

ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

The Bob Jones University Lectures on Evangelism for 1958

by

Tom Malone, D.D.

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CHAPTER ONE

PREACHING TO WIN THE LOST

II Timothy 3:1-7, 4:1-5

My text for this message is made up of two short but challenging phrases,

“Preach the word” (II Timothy 4:2).

“Do the work of an evangelist” (II Timothy 4:5).

I have it in my heart to speak especially to the preachers. I don’t want you to feel, however, if you are not a preacher that I am not talking to you. I might say that I have it on my heart to speak especially to all who are interested in propagating the gospel to the ends of the earth, carrying out the great commission of our Lord Jesus and winning the lost of the earth for whom He died.

You know these are challenging days. I need not remind you of that. One of the amazing things to me about the Bible is how minutely and accurately it describes these last days in which you and I live. Here is a passage of Scripture that we have read that challenges the heart of any true Christian. It tells us something about the characteristics of the last evil days before the coming of our Lord Jesus to receive His church unto Himself. There are many enemies to the gospel today and to preachers and Christian workers and to fundamental Bible-believing soul-winning churches.

The Bible plainly teaches that in this day in which you and I live men will have **“a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.”** There never has been a generation of preachers, there never has been a generation of Christians that has seen so vividly the fulfillment of that part of God’s Word—**“a form godliness but denying the power thereof.”** There is worldliness and modernism on every hand, wickedness in high places, wickedness everywhere scattered across the face of the earth. These are challenging days. They are challenging days for missionaries; they are challenging days for preachers; they are challenging days for every single Christian.

I find that in many instances God’s people sometimes get discouraged in trying to get the job done before the coming of the Lord. We find even in Bible times that Christian leaders and men of God reached days of great discouragement. Take, for instance, that mighty prophet Elijah. Never has a man risen to greater heights, never has a man enjoyed greater power of God than Elijah did yonder on Mt. Carmel.

Elijah challenged four hundred false prophets of Baal, preachers of modernism. He prayed; God opened the heavens and fire fell. He slew the prophets. He set them at nought. He vindicated the cause of God. He proved that they were evil, that modernism was, wrong and of the Devil. Oh, to what heights he arose. Never was there a character in the Bible outside the Lord Jesus Christ who ever rose to such a pinnacle of power with God as Elijah did on Mt. Carmel. But only a few hours later there came a message from wicked Jezebel, the godless queen, that ***“before the sun goes down tomorrow night, I’m going to cut off your head as you cut off the heads of my prophets of Baal.”***

We see Elijah discouraged and defeated and running yonder a day’s journey into the woodland, sitting down under a tree and praying to God that he might die. Yes, the Devil knows how to put Satanic pressure upon the people of God and how to discourage if he can the Christian worker, missionary, preacher, evangelist, and pastor. We need today, I think, as never before the power of God. We need today as never before to know simply and plainly if we can by God’s help and grace, how from the Bible we can get the equipment and power from God to get the job done.

I never will forget hearing about a friend of mine who is preacher and has done a wonderful work but who one day reached a place of great discouragement as a preacher (If I should call his name some of you would know him). He said to his little church that didn’t seem to be growing, “I’m going to resign. It is not fair to you to have a pastor who cannot deliver the goods and win the lost. I’m defeated and discouraged.”

He went away to a conference on evangelism such as this. He came in a little late and the seats were all filled. A great crowd had gathered. He leaned back against the wall and dropped his chin upon his chest. In a moment a preacher got up and began to preach, and God began to speak to him.

- He saw that night in the message that God is greater than all opposition.
- He saw that night that God is greater than all his inabilities.
- He saw that night how it would be possible for the power of God to come on his life so that his life would be a mighty instrument in the hands of God.

He stood there and wept as the Spirit of God searched deep down in his soul, and that night standing against the wall, he said, “Dear Lord, if You will give me another chance, if You will help me, if You will stir my soul tonight, if You will come upon me and clothe me with the power of God, I will be a soul winner.”

He sent a wire back to his little church, and the wire read something like this: “You are going to have a new preacher next Sunday. Be sure to be there to hear him.”

The next Sunday morning from all outward appearances the same preacher walked into the pulpit, but he wasn’t the same. He walked into that pulpit with a burning heart; he walked into that pulpit with a broken heart; he walked into that pulpit weeping over sinners, and he has been winning them to God ever since.

I will tell you, my friends, I believe with all my soul that there are not enough demons in hell and that Satan does not have enough power to overcome the Christian who is fully consecrated and yielded and sold out to God. The question so often comes to me and I know it does to other preachers, “How can we preach in this age? How can we get the job done that God wants us to do?” I want to give you four ways that I believe that preachers ought to preach and Christians ought to witness.

I. WE NEED TO PREACH AND WITNESS WITH REALITY

I believe with all my soul that we ought to witness and preach with a reality in our message. We ought to believe what we are preaching, it ought to grip our hearts to such an extent that every time we sing, or preach, or witness whether people believe the message or not, whether they agree with what we say or not, they will be bound to admit, “There is a preacher or there is a missionary or there is a young man or a young woman who really believes what he or she is singing or what he is preaching.” We ought to preach with reality.

The other day a lady said to me, “Brother Tom, I want you to go and talk to a man in the hospital who has not been saved and who needs the Lord. This man has been a very successful man; he has a very important job in one of the automobile factories here in the city, but he is lost.”

I went to the hospital, asked for the number of the room, and went to the room, but there was an empty bed. I said to one of the people, in the room, “Where is Mr. So-and-So?”

“They said, “He is down in X-ray. He will be back in a few minutes.”

I waited awhile but he didn’t come. The next day I went back and said, “Where is Mr. So-and-So?”

“He’s down in X-ray.”

I waited a few minutes and he didn’t come back. This may seem like a fairy story to you, but I went back the third time and said, “Where is Mr. So-and-So?”

They again replied, “He is down in X-ray.”

I began to wonder if all they had been doing to the poor guy was X-raying him for three days. Then I asked, “Where is X-ray?” They told me where it was, and the thought came to me, “If the Devil wants so badly for you not to see him and not to witness to him and not to talk to him, surely he needs Christ, surely he can be won, surely God wants me to reach him, and I will.”

I went down to the X-ray room. They brought him out in a moment and I talked to him in the hallway. Along came someone rolling him down the hall, and I followed them awhile. I went back up into his room and talked with him. This is what I want to tell you. I said to him “Friend, are you a Christian? Are you a saved man?”

He said, "I'm a member of the church, Mr. Malone." He told me what church and how long he had been a member of it.

I asked, "But are you saved? Do you know Christ? Do you know where you are going when you die? If today were to be your last day do you know where you are going to spend eternity?"

He looked at me and said, "Mr. Malone, I have heard you preach on the radio, and I know that you believe something I do not believe. From what I have heard you say, I think you believe that out yonder in eternity there is a place called heaven."

I replied, "Yes, I do."

He said, "I have heard you preach about heaven."

I said, "Yes, I have preached about heaven and I believe that it is real."

He said, "I do not believe that people have a real body in heaven or hell and that they are going to be able to be seen and to walk and to talk in a literal body. I don't believe it is going to be real as you say it is. Do you really believe it?"

I said, "Yes, I believe it with all my heart. With all my soul I believe as Jesus taught that every lost man and woman, boy or girl who has not been born by God's Holy Ghost is forever lost and will spend eternity in hell."

This man reached out and put his hand on my arm and looked deep into my face and said, "Mr. Malone, if that is true, it is mighty serious business."

I prayed, "Oh, God, give to my heart and the heart of every Christian the seriousness of the unbelieving man."

My friends, I will tell you today, it is true, and it is serious business. Multitudes are lost. They are lost in your city; they are lost all over America; they are lost on every mission field, and we need to enter into the Holy Presence of God in travail of soul and in earnest supplication and prayer until we can go out with a message and the people can say, "Those people believe what they are preaching." We need to preach with tremendous reality.

It is said that some years ago in England there was a great actor giving a reading in a room filled with people. Someone suggested to him that he give the 23rd Psalm. He asked, "Do you really want me to?"

An old clergyman stood up and said, "Yes, Sir. Give the 23rd Psalm."

It is said that the great actor with the most precise intonations and the finest of elocution began to recite. When he had finished, the people smiled and nodded their heads and applauded. Then the actor said, "I want that elderly preacher to give it."

That gray haired preacher rose like a giant for God and began, “**The Lord is my shepherd.**” He walked with God in the green meadows; he walked with God beside the still waters; he walked with God down in the dark valley that came out on the bright side, and finally with his face turned toward heaven he closed, “**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**”

He sat down. Nobody applauded but heads were bowed and people were weeping.

The great actor arose and said, “The difference between me and this preacher is that I knew the Psalm but he knew the Shepherd.”

My friend, our preaching and witnessing must be done with a reality that will grip the hearts of people. It must not be vague. It must not be filled with doubt. We must preach and witness so that the lost of earth shall take knowledge of us that “**we have been with Jesus.**”

Listen, the world today has enough doubt without getting any more from you and from me. We must preach with the tone of reality.

II. WE MUST PREACH AND WITNESS WITH COURAGE

This is no day for the faint hearted. This is the day for the 300 who will go all the way with Gideon. This is no day for the cowardly. This is the day for John the Baptist who preached the truth and let the chips fall where they would. This is the day when men must be willing to lose their heads if need be for the sake of the gospel.

I read some years ago of a wonderful thing that happened in Jacksonboro, Georgia, and was published in the *St. Louis Star-Times* with the dateline October 31, 1949. The article went like this, “The lone survivor of Jacksonboro – the accursed town that was – is dead.

Out of that once damned, now desolate region on Beaver Creek came word today that Richard Bryant, 105-year-old, had died Friday night.

He was the only man alive who saw the terrible curse of a little, hunchbacked, itinerant minister, Lorenzo Dow, come true. He saw the once bustling town disappear, house by house, store by store, until but one house remained – the house specifically spared by Dow. When Bryant was 3 years old, he saw the residents give up in despair at the freaks of fire, water and wind and move five miles away to found another town, Sylvania.

It was in 1794 that Jacksonboro, half way between Augusta and Savannah, had been founded. For 36 years the town went its boisterous way. Then in 1830 Dow drifted down and called upon its citizens to repent. People laughed. They pelted him with eggs, and they would not let him preach. The tormented little minister with the burning eyes turned this way and that until a powerful man, Seaborn Goodall, gave him sanctuary in his house. When Dow strode to meet his tormentors again the following day, a mob drove him to a rustic bridge and bade him never return.

Scornfully, Dow paused on the span, turned and swore that God would bring swift vengeance, the same that overtook Sodom and Gomorrah. The townsfolk laughed again.

But then, unaccountably, fires broke out, windstorms tore off roofs, the placid creek through the middle of the town became wild and unruly, sweeping away homes in flash floods. The remaining settlers finally gave up and moved. Time removed all traces of the town but the Goodall place. Here Bryant was born.”

Friends, have the courage to stand like a Daniel, to suffer like a Joseph and God will stand by you. God help us to have such convictions today as Christians that we can say to God and to men until the mountains crumble to dust, “I will never lower the blood-stained flag of the cross.”

III. WE NEED TO PREACH AND WITNESS WITH COMPASSION

We must preach with compassion. You know, my friends, there is absolutely no substitute for compassion in the work of God. You may have everything else in the world. You may have the greatest talent a person could be endowed with; you may have the greatest mind possible, but there is no substitute for a compassionate heart in the work of God.

Let me tell you, preachers, if you can preach and preach and preach and preach and never shed a tear, never have your heart broken, never know what it means to travail and agonize with an agony akin to that which Jesus had in Gethsemane, if you can preach without tears and compassion, you are going to do a lot of preaching without souls.

Oh, I see Jesus coming yonder on the Mt. of Olives and looking down on the city of Jerusalem and from a broken heart crying, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee to Myself as a hen gathers her chickens, but ye would not.”** The Bible says He beheld the city and wept over it. I can tell you, my friends, if we are going to move people toward God; we are going to have to have some tears.

Jesus had compassion. We read in the Word of God, **“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”** Then saith He unto his disciples, **“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”**

The lost multitudes did something to Jesus. They moved Him to tears. They stirred His heart. He was moved by their great numbers, their weakness and sin. He was moved because they fainted and were scattered and had no shepherd to love them and win them. He sees the lost multitudes of earth as a great harvest field and challenges the children of God to pray, to give, to go. Paul had tears. He **“ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears”** (Acts 19:31).

I hear people talk today about why so many folks are going into false cults and other false and erroneous “isms”. I think I know the answer.

I am a fundamentalist. I believe like every fundamental, Bible-believing Christian believes, but I want to tell you that people want some warmth. They want a heart-felt Christianity; they want some tears; they are tired of technicalities; they are tired of hair-splitting. People want a message with some warmth and fervor and love in it.

I wish God would give us what Mr. Whitefield had. It is said that he preached two hours on the morning of his death. He climbed the stairs one night with a little candle in his hand and started into his bedroom. It is said that out of the window he saw the multitudes and heard them cry, "Come out, Mr. Whitefield, and preach to us some more."

It is said that the old preacher walked out on the little balcony, held the candle for two hours, poured out his soul and preached with tears the gospel to the multitudes. With the candle burning low, he closed the door and walked off the balcony back into his bedroom. That night the candle of his life burned out to shine no more on this earth. Oh, God help us to burn out for Jesus with a broken heart. God give us tears and help us to see men and women lost around the world. God help us to see today the agony, the sin, the remorse, the affliction, the trouble that can be remedied by a warm and stirring message of the dynamic gospel of the Son of God. We need to preach with some tears. God give us a broken heart. God give us tears.

I heard one preacher say that he used to be ashamed to weep and so he prayed, "Oh, God, help me not to embarrass myself and others by weeping over sinners; help me to preach without tears." He said for a long time he did. Then one day he said he went back on his knees to God and prayed, "Give me back my tears." He said that God did and that he never wanted to be without them again.

If we can see the horrors of hell, the miseries of sin, the awful depths of God's infinite wrath and judgment and not have a broken heart, then we are evidently following Jesus from afar off. God gives us tears. Let me tell you, my friend, if God can give us the vision that we ought to have, if God will help us to see things as they are and we cannot Weep, God have mercy on us!

J. Wilbur Chapman told of visiting Sam Hadley in his great work in the slums in the city of New York. He said one day, "Sam, I want you to show me tonight the slums of this city and these human derelicts without God. I want to see these sinners in the rough. It is said that that night J. Wilbur Chapman and Sam Hadley walked together down in the slums. Mr. Chapman wrote about it and said he had never seen such awful conditions. He saw men lying prostrate on the side walks and in the gutters. He heard the curses of the lost men and women; he heard the shrieks and groans and all that goes with drunkenness and debauchery and lust and sin. He heard it all. As they walked along Mr. Chapman said they came under a street light and all of a sudden he heard Sam Hadley cry, "Oh, oh, oh!"

He turned around and asked, "Sam, have you had a seizure? Have you had an attack?" He said in that street light he saw Sam Hadley's face lifted toward heaven and heard him cry, "Oh, God, give me these souls."

J. Wilbur Chapman said, "My heart broke."

My friends, may God give us a taste of what John Knox had when he cried, “Oh, God, give me Scotland or I die.”

God’s Holy Book says, **“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”**

Let me tell you:

- You take your intellect; give me the tears;
- You take your theology, give me the tears;
- You take our hair-splitting, give me the tears;
- You take your technicalities, give me the tears.

Oh, God, give us church members that can weep over souls lost and without God.

IV. WE MUST PREACH AND WITNESS IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Then in the fourth and last place, we should preach and witness in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, **“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”** (Acts 1:8). Now watch, **“Ye shall be witnesses unto me after the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”** You know, my friends, the thing we preachers need is to be fired up. We preachers need the power of the Holy Ghost.

In the 20th Chapter of the book of John you read of the meeting of Jesus with the disciples after the resurrection, and you read how that He breathed on them and said, **“Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”**

I sometimes feel that much of my ministry is without the breath of God. Oh, for the breath of God! Oh, for the power that comes from above!

In Exodus Chapter 32 we read of Israel’s idolatrous sin in connection with the golden calf. This awful sin broke the heart of Moses and grieved the heart of God. God plagued the people and said, **“I will send an angel before thee”** (Exodus 32:34) to lead them into the land of promise, but God said, **“I will not go up in the midst of thee”** (Exodus 33:3).

Moses continued to plead with God and stand in the gap. He prayed, **“Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written”** (Exodus 32:32). What a tremendous prayer of intercession that was. Then God said to Moses, **“My presence shall go with thee and I shall give thee rest”** (Exodus 33:14), and Moses responded with this statement, **“If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence”** (Exodus 33:15). Oh! That is what we need, the wonderful presence of God. We should stay in the holy place of prayer until we are saturated and empowered with His Holy Presence.

My friends, we need the breath and presence of God. Tom Malone needs, every preacher needs, every missionary needs, every Christian, if he is going to witness effectively for God to win the lost, needs to go into the presence of God and stay until his face is shining when he comes out. Moses waited in the presence of God in the quietness of that inner chamber until there was a holy glow on his countenance.

It was said of the great Paderewski, that great interpreter of music that he had this unusual characteristic. It is said that on the afternoon of his great concerts, he would go to the huge hall where he was to perform several hours before the performance was to start. He would go into all parts of the building. He would look in all the rooms and alcoves. He would check over all the equipment. Then he would go back yonder into a room and close the door having given orders that he was to see no one. No one was to open that door until the hour of the performance. The manager would come and without a word in absolute silence would take him by the hand and lead him out before the crowd to sit at the piano. It is said that if that manager spoke one word that the great Paderewski would turn on him and go back into the room and stay for another few minutes of silence. He wanted to meditate until that music gripped his soul, until it fairly saturated his mind.

My friends, we need to stay in the secret chamber until the power of God vibrates in every fiber of our being. We ought not to be afraid to talk about the Holy Spirit; we ought not to be afraid to pray for His power.

After John Knox had preached in the power of God, someone came down the aisle and met him and said, "Mr. Knox, you preached today as if you came right out of the throne room."

Mr. Knox bowed his head in humility and said, "Perhaps I did."

God help us to live as if we have come right out of the throne room of the very presence of God. If we are to change the discords of sin into heavenly melodies of love, if we are to touch the souls of men, our own souls must be in tune with the Infinite. God help us to preach and witness with reality, with courage, with compassion, and with the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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