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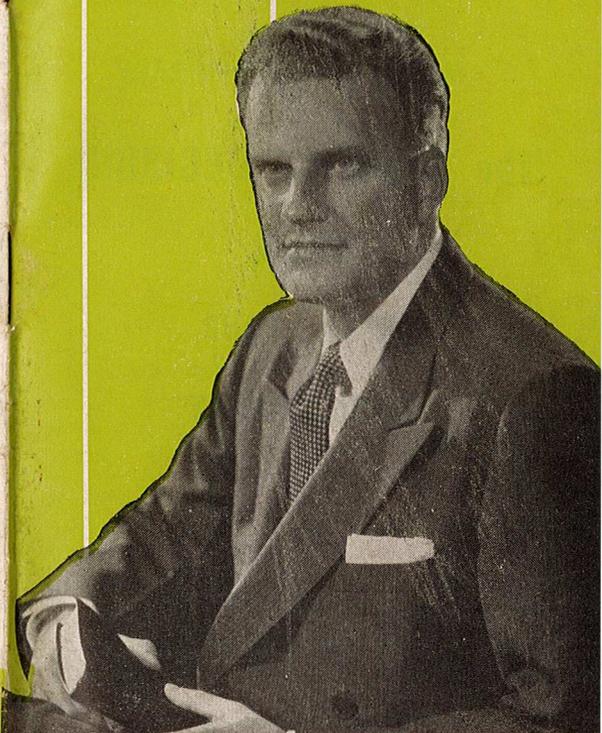
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The Gospel for the Whole World

Sermon of the Month
as preached on the Hour of Decision



By
BILLY GRAHAM

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The Gospel for the Whole World

The American people politely but coolly greeted Mr. Khrushchev on his highly publicized tour of America. What Mr. Khrushchev's thinking on what he had seen and felt is impossible for anyone to say.

The object of his visit to the United States was primarily as a missionary of the Communist way of life. He did his best before millions of Americans to explain how and why Communism is different from our way of life.

In introducing Mr. Khrushchev in New York, Henry Cabot Lodge made it clear that America has its roots deep in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Mr. Lodge quoted Micah, the prophet and Christ before presenting Khrushchev to his first New York audience. The Russian Premier immediately and publicly disagreed with Mr. Lodge.

There is no doubt that Mr. Khrushchev is representing a still militant and aggressive religion called Communism. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that he is by far the ablest Communist missionary since Lenin.

Christianity, too, is indisputably a militant,

aggressive, urgent, and sometimes offensive faith. Christianity is an exclusive rather than an inclusive ideology. It is broad in its embrace but narrow in its demands and requirements.

It is broad in that it puts arms around the world, regardless of race, color or creed. It is narrow because it confines itself to the clear teaching of Jesus that "all men" need to be reconciled to, and redeemed by a holy, righteous God.

Hence, Christian missions is unique in the aggressive movements of history. Christianity in its pure form has no "axe to grind," no system to foster, and no profit motivation. Its job is simply to "seek and to save that which is lost." Nothing more, nothing less.

Jesus Himself was the first missionary! He did not sit passively by and let those who happened to be interested in His teaching come to him. He went out where the sick, the sorrowing, and the sad were, and expounded His message of joy, healing, and salvation. Even at a tender age He invaded the Temple and "taught" the doctors and lawyers who were entrenched in the old traditions.

He found His way to the seaside and intruded upon the life of the commonest of labourers, saying, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Wherever He went He challenged, uprooted, and changed men. And at length

they nailed Him to a cross because He had upset their selfish, secure, smug way of life.

Not only was Jesus a missionary, but He pledged His followers to be missionaries, too! "Follow me!" He said to Peter, James and John, "And I will make you to become fishers of men."

The words apostle and missionary mean the same thing: "one who is sent." The word apostle is from the Greek; and the word missionary is from the Latin. The New Testament is a book of missions. The gospels tell of Jesus' missionary accomplishments, and the Acts tell of the missionary endeavours of the apostles.

The central, abiding incident of the New Testament was the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. His own ministry had been to the "house of Israel." But the first Easter marked an "explosion" which was literally heard around the world!

The disciples were launched into "outer space" by the power of the resurrection, and the gospel made its impact upon the world's people. Peter went to Lydda, Joppa, Antioch, Babylon and Asia Minor. John shot out to Samaria, Ephesus, and to the cities on the Mediterranean. Thomas journeyed to far away India. Paul, the peer of all early missionaries, used the roads Rome had built to take the gospel throughout the Empire.

Today, the need for missions is greater than

ever before! The world is shrinking in size but expanding in population. We live in a world of conflicting, confusing beliefs! We live in a world of complex problems! But more important, we live in a world of dire spiritual need.

The last words of our Lord are still binding upon us: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." Where this is being effectively done, Light is breaking in upon darkened minds and souls. Where this is being done, literacy is increasing, economic conditions are being bettered, but greatest of all: human hearts are being released from the power of sin and evil!

I would like for you to consider four points for an effective missionary advance!

First: The Command Which Has Been Given.

Of the ten-word command which Jesus gave you and me, the first is a powerful little two-letter word: "Go!" The Christian, be he layman, pastor or missionary, is not to sit idly by and watch humanity go on without God, without hope, and without the gospel. We are to step out into the breach; we are to stand in the gap; we are to "Go" and obey the command of our Lord!

The world is at swordpoints . . . It needs the love of God. The world is confused . . . It needs the peace of God. The world is illiterate . . . It needs the wisdom of God.

Did you know that 44 per cent. of the world's population over fifteen years of age is totally illiterate? Nearly half of the people of the world can neither read nor write? Nearly half of the world's people have never heard the story of Jesus and His love?

It is no mere coincidence that the number of people who are living in darkness and illiteracy is about the same as the number of those who have not been exposed to the gospel of Christ! Jesus Himself said: "I am the Light of the World, and He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness."

James Chalmers, martyred missionary from New Guinea, once said: "I have never yet met a single man or woman, or a people, that your system without Christianity has civilized. Wherever there has been the slightest spark of civilized life in the South Seas, it has been because the gospel has been preached there; and wherever you find in the island of New Guinea a friendly people, or a people that will welcome you, there the missionaries of the cross have been preaching Christ."

We must get away from the nonsense advocated by so many today that it doesn't matter what you believe; we are all going to the same place, and one religion is as good as any other! It matters a great deal what you believe! We are not all going to the same place! If we are, then we might as well scrap the New Testament

and turn the clock of history back to the Dark Ages!

“Go,” said our great Commander. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel.” This word was spoken with a tremendous sense of urgency. We must live for the truth He died for! We must carry out our commission!

“Go” with love and compassion! “Go” with your gifts and offerings! “Go” with your prayers! “Go” denying yourselves and following Him.

Secondly: We Are a People Under Orders.

“Go ye,” said our Lord and Master. Who is under orders to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth? Every disciple of Jesus Christ!

Through the centuries the Church of Jesus Christ has flourished in exact ratio to its interest in missions. William Carey said that he went to India as a missionary to save England from spiritual collapse.

If a person inhales but never exhales, he will die. If the Church becomes selfish and self-centred and loses its desire to share the gospel, it will wither away and die.

I can sense a new awakening in the church in regard to missions. There is also much confusion on missionary policy. Churches are re-thinking and realigning their missionary programme.

I attended a meeting of the board of directors of the Wycliffe Bible Translators in Sulphur Springs, Arkansas.

These dedicated people are committed to the task of translating the Scriptures into the tribal languages of the world. Already they have translated the Scriptures into scores of languages.

I listened to their members, many of them with doctor's degrees in linguistics, tell of the wonderful change in the lives of men in primitive tribes, just because they were able to read the Scriptures in their own tongues.

These wonderful, devout people, working at great personal sacrifice, are assisting missionary boards in translating the Bible into native languages and teaching literacy among the people.

There is a direct connection between evangelism and missionary work. In fact, it is difficult to tell where one leaves off and the other begins. Our entire team has been praying and discussing missions and evangelism throughout the world. Early next year we feel led of God to conduct crusades in Africa. For years we have had invitations from various African countries, and now we have decided to accept these invitations. We have had ringing in our ears the command, “Go ye.” We have been warned even by missionaries that the problems are almost insurmountable, but we are going because we feel the inner compulsion of the Holy Spirit.

We have found, when we tour abroad, that we do not receive the financial support for our work that we do when we are holding meetings

in the United States. Yet I am convinced that these crusades abroad have been used of God through radio, television and the public press to challenge and arouse thousands of Americans.

Africa is undergoing one of the greatest social revolutions of all time. Millions of people are breaking away from the traditions of the past. Great and conflicting forces are at work in Africa. Sir Winston Churchill once said: "Whoever controls Africa will control the world." It is our prayer that Christ will some day control all of Africa.

Since the days of Livingstone the missionaries have gone everywhere preaching the gospel. The casualty and martyr list has been the highest anywhere in the world. The gospel crossed the mountains and rivers, penetrating the jungles, until tribe after tribe has come under the influence of the transforming power of Christ. Yet there are millions, even in the areas where the missionary work has been most successful, that need to come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are going to Africa not only to preach but to study and learn about this continent that in the future will help shape the destiny of the world. We need your prayers.

Thirdly: Christ has clearly pin-pointed the objective of world missions.

The Bible says: "For God . . . loved the world." Jesus said: "I am the Light of the

world." Later, and more specifically, He said: "Go ye into all the world." The world was close to His Heart, on His mind, and in His plans! There is no doubt about it: His objective was to saturate the world with the gospel, and to keep the good news perpetually proclaimed.

Dr. William Culbertson has said: "The battle for the evangelization of the world is being lost. Despite the use of modern means of communication, travel and better techniques. In spite of the bravery, sacrifice, and isolated victories of consecrated missionaries, the battle is being lost."

Why is this battle being lost? One of the reasons is the rapidly expanding population which is exploding at the rate of fifty millions per year! Those without Christ in foreign lands are increasing faster than they are being evangelized! It's a matter of simple arithmetic!

God's clock of destiny is ticking off the hours! Large sections of the world can yet be saved for Christ and His gospel. Will we sit idly by, or will we obey Christ's command and go into the part of the world that is left with the saving, redeeming gospel of Jesus Christ?

Fourthly: The Method to Be Employed.

"Preach the gospel!" The primary task of any representative of Jesus Christ is to preach the gospel. Preach it with words; preach it by example; preach it by way of life. But preach

it! Go ye into . . . (whatever) . . . world (you are called to) and preach the gospel!

No one is excluded from the Divine Commission! No one is unimportant to Him! The world around you is your parish. You may live in an exclusive community, but there are lonely, burdened, pagan people waiting for the good news of salvation, within a stone's throw of your home. Go ye into your world with the gospel!

It is necessary for missionaries to be many things: doctors, farmers, counsellors, technicians, and pilots, but always the main job is preaching the gospel. There is no substitute for that. We can give men skills, know-how, and tools; but if we fail to give them the good news of salvation, we have left them without God and without hope. We have withheld the most precious gift that God has bestowed upon men.

Some will say back to me: "Oh, don't forget the social aspect of the gospel," and I will retort, "And don't you leave out the redemptive aspect of the gospel!"

When Mr. Morgenthau was ambassador to Turkey, he wrote: "These missionaries are right. They go straight to the foundations and provide those intellectual, physical, moral and religious benefits upon which alone any true civilization can be built."

Gladstone once said: "Talk about the questions of the day, there is but one question, and that is the gospel. It can and will correct everything needing correction."

And what about you? You have a good house—but have you a home? You have a full wardrobe, but what of your empty heart? You make more money than you have ever made, but have you laid up treasures in heaven? You have security, but what of your soul?

Christ changed my life from an ordinary farm boy with no purpose to a redeemed, transformed son of the Most High God. I have seen Him transform thousands through faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Today, I declare unto you the everlasting gospel of God! What will you do with Christ? I ask you to accept Him today. Quietly, wherever you are, just say: "Lord Jesus, I accept you for all you are, and all you want me to be in life. Take control of my heart, make it your very own." If you pray this prayer and mean it, you will never be the same again.

MY DECISION FOR CHRIST

Believing that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for me and is now living, I want this to be my "hour of decision." Having confessed my sins, I believe in my heart, and do now receive Him as my personal Saviour.

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