

# ***“Don’t Forget to Win Souls!”***

***James 5:19-20***

**Intro.** – Heard someone suggest the church should be called the S.F.T.P.O.G.T.H. After learning what this meant, I agreed: **Society For The Prevention Of People Going To Hell.** How easy it is for a local church to forget this fundamental reason to exist. We get involved with programs, lessons, maintaining buildings, meetings, Bible studies, socials, VBS etc. All of which can be good because this contribute to the ultimate cause of the church, but in the course of having all these events we must remind each other the *purpose* behind them!

In short, the local church must be *other people oriented*. We must involve ourselves in the many facets of the church not to simply help ourselves/church family... We exist as a church for one reason – to help others:

## **“I WAS POEM”**

I WAS HUNGRY – and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger. Thank you.

I WAS NAKED – and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I WAS HOMELESS – and you preached to me on the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I WAS IN PRISON – and you crept off quietly to a chapel in the suburb and prayed for my release.

I WAS SICK – and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I WAS LONELY – and you left me alone to pray for me.

The Lord’s church needs to set its priorities according to Scripture. She then needs to put feet on her profession. Everything done as “the church” must have as her goal that of seeking/saving the lost. From every meeting, to every study, to every social gathering the overriding motive/purpose must be geared to winning/building souls!

*Purpose: to cover three Biblical reasons why we must never forget to win souls*

Our text illustrates this so well. Book of James is so practical... Note with me, however how the book concludes. It’s as if James were saying, “...and don’t forget to win souls!”

Illus. – like when your wife sends you to the store for milk and then she thinks of several other things she could use... While you’re going out the door she says, “...and don’t forget the milk!”

Brothers/sisters, we must put feet on our commitment to Christ. In putting our faith into action, we’re reminded again and again – “don’t forget to win souls!” Our text gives us three reasons why:

## **I THERE IS A GREAT TRAGEDY**

### **A. The Tragedy of Being Lost**

- whether text speaks of a Xtian backslidden or to a person wandering from their sinless life into which they were born, is not the point = person gotten away from truth and is in a lost state...
- 1. Bible in talking about “lost” = spiritual death
- 2. Spiritual death means *separation from God*
  - a. Ephesians 2:1 “*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*”
  - b. 1 Timothy 5:6 “*But the widow lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.*”
  - c. possible to be the picture of health (physically speaking) but be very dead spiritually...

### **B. The Tragedy of Not Seeing the Worth of a Soul**

- Illus. – young man called into Bible College professor’s office for “unbecoming conduct.” Young man summoned up his defense: “Well sir, after all, I’m only human.” Professor jumped to his feet and said, “Great Scott, only human! You mean made in the image of God. Made lower than the angels, but in Christ given the power to become greater than angels. Only human! Someday you will be called upon to judge angels. You are the greatest of God’s creation, the only creature able to think the thoughts of God. You’re the object of His love and the one for whose salvation sent Jesus to Calvary. What do you mean only human?!”
- 1. Those lost (outside of Christ) are dead; yet, our humanistic society tries to gloss this over...
- 2. What a tragedy to not see the worth of a human soul... to recognize a lost soul, a soul separated from God is to recognize the most expensive/precious thing on earth.
  - a. Matthew 18:3 “*Truly I say to you unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.*”

- b. John 3:5 “*Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’*”
- 3. This means you are important... the person sitting next to you is important... neighbor is important... enemy is important. Every human being is important to God...
- 4. Behoooves you and me to understand fully what Bible means when speaks of souls being lost... There is tragedy in lost souls... there is tragedy in not see the worth of a soul...

## II THERE IS A GREAT TASK

- if every person is important to God (and they are), our task is to take the Gospel to every person...:
- A. Something is Missing in Peoples’ Lives
  - 1. Main problem people facing – they’re missing peace/release from guilt – don’t know where find it
  - 2. Looking in all the wrong places – drugs, alcohol, loose morals, possessions etc.
  - 3. Our world is in an upheaval and it is in this upheaval our Lord wants us to go and tell people that Christ is THE answer!
    - Romans 5:1 “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
- B. We Are Sent to a Confused World
  - 1. Perhaps it’s been planted in our minds that to share our faith in Christ, we must convince everyone that our “religion” is right and their “religion” is wrong:
    - a. under such a mindset, we have a burden but the burden is to convince people to think like us
    - b. with such an attitude all we’ll get is an argument – note: yet to hear anyone *argued* into Christ
  - 2. Need to replace this flawed burden with a genuine burden – love and concern for their souls!
  - 3. Exactly what Christ did when went to Cross – “*I love them and because of this I’ll die for them...*”
  - 4. Such must become the burden of our hearts – to love the lost enough to confront with Gospel!

What a great tragedy (men/women/young people lost)... What a great task (go and win them to Christ)!

## III THERE IS A GREAT RESULT

- A. We Can Be Part of Saving People
  - 1. There is tragedy in seeing death (Charles Harding pulling someone from car – lifeless...)
  - 2. Conversely there is a thrill in seeing life and even being part of saving life...
  - 3. We can be instruments through which Gospel can be given and souls will be saved!
    - Romans 6:13b “*...but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*”
  - 4. What can be more significant in life than being used of God in saving people from eternal death?!
- B. Sins Will be Covered
  - 1. A persons *converted* = punishment of sins paid for, sins are covered, righteousness imputed...
  - 2. We can be made free of sins in the sight of God? How...?! By GRACE..., Through FAITH..., At BAPTISM..., For GOOD WORKS...
    - “O happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away” – “What can wash away my sins, nothing...
  - 3. As wonderful as it is to save a backslider – even better to keep backsliders from becoming such!
    - a. Illus. – *Crisis in Morality* by Al Sanders compares the Max Juke/Jonathan Edwards families:
    - b. Max Juke nor his wife believed in Christian training: 1,206 descendents... 300 died prematurely... 100 spent avg. 13 yrs in prison... 190 public prostitutes... cost the state of New York millions of dollars...
    - c. Jonathan Edwards and his wife did believe in Christian training: 729 descendents... 300 became preachers... 65 college professors... 23 U.S. Senators... 30 judges... 100 lawyers... 60 physicians... only blotch in the family was a grandson (Aaron Burr)... cost NY nothing!
  - 4. What a difference Christ and Christian training makes = how true it covers a multitude of sins!

5. Parents/grandparents – such begins with you... Illus – home church has a family didn't encourage their kids to get involved in Lord's work... grew bad... You know who the parents blame?...

**Conclusion:** What is about to take place in a few short moments will make a difference in eternity. Invitation/decision time. Heaven will be watching and reminding this church: Don't Forget to Win Souls!

Let me close with the following illustration. My youngest brother preaches for the Central Christian Church in Rockford, Illinois. He recently wrote an intriguing article that will help summarize this message. He wrote an article entitled "How Do You Win a Million People to Christ?" In this article he writes about a small group of 19 people he helps teach. Sherm calculated that if those 19 Christians would simply win a person to Christ every five years (they were Christians) and those they won would also in turn win a person to Christ every five years that by the year 2022, -- 1,200,000 souls would be won to Christ:

1. We haven't made reaching the lost the expected norm for ourselves or those we lead to Christ...
2. We can use some broadened expectations and dreams when it comes to how much of an impact we individually can and ought to have on winning the lost and building the won...
3. We all have been called to participate in something of incredible proportions! Is there anything you are doing in your life that even comes close to the magnitude of this?

God cares more than anything else about lost people, and you and I are His plan to reach them!!