**Four Calls For Soul-Winners**

**Acts 26:19 KJV** Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

**Acts 16:9 KJV** And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

**Hebrews 12:1 KJV** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us,* and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

**Luke 16:28 KJV** For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

1. **INTRODUCTION—JACK HYLES ON HIS ARRIVAL TO HAMMOND**

Jack Hyles told a story almost 40 years ago about his arrival to the church in Hammond, Indiana. As soon as he got there, he begin to place great emphasis on evangelism and the church reaching those who were lost.

After he had been there about two months, a man called him aside on night and asked him if he could talk with him a few minutes to discuss the direction in the church. The man’s message basically was something like:

. . . I am one of the most influential members of this church and have been here for a long time. Ever since you have been here, I have been very nervous about all of this emphasis on evangelism, soul-winning, and reaching the lost.

. . . Before you got here we would have revivals about once or twice a year and we would hire someone to come and take care of the music and people would come to the meeting and they would join the church.

. . . But since you have gotten here, it has been evangelism, evangelism, and more evangelism and there are some people here who are not very happy with this direction you have chosen to take. We have become nervous wrecks. Things were calm and tranquil before you came but now everything is in a stir!

. . . Why can’t we be like all of the other churches in town? Why the pressure every single time we come to church?

-Most of us, if we are deeply honest with ourselves would probably say that we would feel the same way if we were placed in that situation. We don’t like the pressure being put on us for evangelism.

1. **STATS ON EVANGELISM**

-Here are some statistics that deal with evangelism.

* 9 out 10 American adults cannot accurately define the meaning of the Great Commission.
* Barely 1/3 of all adults (31%) know the meaning of the expression “the gospel.”
* 58% of born-again Christians claim they have shared their faith with a non-Christian in the last year.
* Busters (aged 28-43) are more likely than any other generation to share their faith with others.
* Barna’s data shows that 66% of Busters shared their faith in the last year compared to 58% of Boomers, 52% of Builders, and 41% of Seniors.
* Americans living in the South feel more of responsibility to share their faith with others than do adults in other regions of the country, with 40% of Southerners feeling a sense of responsibility to share their faith with others, compared to 25% of those living in the West or Midwest, and 23% of those living in the Northeast.
* Nearly half of all Christians do not think it is a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs with others.

-How people were introduced to the Church:

* Recent Barna research (2004) finds that among Christians who embraced Christ before their teen years, half were led to Christ by their parents, with another 20% by some other friend or relative.
* 7% came in response to a minister’s personal prompting and 12% cited a special event as the turning point in their journey.
* Among those who mentioned events, about 50% identified a church service while 1% mentioned media evangelism or other special situations.
* Among people aged 13 through 21, the process was much more diverse; 20% credited a friend with, and a similar proportion said their parents were responsible.
* Another 20% recalled an event as the trigger for their commitment.
* 16% listed a relative other than their parent as the primary influencer.
* Ministers were cited by 10%, while media and special personal situations were listed by only 1%.
* 19% of adult converts credited a friend, 14% by mass media experiences, 14% a live event and 13% a relative.
* Ministers were responsible for 10% of adult converts while parents of adults were around 8%.

-What the prevailing fact that comes out again and again in all of these statistics is that “big events” are not what bring people to the church or to the Lord. It is personal evangelism. One on one work!

1. **FOUR TEXTS THAT HAVE FOUR CALLS FOR SOUL-WINNERS**

-The passages of Scripture that I read to you all have a call for soul-winners.

1. **A Call From Within—Acts 26:19**

**Acts 26:19 KJV** Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

-There has to be a call from within. Something inside of me will have to say that this is the way that it has to be! Something will have to tell you, “I cannot be disobedient to the heavenly vision!”

* **John 4**—The woman at the well—Come see a man who told me all the things I ever did!
* **Acts 4**—Sir, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard!

-That is the kind of relationship that we have to develop with the Lord. Not “what kind of church will I have?” but “what kind of church I must have?”

-There has to be a burning that settles into every one of our hearts to see the lost come to experience the power of the Holy Ghost. There is not a single one of us that cannot bring someone to the Lord. It has to happen!

-If there can ever be a vision that gets into your heart, you will make a difference in your world. . . until that happens most will find themselves being disobedient to the heavenly vision.

1. **The Call from Without—Acts 16:9**

**Acts 16:9 KJV** And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

-Come over to Macedonia and help us! How can we drive the streets of this city without hearing people call out to us to be soul-winners?

**My recent trip to Captain D’s**. It was obvious that these people had very little in the way of this world. It looked like a grandfather who was in a wheel-chair and a stroke had seriously disabled him. His wife was doing her best to push him about but it was obvious that she had a difficult time doing so. Then there was apparently a daughter and her husband with them. They had two small boys, both less than 7 years old. What struck me was the tattoos that this oldest of the two boys had. He had one of those Chinese dragons on his neck that was very clear to see. In addition to this, he had a small piercing in his eyebrow and several rings in his ears. My heart was smitten when I saw that. . . I got back in my car and was very burdened about what I saw. Have you ever been to the point where you wanted to gather someone up in your arms and hug them? That is what I wanted to do that cold night several weeks ago.

-That is what Paul heard when the man from Macedonia called out to him. There is a call that comes from without and we are compelled to respond to it.

* I believe this Book.
* I believe that those who die without the Lord are lost.
* I believe that those who are lost will burn in Hell forever and ever in the fires of torment.

-Because of those facts, there is a pressure from without that I cannot get away from.

1. **A Call From Above—Hebrews 12:1**

**Hebrews 12:1 KJV** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us,* and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

-Soul-winners have a call from within, from without, and they also have a call from above.

-There is a great host of people who have gone on before us and they want us to go after souls! You may not be for evangelism and soul-winning, but all of heaven is for soul-winners. The Bible says that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, than of ninety-and-nine just persons who have no need of repentance.

-In a day where increasingly, it is less than cool for a preacher to get up and preach with fervor and passion, we still have to do it. It can’t be watered down and adjusted to fit the culture. There is a call from the Word to preach the Word!

-I have had some who are calling from above to tell me to be a soul-winner.

* **Rev. Grady Rashall**—You gonna preach or fuss tonight? I replied that I was going to try to preach and he told me that was good because he had heard a “might of fussin’ in my day!” A call from above!
* **Sis. Paramore**—I have had to deal with other saints’ on their death beds but this one was far different than any other because of my connection to her my entire life. In the waning days of her life she told me that I better never turn back on the truth and that I always needed to preach with boldness! A call from above!

*O God, I pray that as long as I have breath to breathe, Help me to keep preaching it!!!!*

-Pastor, why all the emphasis on evangelism? Why do we need to be soul-winners? Can’t we just be a relaxed and comfortable church?

1. **The Call from Beneath—Luke 16:28**

**Luke 16:28 KJV** For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

-Soul-winners have a call from within, one from without, one from above and lastly, they have one from below.

-The story of Dives, the rich man who died and went to Hell is very troubling. He lifted up his eyes and said, “Father Abraham, send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”

-Abraham told him sadly that it would be impossible because there was a great gulf that had been fixed between them. When he heard that news, he told him to send Lazarus back to his five brothers and to tell them to not come to the place where he was.

-You may not be interested in soul-winning but those in Hell are interested in soul-winning! There is a call from beneath that is pleading with me to do my best to get this church in gear when it comes to evangelism and soul-winning!

-There are multitudes of people that would love to swap places with you this very minute!

* The greatest prayer meetings are going on in Hell.
* The greatest commitments are made in Hell.
* The greatest plans are made in Hell.
* The greatest preachers are in Hell.

-The problem is that they all waited too late. It is over for them but it is not over for their families who have been left behind.

1. **CONCLUSION—A SHOCK TO ME AT MID-LIFE**

PERSONAL ILLUSTRATION REMOVED. . .