

ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

The Bob Jones University Lectures on Evangelism for 1958

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

WHY FEW ARE SAVED, MULTITUDES ARE LOST

TEXT: “Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:67, 68).

There are two heart-searching questions in John 6:67, 68. The first question is, **“Will ye also go away?”** **“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go?”** This is the second question. We will consider these two questions today: **“Will ye also go away?”** and **“To whom shall we go?”**

Jesus performed many miracles. The greatest of them, in many ways, is recorded in the sixth chapter of the gospel of John. You will remember that the Bible tells us of certain miracles He wrought such as healing the eyes of the blind, raising the dead on three occasions, and healing the sick often. This gospel of John says, **“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”** (John 20:30, 31).

If all the miracles Jesus did were to be written, the world itself could not contain the books thereof. No one knows how many eyes Jesus opened that were blind; no one knows how many dead Jesus raised; no one knows how many times Jesus lifted some sick person by the hand and made him well again. He wrought many miracles. There is only one miracle, however, that all four of the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, make a record of in detail — that is the record of the feeding of the five thousand men besides women and children. No other miracle that Jesus wrought is recorded in all four of the first New Testament books.

This miracle is related to another miracle Jesus wrought which is also recorded in the gospel of John. In the second chapter, you read of the miracle of turning the water to wine. There in that second chapter, Jesus wrought a miracle which speaks to us of His blood that would be shed. He turned the water to wine. Here in this sixth chapter, He performs another miracle when he takes the loaves and fishes from a little lad and so multiplies that lunch that it feeds thousands of people with twelve basketfuls remaining. This miracle speaks of His broken body. Thus we have the two elements that come into prominence when we sit together at the table of the Lord.

The blood shed upon the cross for the redemption of man and cleansing from sin, and the broken body of our Lord. Chapter Six in John gives us a record of this great miracle from which there are many lessons to be learned.

I am surprised when I come to the close of the record of the miracle.

I see five thousand men with their wives and children sit upon the grassy slopes around the Sea of Galilee.

I see them behold with open eyes the greatest miracle the Son of God ever wrought.

I see them eat the bread that literally came from heaven.

I see them behold a miracle before their eyes direct from the Son of God.

But at the close of this chapter, I do not find what I would expect to find. I do not find this great multitude of thousands of people falling at His feet, doing obeisance to Him and acknowledging Him. I find a strange picture at the close of this chapter. I find that the great multitude had been divided into two groups—one a very large one and one a very small one.

I see a very large group at the close of this chapter turn their backs on the Son of God and walk across those grassy slopes back to the communities and cities from which they came.

I see them turn their backs on Jesus and go away from Him.

I also see thirteen lonely men stand upon those grassy slopes.

As Jesus saw that multitude walk away, He turned to those twelve men and said, “**Will ye also go away?**”

This is a picture that is set forth, dear friends, in literally dozens: of places in the Bible. God divides the world. God divides the human race into two groups. They are not two equal groups, for one is always large. The other is always small.

That was true in Noah’s day when a large group was destroyed by a flood and a small group was saved by an ark.

That was true in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah when a large group was destroyed with fire and brimstone and a small group was guided by an angel out of the overthrow of God’s judgment.

That was true when Jesus looked at those who knew Him during the days of His public ministry and said, “**Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**”

It was also true when Jesus said, “**Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat: Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it**” (Matthew 7:13, 14).

This is the case in our day; few are saved, multitudes are lost. This will be the case when the Lord Jesus shall return from heaven.

Few, comparatively speaking, will be raptured away; many shall be left behind to suffer the judgment of God. No wonder the ancient prophet Joel cried, **“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision”** (Joel 3:14).

You ask, “Brother Tom, can you explain why a great multitude went away from Jesus and only a little group remained with Him?”

I think if you read carefully the sixth chapter of the gospel of John, you find several reasons why people went away from Jesus. They go away today for the same reason they went away two thousand years ago. I see the same scene today Jesus saw when with broken heart and tear-stained face, He watched the thousands go away in rejection and turned to His little school and said, **“Will ye also go away?”** These thousands, yea, millions must be evangelized.

I. THEY WENT AWAY BECAUSE OF HIS TEACHING

They went away from Jesus then and now because of His teaching. You find four things in this chapter which Jesus taught on that day which are hard for people to accept.

1. *Jesus taught that He must be sought for spiritual reasons.*

On that day Jesus looked at that multitude and said, ***“You seek me not for holy reasons, but you seek me for superficial reasons.”*** In verse 26 of this chapter we read, **“Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”**

Listen, Jesus said, ***“Ye seek Me not because of the miracles I’ve done; you seek Me not because of a spiritual need in your heart; you seek Me merely because you’ve seen Me feed people. You seek Me for a physical reason and not for a spiritual one.”***

Let me tell you, dear friends, when you see people in great crowds today, I would to God you would think of this and discern: “What are those crowds after?”

I believe in crowds; I believe in multitudes. It’s the hunger and prayer and the cry of my soul that God would help me to preach to just as many people as possible, but I ask, “What are those crowds after?”

Are they looking for the healing of the body? If they are, that might a good reason but that is not a scriptural reason for coming to Jesus, believe in Divine healing and the miracle-working power of God the human body; but I will tell you, if one comes to Christ to get nothing but a well body, he will never get his soul saved and his sins forgiven.

“You seek me,” He said, **“not because of the miracle I have done but because of the bread which I gave you.”** Let me tell you, my friends, you read through the New Testament and see that the miracles which Jesus wrought brought many people after Him but very few people to Him, and the miracles “so-called” today draw multitudes after Christ but few to Jesus. **“Will ye also go away?”**

2. Jesus taught that the Father must draw men to Him.

Now notice. In this chapter Jesus tells how people can come to Him. There is but one way. In verse 44 Jesus said, **“No man come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”** No one can come to Jesus except he is drawn of God. He might have his emotions moved and stirred, and I believe in emotions. We need tears and excitement in our preaching and witnessing. We need warm hearts and cool heads. How many today have cold hearts and hot heads!

I never want to be one to say “I do not believe in tears and emotions in connection with the work God.” You can have your emotions stirred, and in the midst of excitement you might have your will moved upon to come to God, but no one can come to God, Jesus said, except my Father draw him. There is only one way to come to Jesus Christ and only one holy, divine purpose for coming. That is to come to be saved and to come called of God’s Holy Spirit. Any soul-winning ministry must be a Spirit-filled ministry because only the Holy Spirit can draw men to God.

3. Jesus taught that man must partake of Him to be saved.

Jesus went on with His strong teaching. In verse 53 He said, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”**

Notice this. It is not what the Catholic church says it is—the doctrine of transubstantiation, the doctrine that the elements actually turn to the body and blood of Jesus when they are partaken of. We do not believe that. We do not believe that Jesus spoke literally when He said, **“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”**

We believe that Jesus here is saying, that except you partake of the Son of God and He becomes a part of you and comes within you as a Person to live in your temple, your body, as your Saviour, you have no life in you. In order to be saved men must be **“partakers of Christ”** (Hebrews 3:14) and partakers of **“His divine nature”** (II Peter 1:4). “That is strong teaching, Jesus, and it might cause You to lose Your crowd.” True evangelism is that which brings people to a personal Christ and not merely to a program or denomination.

4. Jesus taught that the flesh profiteth nothing but the Spirit quickeneth.

Jesus went on and in verse 63 I think He made the strongest statement that any teacher or preacher could ever make. He said, **“It is the spirit that quickeneth (or maketh alive); the flesh profiteth nothing.”** Dear friends, Jesus taught that it is the Spirit of God that gives life; and without the Holy Spirit of God, the flesh and all that it can do profiteth nothing.

Man can join the church; he can be baptized; he can sit at the Lord’s Table; he can carry a Bible under his arm; he can engage in religious activity, but without the Holy Spirit in his heart, the flesh profiteth nothing. **“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”** (Romans 8:9).

That is the kind of preaching Jesus did. When you hear that kind of preaching and teaching, don't you say that comes from a narrow and bigoted and uneducated person because that is the kind of teaching Jesus did. Strong preaching! He said, "***Seek Me for a holy purpose. You can't come except God calls you. You must actually partake, for all the flesh is of no avail without the Spirit of God in you.***" When the crowds turned and walked away, they went away because they objected to His teaching.

There is nothing more nauseating today than to hear a lot of these "so-called" modernists. There is not anything modern about them. They are as old as the day when Satan in his serpentine form went with his subtle unbelief into the Garden of Eden to bring about the fall of the human race.

They say, "We believe in the teachings of Jesus. We do not believe in a gory, slaughter-house, bloody religion. We believe in the ethics of Jesus and the teachings of Jesus."

Let me tell you, dear friends, you want to remember that it was the Son of God who said, "***Ye must be born again.***" It was the holy, spotless Son of God Who said, "***Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.***"

Don't you say you believe in the teaching of Jesus unless you believe in salvation through the medium of the bloody cross and the Son of God nailed to it.

Don't you say you believe in the teaching of Jesus unless you believe in being born from above by the regenerating miracle of God's Holy Spirit.

Don't you say you believe in the teaching of Jesus unless you believe in a literal, bodily resurrection, an empty tomb, and an occupied throne and the coming of Jesus in the clouds of glory.

The teaching of Jesus is the strongest teaching the world has ever heard, and no teacher or preacher ever spoke any stronger than Jesus. No wonder they turned and went away. He spoke in love, but He spoke the truth.

The Bible tells us that in your generation and mine people shall "***heap to themselves teachers having itching ears.***" They don't desire the truth wholeheartedly all the time. They want their ears tickled, their conscience salved, and their hearts appeased but not cleansed. So they went away.

II. THEY WENT AWAY BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF MAN

Men go away from Jesus, in the second place, because of the fear of man. The wise man of the book of Proverbs said, "***The fear of man bringeth a snare.***" I've seen that in more realms of life than in the realm of Christianity. I've seen the fear of man bring a snare in the realm of politics. I've seen men literally sell their souls, their character, and their integrity to tie on to their political coat tails people and groups of people who might elect them to office. I've seen it in the realm of business and so have you. We've seen business men literally sell their honor, their character, and their good name in order to be a success in business because they were afraid to go into conflict with those who might oppose them.

How true that is in the realm of Christianity, my dear friends. We've seen men and women sell their souls in the very pit of hell itself because they were afraid to walk with that little group of twelve while the multitude turns its back and walks away. They go away from Jesus because of the fear of man.

One of the greatest evangelists this world has ever known was a converted attorney, Charles G. Finney. No other man of his generation ever experienced the kind of revivals Charles Finney knew. Charles Finney prayed and came along at a time when there was a hunger in America, especially in the northeastern section of our country. When he would walk into the plants, the machines would stop and the workers would stand motionless and still. Many times they would fall on their faces in the factories and stores and begin to cry out to God for forgiveness. He preached with such power (Oh, how we covet such power!) that people stood in the midst of his sermons and begged him to hush. He preached with such power that hundreds and hundreds of thousands were swept into the kingdom of God in one area of our country.

It is said that at night when he would ride his horse to his place of destination, he would put his horse in the stable, pull the horse blanket about his shoulders, and there in the barn somewhere he would call on God until the sun came over the hills in the morning. Oh, with what power he preached and people were saved. While he preached one night, it is said that the Chief Justice of the State of New York came walking down the aisle. He was preaching on the text: **"No man liveth unto himself."** The Chief Justice of the State of New York realized that he was not a Christian, and for the fear of his political friends he had sold his soul into hell. He walked down the aisle that night, took the hand of Charles G. Finney, and said, "I want to be a Christian." That great man asked then if he could say a word to the audience. His hair was gray with the snow of many winters and his shoulders were bent beneath the weight of many years. He faced the audience and said to that multitude of people, "For fear of my companions-at-law, I have rejected God's Son until this late hour in life. I want to beg you, young or old, right now, no matter what the cost, no matter what people may say, be a Christian."

It is said that as he stood there with outstretched arms he became a preacher — he who had just been saved for a moment — and people began to come by the scores down all the aisles to be saved. Let me tell you, dear friend, that text is as true this morning as it ever was. **"No man liveth to himself"** and no man dieth to himself. Your life today casts an influence either for God or against Him. You today are leading someone. You lead your children; you lead your friends; you are a leader whether you want to admit it or not. You may not lead many, but you lead some. Everyone in this building is a leader, and your influence you shall face at the judgment bar of God. Let me beg you, do not go away from Jesus because of the fear of man, and do not fail in the matter of soul winning because of the fear of man.

III. THEY WENT AWAY BECAUSE OF DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS

Sometimes people go away from Jesus because of doubts and questions in their minds. The Bible tells of people who had doubts questions. Nathaniel had a doubt which originated in his head. When Nathaniel saw Jesus, he said, **"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"** (John 1:46).

That was not a heart doubt; that was a doubt of his mind. Jesus came and met that need as He saw Him sitting beneath a tree. He called Nathaniel and proved that a good thing, thank God, came out of Nazareth. Thank God, the Jesus we preach today is able to meet and satisfy the honest intellectual doubts of people.

We read of others. John the Baptist had a doubt, an honest doubt of the heart. John the Baptist was in prison awaiting the moment of his execution. He had been faithful to God in preaching the gospel. He sent a messenger to Jesus and asked a question because he had a question unanswered. He asked: “**Art thou He that should come or look we for another?**” (Matthew 11:3). Jesus removed his doubt by saying to the messenger, “**Go tell John the blind see, the dead are raised, the lame walk. You don’t need to look for any other.**” John got his doubt settled. Jesus is the only answer today to the doubts and questions of the human heart.

Thomas had a doubt. It was an honest doubt. Thomas said, “**Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe**” (John 20:25). Whether he ever did or not, the Bible does not say, but Jesus removed his doubts as far as He had removed his sins — the distance of the east from the west.

Let me tell you, dear friend, I have a challenge today for any honest man in the world. If a man says, “I am not a Christian today because I have an intellectual doubt in my head or an honest doubt in my heart,” I will tell you how that doubt can be met head-on and challenged and defeated. In John 7:17 Jesus said, “**If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.**” If you want your doubt overcome, you follow what light God has given you. If you are not a Christian, you take the step Jesus dares you to take; and if your doubts are not removed, we will never ask you to have anything else to do with it. If you are willing to do the will of God and take one step at a time. I will guarantee you God will throw light on your pathway, and God will remove every doubt from your head and from your heart. People sometimes do not come because of doubts, and they go away from Jesus. “**Will ye also go away?**”

IV. THEY WENT AWAY BECAUSE OF LOVE FOR THE WORLD

People sometimes go away from Jesus because of a love for sensual, worldly enjoyment. Oh, the hundreds of people I have met in my limited experience who will not come to Jesus because they do not want to give up sinful pleasures. I was thinking in the last few hours of a girl who came to the altar led by the hand by two well-meaning relatives, her mother and an aunt. This was a meeting where I was preaching when I was just a student in college. They brought that young girl to the front, and she was bowed with conviction. Tears streamed down her face. She was deeply moved. They said, “Her name is so and so.” I called her by her name and said, “Do you want to be a Christian?”

She replied, “Yes, I do, but —.”

I waited to see what the rest of the statement was, and she said, “Mr. Malone, I love to dance, and if being a Christian means to give up the dance, I’m not going to do that.”

I was just a student in school, and I didn't know anything about theology (I still don't know an awful lot because theology doesn't meet the needs of people's hearts, friends, but the Word of God does). I said to her, "You'll never be a Christian until you are willing to turn from the dance floor."

You ask, "Do you mean, Brother Tom, that everybody who dances is not a Christian?"

No, I don't mean that. I think a Christian might backslide and get so far away from God he might go to a dance, but he will be the most miserable person on the floor if he is a Christian; and if he enjoys it, he is not a Christian, for God's Holy Book says, "**Whosoever is born of God doth not commit** (continually) **sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin** (continually) **because he is born of God**" (I John 3:9). If you enjoy sin, you are not saved. You may sin, but no Christian is going to enjoy it. If you can sin and enjoy it, I wouldn't give you a nickel for your chance of ever getting to heaven. Christians, born-again people, do not enjoy sin.

"Well," this young lady said, "I'll never be one."

I said, "You never will; you'll never be saved until you are willing."

That was a three-week meeting. Toward the close of the meeting, I saw her come again. No one led her by the hand this time. She came bowed with conviction and fell at the altar and said, "I want to be saved, and whatever I have to turn away from, Brother Tom, I am willing turn loose from it."

She later married a friend of mine, as fine a Christian man as ever walked on two feet, and they have a lovely Christian home today. They have fine children and are happy in the Lord, but she would have gone to hell for sure if she had continued to say, "I will not give it up." She might have been in hell today, who knows? People turn their backs on Jesus because they are not willing to give up some things. That is one reason why it is so important today that Christians be separated from the world. It also makes it most important that our preaching give emphasis to the depravity of the human heart and point to the natural cravings of lost people for the pleasure of sin which lasts but a season. "**Will ye also go away?**"

V. THEY WENT AWAY BECAUSE OF PROCRASTINATION

People turn their backs on Jesus because they procrastinate; they put it off until another day. You know we often mention the fact that down in Mexico there are two words which they often say. One is "*Manana*" (tomorrow). The other is "*siesta*." They sleep today and put off much that ought to be done until tomorrow. Do you know of any more backward country in the world? Think of all they have lost; think of all they might have had; think of all they might have gained if they had not said for centuries, "Wait until tomorrow."

Let me tell you, dear friends, I know of no instrument in the hands of the Devil that has sent more people to hell and caused more to turn their backs on the Son of God than those words, "Not now, Preacher, some other day."

I so often think when I stand up to preach in my auditorium of a man who sat back there under the balcony one week before Easter Sunday on Palm Sunday about four years ago. He was a 26 year old man who lifted his hand for prayer during the invitation, and by his uplifted hand indicated that he was a lost sinner and wanted me to pray for him. We prayed. As I remember, someone went to him and spoke to him. Others came that day but he did not. Before the next Sunday had come, he was burned to death in an awful automobile and truck accident out on Dixie Highway. I preached his funeral, and they shipped his body to be buried in the family graveyard down in the southern hills. His soul is in hell right now.

On Easter Sunday when the invitation was given, there came young man down the center aisle who is now preaching the gospel. He grabbed me by the hand and said, "Mr. Malone, you mentioned today a 26 year old man who sat in this church last Sunday whose funeral you have already preached. God being my helper, that is never going to happen to me. Tell me how to be saved."

Two young men — one is in the pulpit right now and the other is in hell. If a sinner says, "Tomorrow," and keeps saying it, he will go as straight to hell as any sinner ever went. If a Christian keeps putting off the matter of witnessing to his friends and family, he may never win them. One by one they pass to their Christless guilt and gloom. Write a letter today; make a phone call. Get your loved ones in for the night cometh when no man can work. **"Will ye also go away?"**

I wish I had time to preach another sermon on the next question, **"To whom shall we go?" "To whom shall we go?"** Did you ever think of it?"

Shall we go to the modernists? No. They don't know how to tell you to meet the hunger of the human heart.

Shall we turn to the world? No. When a sinner is dying and turns his face to the wall and looks right in the face of an open grave and an endless eternity, the world has nothing to offer him.

Shall we go to wisdom? No. We shall go to the One Who is the Fountain of all wisdom.

Shall we go to wealth? No. We'll go to the One Who owns the world and all that is in it — the Son of God.

"Will ye also go away?" "To whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life?"

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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