

S.N. March 2, 1975 A.M. -
S.N. Jan 9, 1983 P.M. ✓✓
Shore Church July 12, '89 S. Meeting

THE COMMITTED

Romans 10:14-15

Today we have an unusual experience of unveiling a plaque, in recognition, and in honor of those who have served as ministers of the Gospel in this church for over 72 years of history.

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things. Would you like to have beautiful feet my Christian friend. Most people would. They go to shoe shops and try to get their feet and shoes much too small for them all because they desire beautiful feet. But here is a way to have beautiful feet in God's sight. Preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.

Preaching is a (great call) A Jewish tailor who was rather proud of his styles urged the preacher's wife to have her preacher husband visit his shop and look over his goods. She said, she would tell him but she feared he might be too busy to come right away. Busy? The Jewish tailor said, lifting his hands to his eye brows. I thought he was occupied only (two hours) in the week.

And that is a very popular conception of what a preacher has to do. And many times we miss the point. It is a great call. The difference between a (business and a calling) is that a business is one in which you try to earn a living. And a calling is one in which you try to live a life. In business the effort is to try and see how much money you can make. In a calling, the effort is to see how much good you can do. In a business, one is try to see how much he can get out of the world. In a calling, he is trying to see how much he can put into the world. In a business he is thinking profits and dividends. In a calling, he is thinking of service. In a business, he is building his house on sand. And when the storm

breaks, it falls. But in a calling, he is building on the rock and he can face all storms unafraid. In business, one leaves all that he has behind him when he dies. In a calling, he takes everything with him, and is rich forever.

Of course, one may make his business his calling. He may sell goods, manufacture, write insurance, and transform all of these raw products for the glory of God. His business then becomes a calling. Then the effort is not to see how much money he can make, but to see how much good - how much service he can render. And this lifts business to a high level.

Preachers are (not) the only people God calls. He calls bankers, lawyers, doctors, school teachers - and he wants them to be dedicated. And committed to the task.

The preacher recognizes in gratitude to God that his life is given to tell the message. The remedy for sin.

And with the preacher, the (call is unto death) Dr. Truitt said, that of his grandfather, when the Doctor said that he had but a few moments to live - the old man asked to be propped up in bed, called in the neighbors, and died talking with them about the Gospel.

Now many of these, some of these (names) on this plaque are men who have died talking about the Gospel. One of the pastors on this plaque was shot while he was standing in the front yard or the front porch of the parsonage after going to another charge - another church, from this place. Simply because he preached the gospel.

commitment to (point) men to Jesus Christ. (Joseph Parker) was a mighty

preacher of the Gospel. One reporter said that he went to hear Parker preach in the morning. He went to hear Spurgeon preach at night. Someone asked him what was the difference. In the morning, he said, there was grand preaching. Marvelous pulpit oratory. In the evening he said, Spurgeon said what a wonderful Saviour is Jesus after listening to his sermon.

A group of ministers one day met and they said, we're going to have to do something for McNealy's church. Things are going bad. The young pastor ignores the profession of faith. The people are not getting our doctrines. What are they getting - someone asked. He is giving them nothing but the plain simple Gospel. Replied one of the anxious brothers. Plain simple Gospel - can you beat it? He was asked. Why the plain Gospel is not bad - it is narrow - you reduce it down and what you have is John 3:16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish but have everlasting life.

The primary matter for all is the Gospel. The one hope for the world is in Christ. Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. And this is the thing that Paul always pointed the hearers that he had to Christ. The primary work of the church is to point people to him who saves. The work of every Christian is to point people to the lamb of God. This is the way, walk ye in it.

Preachers spend their lives trying to (get people to be committed.) J. D. Grey said he attended the funeral service of an old preacher who had devoted his lifetime to a neighborhood and they had paid him a starvation salary and then were critical of everything he said or did. He said, he sat there through that service and at the close, they had the people come by. And some of them were sobbing like their hearts were broken. He said here were people who failed to stand by him and support him in his ministry, during his lifetime. And now they were shedding tears, but they were mainly tears of remorse. They were like Nicodemus.

And Joseph - who were outstanding men but failed to stand up for Christ during his life and they came in tears after his death. They were the Lord's pallbearers.

He told of another man who was a mighty man of God, in a large church - that people came fairly well Sunday morning. But he said, Sunday evenings, the empty pews in the sanctuary looked like a second-hand furniture store. There were so many empty pews that they could have discharged a double-barrel shotgun right from the pulpit through the congregation and not hit a person - for they were so scattered. The small crowd made you think of an old maid who said about her church in Los Angeles she had stopped going to church on Sunday night. When someone asked her why - she offered this explanation. Well, you see, our pastor is a widower and I'm unmarried. And on Sunday nights the crowd is so small, when he says "dearly beloved" - I always blush.

Well, we come back to the Sunday night crowds. What has happened to that crowd - in that church the chairman of the board, the president of the Woman's Missionary Union, 75% of the deacons and other leaders of the church were absent. They were having big dinner parties in their homes. They were out to the Country Club pulling off a big one - and yet here was a man of God left down at that church to hold a fort.

Now I believe my relationship here in this church has been a little bit different with the Deacons. We have had some very fine men who have supported us and who prayed, worked and labored. I think about them a little different than one preacher that I heard. He was deathly sick in the hospital and following the regular meeting of the deacons, they sent him this message -- your Deacons have voted to pray for your recovery by a vote of 28 to 5.

I was told about another preacher who had something of the same difficulty. And one day the janitor brought him a slip of paper from the Sunday order of

service, written these words --

I never see my pastor's eyes
Though they with light may shine
For when he prays he closes his
And when he preaches, mine.

at close mine

I remember reading the story Westberry tells about Dr. Martin Niemöller, who was a political prisoner during Hitler's war. And he asked the preacher why didn't Hitler kill you. The preacher's wife answered - I'll tell you why. Hitler was afraid of my husband - he had an uneasy feeling about Martin. The story is told that they put an atheist in the cell with this preacher to try to argue him down and convince him that he ought to become an atheist. It was not long before the atheist asked for a Bible.

How wonderful a commitment. How beautiful is such a witness.

The immortal Gladstone was awakened one night by a woman from the sons of London who had asked him to visit his dying son. Gladstone got up, put on his clothes, and made his way to the attic stairs, and sat down by the little fellow. He planted a kiss on his brow, gave him a gift, and told him about Jesus. The next day as he went to Parliament, he said to him, Mr. Gladstone, we hope you have a great message for Parliament today. Mr. Gladstone is reported to have said, I do not know whether I have a great message for Parliament, or not, one thing I know, there is not a happier man in all of England.

The happiest, most radiant, most attractive people in this world are those who are committed to witness for Jesus Christ. What a difference it makes. We do not need really more teachers today. Or more preachers. Or better preachers.

Because we have had preaching for a long time. What we need is more of the real religion of Jesus Christ. We need those that are in the pews Sunday after Sunday to go out and live a life that is worthy of Jesus Christ.

It was said of (Isaac Watts), we should be a bit of Christ. We are daily newspapers of the Gospel.

As the poet says, you are writing a Gospel - a chapter a day.

In deeds that you do, and in words that you say.

Men w read what you write, whether false or true.

Say, what is the Gospel, according to you. ?

So here is the committment that a person needs to have to be an active witness of Jesus Christ.

I heard the story of a little boy who was distressed when he heard his father say that a fire broke out on the buildings of the campus of his college. And the board of trustees had set out with a drive to raise 3 million dollars.

This little freckled-face red hair boy decided to help. He went to the basement, found him a shallow tray, put a strap on it for a loop, and he went downtown to a wholesale house and talked them into selling him some soap, for 4¢ a bar. He filled the tray and started down the street. And he said to a dignified elderly lady, would you like to buy a bar of soap. Not that I think you need it, but it is very good soap. And you'd be helping out the good cause, because we are

going to raise 3 million dollars for my Dad's college.

The astonished woman said, I beg your pardon. What did you say. So he let her have it again. Would you like to buy a bar of soap. Not that I think you need it. But it is very good soap and it floats. And you'd be helping out the good cause because we are going to raise 3 million dollars for my Dad's college. And the woman said, isn't that a lot of money. But the boy answered, shucks no. There is a kid across the street that is helping me.

Now Paul discovered the thrill of commitment when he exclaimed I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Somebody is helping us.

It is difficult to describe our commitment to Jesus Christ. It is easier for us to illustrate it than it is for us to describe it. An aged saint who had memorized many passages of Scripture - in the latter days of her life, her memory weakened and she could not recall even a single verse. So she repeated over and over again 2 Tim. 1:12. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Her condition grew worse and the gates of Heaven wider and wider. She could not repeat the verse - she could only say, I know him. And when she came to the last moments of her life and her eyes were closed, in a faint whisper she was heard to say - Him, Him, Him. That my friends is a commitment - to bear the witness that we ought to bear.

We have a commitment to this all sufficient message - to this town, to this city - to this state, our convention, this nation, and the world.

If Christ is the door, Mrs. Appleby says, you are the doorkeeper - to open or close it for others. If he is the light of the world. You are the bearer of

that light to the ends of the earth. If Jesus is the vine, you are the fruitbearing branch that draws life from the vine. If Jesus is the bread of life, you are ~~the~~ bread. To break it and to feed it to those that hunger. If he is the truth, you are the truthbearer. If he is the bright and morning star, you are to brush aside the clouds and unveil his beauty. So that men may see it. You are an indispensable part of the great plan and program of God.

Now here in Norfolk, Virginia, there is a bronze plaque layed in cement. And you read - from this spot in (1845 Melville S. Kotts) sailed to become the first protestant missionary to Africa. When you see that, you have to know the story - to see that little man on that boat, going across to a dark continent. To tell people about Jesus Christ. And as you look at that little man, his tiny body infected with the worst kind of T. B. - you'll see him standing in a Doctor's office and you'll hear him saying well, if I only got a year to live, I better be hurrying on because I have a lot of Gospel to preach.

Now that was commitment. He wanted to go to Africa. And there in Africa is his grave. Melville S. Kotts. And I imagine if you search your heart today, you'd like to have that kind of commitment. You'd have to take your hat off. And you'd say Dear God, give us all a commitment like that.

Remember this, if you commit your life - (someone is going with you). David (Livingston) went back to Glasgow and addressed the university. The students had assembled - and as they gazed into his face blackened by the African sun - they looked at the lion injured arm limp by his side. They grew quiet. And at the conclusion - one of them arose and asked, Dr. Livingston, what was it that enabled you to keep on out there in Africa? He replied, if you would know what it was that sustained me, in my loneliness, that gave me strength, when I could not bear the food that was offered to me, that was my help among those whose language I could

not speak, and gave me endurance for all the unspeakable trials that beset me -
it was the promise of Jesus to his church - go and lo, I am with you always.

Have you made a commitment like that. Hurrying out of an art gallery, a
young man passed an old man standing looking at a painting of Jesus. The sight
caught his eye. The young man turned and looked at the painting of Jesus, he
said to the old man - that is wonderful. It certainly is, the old man replied.
And it has a good name, sir, the young man said. It is called the man of Galilee.
The young man turned and left. The old man went away. But on the way, the young
man decided he would return. He came back and stood at the foot of the painting,
looked up into the eyes of the man of Galilee and said - "oh man of Galilee, if
there is anything I can do for you, you can count on me. There is something that
we can do for him.