

PRAYER MEETING 10-7-20
FAITH PROMISE MISSIONS THE GOAL OF WITNESSING

THE GREAT COMMISSION OF THE CHURCH IS TO BE WITNESSES

Introduction:

This is missions month. Each year we take the month of October to focus in on our Lord's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. This we call the great commission of the church. Usually I schedule different missionaries throughout the month and have them present their ministries on Wednesday nights. This year, instead of doing this, we are going to have a Missions - Revival Conference at the end of the month. We have two guest speakers scheduled who will be preaching.

Our text for the establishment of what we call the great commission is found in Acts 1:6-8

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Acts 1:8 But 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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This evening we are going to share a lesson taken from this text.

I. Notice there is a tendency on the part of God's people to get side tracked from our commission:

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

(1.) Christ is now parting from them, and parts in love; and yet He gives them this rebuke, which is intended for a caution to his church in all ages, to take heed of splitting upon the rock which was fatal to our first parents _ an inordinate desire of forbidden knowledge, and intruding into things which we have not seen because God has not shown them.

How many people are zealous to support prophetic books and papers and other things that tantalize our curiosity, but have no zeal or heart for witnessing or missions.

There are so many things in this life that would sidetrack us from the true commission of our Lord.

We desire to spend all our time satisfying and entertaining our fanciful imaginations and hearts, but how little time we give to witnessing and the support of world wide missions and church building.

II. WHAT DID JESUS MEAN WHEN HE SAID, YE SHALL BE WITNESSES OF ME?

1. To witness means we should be willing to stand up and bear record to what our Lord stood for. In this case we become like Him. The word witness comes from the greek word "martus."

The greek word for witnesses is the word:

Martus, from which we get the

AV - witness 29, martyr 3, record 2;

1) a witness

1a) in a legal sense

1b) an historical sense

1b1) one who is a spectator of anything, e.g. of a contest

1c) in an ethical sense

1c1) those who after his example have proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death

One commentator says,

They shall prove this, shall confirm their testimony, not as witnesses do, with an oath, but with the divine seal of miracles and supernatural gifts: You shall be martyrs to me, or my martyrs, as some copies read it; for they attested the truth of the gospel with their sufferings, even unto death.

2. TO WITNESS OF CHRIST INFERS THAT WE MUST BE LIKE HIM IN THIS WORLD:

John 17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

John 17:18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

John 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

John 15:21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

John 15:23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

III. God's twofold purpose of witnessing:

II Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

II Corinthians 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

II Corinthians 2:16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

1. We are to more people a savour of death unto death.

Now we see why for many, witnessing truly made them Martyrs.

To some when we preach we bring tidings of bad news and not good. We are reminders that there is a hell. This in turn produces persecution.

Fellow trying to white wash hell said, it was maybe not all that bad and that hell may be God's furnace, to keep himself warm. I said, no it in the Bible it is likened to God's garbage pit where he burns up all the trash.

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

A. Ezekiel was an example of a messenger of death unto death:

Ezekiel 2:4 For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 2:5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

Ezekiel 2:6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

Ezekiel 2:7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.

Ezekiel 2:8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

B. Jeremiah was an example of a messenger of death unto death:

Jeremiah 20:7 O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

Jeremiah 20:8 For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

Jeremiah 20:9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

There is a movement today to avoid the offence of preaching:

Churches are going more & more into praise services and spending less time preaching and teaching the word of God. Why? There is no offence in music. The offence is when we preach.

I Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

C. We see this trend today as we find people who find preaching a savour of death unto death and look for the preacher to provide a message or a ministry that appeals to their lust rather than their conscience.

People often come to church to be entertained more than hear the word of God, this is evidence that our message to them is a message of death unto death.

Ezekiel 33:30 Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD.

Ezekiel 33:31 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

Ezekiel 33:32 And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

Ezekiel 33:33 And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

II Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

II Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

II Timothy 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

II Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

II Timothy 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

II Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

I believe that the end time church that majors on preaching may not be drawing the record crowds like the old days.

Is this evidence that we need new methods as some would argue?

Is this evidence that preaching is no longer the way to go today?

2. The second purpose of our witness is that people might be saved:

II Corinthians 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

II Corinthians 2:16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

To the one we are a fragrance of death unto death.

To one we are a savour of life unto life.

Matthew 18:5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

Matthew 18:6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Matthew 10:40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Matthew 10:41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

Matthew 10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

A. Notice that a person who receives God's messenger receives the Lord himself.

This is why it is so important that we walk in the spirit and be Christ like.

How will people be saved unless they see Christ in us?

Myself the day I got saved, what impressed me was the witness of so many who were saved.

Testimony times in the church.

a. This is the fragrance of a believer. It is actually the Holy Spirit that they sense.

The fragrance in the Old Testament was a picture of the Spirit of God.

Exodus 30:9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

This was symbolically pictured in the Old Testament by the fragrances that could be smelled in the Holy Of Holies.

* There was a special perfume that was to be used only in the temple:

Exodus 30:34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight:

Exodus 30:35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy:

Exodus 30:36 And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.

Exodus 30:37 And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD.

Exodus 30:38 Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

* **There also was a special anointing oil:**

Exodus 30:31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations.

Exodus 30:32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.

Exodus 30:33 Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

* ***There was a special incense that was to be burned:***

Exodus 30:9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

b. A per-requisite to being a witness of Jesus Christ is that we be filled with the spirit of God:

Acts 1:4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Acts 1:8 But 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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Luke 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The Lord told his early disciples to TARRY till they be endued with power. The idea here is to sit still and wait. So they waited and had a 10 day prayer meeting in the upper room and waited for the promise of God.

After Pentecost they became witnesses for Jesus.

They became a sweet savour to God, some believed and some didn't, but they in either case fulfilled the purpose of witnessing.

II Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

II Corinthians 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

II Corinthians 2:16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

IV. Understanding the twofold purpose for witnessing, we should rejoice every time we witness because each time we have an opportunity to share Christ we have been successful in accomplishing what the Lord wants us to do.

So many times people get discouraged when they witness and people do not receive the message. Remember the purpose of witnessing is twofold, one is to get people saved, and the other is to expose people as being lost and condemned.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

John 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.