

On-Mission Class #7

Christ Proclamation Church; Sunday, March 18, 2018; Steve Thiel

I. Welcome

- Tonight's Goal – Charles Spurgeon – “The Soul Winner” – chapters 1-5
 1. Introduction and Questions – Written to Future Pastors
 2. Discussion – Small Groups
- Next Month's Plan – Charles Spurgeon – “The Soul Winner” – chapters 6-15

II. “The Soul Winner” by Charles Spurgeon

A. Chapter 1 – What Is It To Win A Soul?

1. What Soul Winning IS NOT

- a. It is NOT simply stealing members from other churches – (pp.2-3)
 - We count it utter meanness to build up our own house with the ruins of our neighbor's mansions; we infinitely prefer to quarry for ourselves.
 - The increase of the kingdom is more to be desired than the growth of a clan.
 - Our grand object is not the revision of opinions, but the regeneration of natures. We would bring men to Christ and not to our own peculiar views of Christianity. Our first care must be that the sheep should be gathered to the great Shepherd.
- b. It is NOT simply statistics – “hurriedly inscribing more names upon our church roll in order to show a good increase at the end of the year” – (pp.3-4)
 - I am not among those who decry statistics, nor do I consider that they are productive of all manner of evil; for they do much good if they are accurate, and if men use them lawfully.
 - The fact is, you can reckon very correctly if the figures are honest, and if all circumstances are taking into consideration if there is no increase, you may calculate with considerable accuracy that there is not much being done; and if there is a clear decrease among a growing population, you may reckon that the prayers of the people and the preaching of the pastor are not the most powerful.
 - It is a serious injury to a person to receive him into the number of the faithful unless there is good reason to believe that he is really regenerate.
- c. It is NOT simply emotionalism – “Nor is it soul winning, dear friends, merely to create excitement” – (pp.4-5)
 - On a dry day, a carriage is not moving much along the road unless there is some noise and dust; friction and stir are the natural result of force in motion. So, when the Spirit of God is abroad, and men's minds are stirred, there must and will be certain visible signs of the movement, although these must never be confounded with the movement itself.
 - Excitement is as incidental as dust, but it is not for one moment to be aimed at.
 - The utmost zeal for Christ is consistent with common sense and reason: raving, ranting, and fanaticism are products of another zeal which his not according to knowledge. We would prepare men for the chamber of communion, and not for the padded room at Bedlam. No one is more sorry than I that such a caution as this should be needful; but remembering the vagaries of certain wild revivalists, I cannot say less, and I might say a great deal more.

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2. What is the Real Winning of Souls for God? – (pp.5-10)

- a. Soul winning includes instruction – (pp.5-6)
 - Soul winning first consists of instructing a man or woman in the gospel that they may know the truth of God (p.5).
 - Teach gospel doctrines clearly, affectionately, simply, and plainly, and especially those truths which have a present and practical bearing upon man's condition and God's grace (p.5).
 - To try and win a soul for Christ by keeping that soul in ignorance of any truth, is contrary to the mind of the Spirit; and to endeavor to save men by mere claptrap, or excitement, or oratorical display, is as foolish as to hope to hold an angel with bird-lime, or lure a star with music. The best attraction is the gospel in its purity. The weapon with which the Lord conquers men is the truth as it is in Jesus (p.6).
- b. Soul winning includes impression – “soul winning is not only instructing a hearer and making them know the truth, but it is also requires impressing the gospel upon the hearer so that they may feel it – (pp.7-8)
 - We are to seek our neighbor's conversion because we love him, and we are to speak to him in loving terms God's loving gospel, because our heart desires his eternal good. A sinner has a heart as well as a head; a sinner has emotions as well as thoughts; and we must appeal to both.
 - If our hearers will weep over their sins, and after Jesus, let their tears flow in rivers; but if the object of their sorrow is merely natural, and not at all spiritual, what good is done by setting them weeping?
- c. Soul winning includes regeneration – “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” The Holy Ghost must work regeneration in the objects of our love, or they never can become possessors of eternal happiness”
 - Without this spirit, no man can see or enter the Kingdom of Heaven. It must therefore be our intense desire that the Holy Spirit should visit our hearers, and create them anew – that He would come down upon these dry bones, and breathe eternal life into the dead in sin. Till this is done, they can never receive the truth.
 - A new and heavenly mind must be created by omnipotence, or the man must abide in death (p.9).
 - No minister living can save a soul; nor can all of us together, nor all the saints on earth or in heaven, work regeneration in a single person (p.10).

3. Signs of Regeneration (pp.10-15)

- a. Conviction of Sin (p.10)
- b. Simple Faith in Jesus (p.10)
- c. True Repentance from Sin (p.11)
- d. A Real Change of Life (p.12)
- e. True Prayer – The Vital Breath of Godliness (p.12)
- f. A Willingness to Obey the Lord in All His Commandments (p.13)

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B. Chapter 2 – Qualifications for Soul Winning - Godward

1. Must Have Holiness of Character

2. Must Have Spiritual Life to a High Degree

3. Must Have a Humble Spirit

4. Must Have a Living Faith (p.21)

a. Must Be Called by God (p.21)

- You must have faith, brethren, about your call to the ministry; you must believe without question that you are really chosen of God to be ministers of the gospel.
- You had better not begin to preach until you are quite sure God has called you.

b. Must Have Conviction (p.22)

- You must also believe that the message you have to deliver is God's Word.
- Believe what you do believe, or you will never persuade anybody (p.22)
- God uses the faith of His ministers to breed faith in other people (p.22)

c. Must Believe the Gospel is the Power of God for Salvation (p.22)

- You must believe in the power of that message to save people.
- That is the essential point, you must believe in God and His gospel if you are to be a winner of souls; some other things may be omitted, but this matter of faith must never be (p.23)

5. Must Be Characterized by Thorough Earnestness (p.23)

- "Bright Poker Sermons" – I feel sure there is not power enough in them to kill a cockroach or spider; certainly there is no power to bring a dead soul to life (p.23)
- The Lord Jesus Christ wept over Jerusalem, and you will have to weep over sinners if they are to be saved through you. Dear brethren, do be earnest, put your whole soul into the work, or else give it up (p.23)

6. Must Have a Great Simplicity of Heart (p.24)

- By simplicity of heart, I mean, that a man evidently goes into the ministry for the glory of God and the winning of souls, and nothing else (p.25)
- A man who is to be used by God must just believe that what he is going to do is for the glory of God, and he must work from no other motive.
- He did nothing but drive at us with the Word of the Lord all the while that he was preaching. His one aim was to bring us to repentance and faith in Christ. That is the kind of man whom the Lord delights to bless (p.25).

7. Must Be a Complete Surrender of Yourself to God (p.26)

- One of the principal qualifications of a great artist's brush must be its yielding itself up to him so that he can do what he likes with it (p.27).
- There is something that must be said if you are to be the means of saving that man in the corner; woe unto you if you are not ready to say it, woe unto you if you are afraid to say it, woe unto you if you are ashamed to say it, woe unto you if you do not dare to say it lest somebody up in the gallery should say that you were too earnest, too enthusiastic, too zealous!

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C. Chapter 3 – Qualifications for Soul Winning – Manward

1. An Ignoramus is Non Likely to be much of a Soul Winner (p.28)

- A man being to a great extent ignorant of the things of God himself, I do not see how he can make them known to other people (p.28)
- The man who is almost or altogether ignorant, whatever will he has to do good, must be left out of the race of great soul winners; he is disqualified from even entering the lists, and therefore, lust us all ask, brethren, that we may be well instructed in the truth of God, that we may be able to teach others also (p.28)

2. Must Have an Evident Sincerity (p.28)

- If you have only a feeble appreciation of the gospel you profess to deliver, it is impossible for those who hear your proclamation of it to be greatly influenced by it.
- Hearers cannot separate the heartless speaker from the message he delivers so carelessly. As soon as a man lets his work become a matter of mere form or routine, it sinks into a performance in which the preacher is simply an actor. (p.29)
- I do beseech you, brethren, speak from your hearts, or else do not speak at all. If you can be silent, be silent; but if you must speak of God, be thoroughly sincere about it.

3. Must Have an Evident Earnestness (p.29)

- If a man is to be a soul winner, there must be in him intensity of emotion as well as sincerity of heart (p.29)
- So, brethren, it is not the bigness of the words you utter; it is the force with which you deliver them that decides what is to come of the utterance (p.30)
- What earnestness our theme deserves! – (great quote – 1st full paragraph)

4. Must Have an Evident Love to His Hearers (p.30)

- You must have a real desire for the good of the people if you are to have much influence over them (p.31).
- It is very sad when the failure of any ministry is caused by want of heart (p.31).
- Do you not notice that men succeed in the ministry, and win souls for Christ, just in proportion as they are men with large hearts (p.31)?
- You must love the people, and mix with them, if you are to be of service to them.
- Quotes a large part of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (top of p.32).

5. Must Have an Evident Unselfishness (p.32)

- I tell you what it is; the less you think of yourself, the more will people think of you; and the more you think of yourself, the less will people think of you (p.32).
- If any of you have any trace of selfishness about you, pray get rid of it at once.

6. Must Have an Evident Holiness of Character (p.32)

- When people see that we not only preach about holiness, but that we are ourselves holy men, they will be drawn towards holy things by our character as well as our preaching.

7. Must Have an Evident Seriousness of Manner (p.33)

8. Must Have in His Heart a Great Deal of Tenderness (p.34)

- When you preach, speak out straight, but be very tender about it; and if there is any unpleasant thing to be said, take care that you put it in the kindest possible form (p.34).

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D. Chapter 4 – Sermons Likely to Win Souls

- Of course, we are perfectly agreed that the Holy Spirit alone can convert the soul; none can enter into the Kingdom of God except they are born again from above (p.37)
 - Paul in his place is the right man, and Peter in his place is the right man (p.37).
1. **Sermons distinctively aimed at the conversion of hearers (p.38)**
 - There are sermons of such a kind that, unless God takes to ripening wheat by means of snow and ice, and begins to illuminate the world by means of fog and clouds, He cannot save souls under them (p.38).
 - In His sovereignty, He will work in a place where a warmhearted man is preaching to men the truth that he has himself received, all the while earnestly desiring their salvation and ready to guide them further in the ways of the Lord (p.39).
 - If there be in us a great faith, God will give us blessing according to our faith (p.39)
 2. **Sermons that interest the people (p.39)**
 - We must preach in what Whitefield used to call “market language” (p.39).
 - I sometimes tickle my oyster until he opens his shell, and then I lip the knife in (p.39).
 3. **Sermons that are instructive to the people (p.40)**
 - It is a fine thing to stand up in the street and cry, “Believe! Believe! Believe! Believe! Believe! Believe!” Yes, my dear soul, but what have to believe? (p.40)
 - Emotion, doubtless, is a very proper thing in the pulpit, and the feeling, the pathos, the power of heart, are good and grand things in the right place; but do also use your brains a little, do tell us something when you stand up to preach the everlasting gospel.
 - Sermons that are most likely to convert people seem to be those that are full of truth.
 4. **The people must be impressed by our sermons (p.41)**
 - In order that you may impress the Word upon those to whom you preach, remember that it must be impressed upon yourself first. You must feel it yourself, and speak as a man who feels it; not as if you feel it, but because you feel it, otherwise you will not make it felt by others (p.41).
 - The kind of sermon which is likely to break the hearer’s heart is that which has first broken the preacher’s heart (p.42).
 5. **Take out everything that diverts the hearer’s mind from the object in view (p.43)**
 - Never introduce anything that will like distract the attention of the hearer (p.43).
 - Learn to speak and write correct English (p.44).
 6. **Sermons which are fullest of Christ are the most likely to be blessed (p.45)**
 - Let your sermons be full of Christ, from beginning to end crammed full of the gospel.
 - Preach Jesus Christ to them – And never preach anything else (p.45).
 - We preach Jesus Christ to those who want Him, and we preach Him to those who do not want Him, and we keep on preaching Christ until we made them feel that they do want Him, and cannot do without Him (p.45-46).
 7. **Sermons that really appeal to the heart (p.46)**
 8. **Sermons which have been prayed over are the most like to convert people (p.47)**

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E. Chapter 4 – Obstacles to Soul Winning

1. Indifference and Lethargy of Sinners (p.48)

- Your only hope of overcoming indifference, is to be doubly in earnest yourself (p.48)
- I would far rather have a man an earnest, intense oppose of the gospel than have him careless and indifferent (p.49).

2. Unbelief (p.49)

- This evil exists in all unregenerate hearts, but in some it takes a pronounced form.
- The argument that convinces men of the reality of religion, is that which they gather from the holiness and earnestness of those who profess to be Christ followers (p.49).
- I believe that you will rout unbelief by your faith rather than your reason (p.49).

3. Delay (p.50)

- There is nothing like pressing men for a speedy decision (p.50).

4. Carnal Security (p.50)

- Many men fancy that they are quite safe (p.50).
- Let us plainly proclaim to them that the unbelieving sinner is “condemned already” and that he is certain to perish everlastingly if he does not trust in Christ (p.50).

5. Despair (p.50)

- It is fatalism, not predestination, that makes men talk as if there is nothing whatever for them to do, or that there is nothing they can do. There is no likelihood of anyone being saved while he gives you this as his only hope, “If salvation is for me, it will come to me in due time” (p.50).
- Let us preach full and free salvation to all who trust in Jesus (p.51).

6. The Love of Sin (p.51)

- There a many men who never get saved because of some secret lust; it may be that they are living in fornication (p.51).
- Some will still be living in sin while professing to be seeking the Savior (p.51).

7. Self Righteousness (p.51)

- If the gospel does not convince him of his need, Moses must come with the law.
- The man does not come to Christ because he is not conscious that he is lost, he does not ask to be lifted up because he does not know that he is fallen, he does not feel that he has any need of divine mercy or forgiveness, and therefore he does not see it (p.51).

8. Utter Worldliness (p.51)

- The worldliness takes 2 shapes; in the poor, it is the result of grinding poverty (p.51).
- The other kind of worldliness comes of having too much of this world, or at least of making too much of this world (p.52).

9. People’s habits, and resorts, and company

- Hence the great mercy of having a place where a working man can come and sit in safety, or having a Blue Ribbon meeting, a gather where it may not be all singing, nor all preaching, nor all praying, but where there is something of all these things (p.52).
- I think a Christian minister is quite justified in using all right and lawful means to wean the people from their evil associations (p.53).

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F. Chapter 5 – How to Induce Our People to Win Souls (p.54)

1. Warning – It Takes Time (p.54)

- Do not expect a reward in 1 year that requires 20 years continual toil in 1 place (p.54)
- You will be wise if you go into the ministry expecting not to find any very great assistance from the people in the work of soul winning (p.55)
- Revivals, if they are genuine, do not always come the moment we whistle for them. Try and whistle for the wind and see if it will come (p.55).

2. Do not engage the work according to any set rule (p.56)

- I do not want to be your pastor simply that I may preach to you; but I long to see souls saved and to see those who are saved seeking to win others for the Lord J.C. (p.56).

3. May God lead you to begin with 1 or 2 (p.56)

- Let us try and be ourselves always at the prayer meetings to set an example to the rest. And let us also arrange to have gatherings for prayer in our own house (p.56).
- Your work, brethren, is to set your church on fire, flaming with holy zeal, somehow.

4. Keep up the prayer meetings (p.57)

- If I were you, I would make the prayer meeting a special feature of my ministry. Let it be such a prayer meeting that there is not the like of it within 7,000 miles (p.57).
- If we cannot stir the people without doing extraordinary things, then let us do extraordinary things, but somehow we must keep up the prayer meetings, for they are at the very secret source of the power with God and with men (p.58).

5. Be an earnest example ourselves (p.58)

- A slow coach minister will not have a lively zealous church, I am sure (p.58).

6. Be around Christians who want to help in the work of saving souls (p.58)

- We want, in the church, a band of well trained sharpshooters, who will pick the people out individually, and be always on the watch for all who come into the place, not annoying them, but making sure that they do not go away without having had a personal warning, a personal invitation, and a personal exhortation to come to Christ.
- Our preaching out to be like the address of a commander-in-chief to his army (p.59).

7. The whole atmosphere should be favorable to soul winning (p.59)

- The shower benefits the plants because everything is suitable for the rain to come down, the shadowed sky, the humidity, the general feeling is damp all around.
- Always have your own bible ready [key verses] (p.61) [last full paragraph].

8. Don't be afraid to go into a hard place (p.61)

- If there is any place where I would choose to labor, it would be just on the borders of the infernal lake, for I really believe that it would bring more glory to God to work among those who are accounted the worst of sinners (p.62).
- The very worst sort of people are those who have long been professing Christians, but who are destitute of grace, having a name to live, and yet being dead (p.62).

III. Closing Comments

- Next Meeting – Sunday, April 22nd – 6:00pm to 8:30pm