

S. M. Jan 12, 1952 AM

"PERSONAL WORK"

John 4

Someone has called the first chapter of John the "Finders Chapter". John found Jesus; Jesus found Nathanael; Andrew found Peter.

That is how the Christian Church started -- just two men, each going out and finding his brother. And so it has been in succeeding years. Men are brought to Christ by other men. *1 Cor 5:14 "The love of Christ constrains us" Love leaves no choice!*

Every man whose soul had been touched by the grace of God had a message.

That message was for the man next to him.

The great need of this hour is consecrated, soul-winning, witnessing laymen. The twelve Apostles were laymen. The first martyr was a layman. The missionary journeys were planned and executed by laymen.

*Words "Missile" & "mission" stem from same Latin word MITTO - "to send"
Big question - our spiritual thrust - what are we doing reaching out -*

What could be a finer thing than for our laymen to go out weekly two by two to present the claims of Christ.

Let us face the fact that without personal work Christianity will perish from the face of the earth. It alone can save the churches.

Dr. O. P. Gifford says we sometimes fail in evangelism. He says, "I used to advertise the Sunday services" Now I advertise Sabbath worship. You called on John

the other morning. His wife said he had gone "to service". You went over to the church to see John and what he did at service. You found him sitting at the end of the pew. He joined in the singing. He bowed his head in prayer. He put his envelope on the plate. Then he settled back comfortably in the pew and waited for the minister's message. Within five minutes his head was nodding and he called that service."

That is the thing which in Christian experience many of our churchmen call service.

If we read the history of Christianity you can't help but see the importance of personal work. They had a good time finding people for Christ.

If you want to bring men and women to believe with you must see them face to face and eye to eye.

How is it done in politics. They just button-hole a man and hold on to him till he surrenders.

How do salesmen go to and fro through the land. They go for one at a time.

It is always hand to hand.

Roger Lovette, First Baptist Church, Clemson, S. C. told the story of taking a sick, lifeless baby of a poor tenant farmer to Dr. Sam Newman. He rigged up the I. V. and began preparation that would pump life back into the little limp, dehydrated baby's body. The Doctor in a sharp command said, "Lovette, come in here!" He went in the room where the baby was stretched on the white table. The Doctor said,

"Watch a miracle taking place."

In moments color and life started coming back to the baby's face and arms and legs.

We have something in the Gospel that will work a miracle -- if we pass it on.

Someone asked ^{Becher} Lyman Baer "What do you count the greatest thing that a human being can be or do?"

Without hesitation he replied "The greatest thing is not that one shall be a scientist, as important as that is; not that one be a statesman nor even a theologian; but the greatest thing one can do for another human being is to bring them to Christ Jesus as Savior."

Nothing can bless you or thrill you as leading someone else to know our Lord.

Two things break loose:

The blessings of Heaven.

The hatred of Hell.

Since we are in a spiritual war, that should not surprise us. Jesus has give us a marvelous picture of personal work in John 4.

I. PERSONAL APPROACH OF THE WITNESS 4:1-5

Dr. George Truett once said, "The supreme method for winning the world to Christ is the personal method, bringing people to Christ one by one."

There are other ways: radio, television, tracts, mass evangelism -- but the most effective is one to one.

Jesus preached his greatest sermon to one man and taught in the parable of the lost sheep. Luke 15:3-7 the value of one.

Andrew found his brother.

Philip left a revival to lead one seeker to Christ on the desert.

Paul and Silas won the Phillippian jailer.

Henry Turnbull, "I can see more direct results of good through my individual efforts with individuals than through all my spoken words in religious assemblies, or my written words in books. Reaching one person at a time is the best way of reaching all the world in time.

V 3 Jesus left Judea and departed into Galilee to do personal work.

II. URGENCY OF THE WITNESS - V. 4

V. 4 "And he must needs go through Samaria." Jesus was driven by the Spirit to share his message with a woman who desperately needed to get a new start with a new heart.

Not many of us share this urgency of Jesus in search of the lost.

David Brainerd, pioneer missionary to the Indians of the Eastern Shores of America. He would often be so burdened for the lost that he would fall off his horse into the snow and pray for hours for his Indian friends. In the latter months of his life, he would turn the snow red from the coughing effects of his tubercular lungs.

Oh, how shallow our urgency!

Today we have the spread of "universalism" -- people are saying men don't need to be saved, that they are already saved, that they will be saved.

People often come into the church but not into the Kingdom.

Materialism - says "I have all I need today. I could care less about my soul and eternity."

I pray for more of Jesus' urgency in my daily walk, "Help me, Lord. Help us

Lord to see people through your heart."

III. HINDRANCES TO PERSONAL WORK - V. 7-9

V. 7 - There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus said unto her, Give me to drink.

V. 8 - For his Disciples had gone into the city to buy meat.

V. 9 - Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, how is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritians."

Jesus had to deal with several cultural, religious, and social hindrances of his day.

She was a woman.

She was a Samaritan (The untouchables!)

She was promiscuous!

But that did not stop Jesus from witnessing.

First - we have forgotten man's true nature The Bible clearly states that man is lost and separated from God.

Look at God's discription of man as he sees him.

Man's head is sick.- Isa. 1:5.

His eyes are evil. - Mark 7:22.

His mouth is deceitful. - Psa. 36:3.

His tongue is poison. - James 3:8.

His neck is stiff. - Jer. 17:23.

His ears are dull. - Matt. 13:15.

His feet are running to mischief. - Prov. 6:18.

His bones are full of sin. - Job 20:11.

Inspite of education, affluence, government, and programs, murders are soaring, veneral disease is at epidemic proportion, divorce parallel marriages, white crime is at an all time high, suicides are rising and mental breakdowns are raging.

Man does not need reupholstering. He needs a fresh new start!

Second, we have forgotten the consequences of sin.

Not only in the here and now but also in the bye and bye.

Man, is doomed to an eternity in Hell. Sin operates in earliest childhood.

"The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23.

God does not waste any words -- without Christ there is a payday someday.

Third, Christians have forgotten this priority. Even the church has substituted for the good. We take and take and never witness for Christ.

IV. THE MESSAGE OF LIFE TO BE SHARED - V. 14

V. 13 "Jesus said whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.

V. 14 - But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

That seems so simple in a complex world but it sure reaches man's basic need.

The needs of men are ageless.

Man lives in the burden of guilt, the fear of death, the horror of loneliness and the anxiety of hopelessness.

Jim Henry said a 17 year old girl called at 2 A. M. from a phone booth on a busy thoroughfare. She told him she had a pistol in her hand and was going to end her life. When asked why, she replied, "Because nobody really cares anymore. But if you will tell me that you care if I live, even though you don't know me, I won't do it. I just want to know that somebody cares." There are people like her everywhere.

We have the message -- as simple as it may sound. Christ is the answer!

He becomes a well of water springing up into everlasting life. If you drink of him you live - if you don't, you die!

V. BLESSING AND RESULTS OF PERSONAL WORK

I am sure there was joy at the well when the woman repented.

Notice the blessing in the woman's life.

V. 28 - She became a witness - left her waterpot and went her way into the city.

V. 29 - Come meet the one who dealt with my sin.

V. 30 - Then they went out of the city to meet him.

She became the beggar who found bread leading others -- beggars to the bread of life.

William James said "religion was either a dull habit or an acute fever."

The Samaritan woman caught the fever and I don't believe she ever lost it!

When we Christians get the fever of witnessing - there will be holy joy in the assembly again.

Another blessing --

V. 41 - "And many more believed because of his own word."

This is an awesome challenge - make personal work a priority.

A man heard Gypsy Smith preach. He was caught with the message of soul-winning. He said, "I have been a member of the church for twenty years and a constant attendant. But in all these years I cannot recall ever having spoken to any man about Christ. I have never even tried to do so."

Eighteen months after hearing the sermon on personal work, he reported to his pastor. "Here are the names of 14 men that I have been empowered to win in the past 18 months."

There were twenty years of barren silence, 18 months of Christian witnessing and 14 men won!

There is nothing on earth so effective as a courageous witness for the Master.

There is nothing so powerful as an earnest personal testimony concerning Jesus.

When you speak with someone and say I have had definite dealings with God -- every ear is alert to hear what you have to say.

Tell someone about Christ without delay - it will keep your own soul alive.

A meeting was in progress in the Entaw Place Church, Baltimore.

Every night one of the Deacons came up the aisle with a 16 year old boy on his back. The fellow was paralyzed.

It was a sight for the angels to look upon when that dear saint came "bending under the weight of a precious soul."

He would place him over in the corner of a front pew and then get off where he could watch him.

One night the invitation was given for all to accept Christ, and who was willing then and there to confess him, to stand up.

The dear boy could not stand up, nor rise, but he raised both his hands instead.

Preacher Wharton said, "I wish you could have seen the man who brought him there. His face was radiant, the tears streamed down his cheeks. There was joy in his heart, joy among the angels, joy in our midst."

He had brought the little paralytic to Jesus, and the blessing filled him full, and there was so much of it, it ran over and filled the people.

Many joys await us in the bright beyond, but none can be sweeter than the privilege of meeting those we tried to save. Paul said they were his joy and his crown.

Have you ever lead a person to Christ - have you ever tried to witness in His name. Will you offer your self and consecrate your self to personal work.

Today if you need the living water come and drink.

Today pledge your best to the task of Jesus.