

How to Win Souls

Sermon #1021

Study by W. D. Frazee—November 4, 1966

I suppose we all believe that the great business of the church is to answer the call to win souls. The church is made up of individuals, and each one of us is to help answer the call. Each of us is to help reach every soul in this world with the gospel message in a way that as many as possible will accept it.

The only way a person can be a foreign missionary is first to be a home missionary. I read:

"Let those who desire to work for God begin at home, in their own household, in their own neighborhood, among their own friends. Here they will find a favorable missionary field. This home missionary work is a test, revealing their ability or inability for service in a wider field" *Messages to Young People*, page 207.

So to answer the call to Macedonia we begin at Jerusalem, if that is where we live. When Jesus gave the commission, that is the way He put it.

"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" Acts 1:8.

The light that shines the farthest shines the brightest nearest home. So rather than preaching, I would like to study with you how to win souls. In the providence of God, if we learn this lesson, we shall be scattered all over the earth ere long. The men who have been trained here who are serving, with the Lord's blessing, in other places are the advanced guard. Some of you are being trained here now. And I say, Whether we are students or faculty members, we are all in training, learning to win souls.

How are souls won? Souls are won on our knees.

"O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!" Job 16:21.

The margin says his friend. Notice that this text does not say that a man might plead with a man for God. That is good too. That is part of soul winning. We need to plead with men for God. That is, we need to go to men and urge them and persuade them to give their hearts to Christ. But here is a preliminary work, a preparatory work, an accompanying work. And without it all the pleading with men on God's behalf will not accomplish very much. "Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!"

The book, *Medical Ministry* is a handbook for those who are seeking to carry on medical missionary work. I read:

"Let the workers grasp the promises of God saying, Thou hast promised. Ask and ye shall receive. I must have this soul converted to Jesus Christ" *Medical Ministry*, page 244.

God puts into our mouths the very words we are to use in carrying out the verse in Job.

Students of grammar, what number would we say the word this is? It is singular, and singular means one. So those of us who would like to learn the trade of soul winning, I would answer in the words of inspiration, Begin to pray for souls, and begin to pray for one. I must have this soul converted to Jesus Christ. Now it doesn't have to stop with one, but it always begins with one. You can never have two until you have one.

"Select another, and still another soul, daily seeking guidance from God. Laying everything before Him in earnest prayer, and working in divine wisdom. As you do this you will see that God will give the Holy Spirit to convict, and the power of the truth to convert the soul" *Ibid.*

It is God who wins souls, but He does it in answer to pleading with God for men, and pleading with men for God. We need to do both. If we do those two things, we shall be successful. If we neglect either one we will not be successful. And considering those two things, that part which we are most likely to neglect is the pleading with God for men; praying for souls. Oh, that one might plead for a man with God as a man pleadeth for his friend.

Suppose someone you loved dearly was in prison and condemned to death. You know the governor. You might feel moved to go to the governor and plead with him that he would give that man a pardon. You might feel that the circumstances suggest that. If you did, I cannot imagine your going into the governor's office and mumbling a few words and leave, and say, At least I made the effort. No. I think if you had interest to go there at all there would come pouring out the burden of a heart that could not be satisfied with anything different than a yes answer. Oh that one might plead for a man with God.

Do you have a prayer list? Do you have a list of one or two or three or more names that you are pleading with God for? If you have, you know something about what I am talking about. But if you don't, I invite you to begin. I wouldn't say it is imperative that you write those names down on a piece of paper, but many of you will find it helpful. You won't put it up on the wall for everybody to read. You will have it in a private place. It is something between your soul and God. But it is a wonderful thing to take that list out and spread it out before the Lord.

Hezekiah did that. What he took to the temple and spread out in the court was an ultimatum from the general of the Assyrian army. But what you and I have to spread out before the eye of God is more important than the ultimatum of any earthly army. Here are soul at stake. If they are saved, they will have eternal life. They will be with God in that heavenly land forever and ever.

Is what we do have any bearing on it? Oh, yes. Does what God does in answer to our prayer have anything to do with it? Oh, yes. If it doesn't, we had just as well forget all we are studying tonight. We are not a fatalist. We believe with all our hearts that it is a part of God's plan to grant us an answer to the prayer of faith that which He would not bestow if we did not ask. We believe the word of Christ:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" Matthew 7:7-8.

No wonder inspiration raises the question, What a wonder it is that we pray so little. Why should the children of God neglect prayer when this is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse where are treasured the boundless resources of omnipotence.

I am studying prayer not from the standpoint of what it can do for you. I am studying what it can do for the souls you are laboring for. And unless we learn this, we are not medical missionaries. We may be medical personnel. We may be doctors or nurses, or any one of a dozen other helpers. The world is full of them. The world could use a good many more, of course. But it takes more than that to be a medical missionary. A medical missionary is primarily a soul winner. The word missionary is a noun, and the word medical is an adjective. It tells what kind of soul winner he is, what method he is using to get access to people. He is primarily a missionary, a soul winner. And that is what everyone of us is to be, for I read:

"The work above all work,—the business above all others which should draw and engage the energies of the soul,—is the work of saving souls for whom Christ has died. Make this the main, the important work of your life. Make it your special life work" *Messages to Young People*, page 227.

The early church was successful because they had the anointing of the Spirit of God. They got it through prayer. They had not yet learned what the church later learned that it was the ministry that was to do the work of the church. They hadn't learned that, and it was a sad day for the work of God when most of the church learned that the ministry was to do the work of the church. You and I must go back to Pentecost and learn what the early church learned—the power of intercessory prayer, and the power of universal witnessing by every member.

So much time is lost in trying to file individuals to make them like some skeleton key. So much time is lost in trying to shape people to work like someone else, sing like someone else, talk like someone else, give Bible studies like someone else, make appeals like someone else. But the thing that makes you valuable is that you are not like anyone else. And the reason God made more laymen than He did preachers is that there are vast numbers of people that preachers can never reach. God made you as a layman with a personality and an education. And if you will get on your knees and start crying for souls, He will use you to reach somebody that I can't reach. Oh, how that should thrill the soul of every person here.

This is what made the early church so powerful. They all witnessed. They were all on their knees seeking God. Oh, the power of apostolic simplicity when the power from on high and the energy of human hearts is welded together in an endeavor to reach men for God.

As the members multiplied by leaps and bounds there arose certain material problems. The twelve apostles called the multitude together and said:

"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" Acts 6:4.

Seven deacons were appointed to do the business so the twelve wouldn't have to leave their work of intercession and witnessing. But does that mean that the seven deacons spent their time looking after those material things? Such a conclusion would be foreign to the Scriptures.

"And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" Acts 6:5-10.

Stephen was not just a quiet, timid person who dealt with some business and left all the witnessing to Peter and John. He was on fire for God. So much so that the Devil aimed his darts at Stephen and murdered him. He became the first Christian martyr. He was a layman, but he was on fire for God, and was winning souls right and left. The whole church had that spirit.

A number here have tasted a little bit of what we are talking about. But there isn't a one of us who has yet seen what God is about to do in this movement on what we are studying. My heart longs for the latter rain and loud cry when hundreds and thousands will be seen with their Bibles visiting homes, pleading with men for God because in their closets they have gotten down pleading with God for men.

We can't do God's part, but God won't do our part. Our part is to set ourselves to the task of pleading with God for definite souls. And we begin with how many? One. Then select another and still another. If I were you I would ask God who He wants you to pray for. I wouldn't just pick a name. How do you know whether the key of your personality will fit the lock of the soul that you are about to concentrate on. You had better find out from the Great Locksmith.

You say, How will I know?

Well, that's the first thing to pray about. We are not dealing with a computer. We are not dealing with a slot machine. Put in a nickel and out something comes. No. Do you have the key? Yes. But you don't have the key to everybody. I don't. Nobody does. But you have the key to somebody. What are you doing with that key?

Any of you children and youth who are old enough to understand what I am saying can win a soul. Children have done it. Children your age are doing it. You can have a part in it. Begin to pray for souls. Get down on your knees and ask God for this one and that one and the next one.

I suggest two reasons that God wants to accomplish while you pray. These two reasons aren't all the reason, but they are very important.

The first reason God wants us to take the name of some soul on our lips, and plead with Him about that soul, is that He wants time to impress our heart with some things we can do to help that person. As I was going over my prayer list today I was impressed to make a long distance call to contact a certain man I was praying for. If I hadn't taken that name on my lips I probably wouldn't have thought about it. I contacted that man later in the day. I believe the Lord wanted me to.

I remember a time when I was kneeling down praying I was impressed to take a young man who was leading in the singing in our meetings to go down and sing for a certain man who was sick. Just a few days later we were called to take part in that man's funeral. That was our last opportunity to witness to him. We don't know when the last time is. More important, we don't know when the opportune time is. And if you and I will take time to get our orders, God will take time to give us directions.

We are not the doctor. We are nurses. And what would you think of a nurse who would come running into the hospital every day and not even look to see what the doctor had ordered. Did the doctor order this? I don't know. I am so busy.

It has been done in the spiritual ministry. So remember that one of the very practical reasons God wants you and me to take a prayer list and get on our knees is that He wants to impress our hearts with some things that He wants us to do for those people. So we not only need to talk, we need to listen. Listening on your knees is a bit different from ordinary kinds of listening.

Here is the second reason God wants us to get on our knees and pray:

"The Lord speaks; enter into your closet, and in silence commune with your own heart; listen to the voice of truth and conscience. Nothing will give such clear views of self as secret prayer. . . . Plain, simple duties that must not be neglected will open before you. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 163.

Right here is why people don't go very far in intercessory prayer. God begins to talk to them about some idol in the heart, some obstacle in the life that needs to come out. God will do it if you mean business. Down on your knees as you are pleading with God for souls, God will begin to talk to you about some change that needs to be made in your life. You are

praying for John, and God says, Peter, I have something to talk to you about. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't be interested in John. You should. But God uses your growing burden for John as a lever to try to pry some sin loose from you. And if you love souls enough to keep praying, God will keep prying, and something will get out of you life, and it won't be there anymore.

God will be stricter with you than some other people will. Many a time when I have been on my knees pleading with God for some soul, God has talked to me about something that had to come out of my life. It wasn't always something somebody else was talking to me about.

Do you really want to be a soul winner? It cost something. It costs everything, and it is worth it. It cost Jesus everything. Will you be a soul winner?

Fifty-nine years ago last week the Lord's messenger stood on a beautiful hill called Loma Linda, and outlined the work that was to be done in that place. She said, "Here we have ideal advantages for a school and sanitarium. Here we should have a school conducted on the principles of the ancient schools of the prophets. It may not be carried on in every respect as are the schools of the world, but it is to be especially adapted for those who desire to devote their lives, not to commercial pursuits, but to unselfish service for the Master."

That's what God had in mind when He established the college of medical evangelists on that beautiful hill. I thank the Lord that some years after these words were spoken it was my privilege to go to that hill and be trained as a medical evangelist. I thank God that I had the privilege of going with one of the men who had been trained there before I was, Elder John Tindell. He took me into the field and taught me the trade of soul winning. I am still working on my master's degree. I invite you to join with me. It is the greatest science in the world. It is the greatest art in the world. It is the greatest business in the world. It is the only thing that is worth putting all you have into.

Will you be a soul winner? If you started, will you do more? If you haven't started, will you start tonight? Will you begin to pray for souls? Jesus paid a great price for souls. That's why He went through Gethsemane. That's why He went to Calvary. That's why He submitted to be nailed to the tree and hung up between the heavens and the earth. His soul was so full of it, that when in His agony he heard the cry of the man on the cross next to Him, everything else took second place while He won that last soul before He went into the darkness.

Oh, it is a wonderful thing to have soul winning uppermost in the mind that even infinite suffering cannot stop that infinite longing to win another soul. That's how much God thinks of you. That's the kind of yearning and burning love that He wants to put into your heart for others. But it will never come by merely wishing for it. To your knees, brothers. To you knees, sisters. To your knees, youth and children. Get down on your knees alone with God. Take the verses and references we have read tonight and ask God to give you one or two or three names to pray for. And as you pray day after day there are things that God wants to accomplish in those prayer seasons. He wants to teach you better methods of working for those souls. And when He impresses you to go and talk to somebody, will you do it? Or will you say, Oh, I couldn't do that. Somebody who can talk better must do it. Somebody who is trained better do it.

God told that restored demoniac the very day he was delivered from the devils, Go home to thy house and thy friends and tell them what great things God has done for you, and has had compassion on you. Education has its place, but God pity us when education becomes a barrier between us and soul winning.

Soul winning can start the very day you meet Jesus. Education should be sharpening your sword every day, but keep using it. And remember, not only is that prayer season to teach you and me better methods of soul winning, it is to dig down into the rubbish of our lives and clean us up. It is to point out the idols and demolish them. It is to point out the pride, the selfishness, the rivalry, the criticism, the gloom, and all the other things. And how ugly they look in the light of Calvary when we are down on our knees. And how the heart longs to get rid of them when we know that a soul is at stake. We have got to get into line so God can work. This is the power and wisdom of God to gather souls for Christ.

Shall we do it? Will you do it? Think of Matthew collecting taxes. Think of Peter and John catching fish. The Master comes by and says, Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men. Ah friends, let's come. What do you say?

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