

TALKING TO GOD ABOUT MEN

I Timothy 2:1-6

September 10, 2006 Sunday A.M.

INTRODUCTION

- A. On July 4, 1854, Charlie Peace, a well-known criminal in London, was hung. The Anglican Church, which had a ceremony for everything, even had a ceremony for hanging people. So when Charlie Peace was marched to the gallows, a priest read these words from the Prayer Book: "Those who die without Christ experience hell, which is the pain of forever dying without the release which death itself can bring."

When these chilling words were read, Charlie Peace stopped in his tracks, turned to the priest, and shouted in his face, "Do you believe that? Do you believe that?"

The priest, taken aback by this verbal assault, stammered for a moment then said, "Well...I...suppose I do."

"Well, I don't," said Charlie. "But if I did, I'd get down on my hands and knees and crawl all over Great Britain, even if it were paved with pieces of broken glass, if I could rescue one person from what you just told me."

Tony Campolo, Let Me Tell You a Story (Word, 2000); submitted by Debi Zahn, Sandwich, Illinois

- B. If we believe this, we must be willing to do two things.
1. First, talk to God about men.
 2. Second, talk to men about God.
- C. Talking to God about men is called prayer and its imperative that we do this before we talk to men about God, or share our faith with others.
- D. The apostle Paul reminded Timothy, and in the process us, about talking to God about men, or praying (I Timothy 2:1-2).

I. WHY SHOULD WE PRAY FOR THE LOST?

- A. First, because of God's heart for the lost-vv.3-4.
- B. Second, because of Jesus' sacrifice for the lost-vv.5-6.
- C. Third, because of the spiritual condition of the lost. The Bible describes the condition of the lost.

1. Lost people are spiritually blind-2 Corinthians 4:4.

On September 3, 1989, Varig Airlines Flight 254 was at Brazil's Maraba Airport preparing for takeoff. Under normal circumstances the hop to nearby Belém would only take 48 minutes. Captain César Garcez consulted a computer-generated flight plan and read the number 0270 which corresponded to the magnetic heading from Maraba to Belém. But Garcez inadvertently dialed 270 into the Horizontal Situation Indicator. Minutes later, flight 254 took off and climbed to an altitude of 29,000 feet. Instead of heading northeast toward the Brazilian coastline and the city of Belém, the plane turned west and headed straight toward the Amazon forest.

Captain Garcez sensed something was wrong. At this point in the flight plan he expected to be able to have visual contact with the Belém airport. Frustrated, the captain executed a 180-degree turn, not recognizing the absurdity of his due west/due east course. Having been notified by the flight attendants that the passengers were wondering what was happening, Garcez lied. He announced there was a power failure at the Belém airport, and that he would circle the area waiting for the power to be restored.

Despite not knowing where he was, Captain Garcez informed the Varig flight coordinator on the ground he estimated the plane would be landing in Belém in five minutes. He then ordered the flight attendants to serve a fresh round of drinks to the bewildered passengers.

At 7:39 p.m., when the flight was 68 minutes overdue, the first officer identified the problem and started to explain to the captain his mistake. But the captain dismissed his explanation. Refusing to ask for help, he began counting the minutes until the plane would run out of fuel. All the while he searched the ground hoping to find an airport where he could land the plane.

About an hour later, out of fuel, Garcez made a remarkable crash-landing in total darkness in a dense tropical forest. The plane was 700 miles from the intended destination. Although all six of the crew survived, 13 of the 48 passengers were killed. Both Captain Garcez and the first officer had their commercial licenses revoked. They never flew again.

The Mercer Island Reporter (12-12-02)

2. Lost people are captives of Satan-2 Timothy 2:26.
3. Lost people are condemned-John 3:18.
4. Lost people are spiritually dead-Ephesians 2:1.
5. Lost people are hopeless-Ephesians 2:12.
6. Lost people are hell bound-John 3:36.

Kumar, a Christian in South India, was grieved because none of the 13 people he had invited came to watch a Billy Graham evangelistic broadcast at his home on December 23rd. He began to pray, and around 9 p.m. he felt God compelling him to invite his wife's sister's family to watch the next night's broadcast. Immediately he set about to contact them.

It wasn't easy. His sister-in-law's family had no phone, so Kumar had to call their neighbor and plead with him to go and bring them to the phone for an urgent message. When his brother-in-law, Satish, reached the phone, Kumar asked him and his family to catch a bus to his city as soon as possible. Satish said he had no money. Kumar encouraged him to borrow the money and said that he would reimburse Satish for the tickets.

Satish consented, and at 4 a.m. he and his family boarded a bus for the long trip to Kumar's house. They arrived at 5 p.m., and an hour later they watched the My Hope telecast from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Afterward, Kumar gave his testimony and asked if the others wanted to put their faith in Christ. They were all looking at one another, and Kumar wondered what they were thinking. Then Satish, noticeably distressed, stood and explained that he had lost his job because the tea factory that he worked for had closed. Further, the company was demanding that the family vacate their company-owned house. Seeing no hope, the family had decided that on December 25 they were all going to commit suicide.

Now they saw that through Jesus there is hope, and they prayed with Kumar to accept Christ. Satish said he felt like a new man, and, after staying several more days with Kumar, the family returned home ready to face the future with Christ.

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II. HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR THE LOST?

A. First, make a list of the lost people you know. (i.e. family, friends, neighbors, fellow employees, fellow students, etc.).

B. Second, pray for them every day.

George Muller (1805-1898) of Bristol, England was known as a man of prayer. Without ever asking for funds and living entirely by faith in God, he established five orphanages in Bristol that provided care for 10,000 orphans over a 60-year period. His journals record in minute detail how God directly answered thousands of his prayers. Toward the end of his life he remarked that he had prayed for two men to be saved for over 55 years. "Don't you feel like giving up?" someone asked. "Oh no," he replied, "Why would God give me such a burden for these men if he did not intend to save them?" Before his death one of the men came to Christ. The other was saved after Muller died.

C. Third, be ready to be part of the answer to your own prayers for the lost- Isaiah 6:8.

CONCLUSION

A. We must talk to men about God, but first we must talk to God about men. We must pray for the lost.

1. Because of God's heart for the lost.

2. Because of Jesus' sacrifice for the lost.

3. Because of the spiritual condition of the lost.

B. Will you pray for the lost?