it might feel uncomfortable.

A burden changes what you are willing to endure. A mother will run into danger for her child because love overrides fear. A man will work long hours for something he cares about because desire overrides inconvenience. A soul winner will step into awkward conversations because eternity overrides embarrassment. Paul said, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). The terror of the Lord has a way of shrinking the terror of awkwardness. Hell makes embarrassment look small. Judgment makes nervousness look foolish. A soul going to eternity makes your social discomfort look like a cheap excuse. If you really believe souls are lost, you will find a way to speak.

Chapter Three: The Gospel Can Cross Barriers

The gospel can cross barriers because it is God’s message, not man’s invention. Language barriers are real. Cultural barriers are real. Religious barriers are real. Personal barriers are real. But the gospel has crossed all of them for nearly two thousand years. It has gone through empires, jungles, deserts, prisons, marketplaces, homes, armies, ships, printing presses, pulpits, dinner tables, street corners, and whispered conversations. It went from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. The message is not fragile. The gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16). Every one. Jew, Gentile, American, Russian, rich, poor, educated, uneducated, polished, broken, religious, pagan, respectable, ruined.

That Russian woman needed the same gospel I needed. Her nationality did not change the message. Her broken English did not change the message. Her background did not change the message. Christ died for sinners. Christ was buried. Christ rose again. Salvation is by grace through faith. “For there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:22–23). No difference in guilt. No difference in need. No difference in the Saviour’s sufficiency. A Russian soul, an American soul, a Mexican soul, a Chinese soul, an Indian soul, an African soul — all have sinned, and all need the blood of Jesus Christ. National borders do not stop sin, and they do not limit the gospel.

This is why the soul winner must not be intimidated by people who seem different from him. You may not know their culture. You may not know their religious background. You may not know their language well. You may not know all their questions. But you know the human condition if you know the Bible. They are sinners. They will die. They will face God. Christ died for sins and rose again. That gives you common ground deeper than culture. Start there. Be patient. Use tools. Use a tract in their language if you have one. Use a Bible.

Use simple words. Ask questions. Do not assume. But do not let difference silence you. The gospel has crossed greater barriers than the one standing in front of you.

Chapter Four: A Testimony Can Open the Door, But Scripture Must Give the Light

In that first witnessing experience, testimony mattered. I had been changed. I could say what Christ had done for me. A testimony can be powerful because it gives a living example. But testimony alone is not enough. A sinner needs Scripture. “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psalm 119:130). Not the entrance of your personality. Not the entrance of your life story. The entrance of God’s words. A testimony can make someone listen; the Word gives the light. A testimony can make the message personal; the Scripture makes it authoritative. A testimony says, “This happened to me.” Scripture says, “Thus saith the Lord.”

This is why new believers should learn verses early. Learn the gospel. Learn 1 Corinthians 15:1–4. Learn Romans 3:23. Learn Romans 6:23. Learn Romans 5:8. Learn Ephesians 2:8–9. Learn Acts 16:31. Learn John 3:16. Learn Romans 10:9–10. Learn Ephesians 1:13. You may not know everything, but you can learn enough to show a sinner the main road. A man does not need to understand every road in the state to point someone to the hospital in an emergency. He needs to know the way. The sinner needs the way to Christ. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Get him there.

And when language is limited, Scripture becomes even more important. Simple verses can carry more weight than complicated explanations. The words of God can do what your words cannot. If you can get a clear verse in front of someone, you have put living seed into the conversation. That is why gospel tracts can be so useful. A good tract with Scripture can continue speaking after your conversation ends. A verse can be read again. A word can be translated. A phrase can stick. The soul winner’s job is not to dazzle the sinner with eloquence. It is to get light into the room. Scripture gives light.

Chapter Five: Do Not Despise Small Beginnings

The first soul you help lead to Christ may not happen in a dramatic setting. It may happen awkwardly, quietly, slowly, and imperfectly. Do not despise that. God often starts a man in small places so he learns dependence. A one-week-old believer, a Russian woman, broken English, a dictionary, and a long conversation is not the kind of story religious showmen build a campaign around. But heaven pays attention to one soul. Jesus said, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10). One sinner. Not a stadium. Not a thousand. One. Heaven knows how to rejoice over one.

Small beginnings teach humility. If you start with a crowd, you may think too highly of yourself. If you start with one difficult conversation, you learn that God is the one who

saves. You learn patience. You learn how little you know. You learn how much you need the Lord. You learn the value of one soul. That is priceless. The man who cannot rejoice over one soul is not fit to deal with many. If the only thing that excites you is large numbers, you may not have the heart of a soul winner. You may have the heart of a promoter. The Good Shepherd cares about one sheep. “Doth he not leave the ninety and nine... and seeketh that which is gone astray?” (Matthew 18:12). One matters to God.

Small beginnings also build confidence. After that first soul, you realize God can use you. Not because you are great. Because the gospel is. You realize a conversation can turn eternal. You realize someone can actually listen. You realize the Bible can cut through confusion. You realize the Holy Ghost can work while you are stumbling through your part. That gives courage for the next witness. And the next. And the next. Before long, you are knocking doors, handing tracts, talking to coworkers, speaking to waitresses, mailing gospel literature, and looking for openings because you have learned that God can use ordinary people in ordinary places to do eternal work.

Chapter Six: Willingness Must Grow Into Wisdom

Now, willingness is essential, but willingness must grow into wisdom. A new believer may begin with zeal, but he must add knowledge. “It is not good to have zeal without knowledge” is a truth every soul winner needs, whether quoted exactly that way or learned by experience. Zeal gets you moving. Wisdom keeps you useful. A man who is zealous but careless can confuse people, pressure them, argue foolishly, or give unclear answers. A man who is wise but unwilling becomes a library with no outlet. You need both. “He that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). Not merely loud. Not merely excited. Wise.

That means after the early burden begins, get trained. Read the Bible. Learn the verses. Study how Jesus dealt with people. Study how Paul reasoned. Learn how to explain salvation clearly. Learn what false religions teach so you can answer without getting dragged into endless rabbit trails. Learn when to speak and when to stop. Learn how to ask questions. Learn how to tell whether someone is trusting works, ritual, religion, or Christ. Learn how to use your testimony without making it the gospel. Learn how to avoid turning the sinner’s prayer into a sacrament. Learn how to leave a tract without being obnoxious. Learn how to follow up. Learn how to be bold without being a fool.

But never let the pursuit of wisdom become an excuse for disobedience. Some Christians hide behind study. They are always learning how to witness but never witnessing. That is like a man taking swimming lessons for ten years and never getting in the water. Start with what you know, and keep learning. Speak now, and speak better as you grow. Carry seed now, and learn to sow straighter rows. A one-week-old believer should witness with

humility. A ten-year-old believer should witness with more Scripture and discernment. But both should witness. The shame is not that a new Christian stumbles while trying. The shame is that older Christians who ought to know better stay silent.

Chapter Seven: God Gets the Glory When the Vessel Is Weak

One reason God uses weak vessels is so He gets the glory. If the work depended on human polish, then polished men would boast. If salvation depended on eloquence, then eloquent men would brag. If souls were won by personality, then charming men would become little popes. But God puts treasure in earthen vessels “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). The weaker the vessel, the clearer it becomes that the power is in the gospel and the God behind it. A one-week-old believer with a dictionary leading a Russian woman to Christ is not a monument to human expertise. It is a testimony to divine mercy.

That should keep a soul winner humble. When someone gets saved, do not strut. You did not regenerate that soul. You did not open the heart. You did not seal the believer. You carried the message. God did the miracle. Paul said, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6). The planter matters because God uses him, but the planter does not create life. The waterer matters because God uses him, but the waterer does not create life. God gives the increase. When you forget that, you become proud. When you remember it, you become thankful.

It should also keep a soul winner from despair. You may feel weak. You are weak. You may feel inadequate. You are inadequate. Good. Now trust God. The Lord does not need you to be the Saviour. He already has one. He does not need you to be the Holy Ghost. He already sent Him. He does not need you to be the Word of God. He already preserved it. He needs you to be a willing witness. Open your mouth. Carry the seed. Use the Book. Give the testimony. Point to Christ. If God could use a new believer, broken English, and a dictionary, He can use you.

Conclusion

The Russian woman and the dictionary taught me something early that I never forgot: you do not have to be polished to be used; you have to be willing. A week-old believer with a burden is not useless. A trembling witness with the gospel is not useless. A man who stumbles through simple words while trying to point a soul to Christ is not useless. The gospel is bigger than the vessel. The Word of God is stronger than the witness. The Holy Ghost can work through imperfect speech, awkward settings, broken English, and a dictionary if the truth of Christ is being carried to a soul.

That does not mean ignorance is a virtue. Grow. Study. Learn. Get wisdom. Mark your Bible. Learn the verses. Get better at dealing with souls. Know the gospel clearly. Understand how to answer false religion. Learn to ask better questions. Learn to avoid pressure tactics and false assurance. But do not wait until you feel like an expert. The field is too full, hell is too real, life is too short, and the gospel is too precious for Christians to spend their lives preparing to obey while never obeying. Start sowing now, and keep sharpening the sickle as you go.

One soul matters. That Russian woman mattered. Her broken English did not make her soul worth less. Her background did not put her beyond the gospel. Her need was the same need every sinner has: Jesus Christ. And God let a brand-new believer have a part in pointing her to the Saviour. That is grace. That is mercy. That is the work. So quit making excuses. If you have a Bible, a testimony, and the gospel of Christ, you have enough to start. Get the seed in your hand, the burden in your heart, and the Saviour on your lips. God can use willing vessels.

11 of 25: Fishers of Men – Door to Door and Town to Town

Introduction

There is something about knocking on doors that will cure a Christian of fantasy religion. It takes soul winning out of the classroom, out of the church bulletin, out of the sermon illustration, and puts it on a porch with a real sinner on the other side of the door. You can talk about evangelism in a comfortable room all day long and still never deal with a soul. You can nod your head when the preacher says men are going to hell and still never look one of those men in the eye. You can say you believe the gospel is the power of God unto salvation and still keep it folded up in your Bible like a pressed flower. But when you walk up to a house, knock on a door, wait for it to open, and realize that you now have about ten seconds to speak with wisdom, kindness, boldness, and clarity, you find out very quickly whether soul winning is just a doctrine you admire or a work you are willing to do. The field stops being theoretical. The harvest gets a face.

Early on after I got saved, I started going door to door. I did not know everything. I was not polished. I did not have years of training. I had a burden, a Bible, gospel tracts, and a desire for people to know what Jesus Christ had done for sinners. Every Thursday and every Saturday, we knocked. Door after door. Street after street. House after house. We covered the whole town where I got saved two times. Then another town where I lived two times. Then another town where I helped a friend as an assistant pastor once. That kind of work

teaches you something. It teaches discipline because you have to keep going when the excitement wears off. It teaches persistence because many doors do not open, and many that do open are not interested. It teaches humility because you will stumble, learn, and realize how dependent you are on God. It teaches rejection because not everybody wants to hear. And it teaches saturation because the goal is not to impress yourself with one great conversation, but to get the seed of the gospel everywhere God gives you room to sow it.

Door to door work is not the only way to win souls, and nobody ought to make a pope out of a method. A man can witness at work, in a restaurant, through a tract, in a letter, at a gas station, in a hospital, in a prison, at a family table, or through a simple conversation with a neighbor. The method can vary, but the command does not. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The problem today is not that Christians have too few methods; it is that they have too little obedience. They have cars, phones, printers, the internet, translation tools, gospel literature, maps, contacts, and more open doors than most generations ever dreamed of, but they still do less than old saints did with a King James Bible, a stack of tracts, a pair of shoes, and a burden. Door knocking taught me that soul winning is not merely inspiration. It is work. Holy work, yes. Eternal work, yes. Joyful work, yes. But work. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing" (Psalm 126:6). Notice he goeth forth. Seed in hand. Feet moving. That is where the lesson begins.

Chapter One: Door Knocking Puts Feet Under the Burden

A burden that never moves your feet is not much of a burden. Christians love to talk about having a burden for the lost, but many of them never cross the street, never knock on a door, never hand a tract to a cashier, never speak to a coworker, never mail a gospel message, never ask a family member if he is saved, and never inconvenience themselves one inch for the soul they claim to care about. Door knocking exposes that. It takes all that religious talk and asks, "Will you go?" Not will you admire those who go. Not will you listen to sermons about going. Not will you criticize the people who go because they are not as smooth as you think they should be. Will you go? "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah said, "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). That is the answer of a willing man.

When we went every Thursday and Saturday, it did something to the burden. It gave it legs. It made it practical. You can sit in church and feel moved, but when Thursday comes, your flesh starts negotiating. Maybe next week. Maybe it is too hot. Maybe it is too cold. Maybe people are busy. Maybe they will be mad. Maybe they will ask a question you cannot answer. Maybe somebody else is better at this. That is when obedience has to grab your feelings by the collar and drag them to the field. If you only serve God when your emotions

are high, you will be a very unreliable servant. Discipline is what keeps a man moving when the emotion of the first burden begins to settle into the routine of actual labor.

Door knocking taught me that a soul winner cannot live on excitement alone. The first time you go, you may feel charged up. After enough doors slammed, enough empty houses, enough strange looks, enough interruptions, enough dogs barking, enough awkward starts, and enough people saying, “Not interested,” the novelty is gone. Good. Now you find out whether you are doing it for a thrill or for Christ. The Bible says, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2). Not famous. Not flashy. Not always successful in the way men count success. Faithful. Thursday. Saturday. Door to door. Street to street. Town to town. That is how the seed gets out.

Chapter Two: The Town Is a Field, Not Just a Map

When you start covering a town door by door, you stop seeing it as lines on a map and start seeing it as a field of souls. Every street has people. Every mailbox has a name. Every porch leads to a family, a widow, a drunk, a religious person, a skeptic, a child, a broken marriage, a lonely old man, a busy mother, a young couple, or someone who may be closer to eternity than anybody knows. Houses are not just houses. They are places where souls live. That changes the way you look at a town. The world sees neighborhoods, property values, traffic patterns, school zones, subdivisions, and city limits. A soul winner sees a harvest field.

Jesus said, “The field is the world” (Matthew 13:38). That means your town is part of that field. Your street is part of that field. Your workplace is part of that field. Your neighborhood is part of that field. Do not get so fascinated with distant mission fields that you neglect the souls within walking distance. The Lord may call some men across the ocean, but He has already called every saved man across the room, across the street, across the counter, and across the fence. A Christian who says he loves missions but will not speak to his neighbor needs to check whether he loves missions or just likes the idea of other people doing what he refuses to do nearby.

Covering a town twice is not glamorous, but it is biblical in spirit. It says the gospel ought to be spread thoroughly, patiently, and repeatedly. Some people are not home the first time. Some were not ready the first time. Some threw the tract away the first time and might read it the second time. Some did not listen then, but life has broken something open since. Some doors that were cold one season are open another season. Saturation is not a one-day emotional burst. It is a steady mindset that says, “We want this place to have light.” Paul could say, “I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). House to house. That phrase ought to embarrass some lazy modern Christianity.

Chapter Three: Rejection Is Part of the Work

If you are going to go door to door, get ready to be rejected. That is not a tragedy. That is part of the work. Some people will be polite. Some will be cold. Some will be irritated. Some will mock. Some will tell you they have their own religion. Some will say they are too busy. Some will hide behind the curtain and pretend nobody is home. Some will send a child to the door to say the adults are not available. Some will take the tract and throw it away after you leave. Some will be kind and still lost. If you cannot handle rejection, you will not last long in personal evangelism. But remember this: they are not merely rejecting you. If you brought the gospel, they are responding to the truth.

The Lord Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). A servant is not above his master. If they rejected Christ, they will reject His witnesses. Do not be shocked when lost people act lost. Do not act like some great injustice has happened because a sinner did not appreciate you interrupting his afternoon. You came to his door with a message that tells him he is a sinner, his religion cannot save him, his works cannot justify him, and he needs the blood of Jesus Christ. That message is glorious to a hungry soul, but offensive to a proud one. Rejection is not proof that you failed. It may be proof that the sword touched something.

But rejection must not turn you bitter. That is important. Some Christians get rejected a few times and start treating all sinners like enemies instead of souls. That is the wrong spirit. The soul winner must keep both edge and compassion. If someone refuses, move on. If someone mocks, do not lose your temper. If someone says, “Not interested,” leave a tract if they will take it and go to the next door. “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you... shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them” (Mark 6:11). You are not there to win a shouting match on a porch. You are there to give the gospel. Do your job and keep moving. The next door may have a heart God has already been preparing.

Chapter Four: Discipline Beats Occasional Excitement

A town is not covered by occasional excitement. It is covered by discipline. Every Thursday. Every Saturday. Week after week. That is how streets get finished. That is how neighborhoods get saturated. That is how Christians learn to stop talking and start doing. The flesh loves special events because special events have energy, applause, and novelty. But the real work is often routine. It is putting on your shoes, grabbing the tracts, praying, and going again. The farmer who only sows when he feels inspired will have a sorry field. The soldier who only shows up when he feels brave is useless. The soul winner must develop holy habits.

Paul told Timothy, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). In season and out of season means when it feels favorable and when it does not. There are days when witnessing feels natural and days when it feels like dragging a plow through rock. Go anyway. There are days when people listen and days when nobody seems to care. Go anyway. There are days when you feel bold and days when you feel weak. Go anyway. Discipline is not the enemy of spirituality. For a saved man, discipline can be the servant of burden. It keeps the body and emotions from ruling the work.

This is one reason churches should teach practical soul winning again. Not just preach about it once a year. Teach it. Train it. Schedule it. Practice it. Pair new believers with seasoned ones. Show them how to use a tract. Show them how to introduce themselves. Show them how to ask questions. Show them how to handle common responses. Show them how to leave when the door is closed. Show them how to pray before and after. Show them how to keep records without becoming obsessed with numbers. A lot of believers have never witnessed because nobody ever taught them how. But after they are taught, they must still go. Training without obedience is just another form of delay.

Chapter Five: Door to Door Teaches You How Different People Are

Knocking on doors teaches you quickly that not all sinners are the same. They are all lost without Christ, but they do not all hide behind the same excuse. One is religious and thinks baptism saved him. Another is moral and thinks he is good enough. Another is indifferent and has not thought about eternity in years. Another is wounded by some church abuse and uses that pain as a wall. Another is Catholic, another is Mormon, another is Jehovah’s Witness, another is atheist, another is confused, another is curious, another is lonely, another is under conviction but afraid to say so. Soul winning is not just dumping a memorized speech on every head like a bucket of paint. You must learn to deal with people.

That is why wisdom matters. “He that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). A wise soul winner listens. He does not let the sinner control the conversation forever, but he listens enough to know where to put the verse. If a man is trusting works, take him to Ephesians 2:8–9 and Romans 4:5. If he thinks he is too sinful to be saved, take him to 1 Timothy 1:15 and Romans 5:8. If he is religious, take him to John 3 and show him Nicodemus. If he is trusting baptism, take him to the thief on the cross and the gospel of Christ’s blood. If he thinks there are many ways, take him to John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. You learn these things by doing the work.

Door knocking also teaches you humility because you will meet people you do not understand at first. You will make mistakes. You will answer clumsily. You will talk too much at times. You will fail to press when you should have pressed, and press when you should

have listened. That is part of learning. Do not quit because you are not perfect. Learn. After each visit, think. What happened? What did they say? What verse would have helped? How could I have made the gospel clearer? What did I miss? A soul winner who is teachable gets better. A proud man stays clumsy and blames everyone else.

Chapter Six: Saturation Means the Seed Goes Everywhere

Saturation is a Bible idea in spirit even if the word itself is not the common Bible term. The sower went forth to sow, and the seed went into different soils. The issue was not whether every soil responded the same way. The issue was that the seed went out. When we covered towns door by door, the goal was to get the gospel into as many hands, homes, and conversations as possible. Some heard. Some took tracts. Some rejected. Some were not home. Some may have read later. Some may have thrown it away. Some may have been reached years later by another witness after that first seed was planted. That is how sowing works. You do not control the soil. You sow.

A church or believer with a saturation mindset is always asking, “How can we get more gospel seed into this place?” Door to door. Tracts in envelopes. Conversations at stores. Witness at work. Gospel literature in Bibles. Personal testimonies. Follow-up visits. Nursing homes. Jails. Street corners. Online posts. Letters. Family conversations. You use every lawful door God gives you. Not foolishly. Not obnoxiously. Not deceitfully. But actively. “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand” (Ecclesiastes 11:6). Morning and evening. That is saturation.

The modern church often thinks saturation means advertising the church brand everywhere. That is not the same thing. You can cover a town with invitations and never clearly give the gospel. You can mail postcards with a smiling pastor’s picture on them and never tell a sinner how to be saved. You can run ads, build websites, print banners, and host events, and still leave people ignorant of Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, blood, and grace. Saturation must be gospel saturation, not church marketing saturation. The goal is not merely that everyone knows your church exists. The goal is that everyone possible hears that Jesus Christ died for sinners and rose again, and that salvation is by grace through faith.

Chapter Seven: The Worker Must Keep Going

The hardest part of door to door work is not starting; it is continuing. Starting can be exciting. Continuing requires grit. You will have dry stretches. You will have days when you wonder whether anything is happening. You will have times when the visible fruit seems small. Keep going. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9). That verse is not written for people who never get tired. It is

written because people do get tired. The warning is not to faint. Do not quit because the work is slow. Do not quit because the fruit is hidden. Do not quit because your flesh wants comfort.

Persistence in soul winning is built on faith, not visible success alone. If you believe the seed is the Word of God, sow it. If you believe the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, give it. If you believe the Holy Ghost can use the Word after you leave, leave the tract. If you believe one soul is worth more than the whole world, knock on the next door. If you believe eternity is real, keep speaking. The worker who only continues when he sees immediate results is walking by sight. The worker who keeps sowing because God said sow is walking by faith.

But persistence also requires staying close to the Lord. Soul winning can become mechanical if you do not keep your heart warm. Door knocking can become a religious chore. Tract distribution can become a habit with no prayer. Conversations can become scripts. Guard against that. Stay in the Book. Pray for the people behind the doors. Ask God to give you compassion. Ask God to keep you from pride when someone listens and discouragement when someone refuses. Ask Him to make you clean, bold, wise, and faithful. The work is too serious to be done in the flesh. Keep going, but keep going with God.

Conclusion

Door to door and town to town work is practical Christianity with shoe leather on it. It teaches discipline, persistence, humility, rejection, wisdom, and saturation. It makes the field real. It forces the believer to stop hiding behind religious talk and actually deal with souls. Every Thursday and every Saturday, door after door, town after town, you learn that soul winning is not a theory to admire. It is a work to do. Some will listen. Some will refuse. Some will be kind. Some will be cold. Some will take a tract. Some will slam a door. Some seed will be seen again. Some may not show fruit until eternity. But the command remains, and the field remains.

This generation needs to recover that kind of practical obedience. Not necessarily that every believer must knock doors in the exact same schedule or method, but that every believer must stop using methods as an excuse to do nothing. If you will not knock doors, then where are you sowing? If you will not go Thursday and Saturday, then when are you going? If you will not speak at a porch, will you speak at work? If you will not carry tracts through a neighborhood, will you carry them to the restaurant? If you will not cover a town, will you at least reach your street? The issue is not whether every Christian uses the same route. The issue is whether every Christian is carrying the gospel.

So get the burden moving. Put feet under it. Get seed in your hand and Scripture in your heart. Learn how to speak. Learn how to listen. Learn how to handle rejection. Learn how to keep the gospel clear. Learn how to sow without seeing immediate fruit. Learn how to go back after a hard day. The town is a field. The houses hold souls. The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation. And the believer who keeps going door to door, town to town, conversation to conversation, tract to tract, and witness to witness will one day find out that no faithful seed sown for Christ was wasted.

12 of 25: Fishers of Men – Saturating the Field With Seed

Introduction

A farmer who believes in seed does not sit in the house admiring the bag. He gets out into the field and sows it. That is where a lot of Christianity has gone crooked. We have people who believe the gospel is true, defend it, argue for it, preach about it, build doctrinal walls around it, and correct everybody else's wording about it, but they do not get much seed into the field. They have seed in the barn, seed in the pocket, seed in the church tract rack, seed in the glove compartment, seed in the desk drawer, seed in the Bible case, and seed in their memory, but the field outside is still bare. The Lord Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Seed does not do what seed was meant to do until it is scattered. It has to leave your hand. It has to get into the soil. It has to be put where lost men can hear it, read it, consider it, reject it, believe it, or be troubled by it. You cannot make it grow, but you can sow it. You cannot control the soil, but you can cover the field.

One of the ways I learned this was simple, quiet, and unseen. I would get a phone book, buy stamps, put gospel tracts in envelopes, and mail them out with no return address. No spotlight. No applause. No report. No one calling my name. No one knowing who sent it. Just seed in an envelope, a stamp on it, and a soul on the other end. That kind of work will do something to a man if he is paying attention. It will teach him that not all ministry has to be seen. It will teach him that some gospel labor is anonymous. It will teach him that the point is not whether men know what you did. The point is whether the seed went out. The flesh hates that. The flesh wants credit. The flesh wants numbers. The flesh wants someone to say, "What a worker." But the Spirit-filled witness can put the gospel in the mail, send it out, and let God keep the records.

This essay belongs in this series because soul winning is bigger than one method. Door knocking matters. Personal conversations matter. Testimonies matter. Preaching matters. But seed saturation matters too. There are people you may never meet who can still receive

the gospel. There are doors you may never enter, but a tract can. There are homes where no one would let you stand on the porch for five minutes, but a gospel message may sit on a kitchen table until midnight when someone finally reads it. There are people who would never ask you a Bible question face to face, but they may read a tract alone when pride has nobody to impress. “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1). That is seed work. Sometimes the bread floats out of sight. Sometimes you never see where it lands. But God does.

Chapter One: The Field Must Be Saturated, Not Merely Visited

There is a difference between visiting a field and saturating it. A man can walk through a field one time, toss a handful of seed here and there, and say he did something. But saturation has a different mindset. Saturation says, “How can I get the Word into every place God gives me access?” It is not content with a symbolic effort. It wants the town, the neighborhood, the workplace, the family, the restaurant, the mailbox, the waiting room, the break table, the desk, the car, and the daily path touched with gospel seed. This is not fanaticism. This is farming. If the seed is the Word of God, and the field is the world, then the Christian ought to be thinking like a sower, not like a museum guard protecting seed behind glass.

The Bible says, “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand” (Ecclesiastes 11:6). Morning and evening. That is saturation language. It does not mean reckless foolishness. It means continual sowing. It means you do not stop because you cannot predict which seed will prosper. The verse continues, “for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” That is exactly how tract work functions. You hand one tract to a man and he throws it away. You mail another one and someone reads it three times. You leave one with a waitress and her husband finds it later. You give one to a coworker and he sticks it in a drawer until the day his life falls apart. You do not know which shall prosper. So sow.

Modern Christianity often wants measurable results before it obeys. It wants to know the conversion rate, the engagement numbers, the response percentage, the visible fruit, the return on investment. That is business talk. Some of it has a place in practical planning, but it can become unbelief when it replaces obedience. The sower in Matthew 13 did not refuse to sow because some ground was hard. He sowed. Some seed fell by the way side, some on stony places, some among thorns, and some into good ground. The condition of the ground was not the sower’s excuse to keep the seed in the bag. Saturation says, “We are going to get the gospel out and trust God with the increase.”

Chapter Two: Anonymous Work Kills the Flesh

Mailing tracts with no return address is good medicine for the flesh. The flesh wants to be known. It wants to be thanked. It wants to be credited. It wants to be mentioned. It wants someone to notice the sacrifice, the expense, the effort, the time, and the burden.

Anonymous seed work cuts that thing down. You buy the stamps. You fold the tracts. You stuff the envelopes. You send them. And then nobody knows but God. That is hard on the old man, and good for the new man. Jesus said, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them" (Matthew 6:1). The principle applies more broadly than alms. Be careful of doing spiritual work merely to be seen.

Now, there is nothing wrong with organized outreach, public preaching, or giving reports when they are honest and useful. The book of Acts records numbers at times. Paul reported what God had done among the Gentiles. The issue is not whether anyone ever knows anything. The issue is motive. Anonymous work helps purify motive because there is no immediate human reward. No one pats you on the back for a tract they do not know you mailed. No one invites you to speak because you quietly spent money on postage. No one builds a platform for hidden labor. But God sees. "Thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:4). That is enough for a man who believes the Book.

Some of the best work you ever do for God may be work nobody associates with your name. A tract in an envelope. A Bible left for someone. A note with Scripture. A prayer for a lost soul. A quiet word. A witness that never becomes a story. The judgment seat of Christ will uncover things men never counted. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness" (1 Corinthians 4:5). That includes hidden evil, but it also means God knows what men missed. The Christian who has to be seen doing everything will miss the sweetness of doing something only God sees.

Chapter Three: A Tract Can Go Where You Cannot

A gospel tract is not a replacement for personal witness, but it can travel where you cannot. It can sit in a mailbox, ride in a pocket, lie on a table, fall out of a drawer, get passed to a friend, sit in a glove compartment, or wait in a Bible for years. It does not get tired. It does not get embarrassed. It does not forget the verses. It does not lose its nerve. It does not get offended when ignored. It keeps saying what is printed on it as long as someone reads it. A tract filled with Scripture is a small paper missionary. Do not despise it. God has used weaker looking things than paper to do mighty work.

The power is not in the paper. The power is in the Word of God and the gospel message printed on it. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). If the tract contains the gospel clearly, then it carries seed. It can show the sinner that he has sinned. It can show him the wages of sin. It can show him Christ died for

sinners. It can show him the blood. It can show him the resurrection. It can show him salvation by grace through faith. It can warn him against works and religion. It can point him to Jesus Christ. A tract with the gospel in it is not junk mail in the eyes of God. It is seed.

This is why you should be careful what tracts you use. Do not hand out something you have not read. Do not mail doctrinal confusion. Do not spread vague religious mush. Do not give someone a tract that says everything except the gospel. A pretty design and a sweet story are not enough. Does it tell the sinner he is lost? Does it present Christ's death, burial, and resurrection? Does it mention the blood? Does it make clear that salvation is by grace through faith, not works? Does it point to Christ rather than a prayer, church, ritual, or emotional experience? If not, get better seed. You would not knowingly plant rotten seed in a field and expect a harvest. Do not put rotten gospel literature into the hands of sinners.

Chapter Four: Seed Sowing Requires Expense and Effort

Buying stamps, envelopes, and tracts costs money. Going door to door costs time. Handing out literature costs attention. Speaking to people costs comfort. There is always a cost to sowing. The lazy Christian wants fruit without expense. The carnal Christian wants harvest without labor. The comfortable Christian wants God to use someone else's time, someone else's money, someone else's courage, and someone else's inconvenience. But the Bible says, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap" (Ecclesiastes 11:4). If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never sow.

The phone book tract work took effort. It was not complicated, but it was deliberate. Get the names. Get the tracts. Get the stamps. Stuff the envelopes. Mail them. Repeat. That is not glamorous, but it is work. A lot of Christians avoid simple work because they cannot make it look impressive. They want ministry that feels dramatic. But God often uses repetitive faithfulness. Naaman almost missed his healing because washing seven times in Jordan seemed too ordinary. Some believers miss fruitful service because mailing a tract, knocking a door, or speaking to a cashier seems too small. But the issue is not whether it flatters your ego. The issue is whether it gets the Word out.

The cost also reveals priorities. People spend money on hobbies, food, entertainment, subscriptions, decorations, travel, comfort, gadgets, and convenience without much thought, then act like buying gospel tracts and stamps is a major sacrifice. That tells on us. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). If a man never invests anything in getting the gospel to sinners, he ought to ask whether souls are really as important to him as he says. This does not mean everyone has the same means. A poor believer may do what he can with little. God sees that. But each Christian can ask, "What am I doing to get seed into the field?"

Chapter Five: Some Seed Will Not Be Traced Until Judgment

One of the hardest things about seed saturation is that much of the fruit is hidden. You may never know who read the tract. You may never know whether it was thrown away or passed along. You may never know if someone got convicted, prayed, searched the Scriptures, went to church, or later heard the gospel from someone else because that tract started something. That can bother the flesh because the flesh likes closure. It wants to know what happened. It wants a testimony. It wants proof that the effort was worthwhile. But the life of faith often involves sowing without seeing.

The judgment seat of Christ will sort out many things we could never trace on earth. Paul said, “every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour” (1 Corinthians 3:8). Notice, according to his own labour. Not merely according to visible results. One man plants. Another waters. God gives the increase. The planter may not see the harvest, and the reaper may not know who planted. But God knows. A tract mailed anonymously may be part of a chain of witness that ends in a soul saved years later. A verse spoken casually may come back to a man in the hospital. A gospel booklet left in a house may be read by a teenager after everyone else forgets it. God keeps better records than men.

This should encourage the hidden worker. Do not measure everything by what you can trace. If you require immediate visible fruit before continuing, you will quit too soon. The Bible says, “he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing” (Psalm 126:6). It does not say he always rejoices the same afternoon. It says doubtless. God knows how to honor His Word. Some rejoicing may come now. Some may come later. Some may come when Christ reveals what He did with seed you forgot you sowed. Keep sowing.

Chapter Six: Saturation Does Not Replace Prayer

Seed saturation must be joined with prayer. Mailing tracts without prayer can become mechanical. Door knocking without prayer can become routine. Handing out literature without prayer can become a habit with no heart. The power is not in activity alone. The power is in God using His Word by His Spirit. A wise soul winner prays over the seed. Pray before you send it. Pray for the person who will receive it. Pray God prepares the heart. Pray the tract is not thrown away before it is read. Pray the Scriptures trouble the conscience. Pray another witness follows. Pray for conviction. Pray for salvation. “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1).

Prayer also reminds the worker that he cannot do the inward work. You can put the tract in the envelope, but you cannot put faith in the heart. You can buy the stamp, but you cannot buy conviction. You can mail the gospel, but you cannot regenerate the soul. God must do

that. Prayer keeps you dependent. It takes the work out of the realm of mere human distribution and keeps it in the realm of spiritual warfare. The devil does not want gospel seed read. He does not want a sinner to think about death, judgment, the blood of Christ, or eternal life. Pray against the blindness. Pray against the distractions. Pray that the light gets in.

Prayer also keeps compassion alive. Repetition can make a man cold if he is not careful. You can stuff envelopes like a machine. You can hand tracts like a robot. But when you pray for the souls receiving them, you remember what is at stake. These are not addresses only. These are souls. Homes with people inside. Families. Sinners. Some broken. Some proud. Some religious. Some near death. Some under conviction already. Some one gospel witness away from light. Prayer turns a mailing list back into a mission field.

Chapter Seven: Saturation Is Faithfulness, Not a Guarantee of Visible Success

Saturating the field with seed does not guarantee that every person will respond. That is not the point. The point is faithfulness. Some seed falls by the wayside. Some falls on stony ground. Some falls among thorns. Some falls on good ground. The Lord told us that in Matthew 13. A soul winner who expects every tract to produce a visible convert by next Tuesday has not read the parable carefully. The seed is good. The soils differ. The response varies. That does not make sowing foolish. It makes sowing necessary.

You may mail a hundred tracts and never hear from one person. Was it wasted? Not if the gospel was given. Not if Scripture went out. Not if the seed was sown. Some Christians are so afraid of “wasting” tracts that they never give them out. That is like a farmer refusing to plant because birds might eat some seed. Of course some will be rejected. Of course some will be ignored. Of course some will be wasted in the eyes of men. But what about the one that is not? What about the one sinner who reads it at the right time? What about the one heart God has been preparing? What about the one person too proud to listen publicly but willing to read privately? If one soul is worth more than the world, then seed work is not waste.

Faithfulness also means continuing when the novelty fades. The first batch of tracts may feel exciting. The twentieth batch may feel like labor. Good. Keep going. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9). Weariness is real. The verse admits it. But it says do not faint. Saturation is not built on one emotional afternoon. It is built on repeated obedience. Buy the stamps. Send the tracts. Hand the literature. Speak the word. Pray over the seed. Leave the results with God. Then do it again.

Conclusion

Saturating the field with seed is one of the most practical things a Bible believer can do. It does not require fame, a pulpit, a title, a platform, or a crowd. It requires seed, burden, willingness, and faithfulness. A phone book, a stack of tracts, a roll of stamps, and a burden for souls can become a quiet gospel ministry that heaven records even if earth never notices. Some work is anonymous. Some seed is hidden. Some fruit is delayed. Some results will not be traced until the judgment seat of Christ. That is fine. God never asked us to be omniscient. He asked us to be faithful.

The field is bigger than your voice can reach, but the seed can travel. A tract can go into a house where you may never be invited. A mailed gospel message can sit on a table until a soul is ready to read. A Scripture-filled booklet can speak after you are gone. A verse printed on paper can trouble a conscience at midnight. Do not despise the smallness of the method when the message is eternal. The power is not in the envelope, the stamp, the paper, or the hand that mailed it. The power is in the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So saturate the field. Not with church marketing, not with vague religion, not with self-help fluff, but with the clear gospel. Christ died for our sins. He shed His blood. He was buried. He rose again. Salvation is by grace through faith, not of works. Put that seed everywhere you lawfully can. Mail it. Hand it. Speak it. Leave it. Print it. Share it. Pray over it. Then let God do what you cannot do. The field belongs to Him, the seed is His Word, the increase is His work, and the faithful sower will not lose his reward.

13 of 25: Fishers of Men – Openings Are Everywhere

Introduction

One of the biggest problems with modern Christians is not that they never get openings to witness; it is that they do not recognize the openings when God puts them right in front of their nose. They are waiting for the heavens to roll back, a trumpet to sound, an angel to point at the sinner, and a voice from glory to say, "Now is the time to speak." Meanwhile, a coworker says, "This world is getting crazy," and they say, "It sure is." A waitress says, "I have had a rough day," and they say, "Hope it gets better." A man says, "I am just lost right now," and they give him directions to the nearest highway instead of asking him about his soul. Somebody says, "Pray for me," and they say, "I will," but never ask, "Do you know the Lord?" Openings are everywhere, but Christians have trained themselves to walk past them because they are afraid of looking foolish, afraid of being rejected, afraid of not knowing what to say, or too dull spiritually to see the door standing open.

A soul winner learns to think differently. He does not move through life like a tourist; he moves through life like a fisherman. A fisherman watches the water. He studies movement. He pays attention to little changes. He does not stand there daydreaming while fish are breaking the surface. The Lord Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). A fisher of men learns to look for openings. Some openings are direct. You simply ask, "Are you saved?" or "Do you know for sure where you would go if you died?" or "Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how to be saved?" That is plain, pointed, and sometimes exactly what is needed. Other openings are indirect, and often those are better because they arise naturally in the conversation. A man says something about being lost, afraid, tired, confused, sick, worried, or uncertain, and there is the hook. The Christian who is awake can say, "That reminds me of something the Bible says," or "Can I ask you something?" or "The Lord changed my life when I was under that same kind of burden."

The truth is, God gives more openings than most Christians use. We ask for open doors, then stand there staring at them because they do not look like we imagined. Paul asked for prayer "that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Colossians 4:3). That is a good prayer. But when God opens a door of utterance, somebody has to utter something. An open door is useless to a silent man. A gospel tract is useless in a pocket if it never leaves the pocket. A marked Bible is useless in the hand of a coward who will not open it. The Christian needs to pray for openings, recognize openings, and take openings. You do not have to be obnoxious. You do not have to jam the gospel into every sentence like a man with no social sense. But you do have to be ready. "Be ready always to give an answer" (1 Peter 3:15). Ready means ready before the opening appears. Ready means the verse is close, the tract is available, the testimony is clear, and the heart is willing.

Chapter One: Pray for the Opening

The first thing to do is pray for the opening. That sounds obvious, but most Christians do not do it with any seriousness. They pray for health, money, safety, travel, church services, family problems, national problems, and every ache and pain from here to the county line, but how often do they pray, "Lord, give me an opening today to speak to somebody about Jesus Christ"? If you are not asking God for openings, do not be shocked when you are not noticing them. Prayer tunes the heart. It makes you alert. It reminds you before the day begins that you are not merely going to work, going shopping, going to lunch, going to an appointment, or running errands. You are walking through a field of souls.

Paul did not think open doors were automatic. He asked the saints to pray for them. "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance" (Colossians 4:3). Notice what kind of door it was: a door of utterance. Not merely a door of comfort. Not a

door of popularity. Not a door of applause. A door to speak. That is what a soul winner needs. Sometimes God opens that door through a question. Sometimes through trouble. Sometimes through a passing comment. Sometimes through someone's fear of death. Sometimes through a funeral, sickness, disaster, disappointment, or personal failure. Sometimes the opening is as small as a person saying, "I do not know what to do anymore." If you are prayed up and awake, you can step through.

Prayer also keeps you from forcing things in the flesh. There is a difference between being ready for an opening and trying to kick down every door with a crowbar. Some Christians call their awkwardness boldness when it is really just foolishness. They do not listen. They do not discern. They do not care whether the person understands. They are not fishing; they are throwing rocks into the pond. Pray for wisdom. Pray for boldness. Pray for timing. Pray for love. Pray for the right words. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6). Grace and salt. Not sugar syrup only, and not salt without grace. Prayer helps keep both in the mouth.

Chapter Two: The Direct Opening Has Its Place

There are times when the direct opening is exactly right. "Are you saved?" "Are you born again?" "If you died today, do you know where you would spend eternity?" "Do you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour?" "Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how to be saved?" These questions are blunt, but blunt is not always wrong. A surgeon does not apologize for using a sharp instrument when cutting is necessary. A man standing in front of a burning building does not say, "I hope this is not too intrusive, but there may be a mild thermal situation developing." He says, "Get out. The house is on fire." Directness has a place because souls are serious, death is certain, hell is real, and Christ is the only Saviour.

The direct opening can be useful when time is short. You may only have a few moments with someone. A person may be on a hospital bed. A coworker may be leaving. A stranger may only pause for a minute. A direct question can cut through small talk and put eternity on the table. "Do you know for sure you are saved?" That question has troubled many a soul. It can expose false assurance. It can reveal religious confusion. It can make a man admit, "I do not know." And when he says that, you have an opening to say, "The Bible says you can know." Then you can take him to Scripture and point him to Christ.

But directness requires wisdom. Do not use direct questions as a club to show off your boldness. The goal is not to prove you can make people uncomfortable. The goal is to reach the soul. A direct opening should be used with seriousness, compassion, and readiness to continue. Do not ask, "Are you saved?" and then stand there with nothing but a blank stare if the person says, "What does that mean?" Know what to say next. Have the gospel clear.

Have verses ready. A direct opening is like knocking loudly on the front door of the conscience. If the door opens, you had better have the message in your hand.

Chapter Three: The Indirect Opening Is Often Better

The indirect opening is often better because it comes naturally through the conversation. It does not feel like a stranger jumping out of the bushes with a religious questionnaire. It takes something already said and turns it toward truth. A person says, "This world is getting worse." You can say, "The Bible said it would, and it also tells us how to be ready for eternity." A man says, "I am just lost." You can say, "That is an interesting word. I was lost too until the Lord saved me." A waitress says, "It has been a hard day." You can say, "I am sorry. I will pray for you. Can I leave you something that helped me more than anything?" A coworker says, "I do not know what happens when you die." There is the opening. Walk through it.

The indirect opening is not cowardice. It is wisdom. "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). Wisdom knows that not every fish is caught by throwing the hook at its head. Sometimes you work with the current. Sometimes you let the conversation bring the issue to the surface. Jesus did this often. With the woman at the well, He began with water and moved to living water. With Nicodemus, He went from religious curiosity to the new birth. With fishermen, He spoke of becoming fishers of men. He knew how to take natural things and turn them spiritual. A soul winner ought to learn that. The world is full of natural comments that can become spiritual openings.

The indirect opening also helps you avoid sounding like a machine. Some witnessing sounds like a recorded announcement because the Christian has memorized a script but never learned to deal with a person. People are not all the same. Some need a direct warning. Some need a patient question. Some need a tract. Some need Scripture explained slowly. Some need their false religion exposed. Some need to be brought from personal trouble to eternal truth. The indirect opening gives room for wisdom. It lets you start where the person is and bring him to where he needs to be: Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, risen, and able to save.

Chapter Four: Everyday Words Can Become Gospel Doors

Everyday words are often gospel doors if you are listening. "Lost." "Saved." "Hope." "Fear." "Death." "Heaven." "Hell." "Pray." "God." "Church." "Sin." "Peace." "Forgive." "Life." "Truth." These words come up in ordinary conversation more often than Christians realize. A sinner may say them without any spiritual intention, but the soul winner can hear the opening. If someone says, "I hope this works out," you can say, "There is one hope I am sure of." If someone says, "I need prayer," you can ask, "Do you know the God you are asking prayer

from?” If someone says, “I am scared of dying,” you have one of the clearest openings there is. Do not waste it.

This does not mean every sentence has to become a sermon. Some Christians make the mistake of thinking that every opening must become a full-length doctrinal lecture. That is not always wise. Sometimes you simply drop a sentence and see whether the person responds. Sometimes you hand a tract. Sometimes you ask a question. Sometimes you say, “I would be glad to show you what the Bible says sometime.” Sometimes you give a short testimony. Sometimes the door opens wider, and you walk through with the full gospel. The point is to be awake. A man who is soul-conscious hears words differently because he is listening for eternal openings.

This is also why your own speech should be ready. A simple answer like, “I am saved, thank the Lord,” can become an opening. Someone asks, “How are you?” and you do not have to lie with the usual dead phrase. You can say, “Saved and thankful.” Maybe they laugh. Maybe they ask what you mean. Maybe they ignore it. But you put a hook in the water. Someone asks, “Where are you headed?” and you can say, “Ultimately, heaven. But right now, the grocery store.” That may sound odd to some, but so what? You have said foolish things for the world before. Say something pointed for Christ. Not every line will open a conversation, but some will. You never know which one God will use.

Chapter Five: Be Ready When the Door Opens

An opening is no good if you are not ready. Many Christians say they would witness if God opened the door, but the truth is, they are not prepared to walk through it. They do not have a tract. They do not know the verses. They cannot explain the gospel clearly. They have not thought through their testimony. They do not know how to answer common questions. They panic when the conversation turns spiritual. That is not because God never gave them a door. It is because they were not ready. “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer” (1 Peter 3:15). Ready always. Not ready after three weeks of panic. Not ready after calling the pastor. Ready.

Being ready means having the gospel clear in your own mind. Can you explain in two minutes that all have sinned, the wages of sin is death, Christ died for our sins, shed His blood, was buried, rose again, and salvation is by grace through faith, not works? If you cannot, learn. Can you show it from the Bible? If you cannot, mark the verses. Can you ask someone what they are trusting for salvation? If you cannot, practice. Can you leave them with a tract if the conversation is short? If you cannot, carry some. Can you give your testimony without rambling for twenty minutes and never getting to Christ? If you cannot, think it through. Preparation is not unspiritual. It is obedience sharpening the tool.

But being ready also means being spiritually ready. A dirty life will make you hesitant. Sin will close your mouth. If you are living like the crowd, you will not have much courage to witness to the crowd. Keep short accounts with God. Stay in the Book. Pray before you go into your day. Ask for openings. Ask for boldness. Ask for compassion. Ask for wisdom. You cannot schedule every opening. Some come suddenly. A person asks a question you did not expect. A casual conversation turns serious. A tragedy opens a door. If your heart is cold and your Bible is dusty, you may miss it. Stay ready.

Chapter Six: Do Not Let Fear Close the Opening

Fear is one of the great enemies of personal evangelism. Not lack of opportunity. Fear. Christians have openings all the time and fear talks them out of using them. “This is not the right moment.” “They might get mad.” “I might not know what to say.” “They might think I am strange.” “This could affect our friendship.” “This could be awkward at work.” “Someone else could do it better.” Fear is a professional liar. It always has a reason to keep your mouth shut. But God did not give that spirit. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

Fear often disguises itself as wisdom. Now, real wisdom exists, and a soul winner should use it. But many times when Christians say they are “waiting for wisdom,” they are really obeying fear. Wisdom says, “Speak carefully.” Fear says, “Do not speak at all.” Wisdom says, “Use the right approach.” Fear says, “Avoid the subject forever.” Wisdom says, “Do not be needlessly offensive.” Fear says, “Do not mention sin, hell, blood, or Christ.” Learn the difference. If fear keeps winning every time an opening appears, stop calling it wisdom. Call it what it is and ask God for boldness.

The apostles prayed for boldness, and so should we. “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word” (Acts 4:29). They did not pray for a safer environment. They prayed for boldness to speak in the environment they had. That is convicting. We live in a day where Christians are frightened by awkward conversations, and those early believers were facing threats. Yet they asked for boldness. If an opening comes, take it. Your knees may shake. Your voice may tremble. Your words may be simple. Take it anyway. A trembling witness is better than a silent coward.

Chapter Seven: Leave the Door Open When They Will Not Listen

Not every opening leads to a full gospel conversation. Some people shut the door. Some change the subject. Some refuse the tract. Some say, “I am not interested.” Some get defensive. Some are polite but clearly done. A wise soul winner learns how to leave the door open when possible. You do not have to win every exchange in one sitting. You do not

have to chase a man down the street with a tract in his face. You do not have to force the conversation past the point where wisdom says stop. Sometimes the best thing to do is leave a clear word, offer a tract, and let the seed sit.

Paul said, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6). That verse helps here. Salt bites, but grace governs. If someone refuses, you can say, “I understand. I just wanted you to have the truth because souls matter.” If someone says, “I do not want to talk about religion,” you can say, “I am not trying to argue religion. I just hope you will think about where you will spend eternity.” If someone will not take a tract, do not throw it at him. Move on. The goal is to be faithful, not foolish. There is a time to press, and there is a time to leave the witness behind and pray.

Leaving the door open matters because people change. The person who refuses today may listen later. The one who seems irritated may be under conviction. The coworker who jokes in front of others may ask privately weeks later. The family member who avoids the subject may come back after a funeral. Do not burn every bridge with fleshly zeal. Be firm. Be clear. Be faithful. But do not make yourself the stumblingblock if you can help it. Let the offense be the cross, not your lack of wisdom. “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:23). If they stumble, let them stumble over Christ, not over your ego.

Conclusion

Openings are everywhere, but Christians must learn to see them. Some openings are direct, and a plain question is needed: “Are you saved?” “Do you know where you would go if you died?” “Has anyone shown you from the Bible how to be saved?” Other openings are indirect, rising naturally from ordinary conversation. A word about fear, death, hope, trouble, prayer, heaven, hell, being lost, or needing help can become a door to the gospel. The soul-conscious believer learns to listen for those doors and walk through them when God gives room.

Pray for openings. That is where it begins. Ask God for a door of utterance, then do not stand there mute when He opens it. Be ready with Scripture. Be ready with tracts. Be ready with a short testimony. Be ready with the gospel clear in your mind and Christ warm in your heart. Do not let fear close the door. Do not let laziness waste the moment. Do not let awkwardness become your master. You have said foolish things for the world. You have had uncomfortable conversations about lesser matters. Surely you can speak a word for the Saviour who saved your soul.

And when the opening does not go as far as you hoped, leave seed and keep going. Some doors open wide. Some crack open for a moment. Some shut quickly. Your job is not to

control every response. Your job is to be faithful when the opportunity appears. Life is full of souls, and souls are surrounded by ordinary conversations. A fisherman watches the water. A soul winner watches the words, the moments, the burdens, the questions, and the cracks where light can get in. Openings are everywhere. The question is whether there is enough burden, wisdom, and boldness in us to use them.

14 of 25: Fishers of Men – The Direct Approach

Introduction

There comes a time in personal evangelism when a man needs to quit circling the airport and land the plane. There is a place for the indirect approach, and it is often the smoother and wiser way to begin. A conversation about trouble, death, fear, the condition of the world, prayer, hope, or a personal burden can open the door naturally. But there is also a time when the soul winner has to ask the plain question. “Are you saved?” “Do you know where you would go if you died?” “Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how to be saved?” Those questions are blunt, yes, but blunt is not always wrong. A scalpel is blunt in its purpose even if it is sharp in its edge. A fire alarm is blunt. A warning sign on a bridge is blunt. A man who sees another man stepping into danger and says, “Stop,” is blunt. The issue is not whether a question is direct. The issue is whether it is true, needed, timely, and backed by a heart that cares about the soul.

Modern Christianity has become so afraid of offending people that it has forgotten how to speak plainly. It can talk about community, purpose, worship experiences, small groups, outreach events, mental health, family values, and cultural engagement, but ask a sinner, “Are you saved?” and half the church members act like you set the carpet on fire. That tells you how far we have drifted. The Lord Jesus Christ did not speak in soft religious mist when dealing with souls. He told Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). That is direct. He told the woman at the well about her sin. That is direct. He told religious hypocrites they were of their father the devil. That is direct. He warned men about hell. That is direct. The apostles preached repentance, faith, judgment, the resurrection, and the name of Jesus Christ with a plainness that would get most men removed from modern pulpits.

The direct approach is not for showing off your courage. That is important. Some fellows think bluntness is a spiritual gift when it is really just a lack of wisdom baptized in religious language. The direct approach is not an excuse to be rude, careless, arrogant, or theatrical. It is a tool. It must be used with prayer, compassion, Scripture, and readiness. If you ask a

man if he is saved, you had better be ready to show him how to be saved. If you ask a woman whether she knows where she would go if she died, you had better be ready to open the Bible and point her to Christ. If you ask someone whether anyone has ever shown him the way of salvation, you had better not stumble around with vague church talk. The direct approach is a doorway. If God opens it, walk through it with the gospel in your hand, not your ego in your mouth.

Chapter One: “Are You Saved?” Is a Bible Question in Plain Clothes

The question “Are you saved?” may sound old-fashioned to modern ears, but it is Bible language in plain clothes. The Bible uses the word saved again and again. The Philippian jailer cried, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). Paul wrote, “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). He told the Romans, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). Saved is not a denominational word. It is not a backwoods word. It is not a Baptist slogan. It is Bible. Saved from what? Saved from sin’s penalty. Saved from wrath. Saved from condemnation. Saved from hell. Saved by the Lord Jesus Christ through His death, burial, resurrection, blood, grace, and power.

When you ask a person, “Are you saved?” you are cutting through a lot of fog. You are not asking if he is religious. You are not asking if he believes in God. You are not asking if he was baptized. You are not asking if he goes to church on Christmas and Easter. You are not asking if his grandmother was a Christian. You are not asking if he owns a Bible. You are asking if he has personally trusted Jesus Christ and passed from death unto life. That question exposes false confidence fast. One man answers, “I go to church.” Another says, “I try to be a good person.” Another says, “I was baptized as a baby.” Another says, “I believe all religions are basically the same.” Another says, “I hope so.” Those answers show you where the man is. He may not know what saved means. Good. Now you have an opening to explain it.

Do not be ashamed of Bible words. Explain them if needed, but do not abandon them because the world has become ignorant. Saved is a good word. Redeemed is a good word. Justified is a good word. Born again is a good word. Blood is a good word. Grace is a good word. Faith is a good word. Lost is a good word because Jesus Christ used it. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The direct question “Are you saved?” puts the issue where the Bible puts it. A man is either saved or lost. In Christ or in Adam. Justified or condemned. Under the blood or under wrath. That may sound narrow to the modern ear, but the gate is narrow. Better to ask the plain question now than let a man slide into eternity under a pile of religious assumptions.

Chapter Two: “Do You Know Where You Would Go If You Died?” Brings Eternity Into the Room

The question “Do you know where you would go if you died?” is powerful because it drags eternity into a conversation where people are usually hiding behind time. Most people live as if death is something that happens to other people. They plan, work, shop, eat, laugh, worry, scroll, complain, and chase the next thing as if the grave were not waiting. Then someone asks, “If you died today, where would you go?” and suddenly the room gets quiet inside. The question may not always show it on the face, but it touches something. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Death is not a theory. It is an appointment. Nobody cancels it. Nobody reschedules it. Nobody bribes his way out of it.

This question is direct, but it is merciful. A man who never thinks about death is not safer for ignoring it. He is more foolish. You do not hate a man by reminding him he has an appointment with God. You hate him by pretending he does not. The world spends billions trying to hide death under entertainment, medicine, makeup, funeral language, and sentimental lies. The Bible tears the curtain down and says, “prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12). A soul winner does not need to be morbid, gloomy, or strange about death, but he must be honest. A person may be young, healthy, busy, and confident, but he is still one heartbeat from eternity. Cars wreck. Hearts stop. Blood clots. Bodies fail. Accidents happen. People go to bed and do not wake up. The direct question is not cruel. It is a mercy bell.

The question also reveals assurance or the lack of it. Many people answer, “I hope heaven.” That is an opening. “Would you like to know?” The Bible says a believer can know. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). Not guess. Not hope in the weak sense. Know. Others answer with works: “I think I have done more good than bad.” That is an opening to show them Ephesians 2:8–9. Others say, “Nobody can know.” That is an opening to show them God says otherwise. The direct approach puts eternity on the table and then lets the Bible speak.

Chapter Three: “Has Anyone Ever Shown You From the Bible How to Be Saved?” Is Often the Best Direct Question

One of the best direct questions is, “Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how to be saved?” That question is direct without being needlessly harsh. It does not assume the person knows. It does not start by attacking his religion. It simply asks whether anyone has opened the Book and shown him the way. Many people have heard church talk all their

lives but have never had someone show them salvation from Scripture. They have heard sermons, attended funerals, sat through Christmas services, repeated prayers, been sprinkled, baptized, confirmed, or catechized, but no one ever sat with them and said, “Here is what God says about your sin, Christ’s death, His blood, His resurrection, and salvation by grace through faith.”

That question also shifts authority away from you and onto the Bible. You are not asking, “Would you like my opinion?” You are not asking, “Would you like to hear what my church says?” You are not asking, “Would you like a religious debate?” You are asking whether he has seen it from the Bible. That matters. “The entrance of thy words giveth light” (Psalm 119:130). The sinner does not need your cleverness. He needs light. A soul winner should want the sinner looking at the page, not just at his face. The page has authority. The page remains after the conversation is over. The page can cut where your words cannot. “The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Hebrews 4:12).

When a person says, “No, nobody has ever shown me,” you have a wide-open door. Do not waste it. Say, “Could I take a few minutes and show you?” Then be ready. Have a clear path. Show sin. Show the wages of sin. Show Christ’s death for sinners. Show the blood. Show the resurrection. Show grace through faith. Show assurance based on God’s Word. Do not ramble into every doctrine you know. Do not chase every rabbit. Do not start explaining prophecy, Bible versions, church history, and your opinion on every denomination. Keep the main thing the main thing. You asked to show him how to be saved. Show him how to be saved.

Chapter Four: Direct Questions Expose False Trust

The direct approach is useful because it exposes false trust quickly. Many people can hide behind religious generalities for a long time if you let them. They believe in God. They respect Jesus. They were raised in church. They try to live right. They pray sometimes. They think all religions have some truth. They are spiritual but not religious. They were baptized. They had an experience. They felt something once. They know a preacher. They come from a Christian family. All of that can sound like something until you ask, “What are you trusting to get you to heaven?” That question cuts the wrapping off the package.

The Bible says, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). A direct question can help a person examine what he is really trusting. If he says, “I am trusting Jesus Christ who died for my sins and rose again,” you have something to work with. If he says, “I am trusting my baptism,” then you know where the problem is. If he says, “I am trusting that I have been a good person,” you know the issue is self-righteousness. If

he says, “I am trusting the church,” you know religion has replaced Christ. If he says, “I prayed a prayer,” you need to find out whether he is trusting a prayer or the Saviour. Direct questions reveal foundations.

This is not done to embarrass people. It is done to help them. A man standing on a rotten bridge needs to know it is rotten before it collapses. A sinner trusting works needs to know works cannot save before he stands before God. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Titus 3:5). A religious person trusting ritual needs to know water cannot wash the soul. A moral man trusting decency needs to know all have sinned. A vague believer in God needs to know the devils also believe and tremble. False trust is deadly. The direct approach can expose it before death seals it.

Chapter Five: Directness Must Be Joined to Compassion

The direct approach without compassion becomes harsh and ugly. The direct approach with compassion can be a rescue tool. There is a difference between a man who asks, “Are you saved?” because he cares about a soul and a man who asks it because he enjoys cornering people. The first has the spirit of a rescuer. The second has the spirit of a religious bully. God does not need bullies. He uses witnesses. The Bible says to speak “the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Truth without love can become a club. Love without truth becomes a pillow on the road to hell. The soul winner needs both.

Compassion does not mean weakness. It does not mean softening the gospel until it cannot save. It does not mean hiding hell, sin, judgment, blood, or grace. Real compassion tells the truth because it cares. Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes scattered as sheep having no shepherd. He did not respond by flattering them. He dealt with their need. Jude says, “And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire” (Jude 22–23). Sometimes compassion is gentle. Sometimes it grabs. But in both cases, it is trying to save, not trying to win a personality contest.

When you use the direct approach, let your tone carry seriousness, not arrogance. You can ask a plain question without sounding like you despise the person. “Can I ask you something important?” “Do you know for sure you are saved?” “I ask because souls matter, and I would not want you to miss what Christ did for you.” That is direct and compassionate. If the person gets offended at the gospel, that is one thing. If he gets offended because you acted like a proud fool, that is another. Let the offense be the cross. Let the stumblingblock be Christ crucified. Do not add your flesh to the message and then call the backlash persecution.

Chapter Six: Directness Must Be Backed by Scripture

A direct question must be backed by Scripture. Otherwise, you are just poking people and then leaving them without help. If you ask, “Are you saved?” and they say, “I do not know,” the next words should not be a stream of vague religious talk. Open the Bible. If you ask, “Do you know where you would go if you died?” and they say, “I hope heaven,” show them how God says they can know. If you ask, “Has anyone shown you how to be saved?” and they say no, then show them. The direct question is the incision. Scripture is the instrument that gets to the problem and the remedy.

A soul winner should have a clear set of Bible verses ready. Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:8: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” 1 Corinthians 15:3–4: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. Ephesians 2:8–9: salvation by grace through faith, not of works. Romans 3:25: faith in His blood. Acts 16:31: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” John 5:24: the believer has everlasting life and is passed from death unto life. Those verses are not decorations. They are weapons.

Do not be lazy with the Bible. Mark it. Memorize it. Carry it. Use it. A direct approach without Scripture may stir a conversation, but Scripture gives light. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). If a person challenges you, keep bringing it back to the Book. “I understand what you are saying, but look at what God says.” If he wants your opinion, give him Scripture. If he wants to argue religion, bring him back to Scripture. If he says all churches teach different things, say, “That is why I want to show you from the Bible.” The direct approach should lead directly to the Word of God.

Chapter Seven: Directness Requires Courage and Timing

The direct approach requires courage. There is no way around that. It is easier to talk about weather, sports, food, family, traffic, politics, and prices than to ask a man about his soul. The flesh would rather do almost anything than bring up eternity. It will tell you the moment is not right, the person is too busy, the setting is awkward, the question is too blunt, someone else could do it better, and you might damage the relationship. Sometimes those concerns require wisdom. Often they are just fear wearing a clean shirt. “The fear of man bringeth a snare” (Proverbs 29:25). Fear will keep your mouth shut while souls pass by.

But courage does not mean having no timing. A wise soul winner learns when to ask directly. Sometimes the question belongs at the beginning. Sometimes it belongs after a few minutes of conversation. Sometimes it belongs after a person brings up spiritual matters. Sometimes it belongs in a hospital room, at a funeral, during a crisis, or when a

friend finally gets honest. Sometimes you should not wait. Sometimes you should. Wisdom is not cowardice. Cowardice hides behind wisdom. Learn the difference. Pray. Watch. Listen. Then speak when God gives you the opening.

You will not always get it right. Sometimes you will ask too soon. Sometimes you will wait too long. Sometimes you will walk away and realize you missed the chance. Learn from it. Do not let one awkward attempt silence you for the next ten years. Soul winners are made by doing the work. A man learns to fish by fishing. He learns where to cast, when to wait, when to pull, and when to move. The same is true with dealing with souls. Ask God for boldness and wisdom. Then use the direct approach when it is needed. A blunt question asked at the right time may be the very thing God uses to wake a sleeping sinner.

Conclusion

The direct approach has a rightful place in personal evangelism. “Are you saved?” “Do you know where you would go if you died?” “Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how to be saved?” These questions cut through religious fog and bring the soul to the front of the conversation. They are plain. They are pointed. They may feel uncomfortable. But eternity is uncomfortable to a man who is not ready for it. Hell is real. Death is certain. Judgment is coming. Christ is the only Saviour. A question that brings those matters into view is not cruel. It is merciful.

But the direct approach must be used rightly. It must not be fleshly, proud, pushy, or theatrical. It must be joined to compassion, backed by Scripture, governed by wisdom, and aimed at Christ. The purpose is not to win an argument or show how bold you are. The purpose is to bring a sinner to the truth. If the question opens the door, walk through it with the gospel. Show sin. Show judgment. Show Christ’s death for sins. Show the blood. Show the resurrection. Show grace through faith. Show that works and rituals cannot save. Show the promise of eternal life to the believer.

So do not be afraid of plain questions. Learn to ask them. Pray for courage. Pray for timing. Pray for compassion. Pray for a door of utterance. Carry the Bible. Carry tracts. Keep the gospel clear. Some people need the indirect approach, and we will deal with that too. But some need a direct question that knocks the dust off their conscience and makes them face eternity. If you love souls, there will be times when you must ask plainly. Better a sinner be startled now than damned later.

Introduction

The indirect approach is one of the most useful tools a soul winner can learn because life is full of ordinary moments that can be turned toward eternal things. Not every gospel conversation has to begin with a blunt question like, “Are you saved?” There is a place for that, and sometimes it is exactly what is needed. But there is also a way to move from the natural to the spiritual, from daily conversation to gospel truth, from a casual remark to an open door. A person says something about fear, death, confusion, prayer, being lost, having no peace, needing hope, or wondering what the world is coming to, and a Christian who is spiritually awake can turn that moment toward Jesus Christ. That is not manipulation. That is fishing. The Lord Jesus did that kind of thing perfectly. He asked a woman at a well for water, then spoke to her about living water. He used bread, light, doors, shepherds, seed, harvests, fields, fish, coins, sons, servants, vineyards, and weddings to drive men from the ordinary world into eternal truth. If the Master used natural openings, His servants ought to learn how.

The indirect approach is not cowardice. Some folks think if you do not start every conversation with a spiritual sledgehammer, you are compromising. That is foolish. The Bible says, “he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). Wisdom matters. A fisherman does not catch fish by jumping into the water and screaming at them. He watches. He waits. He casts. He works with the conditions in front of him. A soul winner does the same. He listens to the words people use. He watches the openings God gives. He notices the little cracks where light can get in. The point is not to be awkward for the sake of being awkward. Any fool can be awkward. The point is to be alert. There is a difference between boldness and social clumsiness. Boldness speaks when God opens the door. Clumsiness kicks people in the shins and calls it persecution when they limp away.

The indirect approach can happen anywhere: checkout lines, restaurants, elevators, stores, phone calls, job sites, waiting rooms, hospital rooms, funerals, family gatherings, text messages, social media replies, and casual remarks at work. The soul-conscious believer moves through the day differently because he knows everyone around him is a soul. A cashier is a soul. A waitress is a soul. The man in the elevator is a soul. The coworker who jokes all day is a soul. The neighbor taking out his trash is a soul. The person on the phone is a soul. When a Christian finally believes that, ordinary life becomes full of gospel possibilities. “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Colossians 4:5). Redeeming the time means buying up opportunities. The indirect approach is one way to do that. You take the passing moment and turn it toward eternity before it is gone.

Chapter One: Learn to Listen for Spiritual Words

The indirect approach begins with listening. Most Christians are too busy thinking about what they want to say next to hear the opening God just gave them. A sinner says, “I am just lost right now,” and the Christian misses it. A woman says, “I have no peace,” and the Christian misses it. A coworker says, “I hope there is something after death,” and the Christian misses it. A man says, “This world is going to hell,” and the Christian misses it. These are not throwaway lines to a soul winner. These are words with handles on them. Lost. Peace. Hope. Death. Hell. Prayer. God. Fear. Forgiveness. Truth. These words come up in ordinary conversation, and the Christian who is awake can grab hold of them and gently turn the conversation toward the gospel.

This does not mean you pounce on every word like a wild-eyed religious pest. It means you listen with eternity in mind. If someone says, “I am lost,” you might say, “I know exactly what that word means in a deeper way. I was lost until the Lord saved me.” That is not a sermon yet. It is a hook. If someone says, “I need peace,” you can say, “The Bible talks about peace with God, and that changed my life.” If someone says, “Pray for me,” you can say, “I will. Can I ask, do you know the Lord personally?” That is how the indirect approach works. You do not have to force a door that is already cracked open. You simply notice it and push gently.

The Bible says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Proverbs 25:11). A fitly spoken word is not always a long word. Sometimes it is one sentence at the right moment. Sometimes it is a short testimony. Sometimes it is a question. Sometimes it is handing a tract after a brief comment. The indirect approach requires the Christian to stop sleepwalking through conversations. Listen to what people are saying. Listen to what is underneath what they are saying. Many people talk about surface problems because they do not know how to name the spiritual problem. The soul winner listens for the trail that leads to the heart.

Chapter Two: Use Ordinary Places as Gospel Fields

The indirect approach teaches you that ordinary places are gospel fields. A restaurant is not just a place to eat. It is a place where souls work, serve, sit, worry, laugh, and go home lost unless someone reaches them. A checkout line is not just a place to be impatient. It is a few minutes beside a soul. An elevator is not just a metal box between floors. It is a brief room with eternity in it. A store, waiting room, gas station, barber chair, phone call, and workplace can all become gospel ground if a Christian is awake. “The field is the world” (Matthew 13:38). That includes the ordinary world you walk through every day.

This is where some Christians are blind. They imagine evangelism only happening in church services, revival meetings, organized visitation, or mission trips. Those things have their

place, but most people spend far more time in ordinary places than church places. If the gospel only comes out when a church event is scheduled, most of your daily field stays untouched. The Lord did not say, "Wait for sinners to come sit in your auditorium." He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Going into all the world includes going into the daily paths God has already placed before you.

You do not need to turn every errand into a circus. Just be alert. A kind word to a cashier with a tract. A question to a coworker after he mentions fear or trouble. A gospel booklet left with a good tip at a restaurant. A short testimony during a phone call when someone says life is hard. A verse given to a friend after bad news. These are ordinary doors. Do not despise them because they are small. A match is small until it starts a fire. A seed is small until it grows. A sentence is small until the Holy Ghost drives it into a conscience at midnight.

Chapter Three: Be Natural Without Being Cowardly

The indirect approach should be natural, but natural must not become cowardly. Some Christians say they are being natural when they are really avoiding the gospel. They talk about God generally, church vaguely, prayer politely, and blessings harmlessly, but never get to Jesus Christ, sin, the cross, the blood, the resurrection, or salvation. That is not wise indirect witnessing. That is religious fog. The purpose of the indirect approach is to move naturally toward the gospel, not to orbit around it forever. A fisherman who never puts the hook in the water is not fishing. A Christian who never brings Christ into the conversation is not witnessing.

At the same time, do not become strange just to prove you are bold. Some people think spirituality means turning every normal conversation into a crash landing. Someone says, "Nice weather," and they shout, "Hell is hotter!" Well, there may be a time for that kind of line, but if you use it every fifteen minutes, you may be creating more noise than witness. Wisdom matters. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6). Salt without grace can burn unnecessarily. Grace without salt can become tasteless. The indirect approach uses both. It speaks naturally, but it does not hide the truth.

Being natural means you speak as a real person. If the Lord saved you, say so. If someone asks how you are doing, you can say, "Saved and thankful." If someone asks why you are different, tell him. If someone talks about fear, speak about the peace of God. If someone says he is lost, talk about being found. You do not need to imitate another man's personality. God can use your own. But do not use "being yourself" as an excuse to remain silent. If Christ is in you and the gospel matters to you, then speaking of Him ought to become part of who you are.

Chapter Four: Turn Casual Remarks Toward Eternal Truth

Casual remarks can become gospel bridges when a Christian learns how to turn them. Someone says, “This world is crazy.” You can say, “The Bible said perilous times would come, but it also tells us how to be saved out of this present evil world.” Someone says, “I am just trying to make it through the day.” You can say, “I understand that, but the bigger question is whether we are ready for eternity.” Someone says, “I hope things get better.” You can say, “There is one hope that does not depend on this world getting better.” These are not complicated lines. They are bridges. The goal is to see whether the person will walk across.

The Lord Jesus often turned natural conversations into spiritual truth. In John 4, water became living water. In John 6, bread became the bread of life. In John 10, sheep and doors became truth about salvation and the Shepherd. That is not gimmickry. That is spiritual wisdom. The world is full of pictures that can lead to truth if the Christian knows his Bible. Lost and found. Hunger and bread. Thirst and water. Darkness and light. Doors and entrance. Roads and ways. Work and wages. Gifts and grace. Debt and payment. Courtrooms and judgment. Every one of those can be turned toward the gospel because the Bible uses those pictures.

But when you turn the conversation, get to the point. Do not stay forever in clever comparisons. The sinner needs Christ, not merely a neat illustration. If the person keeps listening, move from the bridge to Scripture. “The Bible says...” is a good phrase. It shifts authority from your cleverness to God’s Word. “The Bible says all have sinned.” “The Bible says the wages of sin is death.” “The Bible says Christ died for our sins.” “The Bible says salvation is by grace through faith.” A casual remark can open the door, but the Word of God must bring the light.

Chapter Five: Tracts Help When Time Is Short

The indirect approach often works best when joined with gospel tracts because many daily opportunities are brief. A checkout line moves. A waitress has tables. An elevator ride ends. A clerk has another customer. A coworker gets called away. A phone call wraps up. You may not have twenty minutes to explain the whole gospel. That is where a good tract becomes useful. It can go with the person after the moment passes. It can speak when you are no longer there. It can put Scripture in their hand and maybe later in their heart.

But use tracts wisely. Do not be cheap, rude, or careless. If you leave a tract at a restaurant, leave a generous tip. A lousy tip with a tract is a disgrace. It tells the server that Christians are stingy and then hands her the gospel wrapped in hypocrisy. If you hand a tract to a cashier, be kind. If you leave one for someone, make sure it is clear and biblical. Do not

distribute vague religious mush. A good tract should tell the sinner he is lost, show Christ's death, burial, resurrection, blood, and grace, and make clear that salvation is by faith, not works. The tract is seed. Make sure it is good seed.

A tract can also make the indirect approach easier. You can say, "This helped me, and I wanted you to have it." Or, "I like to leave something encouraging with people I meet." Or, "This tells how a person can know for sure where he will spend eternity." Or, "I know you are busy, but would you read this when you have time?" That is simple. Some will refuse. Some will take it. Some will read it. Some may throw it away. You are not God. Sow the seed. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand" (Ecclesiastes 11:6).

Chapter Six: Coworkers Require Patience and Consistency

Witnessing to coworkers through the indirect approach requires patience because they see you regularly. That is both an advantage and a danger. It is an advantage because they can watch your life. They can see consistency, kindness, honesty, work ethic, separation from sin, and the reality of your testimony. It is a danger because they can also see hypocrisy. If you preach Christ and then act lazy, dishonest, filthy, bitter, or arrogant, your witness will suffer. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). Your manner of life at work should not contradict your words.

Coworkers often give indirect openings because people talk at work. They talk about problems, marriages, kids, sickness, death, stress, money, fear, politics, and the condition of the world. Do not force every lunch break into a sermon, but do not hide either. Let them know you are saved. Let them know you believe the Bible. Let them know you pray. Let them know Christ changed your life. When they ask questions, answer. When they make comments, use wisdom. When they mock, do not lose your temper. When one pulls you aside privately, be ready. Many people who joke publicly are more serious privately than they let on.

Workplace witnessing also requires long-term seed sowing. You may not win a coworker in one conversation. You may plant a verse today, answer a question next month, give a tract later, invite a private conversation after a crisis, and see fruit years down the road. Do not get discouraged. Do not nag. Do not become the workplace nuisance who cannot do his job because he is always cornering people. Work well. Speak wisely. Watch for openings. Pray for them by name. The indirect approach in the workplace is often slow fishing, but God can use it powerfully.

Chapter Seven: Alertness Turns the Whole Day Into a Mission Field

The great value of the indirect approach is that it turns the whole day into a mission field. You do not have to wait for Saturday visitation to care about souls. You do not have to wait

for a revival meeting. You do not have to wait for a church program. Every day contains people. Every person has a soul. Every conversation may contain a door. That does not mean you live in a state of nervous pressure, trying to manufacture something every minute. It means you live awake. “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time” (Ephesians 5:15–16). Circumspectly means looking around. Pay attention.

Alertness is different from awkwardness. The goal is not to become the person everyone avoids because you cannot speak normally. The goal is to become the person God can use because you are watching for doors and ready with truth. You can laugh cleanly, speak kindly, conduct business, do your job, order food, answer the phone, and live a normal life while still being spiritually awake. The soul winner is not less human; he is more aware. He knows the invisible issue under visible life. The cashier is not just scanning groceries. The waitress is not just bringing food. The coworker is not just complaining about the boss. They are souls.

Ask God to make you alert. Ask Him in the morning to give you one opening. Carry tracts. Keep your testimony ready. Know your verses. Then go through the day looking for the crack in the door. It may come in a sentence. It may come in a question. It may come in a burden someone shares. It may come from a stranger. It may come from someone you have known for years. When it comes, do not freeze. Say something. Maybe just one sentence. Maybe a tract. Maybe a full gospel conversation. But say something. Openings are everywhere when a man is looking through the eyes of a soul winner.

Conclusion

The indirect approach is not a lesser form of soul winning. It is one of the most practical ways to carry the gospel through ordinary life. Checkout lines, restaurants, elevators, stores, workplaces, phone calls, family conversations, and casual remarks can become gospel opportunities when a Christian is alert. The point is not to be awkward for the sake of being awkward. The point is to listen, watch, pray, and be ready to turn natural words toward spiritual truth. A soul winner learns to hear words like lost, hope, fear, death, prayer, peace, and trouble as possible doors.

This approach requires wisdom. It must be natural without becoming cowardly, direct enough to matter without being foolishly abrasive, and always moving toward the gospel rather than floating forever in vague religious talk. A tract can help when time is short. A testimony can open the door. A question can draw out the heart. But the goal is always to get to Christ: sin, judgment, the cross, the blood, the burial, the resurrection, grace, and faith. Ordinary conversations are not the destination. They are bridges to the truth.

So go through the day awake. Pray for openings. Listen for them. Carry seed. Speak when the door cracks open. Do not let fear silence you, and do not let awkwardness become your method. Be alert. The field is not just across the ocean or inside a church visitation schedule. The field is under your feet every day. The world is full of souls, and ordinary moments may be the very places where God gives you a chance to point one of them to Jesus Christ.

16 of 25: Fishers of Men – Tracts, Bibles, and the Printed Witness

Introduction

There is a kind of witness that can keep talking after you walk away. That is the printed witness. A gospel tract, a marked Bible, a mailed booklet, a handwritten note with Scripture, a printed testimony, a Bible verse tucked into a letter, a gospel card left with a tip, a salvation insert placed inside a Bible, or a tract handed across a counter can go places your voice cannot go and remain there long after your voice has stopped. Do not despise that. The devil would love for Christians to think printed gospel seed is old-fashioned, ineffective, silly, or beneath the dignity of modern ministry. Meanwhile, the devil uses printed lies, digital lies, schoolbooks, newspapers, magazines, signs, slogans, pamphlets, novels, websites, and every form of written propaganda he can get his claws on. The world knows the power of words on a page. The question is whether Bible believers still believe the printed Word of God has power when placed in front of a sinner.

A tract is not magic paper. A Bible in a drawer does not save a man by being near him. A verse printed on a card does not regenerate the soul apart from faith. But the Word of God is seed, and printed material can carry that seed. Jesus said, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). That is the point. If the tract contains Scripture and a clear gospel, it is carrying seed. If the Bible is given, marked, read, and believed, it gives light. “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psalm 119:130). A printed witness can sit on a table, ride in a pocket, wait in a glove box, lie beside a hospital bed, fall out of a book years later, get mailed across town, be read in secret, or be passed from one soul to another. A spoken word may be forgotten, but a printed verse can stare a man in the face at midnight when his conscience will not let him sleep.

This chapter matters because soul winners need more tools in their hands than excuses in their mouths. Not everyone will give you twenty minutes. Not every door will stay open. Not every waitress has time to talk. Not every cashier can listen while a line grows behind you. Not every coworker is ready for a full conversation in the moment. But you can leave seed.

You can hand a tract. You can mail the gospel. You can give a Bible with clear gospel verses marked. You can put a salvation insert in a Bible. You can leave something behind that tells the truth when you are gone. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand" (Ecclesiastes 11:6). Tracts, Bibles, and printed gospel material are not substitutes for a living witness, but they are powerful extensions of it. Use them wisely, prayerfully, and doctrinally clean.

Chapter One: Printed Seed Can Travel Farther Than Your Voice

The printed witness can travel farther than your voice because it is not limited to the moment of conversation. You may speak to a man for two minutes and never see him again, but the tract you hand him can go home with him. It can sit on his dresser. It can be read by his wife. It can be picked up by his son. It can fall out of his coat months later when he is in trouble. It can get thrown in a car and found after a funeral. You do not know. That is the nature of seed. You sow it, and God knows where it lands. "Thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that" (Ecclesiastes 11:6). That verse is good medicine for a Christian who thinks only visible, immediate fruit counts.

A spoken witness is wonderful, but a printed witness can keep repeating the same truth without getting tired. A tract does not lose its nerve. It does not forget the verse. It does not get embarrassed. It does not stumble over the gospel. It does not soften the message because the sinner looks annoyed. If it is a good tract, it keeps saying the same thing: all have sinned, the wages of sin is death, Christ died for our sins, He shed His blood, He was buried, He rose again, and salvation is by grace through faith, not works. That is why a good tract is worth carrying. It is a little paper preacher if it has the right message on it.

This does not mean printed material should replace your mouth. Do not become the kind of Christian who throws tracts at people because he is afraid to speak. A tract is often best with a word. "This helped me." "This tells how to know for sure you are saved." "Could I leave this with you?" "This has some Bible verses about eternal life." One sentence can prepare the way for the paper. But when the conversation is short, the printed witness lets the seed remain. You may only have a moment, but the tract may have an hour later. Use that.

Chapter Two: Do Not Hand Out a Tract You Have Not Read

Here is a simple rule that ought to be nailed to every tract rack in the country: do not hand out a tract you have not read. That should be common sense, but common sense has been in short supply for a long time. If you put a piece of literature into a sinner's hand, you are responsible for what you are recommending. Do not assume it is good because it has a cross on the front. Do not assume it is biblical because it came from a church. Do not

assume it gives the gospel clearly because it uses the name Jesus. Read it. Check it. Test it by the Bible. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

A tract can be doctrinally weak, confusing, or dangerous. Some tracts preach works without saying so plainly. Some point the sinner to a prayer instead of Christ. Some never mention sin. Some never mention the blood. Some make baptism part of salvation. Some talk about inviting Jesus into your heart but never explain the death, burial, and resurrection. Some are full of sentimental stories and empty of Scripture. Some are so vague that a Catholic, Mormon, Muslim, liberal Protestant, and Baptist could all read them and think they already agree. That is not a good tract. That is fog on paper. A sinner does not need fog. He needs light.

A good tract should be clear. It should show the sinner’s condition. It should show the penalty of sin. It should present Jesus Christ as God’s Son, crucified for sins, buried, risen again, and sufficient to save. It should mention the blood. It should make salvation by grace through faith plain. It should not leave the sinner trusting works, sacraments, church membership, baptism, reformation, or a repeated formula. It should point to Christ, not to the tract, the church, the author, or a prayer as the foundation. If the tract does not do that, find another one. Bad seed does not become good seed because you handed it out zealously.

Chapter Three: Tracts Must Be Given With Wisdom and Courtesy

A gospel tract should not be used as an excuse for rudeness. Some Christians think handing out literature gives them permission to act like a nuisance. That is foolish. “He that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). Wisdom matters. If you are giving a tract to a waitress, be polite and leave a good tip. If you leave a tract with a lousy tip, you have preached one thing with the paper and another thing with your wallet. Guess which sermon she will remember. Do not be the cheap religious hypocrite who leaves “eternal riches” on the table and stiffes the person working for wages. That kind of testimony stinks.

When handing tracts in public, be direct but courteous. “May I give you something to read?” is simple. Some will take it. Some will not. If they refuse, do not act wounded. Do not chase them. Do not throw it at them. Do not mutter under your breath. Move on. If someone takes it, say a kind word. If an opening comes, speak. If not, let the seed go with them. The goal is not to prove how many pieces of paper you can distribute. The goal is to get gospel truth into human hands with a spirit that does not needlessly dishonor the message.

Courtesy does not mean cowardice. A tract given with wisdom can still be pointed. A smiling face can hand a tract that warns about hell. A kind voice can say, “This tells how to be saved.” A gracious spirit can still carry a sharp message. “Let your speech be always with

grace, seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6). Grace and salt. Not sugar and surrender. Not vinegar and pride. Grace and salt. If the message offends, let it be the cross that offends, not your foolishness. A tract should be carried by a witness who remembers that the person receiving it is a soul, not a target in a paper-distribution contest.

Chapter Four: Mailing Tracts Is Anonymous Seed Sowing

Mailing tracts is one of the simplest forms of anonymous seed sowing. Get the names. Get the addresses. Buy the stamps. Put the tract in the envelope. Pray over it. Send it. No return address if that is how you choose to do it. No credit. No applause. No follow-up praise from men. Just seed sent into the field. That kind of ministry is good for a Christian because it kills the showboat spirit. Nobody knows what you did but God. And if you really believe the gospel matters, that should be enough.

There is something powerful about anonymous work. The flesh likes to be seen. It wants a report, a platform, a testimony slot, or at least somebody saying, “Great job.” But some of the most faithful seed work will never be tied to your name on earth. A tract mailed to a stranger may be read by someone you never meet. It may be thrown away. It may be read ten years later if it is tucked away somewhere. It may get passed to someone else. You do not know. But God knows. “Thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:4). That promise is better than human applause.

Mailing tracts also reminds us that the field is larger than our immediate reach. You may not be able to knock every door in a city, but you can send gospel literature. You may not know how to start a conversation with certain people, but you can mail a clear gospel presentation. You may want to reach a neighborhood, workplace list, old contacts, relatives, or strangers. Printed seed can go. Of course, be lawful, wise, and respectful. But do not underestimate the value of putting Scripture-filled gospel literature into mailboxes and homes. A quiet envelope may be carrying the loudest truth that house receives all year.

Chapter Five: Bibles Should Be Given With Gospel Direction

Giving someone a Bible is a good thing, but it is even better to give a Bible with direction. Many lost people open a Bible and do not know where to begin. Some start in Genesis and get lost in names. Some open randomly and land in a passage they do not understand. Some read a few verses and quit. If you give a Bible, consider marking gospel passages or placing a clear salvation insert inside it. Show them where to read. John’s Gospel is often a good place to start. Romans is essential for doctrine. 1 Corinthians 15 gives the gospel clearly. Ephesians 1 and 2 show grace, faith, and sealing. A Bible in the hand is good; a Bible with a marked trail to Christ is better.

The Ethiopian eunuch had Scripture and still needed guidance. Philip asked, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” The man said, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” (Acts 8:30–31). That is exactly the point. The Bible is the Word of God, but a lost man may need someone to guide him through it to Christ. When giving a Bible, you can say, “Start in the Gospel of John.” Or, “Read Romans chapter 3, 5, 6, and 10.” Or, “I marked some verses that explain salvation.” That is simple, practical, and helpful.

Putting verses in Bibles is one of the best uses of printed witness. A tract tucked into a Bible can give the reader a starting point. A page with the gospel verses listed can become a map. You might include verses like Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, Ephesians 2:8–9, Romans 3:25, Acts 16:31, John 5:24, and Ephesians 1:13. Those verses can guide the sinner from sin to Christ, from death to life, from works to grace, from uncertainty to Bible assurance. Do not merely give a Bible as a religious object. Help them find the Saviour revealed in it.

Chapter Six: Printed Material Helps the Fearful Witness Start

Some Christians are terrified to witness because they do not know how to start. Printed material can help. A tract gives them something to offer. A marked Bible gives them a path to follow. A gospel card gives them a simple opening. This is not a crutch to be despised; it is a tool to be used. A child learning to write uses lines on paper. A new worker uses instructions. A young soul winner may use a tract while learning how to speak more clearly. Good. Use it. Better a nervous Christian handing out clear gospel tracts than a confident Christian who never gives the gospel at all.

A tract can also keep the message on track. Some believers start witnessing and wander into every subject except salvation. They talk about church, politics, prophecy, personal problems, moral decline, false religions, and their own testimony, but never get clearly to Christ. A good tract can anchor the conversation. “Let me show you this verse.” “This explains the gospel simply.” “This part shows what Christ did.” The printed witness can help the spoken witness stay focused. It is not a substitute for learning, but it can be a training aid.

Still, the fearful witness should not hide behind paper forever. Use tracts, but learn to speak. Hand the tract, but say a word. Read the tract with someone if they allow it. Ask what they think. Ask if they know they are saved. Ask what they are trusting. Over time, the tract can become less of a shield and more of a seed bag. The goal is not merely to distribute literature; the goal is to deal with souls. But if printed material helps a timid believer begin, then start there and grow.

Chapter Seven: Printed Witness Must Be Covered in Prayer

Printed witness should be covered in prayer. A tract handed out without prayer may still contain truth, and God can use His Word, but the worker's heart should not be mechanical. Pray over the tracts. Pray before mailing them. Pray when handing one to a waitress. Pray when putting a tract in a Bible. Pray when leaving one in a public place. Ask God to get it into the right hands. Ask Him to keep it from being thrown away before it is read. Ask Him to use the Scriptures in it. Ask Him to bring conviction. Ask Him to send another witness after the printed one. This is spiritual work, not paper distribution.

Prayer reminds you that the power is not in your method. You can print thousands of tracts and still need God. You can mail hundreds of envelopes and still need the Holy Ghost. You can give away Bibles and still need the Lord to open hearts. Lydia heard Paul, but the Bible says the Lord opened her heart. That is the inward work. We sow, but God gives the increase. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). Printed witness is planting and watering. God must make it live.

Prayer also guards against pride and discouragement. If someone responds, you give God the glory. If nobody responds visibly, you keep sowing because the work was committed to God. Do not turn tract work into a fleshly numbers game. Do not become proud because you handed out more than someone else. Do not quit because you did not get immediate feedback. Pray, sow, and leave the results with God. The judgment seat of Christ will reveal more than any earthly report ever could.

Conclusion

Tracts, Bibles, and printed gospel material are valuable tools in the hand of a wise soul winner. They can carry the Word where your voice cannot go. They can stay after you leave. They can speak to someone in private. They can guide a sinner through Scripture. They can help a timid believer begin witnessing. They can saturate homes, tables, mailboxes, pockets, and Bibles with gospel seed. Do not despise the printed witness. The world uses printed lies constantly. Bible believers ought to use printed truth.

But use it wisely. Do not hand out a tract you have not read. Do not distribute doctrinal fog. Do not leave a gospel tract with a bad testimony, a rude spirit, or a cheap tip. Do not give a Bible without helping someone know where to begin. Do not think paper replaces prayer or personal witness. The printed witness is a tool, not the Saviour. The power is in the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The seed must be good, and the sower must be faithful.

So carry tracts. Mail them. Leave them with kindness. Put them in Bibles. Mark gospel verses. Use printed material to open conversations and extend conversations. Pray over it. Let some of the work be anonymous. Let God keep the records. A tract may seem small,

but a seed is small too, and God knows how to put life in seed. Get the printed witness into the field, and trust the Lord with the harvest.

17 of 25: Fishers of Men – The Bible in the Soul Winner’s Hand

Introduction

A soul winner without the Bible is like a soldier walking into battle without a weapon. He may have confidence, personality, charm, enthusiasm, stories, tears, arguments, and a pocket full of religious phrases, but if he does not put the Word of God into the work, he is trying to do spiritual surgery with a butter knife. The sinner does not need your personality. He does not need your cleverness. He does not need your emotional pressure. He does not need your church vocabulary. He does not need to be impressed with how much you know. He needs the Book. He needs the words of God. He needs the Scriptures that can make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). That verse ought to settle it. The Scriptures are able. Not your salesmanship. Not your charm. Not your religious mood. The Scriptures.

This is where a lot of modern soul winning has gone shallow. People have learned how to talk around the Bible without opening it. They talk about their church, their pastor, their experience, their feelings, their testimony, their program, their invitation, and their opinion, but the sinner never sees the blade. The Bible says, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Hebrews 4:12). Quick means alive. Powerful means it works. Sharper than any twoedged sword means it cuts both ways and goes where your words cannot go. A sword is not meant to decorate the wall. It is meant to be drawn. It is meant to cut. If a sinner is wrapped up in self-righteousness, the Word cuts. If he is hiding behind religion, the Word cuts. If he is trusting works, the Word cuts. If he is making excuses, the Word cuts. If he is under conviction, the Word can open the wound and then point him to the remedy. A soul winner who will not use the Bible is keeping the sword in the sheath while the enemy laughs.

The soul winner’s job is not to win a personality contest; it is to guide a sinner through the Scriptures to Jesus Christ. Philip found the Ethiopian eunuch reading Isaiah and asked, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” The man answered, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” (Acts 8:30–31). That is soul winning in one sentence. A sinner has the need. The Scripture has the light. The witness guides him to Christ. Then Philip “preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:35). Not himself. Not his denomination. Not his

ministry. Jesus. That is what the Bible in the soul winner's hand is for. It is not a prop. It is not a badge. It is not religious decoration. It is the sword of the Spirit, the seed of the Word, the light of truth, and the authority that stands above every opinion in the room. If you are going to deal with souls, get the Bible in your hand and use it.

Chapter One: The Bible Is the Authority, Not the Soul Winner

The first reason the Bible must be in the soul winner's hand is because the Bible is the authority. Not the soul winner. Not the preacher. Not the church. Not the tract. Not the testimony. Not the denomination. The Bible. A sinner does not need to be brought under your authority. He needs to be brought under God's authority. When you say, "I think," the sinner can say, "I think something else." When you say, "My church teaches," he can say, "My church teaches differently." When you say, "My pastor says," he can say, "My priest says," "My imam says," "My professor says," or "My grandmother said." That becomes a contest of human voices. But when you open the Bible and say, "Look what God says," the conversation changes.

This is especially important in a world full of religious confusion. Everybody has an opinion. The Catholic has tradition. The Mormon has a burning in the bosom. The Jehovah's Witness has Watchtower material. The Muslim has the Quran. The liberal has scholarship falsely so called. The atheist has his favorite talking points. The self-righteous man has his own moral scale. The sinner has a thousand hiding places. The Bible cuts through all of them. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4). That is the soul winner's ground. Not arrogance. Authority. If God said it, that settles it, whether the sinner likes it, understands it fully, or agrees with it yet.

That is why the Bible should be shown, not merely referenced. There is something powerful about putting the sinner's eyes on the words. Let him see it. Let him read it. Ask, "What does that say?" Not because the page has magic ink, but because faith comes by hearing the Word of God. When a sinner sees "For all have sinned" (Romans 3:23), he is not merely hearing your accusation. He is facing God's verdict. When he sees "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), he is not hearing your religious opinion. He is facing God's sentence. When he sees "Christ died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3), he is facing God's remedy. The Bible carries an authority no personality can match.

Chapter Two: The Bible Shows the Sinner His Condition

The Bible in the soul winner's hand first shows the sinner his condition. You cannot get a man saved who does not know he is lost. You cannot get a man to value the Saviour if he does not know he is a sinner. You cannot get a man to flee judgment if he thinks he is safe. The soul winner must use Scripture to diagnose the soul. "For all have sinned, and come

short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). That verse puts every man in the same line. The rich sinner, the poor sinner, the clean sinner, the dirty sinner, the educated sinner, the ignorant sinner, the religious sinner, the atheist sinner, the moral sinner, and the immoral sinner all stand under the same indictment. All have sinned.

The sinner will naturally try to wiggle away from that. He will compare himself to worse people. He will talk about his good intentions. He will mention church. He will bring up baptism. He will say he is not perfect but not that bad. He will try to lower God’s standard until he can step over it. That is why you use the Book. The issue is not whether he is better than a murderer, a thief, or a drunk. The issue is that he has come short of the glory of God. “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). That verse takes away the sinner’s hiding place. None righteous. No, not one. If he believes the Bible, he has to stop pretending his goodness is enough.

The Bible also shows the consequence. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Wages are what a man earns. Sin pays wages. The payment is death. That is clear. Not spiritual inconvenience. Not temporary discomfort. Death. A sinner must understand that sin is not a minor defect God overlooks because he had a hard childhood or did his best. Sin brings death and judgment. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). The Bible puts the sinner under the sentence of God before it shows him the mercy of God. That is not cruelty. That is truth. A doctor who hides the diagnosis does not love the patient. A soul winner who hides sin and judgment does not love the sinner.

Chapter Three: The Bible Shows Christ’s Finished Work

After the Bible shows the sinner his condition, it shows him Christ’s finished work. The soul winner must not merely wound. He must point to the cure. The Word cuts, but it also reveals the Great Physician. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). That verse is a clean gospel arrow. While we were yet sinners. Not after we improved. Not after we joined. Not after we turned respectable. Christ died for us. There is substitution. There is grace. There is the love of God in action at Calvary.

Then take him to the gospel itself. “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). That is the message by which sinners are saved. Do not assume people know it because they have heard the name Jesus. Many people have heard of Jesus and have no idea what the gospel is. Some think Jesus died as an example. Some think He died because men overpowered Him. Some think the cross is a religious symbol. Some

think His death becomes useful only when joined to sacraments, works, church obedience, and endurance. Open the Bible and show them what God says. He died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again.

The Bible also shows the blood. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Ephesians 1:7). “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:25). Do not hide the blood because modern religion gets squeamish. The blood is not an embarrassing old doctrine to be kept in the basement. It is central to redemption. Without shedding of blood is no remission. A sinner must be pointed to Christ’s blood as the payment for sin. If he is trusting water, works, wafers, religion, feelings, sorrow, promises, or prayers, the Bible must cut those false trusts away and put his eyes on the blood of the Lamb.

Chapter Four: The Bible Shows Salvation by Grace Through Faith

The Bible in the soul winner’s hand must show salvation by grace through faith. This is where false religion hates the Book. The natural man wants to do something to help save himself. He wants to contribute. He wants to bring his morality, baptism, sacraments, church membership, giving, sincerity, penance, commandment keeping, or personal effort. The Bible says otherwise. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8–9). Those verses should be marked, memorized, and used. They knock the props out from under works salvation.

Grace means the sinner does not deserve it. Faith means he receives it by trusting Christ. Gift means it cannot be earned. Not of works means exactly what it says. If a sinner says, “I believe you have to be good,” show him Ephesians 2:8–9. If he says, “I believe baptism is necessary to wash away sin,” show him Ephesians 2:8–9 and then show him Christ’s blood. If he says, “I am trying to live right,” show him Ephesians 2:8–9. If he says, “I hope my good outweighs my bad,” show him Ephesians 2:8–9. Let the Bible argue. Let the Bible cut. Let the Bible expose boasting. “Where is boasting then? It is excluded” (Romans 3:27).

Romans 4:5 is another sharp blade. “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly.” That verse is dynamite under the whole works-salvation structure. To him that worketh not. That does not mean a saved man will never do good works. It means works are not the basis of justification. The sinner being justified is not working for it. He is believing on the One who justifies the ungodly. That verse is so plain that religion has to work overtime to twist it. Put it in front of the sinner and ask, “According to this verse, who does God justify?” Then ask, “Is that person working for it or believing?” Let the Book do its work.

Chapter Five: The Bible Shows the Sinner How to Respond

The Bible not only shows the sinner his condition and Christ's finished work; it shows him how to respond. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). That answer was given to a man who asked, "What must I do to be saved?" God did not leave us guessing. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Not join a church. Not get baptized to be regenerated. Not perform sacraments. Not promise to do better. Not trust a prayer. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul winner should use that verse plainly. A sinner needs to know the issue is faith in Christ.

Romans 10:9–10 is useful when handled in its context: "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead." Then verse 10 says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The heart matters. Faith matters. The resurrection matters. Confession has its place, but the mouth does not replace the heart. Use the Bible to prevent shallow professions. Do not turn Romans 10 into a magic formula. Show the sinner that calling upon the Lord is connected to believing on Him. Romans 10:14 asks, "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" That is the Bible correcting careless soul winning before it gets out of hand.

The Bible also shows assurance to the believer. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life" (John 5:24). Hath means hath. Present possession. The believer does not have to wonder whether Christ lied. If he believes, he has everlasting life and is passed from death unto life. Assurance must be based on Scripture, not on the worker saying, "Now you are saved." Show him what God says. If he trusted Christ, let God's Word give him assurance. If he did not, do not give him false peace. The Bible shows the right response and the right foundation for assurance.

Chapter Six: The Bible Keeps the Soul Winner From Trusting Personality

A man with a strong personality can be a dangerous thing if he does not stay under the Bible. He may be persuasive, emotional, witty, forceful, charming, or intense, and people may respond to him rather than to the truth. That is not safe. The soul winner must not make himself the center. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Corinthians 4:5). The Bible keeps the worker from becoming the issue. It puts the authority outside his personality and above his ability. That is good for the sinner and good for the soul winner.

Some people can talk others into almost anything. Salesmen do it every day. Politicians do it. Cult leaders do it. Religious manipulators do it. A soul winner must not be that kind of

man. He must not be trying to close a deal; he must be trying to present Christ clearly. The Bible keeps him honest. If the sinner responds, he responds to God's Word, not merely to human pressure. If the sinner refuses, he refuses the truth, not just a personality. That matters. The worker's confidence should be in Scripture. "It is written" is stronger than "I feel," "I think," or "I say."

This is especially important for those who are naturally bold. Boldness is good when governed by the Spirit and the Word. Boldness without Scripture can become bullying. Wit without Scripture can become mockery. Emotion without Scripture can become manipulation. Compassion without Scripture can become sentimentalism. The Bible gives the soul winner ballast. It keeps him from drifting into performance. It reminds him that the power is not in his manner, but in God's message. "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:7).

Chapter Seven: The Bible Keeps the Conversation on the Main Issue

When dealing with a sinner, the conversation can wander quickly. The sinner may bring up hypocrites, denominations, politics, suffering, science, church scandals, Bible contradictions, family grievances, predestination, world events, or some foolish thing he saw online. Some of those questions may deserve answers at the right time. But many of them are smoke screens. The Bible in the soul winner's hand helps keep the conversation on the main issue: sin, Christ, the cross, the blood, the resurrection, grace, faith, and salvation. Do not let every rabbit trail become a three-day hunting trip.

When a sinner brings up hypocrites, you can say, "There are hypocrites, but the issue is what God says about you and Christ." Then go to Romans 3:23. When he brings up religions, say, "Let us see what the Bible says about salvation." Then go to Acts 4:12 or John 14:6. When he brings up his goodness, go to Ephesians 2:8–9 or Titus 3:5. When he brings up baptism, go to the gospel, the blood, and the thief on the cross. When he brings up uncertainty, go to 1 John 5:13 and John 5:24. Use the Book like a compass. It keeps pointing back to the true north of the gospel.

That does not mean you never answer questions. It means you discern whether the question is sincere or evasive. Some people have real questions and need patient answers. Others are just throwing dust in the air to avoid conviction. The Bible helps either way. If the question is sincere, Scripture gives light. If it is evasive, Scripture brings the issue back. The goal is not to win an argument about everything. The goal is to point the soul to Christ. Keep the Bible open and the gospel central. The main issue is not whether you can answer every curiosity. The main issue is whether the sinner will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

The Bible belongs in the soul winner's hand because the work of soul winning is spiritual work. Personality cannot replace Scripture. Testimony cannot replace Scripture. Emotion cannot replace Scripture. Cleverness cannot replace Scripture. A sinner needs the words of God. The Scriptures show him his sin, his danger, Christ's finished work, the blood, the resurrection, salvation by grace through faith, and the promise of eternal life to the believer. "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:130). If you want light in the conversation, open the Book.

This does not mean every gospel conversation must look exactly the same. Sometimes you quote Scripture from memory. Sometimes you show verses in a Bible. Sometimes a tract carries the verses. Sometimes a conversation begins with testimony and then moves to the Word. But one way or another, get Scripture into the witness. Do not trust your charm. Do not trust your pressure. Do not trust your delivery. Do not trust your ability to tell stories. The Word of God is the sword. Draw it. Use it. Let it cut. Let it expose. Let it heal by pointing to Christ.

So learn the Bible. Mark the verses. Memorize the gospel passages. Practice taking someone through the Scriptures clearly. Keep a Bible handy. Carry tracts that are full of Scripture and doctrinally clean. Ask sinners to read the verses. Ask what the verses say. Let God's words do what your words cannot. The soul winner is not called to impress sinners with himself. He is called to bring them face to face with the living Word of God and the living Saviour revealed in it. The Bible in the soul winner's hand is not optional equipment. It is the weapon, the seed, the light, and the authority for the work.

18 of 25: Fishers of Men – Dealing With the Uninterested

Introduction

One of the first shocks a new soul winner receives is finding out that many lost people are not nearly as concerned about their souls as he is. You get saved, your eyes open, hell becomes real, the Bible becomes alive, Jesus Christ becomes precious, the cross becomes the center of history, eternity burns in your mind, and you assume everyone will want to hear. Then you go out and find people who are cold, bored, distracted, busy, mocking, indifferent, religiously vaccinated, entertained to death, and spiritually asleep. You tell them Christ died for sinners, and they look at you like you asked them to read the phone book. You mention eternity, and they glance at their phone. You talk about judgment, and they smirk. You ask if they are saved, and they shrug. That is not unusual. That is the field. The Lord Jesus said some seed falls by the wayside, some on stony ground, some

among thorns, and some on good ground. A soul winner who expects every sinner to tremble the first time he hears the truth has not read Matthew 13 very carefully.

The uninterested soul is often harder to deal with than the argumentative soul. At least the argumentative man is engaged. He may be fighting the truth, but he is still awake enough to swing at it. The indifferent man is asleep in a burning house and annoyed that you knocked on the door. He has no questions, no urgency, no fear, no hunger, no visible concern, and no intention of being troubled. That kind of sinner is common in prosperous, entertained, religiously dull, comfort-drunk societies. He is not necessarily an atheist. He may believe in God in some general way. He may even say he is a Christian. But he is not concerned. He is not thinking about death. He is not considering judgment. He is not worried about sin. He is not asking how to be saved. He is thinking about dinner, bills, sports, work, entertainment, errands, and whatever buzzing thing is in his pocket. The soul winner must learn how to stir conscience without becoming obnoxious, how to awaken concern without turning into a pest, and how to leave seed even when the ground seems hard.

This requires wisdom. The Bible says, “he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). It does not say he that annoyeth souls is wise. It does not say he that cornereth souls is wise. It does not say he that argueth souls into exhaustion is wise. It says he that winneth souls. That means the worker must understand people. Some need a direct warning. Some need a question. Some need a verse. Some need a tract and time. Some need the plow before the seed. Some need the law to expose sin. Some need death brought into the room. Some need their false peace disturbed. Some need kindness because they have only seen religious arrogance. The uninterested person is not beyond reach. He is just asleep, distracted, hardened, or blinded. The soul winner’s task is not to manufacture conviction in the flesh. It is to use the Word of God wisely, pray for the Holy Ghost to do what man cannot do, and refuse to let the sinner’s indifference make him careless with the gospel.

Chapter One: Recognize the Uninterested Soul

The uninterested soul comes in many forms. Some are openly cold. They say, “I am not interested,” and close the door, end the conversation, or turn away. Some are polite but empty. They smile, nod, and agree just enough to get rid of you. Some are distracted. They check their phone, look over your shoulder, keep working, or answer in half-sentences. Some are mocking. They make jokes about hell, churches, preachers, or Christians. Some are spiritually numb from years of religion. They have heard Bible words so often without ever being born again that the words bounce off them like rubber balls off a wall. Some are simply comfortable, and comfort is one of the strongest narcotics ever given to a sinner. “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years” is still the language of a fool on the edge of eternity (Luke 12:19).

A soul winner must learn to identify what kind of indifference he is dealing with. A distracted mother with three children pulling at her dress may not be spiritually indifferent at all; she may just be overwhelmed. A man rushing to work may not be cold; the timing may be poor. A person who makes a joke may be hiding discomfort. A religious person who says, "I am good," may be under a thick layer of false assurance. A young man who shrugs may be trying to look unimpressed in front of friends. Wisdom listens before it labels. Do not assume every short answer means the same thing. Some people are uninterested because they are hardened. Others are uninterested because no one has ever made the issue plain enough to matter.

Still, the main mark is lack of concern. The uninterested person does not yet see himself as lost. He does not see sin as deadly. He does not see Christ as necessary. He does not see eternity as urgent. He may agree with general religious statements, but the truth has not gripped him. That is why the soul winner must not merely ask, "Do you believe in God?" Many uninterested people will say yes and mean almost nothing by it. Ask better questions. "Do you know for sure you are saved?" "What are you trusting to get you to heaven?" "Has there ever been a time when you personally trusted Christ as your Saviour?" "If you stood before God today, what would you say is your only hope?" Those questions begin to reveal whether a person has gospel light or only religious fog.

Chapter Two: Do Not Mistake Politeness for Conviction

A polite sinner can be just as lost as a hostile sinner. In fact, politeness can fool a soul winner if he is not careful. Some people are trained to be nice. They will listen, nod, smile, take a tract, say "thank you," and remain completely untouched. They are not convicted; they are courteous. They are not hungry; they are patient. They are not considering Christ; they are waiting for the conversation to end. That does not mean politeness is bad. It is certainly easier to work with than hostility. But do not mistake manners for interest. A man can have good manners on the road to hell.

This is where questions help. If a person is politely listening, ask something that requires thought. "What do you believe a person must do to be saved?" "Do you believe salvation is by grace through faith or by works?" "What do you think Jesus meant when He said, Ye must be born again?" "Have you ever read what the Bible says the gospel is?" A question can reveal whether the person is spiritually engaged or merely socially agreeable. Jesus often asked questions that exposed the heart. He did not just lecture people while they nodded. He made them think. "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). That is still a good question.

The polite uninterested person often needs the issue sharpened. Not rudely, but clearly. You can say, “I appreciate you listening, but this is not just religion. The Bible says every man has sinned and will face God. If Christ is not your Saviour, this is not a small matter.” That kind of statement can move the conversation from politeness to conscience. Some will still remain cold. That is between them and God. But at least you have not left them thinking you were merely offering church information. You are dealing with life and death, heaven and hell, Christ and the soul. Make that plain.

Chapter Three: Use the Lawful Wound of Scripture

The uninterested soul often needs to be wounded by Scripture. Not wounded by your pride, your sarcasm, your temper, or your lack of manners. Wounded by the Word of God. The Bible is a sword. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Hebrews 4:12). A sword is not a feather duster. It cuts. A sinner who is sleeping in self-righteousness, comfort, or indifference may need the blade of Scripture laid against his conscience. That is not cruelty. That is mercy. A surgeon cuts to save. A preacher wounds to heal. A soul winner uses the Word to show a man what he does not want to see.

Start with sin. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Ask, “Do you believe that includes you?” If he says yes casually, press a little. “What does God say the wages of sin is?” Then show Romans 6:23. “For the wages of sin is death.” Ask, “If sin earns death, is this something a man should be casual about?” Let the verse work. Do not rush past it like a man checking boxes. The uninterested soul often needs to sit under a verse long enough for the edge to touch him. If he keeps brushing it off, take him to judgment. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). That verse has stopped many a mouth.

But remember, Scripture should wound lawfully. Do not twist verses. Do not use the Bible like a club to satisfy your frustration. Do not unload every severe passage you know just because the person is not reacting the way you want. The goal is not to make him miserable for misery’s sake. The goal is to awaken him to his danger and point him to Christ. After the wound, bring the remedy. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). If you only wound and never show Christ, you are not doing gospel work. You are just cutting. The Bible cuts so the sinner will see his need of the Saviour.

Chapter Four: Bring Death and Eternity Into the Conversation

The uninterested person often lives as if he will never die. That is why death must sometimes be brought into the conversation. Not in a morbid, theatrical way, but plainly.

“Do you ever think about where you will spend eternity?” “If you died today, do you know where you would go?” “The Bible says after death comes judgment. Are you ready for that?” These questions interrupt the trance. The world keeps people busy so they will not think. It fills their ears, eyes, calendar, and hands with noise. Death cuts through noise. Eternity makes small talk look small.

Jesus did this with the rich fool. The man was talking to himself about barns, goods, ease, eating, drinking, and being merry. God interrupted him: “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Luke 12:20). That is direct. That man was not an atheist arguing theology. He was a comfortable fool planning tomorrow while God was calling for his soul that night. That passage is one of the best texts for uninterested people who assume they have time. Ask them, “What if tonight was your night?” Not as a gimmick. As reality. People die every day who had plans for tomorrow.

Death and eternity can stir conscience because they remove the illusion of control. A man may control his schedule, money, habits, entertainment, and immediate choices, but he does not control death. “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1). The uninterested sinner needs to know that delay is not neutral. To delay Christ is to reject Him today. To say “not now” is to gamble with a soul he cannot replace. If he still refuses, you cannot force him. But do not let him remain uninterested because you were too timid to mention the grave.

Chapter Five: Do Not Argue for Sport

Uninterested people sometimes become mocking people when pressed, and the soul winner must not get pulled into arguing for sport. Some sinners do not want truth; they want a fight. They will ask foolish questions, bring up hypocrites, mock the Bible, insult preachers, or throw out some half-baked argument they heard online. If you chase every rabbit, you will spend an hour in the weeds and never get back to Christ. The Bible warns against foolish and unlearned questions that gender strifes (2 Timothy 2:23). A soul winner needs enough discernment to know when a question is sincere and when it is bait.

That does not mean you never answer objections. Some objections are real stumblingblocks, and a careful answer may help. But answer in a way that brings the issue back to the gospel. If someone says, “There are hypocrites in church,” you can answer, “There are, but hypocrites do not change what God says about your soul. Christ is still the issue.” If someone says, “I do not believe the Bible,” you can say, “You may say that, but the Bible says you have sinned and will face God. Let me show you what it says.” If someone says, “All religions are the same,” show him John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. Keep returning to Christ. Do not let a mocking sinner become the chairman of the conversation.

Sometimes the right move is to stop. If a man is only mocking, you do not have to keep casting pearls before swine. Jesus said that, not some harsh preacher. “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6). That does not mean you decide quickly that everyone is a dog or swine because they did not respond well. It means there comes a point when continued speech only invites blasphemy and contempt. Leave a clear warning, offer a tract if appropriate, and move on. There are other doors, other souls, and other fields.

Chapter Six: Use Questions to Stir Thought

Questions are one of the best tools for dealing with the uninterested. A lecture can wash over a cold mind, but a good question can lodge in it. “What are you trusting to get you to heaven?” “How good would you have to be for God to accept you?” “If salvation is by works, why did Christ have to die?” “What would you do with Romans 3:23?” “If you died tonight, are you sure you would be with the Lord?” “Has anyone ever shown you the gospel from the Bible?” A question puts the man in the witness chair. It makes him answer, not merely listen.

Jesus used questions constantly. “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” “But whom say ye that I am?” “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Questions expose the heart. They also slow people down. A man who has been answering with clichés may suddenly have to think. That is useful. The uninterested soul often lives on borrowed phrases: “I am a good person,” “God understands,” “I am not religious,” “I have my own beliefs,” “Nobody can know,” “All roads lead to God.” A good question can crack those phrases open.

But questions should not be used like traps for your ego. You are not trying to embarrass the sinner so you can feel superior. You are trying to stir conscience. Ask, then listen. The answer tells you where to go next. If he is trusting works, show grace. If he is trusting religion, show the new birth. If he is careless about death, show judgment. If he is confused, show the gospel plainly. If he is mocking, warn and move on. Questions are hooks. Use them wisely.

Chapter Seven: Leave Seed When the Door Closes

When dealing with the uninterested, many conversations will not go far. That is why leaving seed matters. A person may not want to talk, but he may take a tract. He may not read it immediately, but he may read it later. He may throw it away, but someone else may pick it up. You do not know. “Thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that” (Ecclesiastes 11:6). The uninterested soul today may become the convicted soul tomorrow. Life has a way of plowing hard ground. A funeral, sickness, divorce, job loss, fear,

guilt, or loneliness may soften what was once stone. The seed left behind may be waiting for that moment.

Do not despise brief witness. A short word can stay with a man. “You need to be born again.” “Christ died for your sins.” “You are not ready to die without the Saviour.” “Please read this when you get alone.” “The Bible says you can know you have eternal life.” Those statements may sound small, but the Holy Ghost can bring them back. The conscience has a long memory when God starts dealing with it. A verse spoken in passing can become a midnight visitor. A tract ignored in daylight can become a voice in the dark.

Leaving seed also keeps you from becoming frustrated. If you think every encounter must become a full gospel presentation, you will be discouraged constantly. Sometimes all you can do is plant. Sometimes all you can do is water. Sometimes all you can do is warn. Sometimes all you can do is leave a tract. Do it and leave the results with God. “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6). The uninterested may not be ready, but the seed is still good. Sow it.

Conclusion

Dealing with the uninterested is part of soul winning. Not every sinner will tremble. Not every sinner will ask questions. Not every sinner will welcome the gospel. Some are cold, distracted, mocking, polite but empty, religiously numb, or too comfortable to care. The soul winner must not be shocked by that. He must be wise. He must learn to recognize the kind of indifference in front of him, use Scripture to stir conscience, bring death and eternity into the room, ask questions that expose false peace, and avoid pointless arguments that go nowhere.

The goal is to stir conscience without becoming obnoxious. That balance matters. A soul winner should not be a coward, but neither should he be a fool. He should not hide hell, but neither should he preach it with fleshly delight. He should not avoid direct questions, but he should ask them with compassion. He should not chase every rabbit trail, but he should answer sincere questions. He should not pressure a false profession, but he should warn plainly. The uninterested soul needs truth, not theatrics. Scripture, not ego. Compassion, not softness. Salt and grace together.

So do not quit because people are uninterested. Keep sowing. Some ground is hard today and broken tomorrow. Some people who mock in public think in private. Some who refuse a conversation may read a tract later. Some who appear cold may be closer to conviction than you know. The Word of God can do what you cannot do. Use it. Pray over it. Leave seed. Move on when you must. Return when God opens the door. The uninterested soul is still a soul, and a soul is worth more than the whole world.

19 of 25: Fishers of Men – Dealing With the Religious and Self-Righteous

Introduction

The hardest sinner to reach is often not the drunk in the ditch, the addict in the alley, or the criminal in the jail. Many times the hardest sinner to reach is the clean, moral, baptized, catechized, church-going, doctrine-quoting, tradition-defending, self-righteous religious man who thinks he already has God figured out. He has enough religion to make him comfortable and enough Bible language to make him dangerous, but he may not have one drop of saving faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. That is why religious people often need to be deprogrammed before they can hear grace. They have been trained to trust a system, a sacrament, a church, a priest, a pope, a prophet, a prophetess, a water ceremony, a confession booth, a law-keeping program, a chosen-group identity, a kingdom hall, a restoration movement, a Sabbath system, a Calvinist decree, a church covenant, a baptismal formula, or their own moral record. Then when you come along and preach salvation by grace through faith in Christ's blood, they hear it like a foreign language.

This is critical today because America and the world are filled with religious lost people. Catholics trusting Rome and sacraments. Campbellites trusting water baptism. Adventists mixing Sabbath and investigative judgment into their system. Mormons trusting a false Christ, false priesthood, false temple system, and extra-biblical authority. Jehovah's Witnesses denying the deity of Christ and preaching a works-based organization. Muslims honoring a false prophet while denying the Son of God, the cross, and the resurrection. Calvinists who can talk sovereignty until the cows come home but sometimes bury the simplicity of the gospel under decrees, systems, and philosophical machinery. Churchgoers who have sat in pews for decades and still cannot tell you what they are trusting to get to heaven. These people are not all the same, and you should not deal with them all the exact same way, but they often share one problem: they have a religious refuge that keeps them from coming naked and guilty to Jesus Christ.

The soul winner must learn to bring the religious and self-righteous sinner back to the Bible's main issues: sin, righteousness, judgment, Christ, blood, grace, and faith. That is exactly what the Holy Ghost reproves the world of: "of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Religious systems keep shifting the issue somewhere else. Rome shifts it to the church and sacraments. Campbellism shifts it to water. Adventism shifts it to Sabbath identity and judgment schemes. Mormonism shifts it to a false Jesus and a false authority structure. Jehovah's Witness doctrine shifts it to an organization and denial of Christ's deity. Islam shifts it to submission to Allah, works, and denial of the cross. Calvinistic confusion can shift it to whether a man is secretly elect rather than whether he will believe the gospel. Self-righteous churchgoers shift it to being better than others. The

Bible brings it back to the sinner, the Saviour, and the cross. The question is not, “What system do you defend?” The question is, “What are you trusting for your soul?”

Chapter One: The Religious Sinner Must Be Shown He Is Still a Sinner

The first place to begin with the religious and self-righteous is sin. That is where the Bible begins when it shuts every mouth. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). All means all. The Catholic has sinned. The Baptist has sinned. The Campbellite has sinned. The Adventist has sinned. The Mormon has sinned. The Jehovah’s Witness has sinned. The Muslim has sinned. The Calvinist has sinned. The preacher, priest, elder, deacon, missionary, choir singer, altar worker, church mother, theology professor, and Sunday school teacher have sinned. Religion does not erase sin. Ritual does not erase sin. A long record of church attendance does not erase sin. A religious title does not erase sin. Every man stands guilty before a holy God unless he is saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The self-righteous man does not usually deny imperfection. He will say, “Nobody is perfect.” But he says it like sin is a harmless human weakness instead of treason against God. He admits flaw but not guilt. He admits mistakes but not condemnation. He admits he is not perfect but still thinks he is good enough. That is where the Bible must cut deeper. “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). Not merely none perfect by human comparison. None righteous by God’s standard. That verse levels the religious crowd. The man trusting his morality has none. The man trusting his church record has none. The man trusting his commandment keeping has none. The man trusting his baptism has none. God says none righteous.

This is where the soul winner has to avoid being dragged immediately into the distinctive doctrines of every system. A Catholic may want to argue apostolic succession. A Campbellite may want to argue Acts 2:38. An Adventist may want to argue the Sabbath. A Mormon may want to argue feelings and restored authority. A Jehovah’s Witness may want to argue the name Jehovah and kingdom hope. A Muslim may want to argue textual corruption. A Calvinist may want to argue election before you even get to the gospel. Do not let the first move be their chosen battlefield. Bring them back to sin. “Have you sinned against God?” “Are you righteous according to God’s standard?” “If God judged you by absolute holiness, how would you stand?” Until a religious man is willing to take the place of a sinner, he will not properly see his need of the Saviour.

Chapter Two: The Religious Sinner Must Be Stripped of False Righteousness

The self-righteous man is not merely trusting nothing; he is usually trusting something false. That false righteousness must be stripped away by Scripture. Paul said of Israel, “For

they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). That is one of the greatest verses in the Bible for dealing with religious people. They are going about to establish their own righteousness. That describes every works system on earth. A man tries to establish righteousness by sacraments, water, law-keeping, church membership, morality, sincerity, temple work, organizational loyalty, Sabbath observance, confession, penance, endurance, or reformation. But while he is busy establishing his own, he refuses to submit to God's righteousness.

God's righteousness is not improved human righteousness. It is not God helping a man patch up his own filthy garment. It is the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to the believer. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). That verse will do more for a religious sinner than a thousand arguments about denominational history if he will believe it. Christ took our sin. The believer receives righteousness in Him. That is not Rome's system. That is not Mormon temple worthiness. That is not Jehovah's Witness endurance. That is not Sabbath keeping. That is not baptismal regeneration. That is not moral self-improvement. That is the great exchange grounded in Christ's finished work.

The soul winner must ask questions that expose false righteousness. "If God asked why He should let you into heaven, what would you say?" "Are you trusting Christ alone, or Christ plus something you do?" "Is your hope in His blood, or in your obedience?" "If your church system were removed, would you still have peace with God through Christ?" "Do you believe you have eternal life right now because of Christ, or are you hoping to earn it by faithfulness?" These questions matter. Religious people often use grace words while trusting works. They say "Jesus," "faith," and "grace," but when pressed, their hope is still in the system. The Bible must strip that away. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5).

Chapter Three: The Religious Sinner Must Be Brought to Judgment

Religious people often assume their religion will help them in the judgment. That is a deadly assumption. Jesus warned that many would say, "Lord, Lord," and then list religious works, only to hear, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22-23). That passage is terrifying because those people are not atheists. They are religious. They call Him Lord. They claim works. They expect acceptance. But Christ rejects them because He never knew them. A religious sinner needs to feel the force of that passage. It is possible to talk about Jesus, do religious works, and still be lost.

Judgment removes the comfort of comparison. At the judgment, the sinner will not be compared to his neighbor, his priest, his pastor, his family, his denomination, or the worst criminal he can imagine. He will face God. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). That appointment is not canceled by church membership. It is not postponed by baptism. It is not softened by tradition. God will judge. The religious man has to understand that the question is not whether he passed his church's requirements. The question is whether his sins are gone, whether he has the righteousness of Christ, whether he is in the Son, whether he has believed the gospel.

This is why judgment should be used carefully but plainly. Do not preach judgment as if you enjoy the thought of sinners being damned. That is fleshly. But do not hide it either. A religious sinner may be sleeping under a blanket of false peace, and judgment is one of the truths God uses to wake him. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). Ask him, "If you stood before God tonight, what would you be trusting?" If the answer is anything but Christ and His finished work, he needs the gospel. If he says, "I have done my best," show him that his best is not the standard. If he says, "I belong to the true church," show him that Christ is the Saviour, not an institution. Judgment brings the issue down to the soul and God.

Chapter Four: The Religious Sinner Must Be Confronted With Christ

Religious systems love to talk about everything except the sufficiency of the biblical Christ. They may mention Jesus constantly and still present a false or insufficient Christ. That is why the soul winner must bring the issue back to who Jesus Christ is and what He did. "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12). Not in Mary. Not in Joseph Smith. Not in Charles Taze Russell. Not in Ellen G. White. Not in Alexander Campbell. Not in the pope. Not in Muhammad. Not in a pastor, elder, priest, prophet, church, organization, temple, kingdom hall, or denomination. Salvation is in Jesus Christ.

But the Christ must be the Christ of Scripture. The Mormon Jesus is not the eternal God manifest in the flesh in the biblical sense. The Jehovah's Witness Jesus is not the Almighty Saviour of the Bible. The Muslim Jesus is not the crucified and risen Son of God. The liberal Jesus is a moral teacher. The Roman sacramental system does not leave the believer resting in the once-for-all sufficiency of Christ's finished work. Many religious people have a Jesus-name attached to a false system, but the soul winner must preach the biblical Christ. "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). "He rose again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:4).

Christ must be presented as sufficient. That word is key. Is Christ enough? Is His blood enough? Is His death enough? Is His resurrection enough? Is His righteousness enough? Is His promise enough? Religion says Christ plus. Christ plus sacraments. Christ plus water. Christ plus works. Christ plus Sabbath. Christ plus organization. Christ plus temple. Christ plus endurance. Christ plus law. Christ plus confession to a priest. Christ plus final judgment according to performance. The gospel says Christ alone. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). Once for all. That kills the religious treadmill.

Chapter Five: The Religious Sinner Must Be Brought to the Blood

The blood of Christ is where religion loses its pride. Men love systems because systems give them something to do, something to boast in, something to control, and something to measure. The blood strips all that away. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). Redemption through His blood. Forgiveness through His blood. Not through holy water, not through a baptistry, not through a wafer, not through a temple recommend, not through Sabbath observance, not through door-to-door Watchtower work, not through submission to Islam, not through a decree debated in a theological system, not through your church attendance. Through His blood.

Romans 3:25 says Christ is set forth "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." That phrase should be used often with religious sinners. Faith in His blood. Ask them, "Are you trusting the blood of Jesus Christ as the full payment for your sins?" Many religious people have never been asked that plainly. They are trusting everything around the blood, everything near the blood, everything symbolizing the blood, everything their church says about the blood, but not the blood itself as the sufficient payment. The soul winner must bring them there. Without shedding of blood is no remission. If the blood of Christ does not settle the account, nothing they do can settle it.

The blood also destroys pride because it says man's condition was so bad that nothing less than the death of God's Son could save him. If religion, morality, law, water, sacraments, or self-improvement could save, Calvary was unnecessary. But Christ died because nothing else could redeem the sinner. That is why Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14). Religious men glory in systems. Bible believers glory in the cross. The soul winner must bring the religious man away from his system and down to the blood-stained ground at Calvary.

Chapter Six: The Religious Sinner Must Be Shown Grace

Grace is the hardest thing for religious people to accept because grace gives them no credit. Religion lets a man contribute. Grace shuts his mouth. Religion says do. Grace says

done. Religion says earn. Grace says receive. Religion says climb. Grace says Christ came down. Religion says keep working. Grace says Christ finished the work. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). Gift means gift. Not wages. Not installment plan. Not probation. Not sacramental process. Gift. The sinner receives it by faith because Christ paid for it.

Romans 4:5 is poison to self-righteous religion and medicine to the broken sinner. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." To him that worketh not. That verse should be pressed carefully. Ask the religious person, "Is the man in this verse working for justification?" The answer is no. "What is he doing?" Believing. "Who does God justify?" The ungodly. That is grace. Religious people want God to justify the improved, the faithful, the obedient, the sacramental, the worthy, the church-approved, the system-loyal. The Bible says God justifies the ungodly who believe on Him. That verse is a sword through the heart of works salvation.

Grace does not mean good works are unimportant after salvation. Do not let the religious man accuse the gospel of promoting sin. The Bible says we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10). But verse 10 comes after verses 8 and 9. Works follow salvation; they do not cause it. Fruit follows life; it does not produce life. Service follows sonship; it does not purchase sonship. A soul winner must keep the order clear. If you confuse root and fruit, you will preach another gospel. Grace saves. Faith receives. Works follow. That order must be hammered into the mind of the religious sinner until his system cracks and Christ stands alone.

Chapter Seven: The Religious Sinner Must Be Called to Faith, Not System Loyalty

The final issue is faith. Not faith in a church. Not faith in a rite. Not faith in a preacher. Not faith in a prophet. Not faith in a doctrinal machine. Faith in Jesus Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). That verse is gloriously simple. Religion hates it because it cannot control it. If salvation is by faith in Christ, the priest loses control, the cult loses control, the denomination loses control, the religious hierarchy loses control, and the sinner must deal directly with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why religious systems add layers. They cannot stand the simplicity of Christ.

Ephesians 1:13 gives the order: the sinner hears "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation," trusts Christ, and after believing is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That is not system loyalty. That is gospel faith. The religious sinner needs to be asked, "Have you personally trusted Jesus Christ and His finished work, or are you trusting your religious system?" That question may irritate him, but it is necessary. If his confidence collapses

when his system is questioned, his confidence is not in Christ. If he cannot say he has eternal life because of what Christ did, he may be trusting something else.

Faith also gives assurance because it rests on God's promise. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). Hath. Not hopes to earn. Not might receive after a lifetime of rituals. Hath. The religious man often thinks assurance is presumption because his system keeps him working, fearing, confessing, performing, and depending on the institution. Bible salvation gives assurance because Christ finished the work and God cannot lie. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). Know. Not guess. Faith in Christ brings the soul to rest.

Conclusion

Dealing with the religious and self-righteous is one of the most important parts of soul winning today. Many people are not lost because they never heard religious words. They are lost under piles of religious words. They have been baptized, confirmed, catechized, churching, instructed, initiated, organized, sacramentalized, and systematized, but they have never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ alone. They may defend Rome, Campbellism, Adventism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness doctrine, Islam, Calvinistic systems, or their own church tradition with zeal, but zeal without truth cannot save. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15), and a man must come as a sinner before he can be saved.

The soul winner must bring such people back to the Bible's main issues: sin, righteousness, judgment, Christ, blood, grace, and faith. Do not let them keep you forever on their preferred battlefield. Bring them back to sin: all have sinned. Bring them back to righteousness: none righteous, and only Christ provides righteousness. Bring them back to judgment: every man will face God. Bring them back to Christ: neither is there salvation in any other. Bring them back to the blood: redemption is through His blood. Bring them back to grace: not of works. Bring them back to faith: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the road out of religious confusion.

Be firm, but not foolish. Be plain, but not needlessly hateful. Be patient when the person is genuinely confused. Be sharp when the system is hiding Christ. Use the Bible. Ask what they are trusting. Expose false confidence. Point to the finished work of Jesus Christ. A religious sinner may be harder to reach than an openly wicked sinner, but he is not beyond the gospel. The same blood that saves the drunk can save the churchman. The same grace that saves the harlot can save the priest-ridden Catholic, the water-trusting Campbellite, the Sabbath-bound Adventist, the cult-trained Mormon or Jehovah's Witness, the deceived

Muslim, the system-bound Calvinist, and the pew-sitting Baptist who never got saved. Strip away the refuge of lies, and point the soul to Christ.

20 of 25: Fishers of Men – Dealing With Fear, Excuses, and Objections

Introduction

If the devil cannot take the gospel away from a saved man, he will try to keep the saved man from giving it away. That is where fear, excuses, and objections come in. Some of them come from the sinner, and some of them come from the Christian. The sinner says, “I am not ready,” “I have my own beliefs,” “There are too many hypocrites,” “I am a good person,” “Nobody can know,” “I will think about it later,” or “I do not believe the Bible.” The Christian says, “I do not know enough,” “I am not gifted,” “They will reject me,” “It will not do any good,” “I am too busy,” “I might say it wrong,” or “Someone else can do it better.” And while both sides are making speeches, the clock keeps ticking, the grave keeps opening, and souls keep slipping into eternity. Excuses do not stop death. Objections do not cancel judgment. Fear does not excuse disobedience. The Bible still says, “he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30).

A soul winner must learn how to deal with both kinds of excuses. He must know how to answer the sinner without getting dragged into endless arguments, and he must know how to answer his own flesh when it starts whining. Because make no mistake about it, your flesh will whine. The flesh does not want to witness. It wants comfort, safety, approval, convenience, and a good reputation. It does not want awkward conversations. It does not want rejection. It does not want to be called strange, pushy, narrow, hateful, old-fashioned, or fanatical. It does not want to open the Bible in front of a lost person and risk being asked a question it cannot answer. The flesh wants a Christianity that stays respectable, quiet, and harmless. But Jesus Christ did not save us to be harmless religious decorations. He said, “Ye are my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). A witness who never speaks is a strange witness.

The truth is, most excuses shrink when put next to eternity. “I do not know enough.” Learn, and witness with what you do know. “I am not gifted.” The gospel is gifted. Use it. “They will reject me.” They rejected Christ before they rejected you. “It will not do any good.” That is not your call. Sow the seed. “I am too busy.” Too busy for souls? Then you are too busy. “I might say it wrong.” Then study, pray, and say it better next time. If Christians put half as much energy into witnessing as they put into explaining why they do not witness, the field would be covered with seed. This chapter is not written to pat excuses on the head. It is

written to drag them into the light, beat them with Scripture, and send the believer back into the field with a Bible in his hand and the gospel in his mouth.

Chapter One: “I Do Not Know Enough”

“I do not know enough” is one of the most common Christian excuses, and it sounds humble until you examine it. Sometimes it is honest. A new believer may truly feel unprepared. He may not know many verses. He may not know how to answer objections. He may not understand all the doctrines involved. Fine. Then learn. But do not turn ignorance into a permanent hiding place. A man who has been saved for years and still says, “I do not know enough,” may not be humble. He may be lazy. If you do not know enough to witness, why have you not learned enough? You had time to learn your job, your phone, your hobbies, your favorite teams, your favorite shows, your business, your tools, your recipes, your routes, and your daily routines. Learn the gospel.

The truth is, you do not have to know everything to tell someone something. The blind man in John 9 did not know how to answer every religious question the Pharisees threw at him, but he knew one thing: “whereas I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25). That is a testimony. A new Christian may not understand every prophecy, every dispensation, every cult, every hard verse, every church history issue, and every theological system, but he can say, “I was lost, Christ died for my sins, He rose again, and I trusted Him.” He can learn Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, Ephesians 2:8–9, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9–10, and John 5:24. That is enough to start. Then keep learning.

Use ignorance as a spur, not a pillow. If someone asks a question you cannot answer, do not fake it. Say, “That is a good question. I do not want to make something up. Let me study it and get back with you.” There is no shame in that. There is shame in staying ignorant because you never study. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God” (2 Timothy 2:15). A soul winner should be a student of the Book. The more you witness, the more you will find out what you need to learn. That is good. The work itself will drive you into the Bible if you have any honesty. So stop saying, “I do not know enough,” as if that settles the matter. Learn enough. Then open your mouth.

Chapter Two: “I Am Not Gifted”

“I am not gifted” is another excuse that sounds spiritual but often smells like fear. Not everyone is an evangelist in the official ministry sense. Not everyone is a public preacher. Not everyone has the same boldness, personality, opportunity, or method. That is true. But every saved person can be a witness. Acts 8:4 says, “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” That was not a platform ministry for a select few professionals. The scattered believers carried the Word. The Great Commission was

not given so that ninety percent of Christians could sit still and admire the ten percent who do something.

Being a witness does not require the same gift in every person. A quiet believer can hand a tract. A mother can teach her children. A worker can speak to a coworker. A businessman can witness across a desk. A young person can speak to a friend. An older saint can write letters or mail tracts. A shy person can ask one honest question. A bold person can take the direct approach. A thoughtful person can answer objections carefully. A compassionate person can reach someone in grief. God uses different personalities, but He does not excuse silence. "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so" (Psalm 107:2). If you are redeemed, say so.

The issue is not whether you are gifted like someone else. The issue is whether you are obedient with what you have. Moses said he was not eloquent. God did not accept that as a final excuse. Jeremiah said he was a child. God still sent him. Gideon felt weak. God still used him. The treasure is in earthen vessels "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). You may not be gifted, but the gospel is powerful. You may not be impressive, but the Word of God is sharp. You may not be eloquent, but Christ saves. Stop looking at yourself as though you are the power source. You are the carrier. Carry the message.

Chapter Three: "They Will Reject Me"

"They will reject me" may be true. They might. Some will. Welcome to Christianity. The Lord Jesus Christ was rejected. The apostles were rejected. The prophets were rejected. Paul was mocked, beaten, stoned, imprisoned, and opposed. Stephen preached one of the sharpest sermons in the book of Acts and got stoned for it. If your entire plan is to avoid rejection, you will not be much use in a world that rejected Christ. Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). That verse is not hard to understand. The servant is not above his Lord.

But notice how selfish the excuse is. "They will reject me." The soul winner has to get past himself. The issue is not you. The issue is Christ and the soul in front of you. If they reject the gospel, that is tragic for them, not merely uncomfortable for you. Your embarrassment is not the main event. Their eternity is. We have become so tender about our feelings that we forget sinners are headed to judgment. What is a dirty look compared to hell? What is an awkward moment compared to the lake of fire? What is being called a name compared to a soul losing eternity? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). If the soul is worth more than the world, your reputation is not worth more than the soul.

Rejection can also be useful. It teaches humility, dependence, patience, and endurance. It reminds you that you cannot save anybody. It teaches you to leave results with God. It teaches you to keep sowing when the soil is hard. Do not become bitter. Do not become timid. Do not become obnoxious. Just keep going. “And let us not be weary in well doing” (Galatians 6:9). Some will reject. Some will listen. Some who reject today may listen later. Some who mock in public may think in private. Your job is not to control the response. Your job is to be faithful with the witness.

Chapter Four: “It Will Not Do Any Good”

“It will not do any good” is one of the devil’s favorite lies because it pretends to be realism. You hand out a tract, and he says, “They will throw it away.” You witness to a coworker, and he says, “He will not listen.” You speak to a family member, and he says, “You have tried before.” You knock doors, and he says, “People do not respond anymore.” You mail tracts, and he says, “Nobody reads those.” The devil is suddenly an expert in evangelistic results when he wants to keep you quiet. But he is a liar. You do not know what God will use. “Thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that” (Ecclesiastes 11:6). That verse was written for people who cannot see the future. That includes you.

The Word of God can do more than you think. A tract can be read later. A verse can come back at midnight. A conversation can trouble a conscience for years. A rejected witness can become the first plow cut in hard ground. A child may remember something said casually. A dying man may recall a gospel warning he once brushed aside. You do not know. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Planting may not look like harvest, but without planting there is no harvest. A man who refuses to sow because he cannot guarantee visible results is not wise; he is faithless.

This excuse also insults the gospel. “It will not do any good” may be true if you are talking about your charm, your cleverness, or your personality. But the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16). The Word of God is quick and powerful. The Holy Ghost still convicts. Christ still saves. Grace still reaches sinners. The blood still cleanses. Do not judge the power of the gospel by the coldness of the age. Dark nights make light more necessary, not less. Sow the seed. Let God decide what good it will do.

Chapter Five: “I Am Too Busy”

“I am too busy” is one of the most revealing excuses because it tells what a man values. Everybody is busy with something. The question is not whether you have responsibilities. You do. Work, family, church, health, obligations, and daily life take time. The question is whether you have arranged your life so tightly around temporal things that eternal things

cannot get in. If you are too busy to speak of Christ, too busy to hand out a tract, too busy to pray for lost souls, too busy to learn the gospel clearly, too busy to witness to a coworker, too busy to write a note, too busy to ask a family member about salvation, then you are too busy.

The Bible says, “redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16). Redeeming time means buying up opportunity. It does not mean waiting until life becomes empty and easy. It will not. If the devil can keep you waiting for a less busy season, he can keep you silent for decades. Witness while busy. Carry tracts while running errands. Speak to the cashier while shopping. Talk to coworkers while working. Use lunch breaks. Use phone calls. Use letters. Use travel. Use waiting rooms. Use the natural contacts God already put in your life. Soul winning is not always adding an entire new schedule; sometimes it is adding gospel alertness to the schedule you already have.

Look at how much time is wasted on lesser things. Scrolling, arguing, entertainment, news, hobbies, sports, shopping, complaining, and idle talk eat hours. Yet a Christian says he is too busy to witness. Too busy to hand out a tract? Too busy to pray over three names? Too busy to learn five verses? Too busy to speak one sentence for Christ? No, in many cases the issue is not time. It is burden. When a man truly cares about something, he finds time. If one soul is worth more than the world, then gospel witness deserves a place in the day.

Chapter Six: The Sinner’s Objections Must Be Answered Without Losing the Gospel

The sinner has excuses too, and the soul winner must learn to answer them without losing the main issue. The sinner says, “There are hypocrites in the church.” True. There are hypocrites in grocery stores too, but you still eat. There are hypocrites in banks, hospitals, schools, families, and governments, but you still use them when needed. The presence of hypocrites does not change the truth of Jesus Christ. The issue is not whether hypocrites exist. The issue is whether Christ died for your sins and whether you are trusting Him. Do not let the hypocrite excuse become a hiding place. Judas was a hypocrite, and he did not make Jesus false.

The sinner says, “I am a good person.” The Bible says, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). He says, “Nobody can know.” The Bible says, “that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). He says, “All religions lead to God.” Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). He says, “I will do it later.” The Bible says, “behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). He says, “I do not believe the Bible.” The Bible still says he will be judged, and his unbelief does not cancel truth. “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (Romans 3:4).

But answer objections with the goal of getting back to Christ. Do not spend an hour arguing about hypocrites, dinosaurs, politics, church history, denominational scandals, and philosophical traps while the gospel lies untouched. Some questions are sincere and deserve patience. Some are smoke screens. Ask, “If I could answer that, would you be willing to hear what the Bible says about salvation?” That exposes whether the objection is real or evasive. Keep bringing the sinner back to sin, judgment, Christ, the cross, the blood, the resurrection, grace, and faith. The gospel is the main issue. Do not lose it in the weeds.

Chapter Seven: Fear Must Be Answered With Faith and Obedience

At the root of many excuses is fear. Fear of man. Fear of failure. Fear of rejection. Fear of embarrassment. Fear of questions. Fear of conflict. Fear of being labeled. Fear is a snare. “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25). Fear will tie your tongue, cool your burden, hide your tracts, close your Bible, and make you call disobedience wisdom. It must be answered with faith and obedience. You cannot wait until fear disappears. You obey through it.

The apostles knew what real threats were. They were commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus. Their response was not to form a committee on cultural sensitivity. They said, “We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). Then they prayed for boldness. They did not pray for popularity. They did not pray for an easier age. They prayed, “grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word” (Acts 4:29). That is the prayer many Christians need to recover. Not “Lord, make witnessing comfortable.” “Lord, make me bold.”

Faith says God can use the seed. Faith says the Word will not return void. Faith says Christ is worth speaking of. Faith says souls matter more than comfort. Faith says obedience is better than self-protection. The way to overcome fear is not to analyze it forever. It is to take the next obedient step. Hand the tract. Ask the question. Speak the verse. Give the testimony. Open the Bible. The first step may be shaky. Take it anyway. Courage is not the absence of trembling; it is obedience while trembling.

Conclusion

Fear, excuses, and objections are part of the work. The sinner has his excuses, and the Christian has his. The sinner hides behind hypocrisy, morality, unbelief, delay, religion, and confusion. The Christian hides behind ignorance, lack of gifting, fear of rejection, discouragement, busyness, and the lie that it will not do any good. Both need to be brought under the Word of God. The sinner’s excuses must be answered with Scripture and brought back to Christ. The Christian’s excuses must be exposed as disobedience when they keep him silent.

The truth is simple. You may not know enough, so learn. You may not be gifted, but you can witness. They may reject you, but they rejected Christ. You may not see immediate results, but the seed is still good. You may be busy, but souls are eternal. You may be afraid, but God did not give you the spirit of fear. You may face objections, but the Bible has answers, and the gospel must remain central. No excuse is big enough to cancel the command of God or the value of a soul.

So stop feeding excuses. Starve them. Get in the Book. Learn the gospel. Carry tracts. Pray for openings. Ask God for boldness. Answer sinners with Scripture. Answer your own fear with obedience. The field is not waiting for perfect men. It is waiting for faithful ones. Christ saves sinners. The gospel is the power of God. The Word is the sword. The Holy Ghost still works. And the Christian who quits making excuses and starts sowing seed will find that God can use weak vessels who are willing to obey.

21 of 25: Fishers of Men – Persuasion Without Manipulation

Introduction

There is a Bible difference between persuading a soul and manipulating a soul. That difference needs to be driven into the ground because modern soul winning has been damaged on both sides. On one side, you have the dead, timid, respectable Christian who says, “We should not pressure anybody,” and by that he means he never warns anybody, never presses anybody, never asks anybody where he will spend eternity, and never brings the sinner to a point of decision. On the other side, you have the religious salesman who thinks soul winning means pushing a sinner through a few verses, forcing a prayer out of his mouth, counting him as saved, and moving on to the next number. Both are wrong. The first man has no burden. The second man has no wisdom. The Bible says, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Persuasion is Bible. Manipulation is flesh.

A soul winner must understand that winning souls is more than helping, more than bringing, and more than merely leading in a loose sense. A person can help a sinner by giving him literature. He can bring a sinner to church. He can lead a sinner toward truth by answering questions. But winning a soul involves dealing with that soul personally, prayerfully, scripturally, and persuasively until the man is brought face to face with Jesus Christ and his own need of salvation. That requires burden. It requires intercession. It requires the kind of concern that does not just toss a religious remark in the air and hope something happens. A real soul winner wants the man saved. He wants the sinner to

understand. He wants the conscience awakened. He wants the gospel clear. He wants the soul brought to Christ, not merely brought into a building, a program, a prayer, or a religious experience.

But persuasion must never become manipulation. The sinner must not be tricked, flattered, rushed, cornered, emotionally bullied, or counted as saved because he repeated words he did not understand. You cannot regenerate him. You cannot seal him. You cannot believe for him. You cannot repent for him. You cannot make the Holy Ghost do your bidding. You can preach. You can warn. You can plead. You can reason. You can answer. You can show Scripture. You can press the claims of Christ. But you cannot manufacture the new birth. The soul winner who forgets that will produce fake numbers, false assurance, and religious confusion. The soul winner who remembers it will persuade with tears, truth, prayer, and Scripture, while leaving the saving work to God.

Chapter One: Biblical Persuasion Is Commanded

The Bible does not present soul winning as a cold transfer of information. It is not merely handing a man a doctrine sheet and walking away with no concern for his response. Paul said, “we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). That is active. That is earnest. That is not neutral. Paul knew the terror of the Lord, and that knowledge moved him to persuade. He did not say, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we casually mention religious options.” He did not say, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we keep quiet so nobody feels pressured.” He said, “we persuade men.” A preacher or witness who never persuades is not following Paul in that verse.

Persuasion means you are trying to bring the sinner to a right conclusion. You are not merely presenting Christ as one possibility among many. You are declaring that Christ is the only Saviour, the sinner is lost without Him, judgment is coming, and faith in Christ is the only way of salvation. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). That is not a casual suggestion. That is the answer to a desperate question. When the jailer said, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul did not say, “Explore your spirituality.” He pointed him directly to the Lord Jesus Christ. Persuasion presses truth until the sinner understands the issue.

This matters because some Christians have confused gentleness with weakness. Yes, a servant of the Lord should not strive in a fleshly way. Yes, he should be patient. Yes, he should be meek when instructing those that oppose themselves. But meekness is not silence. Patience is not cowardice. Gentleness is not gospel fog. Paul reasoned, testified, warned, and persuaded. The Lord Jesus warned men plainly. Peter exhorted the crowd at Pentecost, saying, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). Biblical

persuasion is commanded because souls are in danger and the gospel demands a response.

Chapter Two: Manipulation Is Not Soul Winning

Manipulation is when a worker uses pressure tactics to produce a visible response instead of patiently bringing a sinner to understand and believe the gospel. It may look successful on paper, but it is rotten at the root. The manipulator wants the decision more than he wants truth. He wants the number more than he wants understanding. He wants the sinner to say the words more than he wants him to believe from the heart. He rushes past confusion. He ignores hesitation. He turns prayer into a formula. Then he announces, "You are saved," as though his declaration seals the soul. That is not soul winning. That is religious fraud.

The Bible says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10). That verse alone destroys mouth-only manipulation. If the man does not believe from the heart, you did not help him by getting him to move his lips. You may have made him harder to reach. Now he thinks he has already done what he needs to do because some worker told him a prayer settled it. He may spend the next twenty years saying, "I prayed that prayer," while never once trusting the blood of Jesus Christ as the full payment for sin. That is a tragedy. It would have been better to leave him honestly troubled than falsely assured.

Manipulation also misrepresents God. It makes salvation look like a transaction controlled by the worker. Say this. Repeat that. Sign here. Raise your hand. Now you are safe. That is not the new birth. That is not the Holy Ghost convicting and regenerating. That is not the sinner hearing the word of truth and trusting Christ. Ephesians 1:13 gives the order: the sinner hears the word of truth, the gospel of salvation; he trusts; after believing, he is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That is God's order. Manipulation tries to shortcut the whole thing with a human method. A Bible believer should want no part of that.

Chapter Three: Persuasion Begins With Intercessory Burden

Biblical persuasion begins before the conversation. It begins in prayer. If you are going to deal with a soul, you ought to pray for that soul. That is where intercessory burden comes in. A man who never prays for sinners may still talk to them, but his work will often become mechanical, argumentative, or fleshly. Prayer reminds you that you cannot save them. Prayer puts the soul before God before you put the gospel before the soul. Paul said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1). There is the burden. Heart's desire and prayer. Not cold doctrine only. Not anger at their error only. A desire that they might be saved.

Intercessory burden changes the way you speak. If you have prayed for a man, you are less likely to treat him like a debate opponent or a number on a report. You remember he is a soul. You remember that blindness is real. You remember that false religion may have had him in chains for years. You remember that pride, fear, family pressure, ignorance, and sin may be wrapped around his heart. That does not make you soft on error, but it helps keep you from becoming hard toward the person. “And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire” (Jude 22-23). Both require burden.

Prayer also gives patience. Some sinners need more than one conversation. Some need seed planted and watered. Some need false foundations exposed slowly. Some are under conviction but afraid. Some are confused by years of bad teaching. If your only goal is a quick number, you will mishandle such people. But if you have a burden, you can labor. You can answer. You can return. You can pray again. You can leave a tract. You can send a verse. You can keep the door open. The burden does not manipulate. It intercedes, persuades, and waits on God.

Chapter Four: Persuasion Uses Scripture, Not Tricks

Biblical persuasion uses Scripture because the power is in the Word of God. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The soul winner’s cleverness cannot produce faith. Emotional stories cannot produce faith unless they lead to the truth of the Word. Music, mood, lighting, pressure, and atmosphere cannot replace Scripture. A sinner must hear the gospel. He must hear what God says about sin, judgment, Christ, the blood, the resurrection, grace, and faith. The Word gives light. “The entrance of thy words giveth light” (Psalm 119:130).

This is why a soul winner should take people through the Scriptures. Show them Romans 3:23. Show them Romans 6:23. Show them Romans 5:8. Show them 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Show them Romans 3:25. Show them Ephesians 2:8-9. Show them Acts 16:31. Show them John 5:24. Do not merely tell them what you believe. Let them read what God said. Ask, “What does that verse say?” Ask, “According to this verse, what did Christ do?” Ask, “Does this verse say salvation is by works?” Ask, “What does God promise the believer?” Scripture-based persuasion brings the sinner under divine authority.

Tricks are unworthy of the gospel. Do not trick a man into agreeing with you by wording questions dishonestly. Do not use emotional bait to get a response. Do not tell him he will please you if he prays. Do not make him feel rude for not giving you the answer you want. Do not frighten a child into repeating words he cannot understand. Do not use crowd pressure. Do not use music to manipulate tears and then call the tears salvation. Use the

Bible. Let the sword cut. Let the seed work. Let the Holy Ghost convict. If the Word of God is not enough for your method, your method is already suspect.

Chapter Five: Persuasion Presses for a Real Response

Persuasion does not mean presenting the gospel and never asking the sinner what he will do with it. There comes a point where the matter must be brought home. “What are you trusting?” “Do you believe Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again?” “Are you willing to trust Him alone?” “What is keeping you from believing on Christ?” These questions are not manipulation. They are necessary. A witness who never brings the sinner to the issue may spend years casting truth into the air without ever drawing the net. The gospel demands a response. A man is either believing or not believing. He is either trusting Christ or trusting something else.

The Lord Jesus often pressed men with direct truth. He did not merely float ideas. He said, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). He said, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). He said, “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). Those are pointed statements. Paul pressed Agrippa until Agrippa said, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Almost is a terrible word. It shows the sinner was brought near the issue. He understood enough to know he was being pressed toward Christ. That is persuasion.

But pressing for a response must be honest. If the sinner says, “I do not understand,” then explain. If he says, “I am still trusting my works,” then do not tell him he is saved. If he says, “I need to think,” warn him not to delay, but do not lie to him and say his confusion is faith. If he says, “I believe,” ask what he believes and whom he is trusting. A real response is not merely a response to you. It is a response to Christ and the gospel. Persuasion presses for that, but it does not counterfeit it.

Chapter Six: Fake Numbers Are a Curse, Not a Blessing

Fake numbers are one of the great curses of shallow evangelism. Men want to report how many souls they won, how many prayed, how many came forward, how many raised hands, how many cards were signed, and how many decisions were made. There is nothing wrong with rejoicing when people truly get saved. The book of Acts gives numbers at times. But there is something very wrong when numbers become more important than truth. If the number is inflated by pressure, confusion, false assurance, or shallow professions, it is not fruit. It is a religious statistic.

A fake number can soothe the worker’s ego while damning the sinner’s confidence. The worker goes home happy because he counted another convert. The sinner goes home lost but thinking he is saved because someone told him so. That is a terrible exchange. The

worker gets a story. The sinner gets false peace. God is not impressed. “The LORD pondereth the hearts” (Proverbs 21:2). Men count professions. God knows believers. Men count prayers. God knows faith. Men count hands. God knows hearts. That ought to put fear into every man who handles souls carelessly.

It is better to have fewer real converts than a multitude of fake decisions. It is better to say, “I gave the gospel clearly, and he is still thinking,” than to say, “I got him to pray,” when he did not understand Christ. It is better to leave a sinner under conviction than to numb him with false assurance. A faithful soul winner is not judged by how many numbers he can manufacture. He is judged by faithfulness to the message, honesty in the work, love for the soul, and dependence on God for the increase.

Chapter Seven: Biblical Persuasion Leaves the Results With God

After you have prayed, opened the Scriptures, explained the gospel, warned, pleaded, answered, and pressed the issue, you must leave the results with God. That is not indifference. That is faith. You cannot crawl inside the sinner’s heart and believe for him. You cannot force conviction to become faith. You cannot regenerate him. You cannot seal him. You cannot guarantee the response you want. Paul planted. Apollos watered. “But God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6). That verse should be written across the soul winner’s mind. Planting matters. Watering matters. But God gives the increase.

Leaving the results with God protects you from pride when someone believes. If a sinner gets saved, glory to God. You did not perform the miracle. Christ saved him. The Spirit sealed him. The Word reached him. You were allowed to be the instrument. That should make you thankful, not proud. It also protects you from despair when someone refuses. A rejected gospel presentation is not always a failed witness. Noah preached, and the world still drowned. Jeremiah preached, and many refused. Stephen preached, and they stoned him. Paul preached, and some mocked. Even the Lord Jesus was rejected. Faithfulness is not always measured by immediate visible fruit.

Leaving the results with God also keeps persuasion from becoming manipulation. The manipulator cannot leave results with God because he needs results for himself. He needs the number, the story, the feeling of success. The biblical soul winner can press honestly and then stop honestly. He can say, “I have shown you what the Bible says. You need to trust Christ. I cannot believe for you.” That is clean. That is true. That leaves the sinner responsible before God. Persuasion does not remove responsibility. It makes the responsibility plain.

Conclusion

Persuasion without manipulation is the Bible balance. We are commanded to persuade men because the terror of the Lord is real, the soul is valuable, hell is terrible, judgment is coming, and Christ is the only Saviour. A cold witness who never presses the issue is not being spiritual. He is often being cowardly. The gospel is not a religious suggestion. It is the power of God unto salvation, and men must believe it. The soul winner should warn, plead, reason, testify, exhort, and bring the sinner face to face with Jesus Christ.

But persuasion must never become manipulation. We must not use pressure tactics, emotional trickery, dishonest questions, forced prayers, childlike compliance, altar-call machinery, or fake numbers to manufacture results. A sinner must believe from the heart. He must understand the gospel. He must trust Christ, not the worker, not a prayer, not a ritual, not a feeling, and not a church. To tell a confused sinner he is saved because he gave the response you wanted is not compassion. It is cruelty.

So persuade men, but do it the Bible way. Pray for them. Carry a burden. Open the Scriptures. Show sin, righteousness, judgment, Christ, blood, grace, and faith. Press the question honestly. Ask what they are trusting. Urge them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Warn them not to delay. But do not fake what only God can do. The soul winner plants and waters. God gives the increase. Be earnest without being crooked, bold without being fleshly, urgent without being manipulative, and faithful without needing fake numbers to prove your worth.

22 of 25: Fishers of Men – Drawing the Net

Introduction

There comes a point in soul winning where a man has to stop circling the subject and bring the sinner to the issue. That is what drawing the net means. A fisherman can cast all day, talk about fishing all day, clean his tackle all day, admire the water all day, discuss the weather all day, and tell stories about fish he has seen, but if he never draws the net, he is not finishing the work. The same thing happens in personal evangelism. Some Christians can talk about God, church, morality, prophecy, the Bible, the condition of the world, and even the gospel in a general way, but they never ask the sinner what he is going to do with Jesus Christ. They cast truth out into the conversation, but they never draw the net. They never bring the issue to a point. They never ask, “What are you trusting?” “Do you believe that Christ died for your sins and rose again?” “Are you willing to trust Him alone?” “What is keeping you from being saved?” That is not wisdom. That is fear wearing a religious coat.

Now, drawing the net is not manipulation. That needs to be said plainly because some people cannot tell the difference between biblical urgency and fleshly pressure. We are not talking about tricking a sinner, cornering him, embarrassing him, forcing him to repeat words he does not understand, or counting him saved because he gave you the answer you wanted. We already dealt with that. Prayer is not the Saviour. A decision card is not the new birth. An aisle is not Calvary. A profession is not always possession. But the abuse of a thing does not remove the right use of it. The fact that some men manipulate does not mean faithful soul winners should never press for a response. Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). Persuasion moves toward a conclusion. It does not merely drop information and drift away forever.

The gospel demands a response because Jesus Christ is not a subject to be admired from a distance. He is the Saviour to be trusted or rejected. A sinner does not remain neutral after hearing the gospel. If he refuses Christ, delays Christ, dodges Christ, or hides behind religion, he is not sitting in a harmless waiting room. He is still condemned. "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). That is why the soul winner must learn to draw the net with Scripture, sobriety, compassion, and honesty. There is a time to explain, a time to answer, a time to warn, a time to listen, and then there is a time to ask, "What will you do with Christ?" Not what will you do with my church, my argument, my personality, or my method. What will you do with the Lord Jesus Christ who died for your sins, shed His blood, was buried, and rose again?

Chapter One: Casting the Net Is Not Enough

Casting the net is necessary, but it is not the whole work. A fisherman who never casts catches nothing, so the gospel must be put out. The sinner must hear the Word. He must hear about sin, death, judgment, Christ, the cross, the blood, the burial, the resurrection, grace, and faith. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). You cannot draw a net you never cast. Some Christians want a harvest where they have never sown. They want someone to get saved without ever opening the Bible, speaking the gospel, handing a tract, or asking a question. That is fantasy religion. The seed must be sown and the net must be cast.

But there are others who cast and cast and cast, and never draw. They talk for years to the same person and never bring him to the issue. They explain doctrine, answer questions, recommend sermons, give books, invite to church, discuss theology, and keep everything safe in the realm of conversation. But at some point, a sinner should be asked whether he believes the gospel. At some point, the question must come down from the clouds and land on the soul. "Do you believe Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again?" "Are you

trusting Him alone?” “Are you still trusting your works, baptism, religion, or church?” That is drawing the net.

This is one reason some Christians never see anyone saved. They are forever casting general truth but never pressing specific responsibility. They are afraid of the moment when the sinner has to answer. They are afraid the sinner will say no. They are afraid the relationship will become uncomfortable. But the gospel has always made things uncomfortable for sinners who will not believe it. The soul winner must not be reckless, but he must not be timid. If the message has been made clear, and the sinner understands enough to respond, then ask him where he stands. Casting without drawing can become a religious way to avoid the hardest moment.

Chapter Two: The Gospel Brings Men to a Decision

The gospel is not merely information; it is a message that calls for faith. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). That is direct. The Philippian jailer asked what he must do to be saved, and the answer was not, “Think about spiritual things for the next ten years.” It was not, “Join our religious community and see how you feel.” It was not, “Admire Jesus as an option.” It was believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel brings a man to the point where he must either believe or not believe. He may use many words to decorate his refusal, but the issue remains.

Jesus Christ pressed men to decision. He said, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). He said, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). He said, “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). He said, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Those are not vague religious reflections. Those are lines drawn in the sand. Christ did not present Himself as a subject for endless polite discussion. He came as the way, the truth, and the life. A sinner either receives Him or rejects Him. There is no neutral chair in the courtroom of God.

Drawing the net means making that plain. It means saying, in one way or another, “You have heard what the Bible says. You know you are a sinner. You know Christ died for sins and rose again. You know salvation is by grace through faith, not works. What are you going to do with that?” That question is not pressure in the wrong sense. It is honest. If a doctor explains the disease and the cure, at some point he asks whether the patient will take the remedy. If a man warns a driver that the bridge is out, at some point the driver must decide whether to keep going or stop. The gospel demands a response because the soul is in danger and Christ is the only remedy.

Chapter Three: Drawing the Net Requires Gospel Clarity First

Do not draw the net before the gospel is clear. That is where many shallow soul winners get into trouble. They want a decision before the sinner understands what he is deciding about. They want a prayer before the gospel has been explained. They want a profession before Christ has been made clear. That is not drawing the net; that is dragging the net through dry ground. The sinner must hear enough truth to know his need and the Saviour's provision. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel... By which also ye are saved" (1 Corinthians 15:1–2). Then Paul declares the gospel: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. That message must be clear.

If the sinner thinks salvation is by works, draw the net by bringing him to grace. If he thinks baptism saves, draw the net by showing him the blood and faith. If he thinks all religions lead to God, draw the net by showing him Christ as the only way. If he thinks prayer words save, draw the net by showing him heart faith in Christ. But do not ask for a decision while the person is still thinking in false categories. Ask questions first. "What do you believe the gospel is?" "What are you trusting?" "Do you believe salvation is a gift or something earned?" "Do you understand that Christ died for your sins and rose again?" These questions help you know whether the net is ready to draw.

Gospel clarity also protects against fake conversions. A sinner may respond emotionally to a serious conversation, but emotion is not faith. He may want relief from fear but not understand Christ. He may want to please you but not believe the gospel. He may be willing to pray but still trust works. Drawing the net does not mean rushing him. It means bringing the truth to bear when the truth has been given. If the gospel is not clear, make it clear. If he does not understand, explain. If he is confused, answer with Scripture. But when he does understand, do not hide forever behind more explanation because you are afraid to ask for a response.

Chapter Four: Drawing the Net Uses Honest Questions

Honest questions are one of the best ways to draw the net. "Do you believe what the Bible says about your sin?" "Do you believe Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again?" "Are you trusting Him alone, or are you still trusting something else?" "What is keeping you from being saved?" "Would you like to trust Christ right now?" Those questions are not tricks. They are clear, honest, and direct. They put the issue before the sinner without manipulating him. A sinner should know what you are asking and why.

A dishonest question tries to trap a person into a response. An honest question brings him to the truth. There is a world of difference. "Would you like to go to heaven?" is not enough by itself. Most people say yes. "Would you like to avoid hell?" Of course. But that does not mean they understand the gospel or are trusting Christ. Better questions deal with the

object of faith. “What are you trusting to get to heaven?” “Do you believe Christ’s blood is enough to pay for your sins?” “Are you willing to stop trusting your works and trust Christ alone?” Those questions expose the real issue.

Drawing the net also means listening to the answer. If the sinner says, “Yes, I believe Jesus died, but I still think you have to be baptized to be saved,” the net is not drawn yet. He is still tangled in works or ritual. If he says, “I want to be saved, but I do not understand why my good works do not count,” go back to Scripture. If he says, “I believe Christ did it all,” then ask whether he is trusting Him. Do not be so eager for the answer you want that you ignore the answer he gives. Honest questions require honest listening. The goal is not a fast profession. The goal is a soul brought to Christ.

Chapter Five: Drawing the Net Should Be Urgent, Not Crooked

There should be urgency in drawing the net. A sinner is not guaranteed tomorrow. “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1). The Bible says, “behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). Now is a Bible word. Later is often the devil’s word. Many people in hell intended to think about it later. Many lost men have said, “Not now,” and never got another serious opportunity. So yes, press the urgency. Warn the sinner not to delay. Tell him life is a vapor. Tell him Christ should not be postponed.

But urgency must not become crookedness. Do not use fear to force words out of someone who does not understand. Do not tell a child, “You could die tonight,” and then bully him into repeating a prayer just to stop being scared. Do not play emotional music, tell tragic stories, and then count tears as faith. Do not use social pressure to make someone respond because others are watching. That is crooked. Biblical urgency tells the truth about time, death, judgment, and Christ. Manipulative urgency uses fear to produce a result for the worker. There is a difference.

The soul winner should be able to say, “I am urging you because this matters, but I cannot believe for you. You must trust Christ yourself.” That is clean. You can say, “Do not put this off,” and still refuse to fake a conversion. You can say, “Today is the day of salvation,” and still not pressure someone into words he does not mean. You can warn, plead, and persuade while keeping a clear conscience. Urgency belongs in soul winning because eternity is real. Crookedness has no place because the gospel is holy.

Chapter Six: Drawing the Net Means Exposing Delay

Delay is one of the sinner’s favorite hiding places. “I will think about it.” “Maybe later.” “Not today.” “I am not ready.” “I need to clean up first.” “I have too much going on.” Sometimes a person truly needs more understanding, but often delay is just unbelief dressed in softer

clothes. The soul winner should expose that. “What are you waiting for?” is a good question when the gospel has been made clear. “What would you need to know that God has not already said?” “If Christ paid for your sins and rose again, why not trust Him?” “If you are not trusting Him now, what are you trusting?” Delay needs to be brought into the light.

The Bible gives fearful examples of delayed response. Felix trembled and said, “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). A convenient season. That is one of the devil’s favorite phrases. There is no record that Felix ever got saved. Agrippa said, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Almost. Another terrible word. Almost saved is still lost. Almost persuaded is still condemned. A soul winner drawing the net should let those passages speak. Delay is not safe.

This does not mean pretending every person who asks for time is insincere. Some are counting the cost. Some are confused. Some are afraid. Some need to read Scripture. Be wise. But if a person clearly understands and is simply putting off Christ, warn him. “You are not promised tomorrow.” “You are rejecting Christ today by refusing to trust Him.” “Not deciding for Christ is still deciding against Him for now.” That is not harsh. It is true. Drawing the net brings delay under the searchlight of Scripture.

Chapter Seven: Drawing the Net Leaves the Final Choice With the Sinner Before God

After the gospel is clear, the questions are asked, urgency is pressed, and delay is exposed, the final choice rests with the sinner before God. You cannot make it for him. A man must personally believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You can guide him. You can warn him. You can plead with him. You can pray for him. You can answer him. But you cannot believe in his place. Faith is not transferable by pressure. The sinner must come to Christ. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). You can point. He must come.

This is where drawing the net differs from manipulation. Manipulation will not let the sinner stand responsible before God. It keeps pushing, rewording, cornering, and pressing for some outward motion. Biblical drawing brings the issue plainly and then leaves the man responsible. You can say, “I have shown you what the Bible says. You need Christ. Will you trust Him?” If he refuses, he refuses with light. If he believes, he believes with understanding. Either way, the net has been drawn honestly.

Leaving the final choice with the sinner also protects the worker’s conscience. You do not have to manufacture a result. You do not have to pretend. You do not have to inflate numbers. You do not have to say someone got saved when he did not. You can leave the conversation knowing you gave the gospel, pressed the issue, and dealt honestly. That is

faithfulness. The Holy Ghost does the saving work. The sinner must believe. The worker must be faithful. That is the Bible balance.

Conclusion

Drawing the net is a necessary part of soul winning. It is not enough to cast truth forever without ever bringing the sinner to the point of decision. The gospel is not a subject for endless discussion only. It is the message of salvation, and it demands a response. Christ died for our sins, was buried, rose again, shed His blood, and offers salvation by grace through faith. The sinner must be asked what he will do with that. Will he believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, or will he keep trusting himself, his religion, his works, his rituals, his excuses, or his delay?

But drawing the net must be done honestly. Do not draw before the gospel is clear. Do not mistake emotional pressure for conviction. Do not manipulate with fear, music, public pressure, or dishonest questions. Do not count fake numbers. Do not give assurance where there is no understanding or faith. Use Scripture. Ask honest questions. Press the urgency. Expose delay. Then leave the sinner responsible before God. Biblical persuasion is earnest and clean. Fleshly manipulation is crooked and dangerous.

So learn to draw the net. Ask, "What are you trusting?" Ask, "Do you believe Christ died for your sins and rose again?" Ask, "Are you willing to trust Him alone?" Ask, "What is keeping you from being saved?" Do not be afraid of the moment when the conversation becomes personal. That may be the very moment God uses. A fisherman who never draws the net may talk about fishing all his life and never bring anything to shore. A soul winner must cast the gospel clearly, then draw the net faithfully, and trust God with the increase.

23 of 25: Fishers of Men – Follow-Up After a Profession

Introduction

Soul winning does not end the moment a sinner makes a profession of faith. That is where many churches have dropped the baby on the concrete. They work to get a profession, a raised hand, a walk down the aisle, a signed card, a repeated prayer, or a public statement, and then they leave the newborn standing in the cold with a bottle in one hand and wolves circling the crib. That is not Bible Christianity. If a person truly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, that soul has passed from death unto life, and now he needs grounding. He needs assurance from the Scriptures. He needs to know what happened to him. He needs to learn how to pray. He needs to get into the Bible. He needs fellowship with believers. He needs

baptism rightly understood, not as a saving ritual, but as public identification with Christ after salvation. He needs discipleship. He needs warnings about false doctrine. He needs to be taught eternal security so the first legalist, Catholic, Campbellite, Adventist, Calvinist confusion machine, or works-salvation preacher does not come along and rob him of peace before his spiritual eyes are fully open.

There is a lot of cheap evangelism that treats a profession like the finish line, when in reality it should be the beginning of care. A baby being born is not the end of parenting. It is the start. Nobody in his right mind says, “Well, the child was born, so my work is done,” and then leaves the infant on the sidewalk to raise himself. Yet churches do that spiritually all the time. They count the profession, celebrate the number, mention it in a report, and never feed the convert. Then they wonder why so many disappear, get confused, return to old sins, fall into false doctrine, or spend years doubting whether they were ever saved. Some of that is because many professions were never real. But some of it is because real newborn believers were never grounded. Peter wrote, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). Newborn babes need milk. If nobody feeds them, do not be surprised when they become weak.

Follow-up is not about controlling someone after a profession. It is not about turning a new believer into a church robot. It is about obeying the Lord by helping a soul grow in the truth. Jesus said to make disciples, and teaching is part of that commission. Paul did not merely preach and vanish. He returned to strengthen disciples. He wrote letters. He warned. He instructed. He corrected. He prayed. He labored “until Christ be formed” in them (Galatians 4:19). That is the spirit we need. If God lets you have a part in seeing someone trust Christ, do not treat that soul like a number. Treat him like someone Christ bought with His blood. Give him Scripture. Give him assurance. Help him get grounded. Warn him against false gospels. Teach him to stand on Christ, not feelings, not works, not church systems, not rituals, not his own performance. Soul winning opens the door. Follow-up helps the new believer learn how to walk through it.

Chapter One: Make Sure the Profession Was Gospel-Based

Before follow-up can be done rightly, there must be care that the profession was actually gospel-based. This is not about tormenting a new believer or making him doubt. It is about making sure his faith is resting where the Bible says it must rest: in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work. Many people make religious professions for many reasons. Some want relief. Some want to please a parent. Some want to satisfy a preacher. Some want to escape pressure. Some want to join a group. Some are emotional in a moment. Some are trusting a prayer. Some are trusting baptism. Some are trusting works while adding Jesus to the pile. Follow-up should begin by asking, gently and clearly, what the person understood

and what he is trusting. “What did Christ do for you?” “What are you trusting for salvation?” “Do you believe Jesus Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again?” “Are you trusting Him alone?”

This is not suspicion for suspicion’s sake. It is spiritual care. Paul told the Corinthians to keep in memory what he preached unless they had believed in vain, and then he repeated the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. That gospel must be the foundation. If the person says, “I am saved because I prayed,” you need to guide him carefully away from confidence in the prayer and toward confidence in Christ. If he says, “I am saved because I decided to live right,” he needs the gospel clarified. If he says, “I am saved because I got baptized,” he needs to understand grace and the blood. If he says, “Jesus Christ died for my sins, rose again, and I trusted Him,” then you have something scriptural to build upon. Do not build discipleship on fog. Build it on Christ.

A good follow-up worker is not trying to steal assurance from a new believer. He is trying to place assurance where it belongs. False assurance is cruel, but Bible assurance is a blessing. If someone truly believed the gospel, show him what God says about the believer. Do not leave him staring at his emotions, tears, memory, or sincerity. Put his eyes on Christ and the written Word. If someone did not understand the gospel clearly, do not shame him. Open the Bible and explain it again. Some people need more light. Some need the truth repeated. Some need false religious ideas untangled. The goal is not to win an argument about whether a profession was valid. The goal is to make Christ clear and get the soul resting in the right place.

Chapter Two: Ground the New Believer in Assurance

The first thing many new believers need is assurance. Not presumption. Not a preacher’s emotional guarantee. Not “you prayed, so never question anything.” Bible assurance. Assurance comes from what God wrote, not from what a man feels. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). Written. Believe. Know. There is the order. God wrote truth so believers could know they have eternal life. A new believer should be shown that verse early and often. He needs to understand that assurance is anchored in God’s promise to the believer, not in the strength of his emotions.

John 5:24 is another foundation stone: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.” Hath means hath. It does not mean hopes to have if he behaves well enough. It does not mean may receive after a probationary period. It does not mean will find out at the final judgment whether Christ’s

work was enough. It says the believer hath everlasting life and “is passed from death unto life.” That is a tremendous verse for a new convert. If he has believed on Christ, God says he has everlasting life. Teach him to answer doubt with Scripture. Not with feelings. Not with church slogans. With Scripture.

Assurance also needs to be protected from two enemies: legalism and sin. Legalism says, “You are not really safe unless you keep performing.” Sin says, “Since you are saved, it does not matter how you live.” Both are lies. The believer is secure because Christ saves and keeps him, but that security is not a license to live like the devil. A new believer must learn that his sonship rests on Christ, while his fellowship can be affected by sin. He needs to know how to confess sin to God as a son, not as a lost man trying to get saved again every time he stumbles. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9). Assurance should make a believer thankful, clean, and steady, not careless.

Chapter Three: Teach Him to Get Into the Bible

A new believer needs the Bible the way a newborn needs milk. He may not understand much at first. That is normal. Babies do not eat steak on the first day. But they do need nourishment, and the Christian’s nourishment is the Word of God. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). The first follow-up question should not be, “How can we use you in the church program?” It should be, “Are you getting into the Bible?” A new convert who is not fed will become weak, confused, and vulnerable. The Word cleans him, strengthens him, teaches him, corrects him, and roots him.

Do not simply tell a new believer, “Read the Bible,” and walk away. Help him know where to begin. The Gospel of John is a strong place because it presents Christ and eternal life plainly. Romans grounds him in sin, justification, grace, and Christian living. Ephesians shows him his position in Christ, salvation by grace, sealing by the Spirit, and the believer’s walk. First John helps with fellowship, assurance, and discernment. Teach him to read slowly. Teach him to mark verses. Teach him to ask, “What does this say about God, Christ, sin, salvation, the believer, and how I should walk?” Give him a simple Bible reading plan if needed, but do not make the plan more important than the Book.

The Bible also protects him from false teachers. A new believer who does not know Scripture is easy prey. Someone will come along and say, “You need to keep the Sabbath to be right with God.” Another will say, “You need water baptism to wash away your sins.” Another will say, “You can lose salvation every time you sin.” Another will say, “The church alone can interpret truth.” Another will say, “The King James Bible is outdated and unreliable.” Another will say, “Paul’s gospel does not matter.” If the new believer is not

grounded in the Book, he can be tossed around quickly. Teach him early that the Bible is his authority. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

Chapter Four: Teach Him to Pray Like a Son

A new believer needs to learn prayer, not as a ritual, but as fellowship with God. Many people come out of religious backgrounds where prayer is memorized, formal, repetitive, or directed through some mediator other than Christ. Others come out of no prayer life at all and do not know how to begin. Teach him that because he is saved, he can come to God as a child to a Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Ephesians 2:18). That is not dead religion. That is access. The believer does not need Mary, a priest, a saint, a confessional booth, or a religious system to get him to God. He has access through Christ.

Teach him to pray honestly. Thanksgiving, confession, requests, intercession, worship, and dependence all belong in prayer. He does not need to sound like a preacher. He does not need fancy language. He needs sincerity and faith. God is not impressed by long, empty religious speeches. Jesus warned about vain repetitions. Prayer is not magic words. It is talking to God under the authority of Scripture and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Encourage the new believer to set aside time to pray, but also to pray throughout the day. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) is not mechanical chanting. It is a life of dependence.

Prayer will also help him stand in temptation. A new believer often faces immediate pressure. Old friends test him. Old sins call him. Doubt comes. Family may mock. Religion may confuse. The flesh does not disappear because he got saved. Teach him to pray when tempted, when discouraged, when confused, and when he fails. Teach him not to run from God after sin, but to confess and get right. The devil wants a new believer isolated, ashamed, and silent. Prayer keeps him looking to the Lord. A soul winner who leads a person to Christ and never teaches him to pray has left a soldier without communication.

Chapter Five: Teach Baptism Rightly, Without Making It Part of Salvation

A new believer should be taught baptism, but baptism must be taught rightly. Baptism does not save the soul. The blood of Jesus Christ saves. Grace through faith saves. Christ saves. Water baptism is an act of obedience after salvation, a public identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is not the cause of regeneration. It is not the washing away of sins in the soul. It is not a sacrament that completes the gospel. “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17). That verse alone should make every baptismal regeneration preacher choke on his own system. If baptism were part of the saving gospel for the body of Christ, Paul could not have said that.

But because baptism does not save, some believers treat it as unimportant. That is also wrong. Baptism matters because Christ commanded it and because it testifies publicly. The new believer should understand that he is not being baptized to get saved, but because he has been saved. He is identifying with Christ. He is making a public testimony that he belongs to the Lord. He is showing outwardly what has happened inwardly. The order matters. Faith first, then baptism. In Acts, those who received the Word were baptized. The Ethiopian eunuch believed and then was baptized. That is Bible order.

This point is especially important because false teachers will use baptism to confuse new believers. Campbellites and other baptismal regeneration groups love to pounce on young converts and tell them they are not really saved without water. A new believer must be grounded before they get to him. Show him Ephesians 2:8-9. Show him Romans 4:5. Show him the thief on the cross. Show him Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17. Then teach him to obey the Lord in baptism rightly, joyfully, and publicly, without letting anyone turn water into a rival to the blood of Christ.

Chapter Six: Bring Him Into Fellowship and Discipleship

A new believer needs fellowship with Bible-believing Christians. Lone-ranger Christianity is dangerous, especially for a newborn. The early believers "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. That is healthy Christian life. A new believer needs to be around people who love the Book, believe the gospel, pray, worship, and walk with God. He needs examples. He needs encouragement. He needs correction. He needs older believers who can help him grow.

But fellowship must be Bible-based. Do not throw a new convert into just any church because it has a steeple and friendly people. Bad doctrine can poison a young believer quickly. A church that corrupts the gospel, attacks the Bible, preaches works salvation, denies eternal security, exalts tradition, entertains the flesh, or runs on emotional nonsense can do serious damage. Better a new believer have a small circle of strong Bible believers than a large religious crowd that feeds him confusion. The local church should be a nursery, a school, a family, and a training ground. Too many churches are nurseries with no milk, schools with no doctrine, families with no discipline, and training grounds with no gospel fire.

Discipleship means teaching him to follow Christ, not merely attend services. He needs to learn Bible reading, prayer, assurance, Christian conduct, separation from sin, witnessing, giving, service, forgiveness, spiritual warfare, and how to handle trials. He needs to understand that salvation is free, but growth requires obedience. He is not saved by

discipleship, but he should become a disciple because he is saved. “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). Teaching takes time. Follow-up takes time. If you are willing to spend an hour getting a profession but not willing to spend time helping the person grow, something is wrong.

Chapter Seven: Ground Him in Eternal Security Before the Wolves Arrive

One of the most important follow-up subjects is eternal security. A new believer must know that salvation rests on Christ’s finished work, not his ability to keep himself saved. If he does not learn that early, every legalist and false teacher in the county will try to shake him. The Bible says believers are “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” after believing the gospel (Ephesians 1:13). It says the believer is “sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). It says Christ gives eternal life and His sheep shall “never perish” (John 10:28). It says nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39). That is not temporary probation. That is security.

This doctrine is not a side issue for advanced students. It is practical milk and meat together. A new believer who thinks he can lose salvation every time he sins will either become terrified, self-righteous, or eventually exhausted. He will look at himself instead of Christ. He will measure his standing by performance instead of promise. He will confess the same sins over and over trying to get re-saved. He will be vulnerable to churches that control people through fear. Teach him the difference between salvation and fellowship, sonship and discipleship, justification and sanctification, the new birth and daily growth. A son may need correction, but he does not become unborn every time he disobeys.

Grounding him in eternal security also protects grace. Works-salvation systems often smuggle works in through the back door by saying, “You are saved by grace, but you stay saved by works.” That is just works salvation with a delayed fuse. If Christ saves and seals the believer, then Christ keeps him. Good works matter, but they are fruit, not the root. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Ephesians 2:10). The good works come after Ephesians 2:8-9, not before them and not as the condition that keeps salvation alive. Teach the new believer to rest in Christ and then walk worthy because he is saved, not to stay saved.

Conclusion

Follow-up after a profession is not optional decoration. It is part of caring for souls. If a person truly believes the gospel, he needs assurance, Scripture, prayer, fellowship, baptism rightly understood, discipleship, and grounding in eternal security. He needs someone to help him understand what happened and how to begin walking with God. A newborn left unfed is a tragedy. A new convert left unguided is easy prey. Churches that

count professions but do not feed converts are not doing faithful work. They are counting births and neglecting babies.

The follow-up must begin with the gospel foundation. What did the person believe? What is he trusting? Is his confidence in Christ's death, blood, burial, and resurrection, or is it in a prayer, ritual, emotion, or church system? Once that is clear, give him Bible assurance. Show him 1 John 5:13, John 5:24, Ephesians 1:13, and John 10:28. Teach him to read the Bible, pray, obey the Lord in baptism as a testimony after salvation, and get into sound fellowship. Warn him against false doctrine before false teachers find him. Teach him eternal security so his peace rests on Christ instead of his own performance.

Soul winning is not merely getting a sinner to make a profession. It is caring enough to see that soul established in the truth. Planting matters. Reaping matters. But feeding matters too. If God lets you have a part in seeing someone saved, do not treat that soul like a statistic. Treat him like a new believer Christ purchased with His own blood. Help him get grounded. Help him stand. Help him grow. Help him learn the Book. Help him rest in Christ. The work of personal evangelism is not finished when the profession is made. In many ways, that is where the next work begins.

24 of 25: Fishers of Men – Why Churches Stopped Winning Souls

Introduction

Somewhere along the line, churches stopped believing that every saved person is supposed to be a witness. They did not always say it out loud. They did not print it in the doctrinal statement. They did not stand in the pulpit and announce, "From now on, the average believer can sit, watch, sing, give, attend, and leave the evangelism to the professionals." But that is what happened in practice. Soul winning got moved from the street to the sanctuary, from the believer to the staff, from the daily path to the church calendar, from the burden of the saved man to the job description of the paid man. The average Christian was trained to invite people to church instead of giving them the gospel. The average church member was trained to think outreach meant showing up for an event, handing out church-branded material, supporting a missions budget, or hoping the preacher would say something evangelistic when visitors came. That is not New Testament Christianity. That is program religion with a gospel label stuck on the box.

The gospel was never meant to be trapped inside the sanctuary. It belongs in the streets, homes, workplaces, jails, hospitals, schools, barracks, restaurants, checkout lines,

porches, living rooms, and ordinary conversations of daily life. Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). He did not say, “Build a religious facility and wait for every creature to come sit quietly in a padded chair.” The local church is important. Bible preaching is important. The assembly of believers is important. But the sanctuary is not the whole field. The field is the world. “The field is the world” (Matthew 13:38). If all the gospel activity happens inside the church building, most of the field is never touched. The lost do not live in pews. They live in houses, apartments, offices, factories, dorms, neighborhoods, nursing homes, prisons, and digital noise. If the gospel never leaves the church building, it has been functionally buried.

This chapter is a rebuke because the hour calls for one. Modern churches have become experts at programs and amateurs at soul winning. They know how to organize coffee teams, children’s check-in systems, media booths, worship sets, sermon series graphics, leadership pipelines, small group campaigns, branding meetings, building projects, livestreams, conferences, and volunteer rotations, but many of them could not teach a new believer how to sit across from a sinner and show him from the Bible how to be saved. They have activity without burden, motion without mission, events without evangelism, and crowds without conversion. A church can be busy and still be barren. A church can have a full calendar and an empty net. A church can be known in the community and unknown in hell. The question is not, “Do we have programs?” The question is, “Are sinners hearing the gospel, and are saved people being trained to win souls?”

Chapter One: Churches Replaced Witnessing With Invitations

One of the first reasons churches stopped winning souls is that they replaced witnessing with invitations. Now, inviting someone to church is not wrong. It can be good. A sinner may come to a service, hear the gospel, and get saved. Praise God when that happens. But inviting someone to church is not the same thing as giving him the gospel. A church invitation may get him into a building. The gospel tells him how to get into Christ. A church invitation may expose him to preaching. The gospel tells him that Christ died for his sins, was buried, rose again, shed His blood, and saves by grace through faith. Those are not the same. When Christians think they have witnessed because they said, “You should come to church sometime,” they have confused the doorway with the message.

This substitution has made believers passive. Instead of learning how to use Scripture, they learn how to promote events. Instead of asking, “Are you saved?” they ask, “Would you like to visit our church?” Instead of explaining sin, judgment, blood, grace, and faith, they hand someone a service time and hope the preacher handles the hard part. That is not entirely wrong if it is part of a larger witness, but it is weak if it becomes the whole witness. The early believers did not merely invite people to a meeting. They preached Christ. “Therefore

they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). Everywhere. Not just in the assembly. Not just under apostolic supervision. Scattered believers carried the Word with them.

The problem is that many Christians feel safer inviting than witnessing. An invitation can be vague and socially acceptable. Witnessing gets personal. An invitation says, “Come see what we do.” Witnessing says, “You are a sinner, Christ died for you, and you need to believe on Him.” An invitation can be ignored politely. The gospel confronts the conscience. That is why churches drift toward invitation-only evangelism. It is easier. It is cleaner. It offends fewer people. But it also leaves many souls without a clear gospel witness. A Bible-believing church should teach its people to invite, yes, but also to witness. The invitation may bring a sinner under preaching. The witness brings the gospel to the sinner where he is.

Chapter Two: Churches Professionalized Evangelism

Another reason churches stopped winning souls is that they professionalized evangelism. The work got handed to pastors, evangelists, missionaries, outreach directors, visitation captains, and paid staff while ordinary believers were trained to spectate. The professional class does the preaching, the witnessing, the mission work, the counseling, the follow-up, the apologetics, and the soul dealing. The rest of the church funds it, attends it, and comments on it. That may look efficient on paper, but it is not the New Testament pattern. Every believer is a witness. Every saved person has a testimony. Every Christian has a field. “Ye are my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). That was not written to create a clergy caste while the rest of the saints became religious consumers.

The pastor should preach. The evangelist should evangelize. The missionary should carry the gospel. But none of that excuses the man in the pew. God did not save anyone to become a silent audience member. The mechanic has a mission field in the shop. The nurse has a mission field in the hospital. The mother has a mission field in the home. The student has a mission field at school. The businessman has a mission field in his contacts. The old saint has a mission field in letters, prayers, family, and conversations. The waitress, truck driver, cashier, teacher, soldier, contractor, and office worker can all carry gospel seed. The church should equip them, not replace them.

Professionalized evangelism also weakens the church because believers never grow into usefulness. They remain dependent. They think, “I will bring them to the preacher,” instead of learning how to open the Bible themselves. That is like a soldier who always has to find the captain before he can fire his weapon. No army works that way. A local church should be an armory and training ground. It should teach believers the gospel, how to use the

Bible, how to answer objections, how to give a testimony, how to hand out tracts, how to follow up, and how to disciple. The church is not supposed to be a theater where a few perform while the rest watch. It is a body, and bodies move when the members work.

Chapter Three: Churches Became Program-Driven Instead of Burden-Driven

Many churches stopped winning souls because they became program-driven instead of burden-driven. Programs are not automatically bad. A church can have organized visitation, tract distribution, missions, children's work, jail ministry, nursing home ministry, street preaching, Bible classes, and follow-up systems. Organization can serve the burden. The trouble begins when organization replaces burden. Then the program continues even after the heart is gone. People show up because it is on the calendar, not because souls are burning in their conscience. They fill roles, check boxes, complete rotations, and call it ministry. But the tears are gone. The urgency is gone. The prayer is gone. The burden is gone.

A burden for souls cannot be manufactured by a committee. It comes from believing the Bible. Hell is real. Judgment is coming. Christ died for sinners. The gospel saves. One soul is worth more than the world. If those truths are alive in a church, programs become channels for burden. If those truths are dead, programs become religious machinery. Paul's evangelism came from burden. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1). Heart's desire and prayer. That is not a committee slogan. That is a man carrying souls before God.

Program Christianity can also make people think activity equals fruit. A church may run events all year and see very little gospel dealing. It may host community days, concerts, giveaways, conferences, youth events, family nights, sports leagues, and holiday programs, and still never train its people to explain salvation. The calendar is full, but the net is empty. That is tragic. If a program does not move toward the gospel, it may be harmless in some ways, but it is not evangelism. Feeding people, helping people, and gathering people can open doors, but someone still has to preach Christ. Without the gospel, a church becomes a religious community center with hymns.

Chapter Four: Churches Softened the Message

Another reason churches stopped winning souls is that they softened the message until there was not much left to win anyone with. They quit preaching sin plainly. They quit warning about hell. They quit speaking of judgment. They quit preaching the blood with force. They quit telling religious people they are lost without Christ. They traded conviction for comfort, repentance for reassurance, the cross for therapy, and the gospel for life coaching. When the message gets soft, the burden gets soft. If sinners are not really lost, if

hell is rarely mentioned, if judgment is too negative, if sin is renamed brokenness only, and if Christ is presented mainly as a helper for life improvement, then why would anybody become a soul winner? Soul winning only makes sense if the Bible is true about man's condition.

The gospel begins with bad news because sinners need to know what they are being saved from. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). Those verses are not optional seasoning. They are part of the diagnosis. Then comes the remedy: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). "In whom we have redemption through his blood" (Ephesians 1:7). "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). A church that will not preach the diagnosis clearly will not produce many people who value the remedy deeply.

Soft preaching produces soft witnesses. If the pulpit never speaks plainly, the pew rarely will. If the preacher apologizes for doctrine, the people will be ashamed of it in public. If the church avoids hard truths to keep visitors comfortable, members learn that comfort matters more than conversion. The early church did not turn the world upside down by whispering vague positivity. They preached Christ crucified. They preached repentance. They preached the resurrection. They warned. They persuaded. They suffered. A church that wants soul winners must recover a message with edges. The gospel is good news, but it is not cotton candy. It is blood, death, resurrection, grace, and eternal life offered to guilty sinners.

Chapter Five: Churches Lost Confidence in the Word of God

Churches stopped winning souls when they lost confidence in the Word of God. Once a church starts doubting the Book, correcting the Book, apologizing for the Book, updating the Book, and treating the Bible like a helpful religious resource rather than the final authority, soul winning loses its weapon. A soul winner needs a sword, not a maybe. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). If the church has trained its people to say, "A better rendering might be," "The oldest manuscripts omit," "Scholars are divided," and "This verse probably should not be here," do not be surprised when they have no confidence looking a sinner in the eye and saying, "The Bible says."

The sinner does not need a lecture in textual uncertainty when his soul is headed for judgment. He needs the Word of God. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). If faith comes by hearing the Word of God, then attacking confidence in the Word is an attack on the very instrument God uses to produce faith. A church that undermines the Bible in the name of scholarship may still have sermons,

classes, and religious activity, but it will not produce bold witnesses like a church that believes it has the words of God in its hands.

Confidence in Scripture gives courage. When a believer knows what God said, he can speak with authority without being arrogant. He can say, “For all have sinned.” He can say, “The wages of sin is death.” He can say, “Christ died for our sins.” He can say, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” That is not his opinion. That is Scripture. The Word cuts, convicts, enlightens, and points to Christ. A church that wants to recover soul winning must recover confidence in the Bible. No sword, no fight. No seed, no harvest. No light, no path.

Chapter Six: Churches Chose Respectability Over Boldness

Churches stopped winning souls because they chose respectability over boldness. They became afraid of being called extreme, narrow, judgmental, old-fashioned, offensive, unloving, or embarrassing. They wanted the community to like them. They wanted the world to respect them. They wanted civic approval, social acceptance, and a polished image. So they sanded the edges off the message and trained their people to be nice, quiet, and inoffensive. But the gospel is offensive to pride. The cross is a stumblingblock. Christ said the world would hate His own. If a church is determined never to be disliked by the world, it will eventually stop saying the things the world hates.

Boldness was a mark of the early church. When threatened, they prayed, “grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word” (Acts 4:29). They did not pray, “Lord, help us maintain a respectable community profile.” They did not pray, “Lord, teach us how to avoid controversy.” They prayed for boldness to speak the Word. That is a long way from modern churches that need six meetings to decide whether a gospel tract is too confrontational. The early believers had threats. We have awkwardness. They prayed for boldness. We pray for comfort.

Respectability can become an idol. A church can become more concerned with how the community views it than whether sinners are warned. A Christian can become more concerned with how coworkers see him than whether they know Christ. At some point, a believer must decide whether he wants to be faithful or fashionable. “For do I now persuade men, or God? ... for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10). Soul winning requires enough holy backbone to be thought strange. If nobody ever thinks your Christianity is strange, maybe it is because it never crosses the world’s path.

Chapter Seven: Churches Forgot Every Believer Is a Witness

At the root of much of this is one simple failure: churches forgot that every believer is a witness. Not every believer is a pastor. Not every believer is an evangelist by office. Not every believer is a missionary in the formal sense. But every believer has a testimony and a responsibility to speak for Christ. “Let the redeemed of the LORD say so” (Psalm 107:2). If you are redeemed, say so. Not think so only. Not feel so only. Say so. A silent redeemed man is living beneath his privilege and responsibility.

The New Testament does not picture a church where one professional does all the witnessing while everyone else attends services and critiques the sermon. It pictures believers carrying the Word, speaking the truth, testifying of Christ, and living as ambassadors. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20). An ambassador carries a message from a king. He does not invent it. He delivers it. If every believer is an ambassador, then every believer has a message to carry: Christ died for sinners, was buried, rose again, and saves by grace through faith. That message belongs in every believer’s mouth.

A church that recovers this truth becomes dangerous to the devil. Not because it has a famous pastor. Not because it has a large building. Not because it has polished branding. But because the members leave the building carrying the gospel. The barber speaks. The mechanic speaks. The mother speaks. The student speaks. The businessman speaks. The widow mails tracts. The young man knocks doors. The older saint writes letters. The waitress leaves gospel seed. The church becomes more than a meeting place; it becomes a sending station. That is what we need again. Not spectators. Witnesses.

Conclusion

Churches stopped winning souls for many reasons, but most of them come down to unbelief, fear, professionalism, and misplaced priorities. They replaced witnessing with invitations, evangelism with programs, burden with machinery, bold preaching with soft language, Scripture confidence with scholarly uncertainty, and every-member witness with professional ministry. The result is predictable: churches full of activity but light on conversions, full of programs but empty of burden, full of people who know how to attend but not how to deal with a soul.

The answer is not complicated. Get back to the Bible. Get back to the gospel. Get back to the field. Teach every believer that he is a witness. Train people how to use Scripture. Preach sin, judgment, Christ, blood, grace, and faith. Stop apologizing for the Book. Stop treating soul winning like a specialty reserved for professionals. Stop acting like inviting people to church is the same thing as giving them the gospel. Get the gospel out of the

sanctuary and into the streets, homes, workplaces, restaurants, stores, mailboxes, and daily conversations where lost people actually live.

The church building has its place, but the field is the world. The pulpit has its place, but the believer's mouth has its place too. The pastor has his calling, but the saints have their witness. If churches are going to win souls again, they must recover old-fashioned Bible obedience: saved people telling lost people about the Saviour. Not marketing. Not manipulation. Not religious entertainment. Gospel seed, Bible truth, Holy Ghost boldness, and believers who are willing to speak. That is how the net gets wet again.

25 of 25: Fishers of Men - The Crown of Rejoicing

Introduction

There is coming a day when all the noise of this world will stop, all the applause of men will die in the wind, all the arguments will be over, all the platforms will be gone, all the buildings will be left behind, all the money will belong to somebody else, and every saved man will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. That day will straighten out a lot of crooked thinking. Men who thought they were important may find out they wasted their strength on wood, hay, and stubble. Men nobody noticed may shine with eternal reward because they carried the gospel when no one was clapping. The judgment seat of Christ will not be a popularity contest. It will not measure a man by how many people liked him, followed him, praised him, quoted him, or invited him to speak. It will measure service, motive, faithfulness, doctrine, labor, sacrifice, and what was done for Jesus Christ. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10). That verse ought to sober every believer who has been living like this life is a vacation instead of a stewardship.

Soul winning matters because souls matter, and gospel labor matters because eternity is real. The Lord Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). If one soul is worth more than the whole world, then any faithful effort to reach a soul with the gospel is not a small thing. The world may not care. The church crowd may not notice. The man who received the tract may throw it away. The coworker may mock. The neighbor may avoid you. The family member may roll his eyes. The religious person may argue. The uninterested sinner may shrug. But heaven knows the value of what was offered. A gospel witness is not wasted because a sinner refuses it. A seed is not worthless because it falls on hard ground. The sower is not a failure

because some ground rejects the seed. God told us to sow. God told us to warn. God told us to preach. God told us to persuade. The results belong to Him.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” Then he answered, “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19). There is the crown of rejoicing. People. Souls. Converts. Those reached, taught, strengthened, warned, and established in Christ. Paul was not pointing to a building, a certificate, a social title, or a bank account. He pointed to saved people standing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is eternal joy. That is fruit that survives the fire. That is the final note of this series. Fishers of men are not wasting their time. They are not merely passing out paper, knocking on wood, speaking into the air, mailing envelopes, answering questions, or enduring rejection. They are laboring in the only work on earth that reaches into eternity. No faithful gospel witness is wasted. Some seed is seen. Some seed is hidden. Some fruit comes early. Some fruit shows up late. Some may not be known until the judgment seat of Christ. But God keeps the records.

Chapter One: The Judgment Seat Will Reveal What Men Forgot

The judgment seat of Christ will reveal many things men forgot, ignored, misunderstood, or despised. A tract handed out years ago and forgotten by the one who handed it may have been read by a soul under conviction. A verse spoken in a brief conversation may have troubled a conscience for years. A gospel letter mailed without a return address may have been used in a chain of witness that led someone to Christ. A child taught a Bible verse may have grown up and later remembered it in a dark hour. A coworker warned plainly may have acted cold, but the words may have followed him home. Men forget these things because time passes, life moves, and the flesh measures only what it can see. God forgets nothing. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love” (Hebrews 6:10).

That is a tremendous encouragement to the faithful sower. Much of soul winning is hidden work. You do not know who reads the tract. You do not know what happens after the door closes. You do not know whether the waitress read the booklet after her shift. You do not know whether the man who mocked you thought about it later. You do not know whether the child listening from the hallway understood more than the adults did. You do not know whether a dying relative remembered the gospel warning you gave years before. You do not know. But God knows. The judgment seat of Christ will bring many things into the light. “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come” (1 Corinthians 4:5). That verse ought to keep a man from quitting just because he cannot trace the fruit.

The world keeps records of foolish things. It records money, titles, property, awards, followers, subscribers, ranks, sales, views, and applause. Heaven records things the world

never noticed: a prayer over a lost soul, a tract given with tears, a Bible marked for a new believer, a warning given to a mocking sinner, a gospel conversation held in weakness, a letter written to a relative, a testimony given at work, a door knocked in the heat, a town covered with seed, a name carried before God in intercession. The judgment seat will show what mattered. Many things men bragged about will burn. Many things men ignored will shine.

Chapter Two: The Value of a Soul Makes the Labor Worth It

The labor of soul winning is worth it because a soul is worth more than the world. That is not sentimental talk. That is the valuation of Jesus Christ Himself. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Think about that. If a man could own every bank, every country, every corporation, every island, every mansion, every field, every mine, every factory, every treasure, every army, every palace, every pleasure, and every throne on earth, and lose his soul, he would still be a loser. That means one soul outweighs the whole world system in eternal value. A Christian who believes that cannot treat soul winning like a side hobby.

The devil works hard to make souls look ordinary. He wants you to see a waitress, not a soul. A cashier, not a soul. A coworker, not a soul. A neighbor, not a soul. A relative, not a soul. A stranger, not a soul. He wants you annoyed by people, distracted by people, intimidated by people, entertained by people, impressed by people, or disgusted by people, but not burdened for people. The Bible believer must learn to see past the body, the clothes, the attitude, the religion, the sin, the personality, and the social role. That person is a soul. He will live forever somewhere. That one thought gives eternal weight to ordinary moments.

If one soul is worth more than the world, then one faithful witness is never foolish. The world may call you strange. Religion may call you extreme. Lukewarm Christians may tell you to calm down. The flesh may say it is not worth the trouble. But what is trouble compared to a soul? What is embarrassment compared to eternity? What is rejection compared to hell? What is inconvenience compared to the blood of Christ? “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). If saving sinners was important enough for the Son of God to come down and die, then telling sinners about that Saviour ought to be important enough for saved people to open their mouths.

Chapter Three: Not Every Seed Shows Fruit Immediately

Not every seed produces visible fruit immediately. That truth must be understood, or soul winners will become discouraged and quit. The Lord Jesus gave the parable of the sower, and He told us plainly that the seed falls into different kinds of ground. Some falls by the

way side. Some falls on stony places. Some falls among thorns. Some falls into good ground. The sower is faithful, the seed is good, but the soils differ. That means rejection, delay, shallow response, distraction, and fruitfulness are all part of the field. A man who expects every gospel witness to produce an immediate visible conversion has not understood the work.

Some seed lies under the ground longer than you expected. A word spoken in youth may bear fruit in old age. A tract read casually may come back during a crisis. A sermon ignored in the moment may echo at a hospital bed. A conversation brushed aside may return when death enters the family. A verse memorized as a child may become light decades later. The sower does not control the timetable. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). Sometimes you plant and another man waters. Sometimes another man plants and you reap. Sometimes you do not know whether you planted, watered, or simply removed a stone from the ground. God knows.

This should make the soul winner patient. Do not dig up the seed every five minutes to see if it is growing. Do not demand immediate visible proof that your labor mattered. Sow, pray, water, wait, and keep sowing. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand" (Ecclesiastes 11:6). Morning and evening. Early and late. When you see fruit and when you do not. When people listen and when they do not. When the field looks promising and when it looks dead. Faithful sowing is not based on visible results only. It is based on the command of God and the confidence that His Word is never empty.

Chapter Four: The Joy of Seeing Fruit Later

There is a special joy in seeing fruit later. Sometimes God lets a soul winner see it in this life. A person you witnessed to years ago gets saved. A tract you handed out is remembered. A child you taught grows up and walks with God. A coworker who once avoided you calls with questions. A family member who resisted for years finally breaks under conviction. A young convert you followed up with becomes a faithful witness himself. There is nothing like that joy. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4). That verse reaches beyond physical children. Spiritual fruit brings deep joy.

This later fruit teaches humility because you realize God was working when you were not watching. You thought nothing was happening. God was plowing. You thought the conversation failed. God used one sentence. You thought the tract disappeared. God kept it alive in someone's mind. You thought the family member was hardened beyond reach. God was arranging another witness. You thought the young believer was weak. God was growing him quietly. The soul winner learns that God's work is deeper than visible

response. The Holy Ghost does not need to give daily reports to the worker. He works where man cannot see.

Seeing fruit later also strengthens faith for future sowing. Once you see that God can use a seed long after it leaves your hand, you become less dependent on instant feedback. You hand out the next tract with more confidence. You speak the next word with more faith. You pray for the next soul with more patience. You realize the gospel has a longer reach than your immediate perception. Some fruit God lets you see to encourage you. Some He hides to humble you. Some He saves for the judgment seat of Christ. In all of it, the lesson is the same: keep sowing.

Chapter Five: The Crown of Rejoicing Is Connected to Souls

The crown of rejoicing is connected to souls. Paul wrote, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” and then answered, “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19). That is one of the sweetest verses in the Bible for a soul winner. Paul looked at believers he had reached and taught, and he saw future joy at the coming of Christ. Imagine standing in the presence of the Lord with souls there because God used your witness, your prayers, your tears, your labor, your preaching, your tract, your testimony, your warning, or your follow-up. Not because you saved them. You did not. Christ saved them. But God allowed you to have a part.

That crown is not about self-glory. In heaven, every crown ultimately belongs at the feet of Jesus Christ. But the Lord is gracious enough to reward labor done for Him. A saved man who points another sinner to Christ is not wasting time. He is connected to eternal reward. The world’s crowns fade. Athletic crowns fade. Political crowns fade. Academic crowns fade. Business crowns fade. Social crowns fade. Religious popularity crowns fade. But a crown connected to souls stands in relation to eternity. “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). That is a verse worth thinking about.

This should purify ambition. If you want something to rejoice over at Christ’s coming, get involved in souls. Not just arguments. Not just platforms. Not just opinions. Not just church attendance. Souls. Witness to them. Pray for them. Teach them. Warn them. Encourage them. Follow up with them. Ground them in the truth. The crown of rejoicing is not connected to religious spectatorship. It is connected to people reached for Christ. Paul’s joy was not merely that he had preached sermons. His joy was that those believers would be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.

Chapter Six: Faithful Gospel Labor Is Never Wasted

No faithful gospel witness is wasted. That statement must be believed by every soul winner. The visible outcome may vary, but faithfulness is never wasted. If a sinner rejects the gospel, the witness still stands as testimony. If a tract is thrown away, the act of sowing was still obedience. If a door is slammed, the worker still went. If a conversation ends badly, a verse may still have entered the mind. If a family member refuses for years, the prayers are still before God. If a church seems cold, the truth preached still has value. "My word shall not return unto me void" (Isaiah 55:11). God's Word accomplishes what He pleases, even when men cannot see how.

This does not mean every method is wise or every effort is equally useful. A foolish witness can do damage. A bad tract can confuse. A manipulative worker can give false assurance. A proud soul winner can get in the way. We have dealt with all that in this series. But when the gospel is clear, the spirit is right, the Scripture is used, and the witness is faithful, the labor is not wasted. You may not see the result, but God sees the obedience. You may not see the fruit, but God knows the seed. You may not know the end of the story, but God wrote the final chapter before you ever began.

This truth keeps the worker going. Weariness is real. Disappointment is real. Rejection is real. Hidden labor is real. But so is reward. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). Due season is God's season, not always yours. Reaping may come sooner than expected, later than desired, or at the judgment seat. But the promise stands. Do not faint. Do not quit because the field looks hard. Do not stop because one person refused. Do not throw away the seed bag because the first handful did not produce in five minutes. Keep going. No faithful gospel witness is wasted.

Chapter Seven: The Final Accounting Will Be Worth It

The final accounting will be worth it. Every mile walked, every door knocked, every tract handed out, every stamp bought, every Bible given, every awkward question asked, every conversation endured, every rejection absorbed, every prayer offered, every tear shed, every late-night burden carried, every follow-up visit made, every new believer strengthened, every false doctrine answered, every gospel warning given, every seed sown will be seen by the Lord. Men may forget. Christ will not. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

Think about the moment when a soul comes to you in glory and says, "God used that tract." Or, "God used that conversation." Or, "I heard that warning." Or, "You told me about Christ." Or, "You prayed for me." Or, "You did not know it, but that verse stayed with me." We do not know exactly how all of that will unfold, but we know Paul expected people to be his joy and

crown in the presence of Christ. That means personal gospel labor has eternal relational joy attached to it. Souls are not statistics in glory. They are people. Redeemed people. Blood-bought people. People who will worship the Lamb forever.

That final accounting should make us serious now. We are not playing church. We are not decorating time. We are not building earthly monuments. We are not trying to win applause from a world that crucified our Saviour. We are headed for the judgment seat of Christ, and the people around us are headed for eternity. The saved will give account of service. The lost will face judgment without Christ. That reality should burn through laziness, fear, pride, and excuse-making. The final accounting will be worth it for the faithful worker, but it will also expose wasted opportunities. Better to sow now and rejoice then than to protect our comfort now and stand ashamed then.

Conclusion

The crown of rejoicing brings the whole matter of soul winning into the light of eternity. This series began with a changed man opening his mouth, and it ends with saved souls in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. That is the whole line of the thing. God saves a sinner. That saved sinner gets burdened for other sinners. He carries the gospel seed. He uses the Bible. He gives his testimony. He knocks doors. He mails tracts. He speaks in ordinary places. He deals with the uninterested, the religious, the fearful, and the confused. He persuades without manipulation. He draws the net honestly. He follows up with new believers. And then one day he stands before Christ, where the full value of faithful labor is revealed.

Not every seed produces visible fruit immediately. Some seed is rejected. Some is delayed. Some is hidden. Some is watered by others. Some produces after years. Some fruit will not be known until the judgment seat of Christ. But no faithful gospel witness is wasted. The Word of God is not weak. The gospel is not powerless. The blood of Christ has not lost its value. The Holy Ghost has not retired. Souls are still worth more than the world. Hell is still real. Grace is still free. Jesus Christ still saves sinners who believe on Him.

So go on and be a fisher of men. Get the seed out. Speak to the soul in front of you. Hand the tract. Open the Bible. Ask the question. Warn with tears if God gives them. Preach the blood. Point to the empty tomb. Tell the religious man his system cannot save him. Tell the careless man eternity is coming. Tell the broken man Christ receives sinners. Tell the new believer what God says. Do not quit because you cannot see everything God is doing. The day is coming when the net will be drawn for the last time, the labor will be reviewed, and the faithful worker will understand that every honest gospel seed was worth sowing. "For

what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” Saved souls in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is worth more than the whole world.

Series Conclusion: Fishers of Men

After walking through all 25 essays in **Fishers of Men**, the conclusion is plain: soul winning is not a church program, a professional ministry category, a religious sales tactic, or a method reserved for preachers, missionaries, and polished public speakers. Soul winning is the natural work of saved people who understand what they were saved from, who saved them, and where the lost world is headed without Jesus Christ. The Lord did not save us so we could sit quietly in religious comfort while sinners pass by us on their way to eternity. He saved us, sealed us, gave us the Book, put the gospel in our hands, and left us here as witnesses. “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). That verse is not a slogan for an old-fashioned sermon. It is God’s wisdom written on the work of reaching souls.

What we have seen in this series is that personal evangelism begins with real conversion. A changed man starts talking because the gospel has done something in him. He sees coworkers, friends, family, neighbors, waitresses, clerks, strangers, and even enemies differently because he has learned to see them as souls. A soul is not a social category, a personality type, or a body walking through daily life. A soul is an eternal being that will live forever somewhere. Jesus Christ said, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). If one soul is worth more than the whole world, then no honest gospel witness is a waste of time. A tract is not small when it carries eternal truth. A conversation is not small when Christ is presented. A door knocked, a verse quoted, a Bible opened, a testimony given, a prayer offered, a warning spoken, or a gospel booklet mailed can matter forever.

We have also concluded that the gospel must stay clear. That may be the most important corrective in the whole series. A sinner is not saved by church attendance, baptism, sacraments, self-reformation, morality, Sabbath keeping, religious tradition, emotional pressure, a repeated prayer, or a preacher’s assurance. A sinner is saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, shed His blood, was buried, and rose again. “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The gospel is the seed. The Word of God is the sword. The Holy Spirit does the inward work. The believer carries the message. When those lines are kept clear, soul winning stays Bible. When they

are blurred, false professions, fake numbers, religious confusion, and false assurance start multiplying.

We have concluded that burden must be joined with wisdom. A soul winner should be bold, but not foolish. Direct, but not obnoxious. Urgent, but not manipulative. Compassionate, but not soft on truth. Willing to persuade, but never willing to trick. Willing to draw the net, but never willing to drag a confused sinner into a false profession. Willing to ask, "Are you saved?" but also willing to listen. Willing to use indirect openings in restaurants, checkout lines, elevators, workplaces, phone calls, and ordinary conversations, but not so indirect that Christ never gets named. The Bible says, "he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). Wisdom does not cancel boldness. Boldness does not cancel wisdom. A Bible believer needs both.

We have concluded that the printed witness still matters. Tracts, marked Bibles, mailed literature, gospel notes, and Scripture-filled booklets are not dead tools unless Christians leave them unused or fill them with doctrinal fog. A good tract can go where your voice cannot. A Bible with marked gospel passages can guide a sinner long after the conversation ends. A mailed gospel message with no return address can become anonymous seed God uses in ways no one may see until the judgment seat of Christ. But printed material must be clean. Do not hand out what you have not read. Do not give sinners vague religious mush. Give them sin, judgment, Christ, blood, resurrection, grace, faith, and Bible assurance.

We have concluded that churches have largely failed because they replaced soul winning with program Christianity. They taught believers to invite people to church but not necessarily to give them the gospel. They professionalized evangelism until ordinary Christians became spectators. They softened the message, lost confidence in the Bible, chased respectability, and forgot that every believer is an ambassador for Christ. That has to be reversed. The gospel belongs outside the sanctuary. It belongs in the hand of the factory worker, the nurse, the mother, the student, the businessman, the old saint, the young convert, the preacher, the teacher, the waiter, the cashier, and every saved person who can say, "Christ saved me, and He can save you."

We have concluded that the work does not end when someone professes faith. New believers need follow-up. They need assurance from the Scriptures, not from emotions. They need to learn the Bible, pray, get into sound fellowship, understand baptism rightly, and be grounded in eternal security before wolves arrive with works salvation, sacramental confusion, Calvinistic fog, Catholic tradition, Campbellite water, Adventist bondage, Mormon deception, Jehovah's Witness error, or any other system that shifts the soul away

from Christ. If we care enough to witness, we ought to care enough to help the newborn grow.

So what comes next?

Next, this series should be used as a **field manual**. It should not just be read and admired. It should push believers into action. Each essay can stand on its own, but together they form a full training course: burden, doctrine, method, testimony, tracts, direct approach, indirect approach, dealing with objections, religious confusion, persuasion, drawing the net, follow-up, and eternal reward. This can be turned into teaching lessons, PDF chapters, social media excerpts, church training outlines, devotionals, short posts, discussion questions, and practical assignments. The next step is not merely publishing the series. The next step is using it to get believers back into the field.

Next, believers should begin with simple obedience. Pray for openings. Carry gospel tracts. Learn the core verses. Write down your testimony. Practice explaining the gospel clearly in two minutes. Ask someone, “Has anyone ever shown you from the Bible how to be saved?” Leave a tract with a good tip. Mail gospel literature. Speak to a coworker. Call a family member. Mark a Bible for someone. Follow up with someone who recently made a profession. Do not wait until you feel like an expert. Start with what you know, and keep learning as you go. A willing believer with a clear gospel is more useful than a polished coward with a silent mouth.

Next, the Church needs to recover the old burden: souls, souls, souls. Not numbers for pride. Not fake professions. Not altar-call machinery. Not emotional manipulation. Souls. Real people. Real sinners. Real judgment. Real gospel. Real faith. Real follow-up. Real fruit. And one day, real reward. Paul said, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” and answered, “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19). That is where this series ends: at the coming of Christ, with saved souls standing in His presence.

The conclusion is simple. The field is still the world. The seed is still the Word of God. The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation. The blood still cleanses. The Holy Ghost still convicts. Jesus Christ still saves. Hell is still real. Grace is still free. Time is still short. Souls are still passing into eternity. And the command still stands: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

So what next?

Get the seed.

Get in the Book.

Get on your knees.

Get the gospel clear.

Get your mouth open.

Get back into the field.