

We Must Evangelise!

Should all Christians evangelize, or is this the duty only of ministers and evangelists?

And oft-told account of when the newly-ordained William Cary, shared his burden for the heathen at a late 1700s Baptist leaders meeting, an older minister interrupted him, “Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen, he’ll do it without consulting you or me!”

Thankfully Cary was undeterred, and we know his now-famous motto for evangelical missions,

“Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God!”

I. Paul Evangelized, So Must We

Look at Paul’s attitude for the people during his fourth shipwreck experience,

“And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man’s* life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. ...

And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.”

(Act 27:20-25, 33-37)

Paul himself described in 2 Cor 11:23-28, his 3 earlier shipwrecks, one of which left him in the ocean depth, several imprisonments, 5 whippings of 39 stripes, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned and left for dead, many perils of rivers, of robbers, of the Jews, of the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren, in weariness, pain, watching, hunger, thirst, fasting, cold, nakedness, daily care of all the churches – all for the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

After Paul’s Damascus Road conversion, Ananias was sent by God to Paul, “Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children

of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake". "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." (Act 9:15-20)

Paul thus later, bound in spirit, had determined to be at Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost, not knowing what things shall befall him there, but knowing that bonds and afflictions are included,

"... he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Acts 20:16-23)

Such was Paul's evangelistic zeal, from house-to-house and in public. At Jerusalem, he was falsely accused by the Jews, leading to 2-years' house arrest at Caesarea under Governor Felix (Act 24:27). Subsequently, tried before Governor Festus and King Agrippa, he appealed to Caesar (Act 25:10), for even Caesar must hear the Gospel (Acts 27:24); which is the background for this ship voyage and fourth shipwreck. In the ship, his concern was not for his own welfare alone but for all 276 souls, for whom he prayed, and received God's promise that not one life would be lost. Paul thus freely told them so, so that even if any would not believe the Gospel, they would in time know that what he told them had come precisely true.

We can see throughout Acts, and in his epistles, that Paul never ceased to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. John Calvin quoted Paul so often that some say Paul was a Calvinist, whereas Calvin was a Paulinist. Whatever it is, true Calvinism cannot be against evangelisation!

Question and Thought: If Paul so evangelized, can we refrain from doing so?

II. Jesus' Example

We need not say anything about Jesus' example, evangelizing through the villages of Israel and Judah, and even to the Samaritans. In one account, Jesus indefatigably said,

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. Therefore, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

(John 10:16-17)

Then in a very special way, one day, He journeyed all the way to the borders of Tyre and Sidon,

"And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid. For a *certain*

woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis."

(Mark 7:24-31)

Question and Thought: Did you notice, how Jesus walked all the way from Galilee to the coast of Tyre and Sidon, and then all the way back to Galilee, just for one gentile Syrophenician woman, whose daughter had an unclean spirit? Are there any souls not worth saving? Did Jesus not come down from heaven's glory to save you, and to save me? Are we worth saving?

III. If We Really Believe, We Would Tell Others

One time after I had shared the Gospel with a colleague, he was thoughtful for a time, and then told me, "If you believe this, you should give up everything, and put all your efforts to tell the whole world this Gospel!" He was not wrong, although it is not necessary that everyone must leave secular employment to be a part of the Gospel ministry. We just have to be very grateful for our salvation, as was a man, whom they had called "Legion",

"And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, **Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee.** And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him."

(Luke 8:32 -39)

Question and Thought: The Gospel is simply each one of us, going home to our own families, relatives and neighbours, and showing how great things God hath done for us! This man, Legion, published the Gospel throughout the whole city where he came from. How about us?

Concluding Plea to Save Souls

There were two thieves at Jesus' right and left, railing on Him, until one repented, who said,

“Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

(Luke 23:39-44)

If you think about it, this thief is on surer grounds than many churchgoers on Earth today. For a certainty, he is with Christ in Paradise. One thing he cannot do is to go back to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to his loved ones and friends. You and I still can. Will we do so?

For Paul, a dispensation was given: “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16). May we pray with broken hearts to the Lord of Harvest, to grant us a similar dispensation.

Sincerely,

Brother S H Lim, 31 December 2020

For Evangelism-Discipleship Dept