

RESTORE
DWIGHT L. MOODY¹

Saturday, June 20

Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

When Edward Kimball walked into that shoe shop in Boston on April 25, 1855, he had no idea the impact he would have on the world. He had come to visit one of his Sunday School students who worked there. He had been burdened for the 18-year-old young man and came to share the gospel with him. That day Dwight L. Moody accepted Jesus as his Savior. Soon this young believer moved to Chicago and joined the Plymouth Congregational Church where he started his own Sunday School class. Moody grew the class from 18 students to nearly 1000 students in a few short years.

During the Civil War, Moody ministered to the soldiers, where he overcame his shyness as a speaker and learned how to talk personally to people in need. He also got married to Emma Revell on August 28, 1862. After the war, Moody continued to work full time in Christian ministry. His Sunday School class became the Illinois Street Independent Church (known today as Moody Memorial Church). He was also the president of the YMCA in Chicago. The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 destroyed almost everything Moody had built – his home, the church, and the YMCA. But it could not destroy Moody’s faith. He travelled the country raising funds to rebuild. On one such trip to New York, he had an experience with God that changed everything. He would later write:

“I can only say that God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted.”²

He returned to Chicago with a new fire and deep commitment to reach souls with the gospel.

A few years earlier (1870), Moody heard Ira Sankey sing for the first time at a YMCA meeting. He invited Sankey to join him as music leader for his meetings. After thinking about it for 6 months, Sankey left his government job and joined Moody. They would be an unstoppable team. Throughout America and England, they shared the gospel with an estimated 100 million people without the use of radio, TV, or a public address system! In 1889 he started the Chicago Evangelistic Society to train young people to know and share God’s Word. The school continues this mission today as the Moody Bible Institute.

Dwight L. Moody never went to seminary and he was never ordained. He was a layman with a passion to see people come to Christ and allowed the Holy Spirit to work through him and in him to share the gospel. Every meeting was preceded by a Noon Prayer Meeting where prayers would be lifted up for the coming service and those who attended. Moody considered this the most important thing he did! He preached the Bible and encouraged churches to work together to reach people with the gospel. He was not afraid to try new things. While his message was always the truth of God’s Word, his methods and music were innovative and sometimes ruffled the feathers of the established church. But Moody courageously followed the Lord’s leading and changed the world for Christ.

¹ Alton Gansky. “Dwight L. Moody”, 60 People Who Shaped the Church, p. 474-279

Warren W. Wiersbe. “Dwight L. Moody” 50 People Every Christian Should Know, p. 177-197

² Alton Gansky. 60 People Who Shaped the Church, p. 277

