

INTRODUCING PEOPLE TO CHRIST

We rejoice that an increasing interest is being taken in the glorious task of evangelism. That Kentucky and Southern Baptists are placing greater emphasis on evangelism is most encouraging. Evangelism has had much to do with what we are and we cannot go forward without it. Evangelism is the primary function of a church. It is given first place in the Great Commission--"Make disciples." By evangelism we mean the proclamation of the gospel of Christ to lost souls in such a way as to lead them to an acceptance of Him as Saviour and a public confession of Him as Lord. The paramount concern of the Christian should be the same as that of his Lord, Who said plainly that He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." The very first business of every church, preacher and Christian is to introduce people to Christ and win them to service for Him. Every child of God should be an unceasing worker in trying to get others to accept Christ as Saviour.

In addressing you on the subject, "Introducing People To Christ," I shall take you to John 1:42 for a text which provides a great inspiration and presents a tremendous challenge. It contains six words: "And he brought him to Jesus."

John the Baptist was the great voice and religious leader of his day. He was preaching near the Jordan River and baptizing in it. Andrew and John went out to hear him and became his disciples. Later, when they were talking with the Forerunner, Christ passed by. Pointing to Him, John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" What emotions must have stirred his soul as he thus bore testimony to the Christ! Moved by a fervid impulse, Andrew instantly left the Baptist and followed Christ. In so doing Andrew came into possession of an indescribable joy, glowing radiance and a measureless power.

As soon as Andrew had experienced for himself the joy and blessedness of personal fellowship with Christ, he did not sit down in complacency but immediately became concerned that his brother, Simon, enter into a similar experience and relationship. He simply could not withhold the glorious news that he had learned, and which had filled his soul with joy and thanksgiving. He longed to share his discovery. Just as soon as he came to know the Saviour he was greatly concerned that somebody else might be saved. He began his recruiting work as soon as he had enlisted in the Master's service. That is the best thing any young Christian can do. How like Christ it is to be concerned about the salvation of others!

Finding Christ to be the answer to his spiritual desires and hopes, Andrew went straight home to get in his first work for his Saviour. He went in search of his brother to inform him of his discovery and to invite him to share in it. In the light of his own experience with Christ, he was thoroughly convinced that his brother would be deeply interested in the discovery and would hail it with delight. Andrew was not afraid to speak to his own brother about Christ. To himself he said, "Would that my dear brother, Simon, were a sharer of my joy!" It is ever thus with those who truly know the Lord. The love of Christ enlarges the heart in love to all: first, to members of the same family; second, to the circle of acquaintances; third, to those of the same country; and, fourth, to all mankind.

Just as soon as Andrew had come to know the Lord, he made it his business to go and find Simon Peter, tell him his Christian experience and invite him to come to Christ. It often requires more courage, faith and love to speak to a brother or close relative about Christ than it does to witness to a total stranger. Genuinely saved people never want to withhold Christ from others, and one of the best places to begin soul-winning is right at home among one's own relatives, even though the task may be difficult. Relationship most assuredly adds obligation to opportunity.

How noble it was in Andrew that he showed such a great interest in the salvation of his brother! When he found him, he did not preach to him, or enter into an argument with him, but he simply talked with him. He told him the good news in plain, unadorned and short sentences. Then, he brought his brother, of whom he was so proud, and introduced him to Christ.

The majority of Christians have come to Christ because somebody—father, mother, brother, sister, minister or friend—spoke to them about the Saviour and brought them to Him. The winning of souls to Christ is usually done by personal work, which is something any Christian can do. It is the Lord's plan for them to do so. Frequently I receive a letter asking me to take a personal interest in the spiritual welfare of someone who is near and dear to the writer. But with the request there usually comes this word: "But do not let him (or her) know that I have asked you." Such a request shows a strange unwillingness to do as Andrew did.

Andrew is an interesting and outstanding example of a soul-winner. He was a very humble man. He kept himself in the background and never sought to focus attention upon himself. He was consistent in his conduct. His method was very simple. He had a gift for influencing others, which ability he used tactfully and wisely. He excelled in the gentle art of introducing others to Christ. Every time he is mentioned in the Bible he was introducing somebody to the Saviour. In every glimpse we have of him he was in the act of leading somebody else to Christ.

I. Reasons For It.

The motives which constrain us to evangelistic endeavors are as wide as the world, as inclusive as the needs of men, as lofty as the love of God, as deep as the pit of hell, as broad as time, and as long as eternity.

1. The importance of the work.

Introducing people to Christ is the supreme task of the Christian. This is true because of the worth of souls. For the purpose of saving sinners Christ came, lived, died and rose again. The main business of every one of His followers is to witness to clearly that all shall understand that there is but one hope for people, and that is Christ. As we witness to the lost, eternal destinies hang in the balance.

2. The command of Christ.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." If Christ is our Lord, we are obligated to obey Him. He said, "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." If we obey Christ and follow Him, He will make us soul-winners. If we are not winning souls, we are not following Christ and obeying Him. The soul-saving passion dominated His life. In what sense is one a follower of Christ who does not give his life to what the Lord gave His life? He said, "Follow Me." If we love Him, we shall strive to please Him. If we are to obey Him, we must witness to our relatives, our acquaintances and those in the regions beyond.

3. The condition of people.

Those who have not been introduced to Christ are lost in sin and they need salvation. The deepest cry of the human heart is for a mighty Saviour. Beneath all the apparent indifference to religious concerns; beneath all this absorbing bustle and excitement of our modern life; this cry rises louder and louder. The one far-reaching, deep-seated want of souls is to behold Christ, to come into direct touch with Him, and to have fellowship with Him. This cry is not always clear and articulate, but it frequently finds expression in a voiceless discontent and a restless craving which cannot put itself into words. There is no hope for the lost apart from the gospel of Christ which has been entrusted to us. If we actually love them, we will strive to introduce them to Christ.

4. The duty of witnessing.

A witness is a person who has seen something, heard something, experienced something, knows something, and is willing to tell what he knows. A witness for Christ is

one who tells another what he knows about the Saviour with a view to winning him to a saving knowledge of Him. One of the outstanding characteristics of the early Christians was that they were always bearing witness to the saving power of Christ. They knew Christ, walked with Him, talked with Him and lived in the closest fellowship with Him. Even the enemies of the Saviour took knowledge of the fact that they had been with Christ. They knew it by their walk and talk, by the way they lived and acted seven days in the week.

Christian witnessing is of two kinds--that of the lips and that of the life. The life speaks even when the lips are silent. The lips should speak for Christ, and the life should shine for Him. Actions speak louder than words. Example is better than precept. Emerson said, "I cannot hear what you say for the noise of what you are." There is no witnessing quite like that of the life.

One does not need to sit in a courtroom very long until he learns that the influence which the testimony of a witness has with the jury depends largely upon the character of the person. That is doubly true in the realm of religion. The influence that your testimony for Christ is going to have will depend very largely upon your Christian character. When one, who is living a beautiful Christian life, witnesses for Christ, his testimony has great weight. Nothing can withstand the witness of a godly life. Henry Drummond was right when he said, "The best evidence of Christianity is a Christian."

All Christians are witnesses for Christ. Some are good witnesses and others are bad ones. If our words, deeds and lives influence people to accept Christ, we are good witnesses. If what we are, say and do make it harder for people to become Christians, we are bad witnesses for Christ.

We should remember that, just as discussing bait, buying tackle, strolling along a stream and hoping to catch fish do not constitute fishing, attending church services, singing, praying and returning home are not the same as introducing people to Christ.

II. Requisites For It.

1. A Christian experience.

Without this experience one's efforts at introducing people to Christ are doomed to failure. As Moody said, "To introduce two persons successfully one must know them both." Spurgeon said, "God will not use dead tools for working living miracles." We must know the way over which we are to lead others. The blind cannot lead blind people successfully. Even a good life insurance company will require an agent to hold a policy in the company before he is allowed to try to sell a policy to others. And that reasoning is sound.

2. A conviction of the sinner's need.

We must believe that men are lost. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." We must have the unwavering conviction that all people out of Christ are already condemned and doomed. Without this conviction one can never introduce people to Christ successfully. Accompanying this conviction of the sinner's need is the realization that Christ is the one and only Saviour, and fully adequate for the needs of every sinner.

3. A concern for souls.

Along with a genuine sense of danger to which the souls of the lost are exposed must go a tender solicitude for their welfare and a zealous exertion for their salvation. A word which we have practically lost from our Christian vocabulary is "concern." A prominent churchman, Bishop Theodore S. Henderson, made the

alarming assertion: "The average church officer has not the slightest spiritual concern for the salvation of other people." Many unsaved people can look us in the faces and truthfully say: "No man cared for my soul." We frequently sing, "Throw Out The Lifeline," but we do not throw it. We sing, "I Love To Tell The Story," but never tell it. We sing, "Rescue The Perishing," but our rescue efforts do not prove that we have much concern. Have you ever said to a lost person what Whitefield said: "I am willing to go to prison and to death for you, but I am not willing to go to heaven without you"?

4. A consistent life.

The work of evangelism would be multiplied many times if Christians presented consistent lives to the world. "Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean." If one is not clean and consistent in his life, the more he keeps his mouth shut about Christ the better it is for His cause. How can we expect others to accept our offer of the gospel of Christ unless our own lives provide evidence of what we claim it will do? Would you buy a hair restorer from a bald man? Is your life a living testimony for Christ?

A Christian lady came to the United States for Bible instruction. Later she was asked if she would not be delighted to have her brothers come over here to study, as they also were in Christian work in the homeland. She held up her hands, and with horror in her face said: "No, no, I would not want them to come and see the way American Christians live!"

In I Corinthians 3, Paul referred to the church members at Corinth as the Lord's babies. Practically every pastor in Kentucky has a number of the Lord's babies in his church. What are their characteristics? They are basically selfish. They are jealous. They demand attention, wanting the pastor to visit them in homes, even though they never visit him at the church. They have to be coaxed to do things. They want to have their own way. If they are obliged to yield to the wishes of others, or take second place, they go home, pout and sulk. They require amusement, wanting baby talk instead of spiritual food. They do not want scriptural sermons. They like the showy better than the scriptural. They like the world better than they do the Word. They tattle on one another. Did you ever belong to a sewing circle: one of these stitch and chatter societies, where they take one stitch to every six chatters? Many of the Lord's babies enjoy such tale-bearing. But all such church members never introduce anybody to Christ.

III. Results Of It.

Introducing people to Christ has its shining rewards. Its results accumulate with the passing centuries. It is a deathless business. The influence set in motion in winning a soul to Christ will continue to increase until it lashes the shores of eternity.

1. The salvation of those who trust Christ.
2. The peace of soul in doing God's will.
3. The joy of helping others.
I am sorry for any Christian who has never had the joy of introducing somebody to Christ. The greatest joy in the Christian life is to introduce a soul to Christ. There is an ecstasy about it that is sublime. It simply sets all the joy bells of the heart to ringing.
4. The undying gratitude of those you win to Christ.
5. The satisfaction of helping to increase the population of heaven.

6. The appreciation and commendation of Christ.

We never know how far-reaching may be the results of introducing a soul to Christ. Think of Andrew. He was an humble, quiet, unassuming and consistent Christian. Perhaps the greatest act of his life was that of bringing Simon Peter to Christ. Andrew was the acorn, Peter was the oak, and three thousand converts at Pentecost were the great forest. Andrew will share in the rewards for Peter's work because he introduced him to Christ.

Think of Stephen and Ananias in helping to bring Paul to Christ. Think of the unknown man who introduced Spurgeon to Christ. Dr. J. B. Hawthorne was an orator whose services were sought by scores of churches, and whose sermons were heard by thousands. On one occasion he went to assist a pastor and church in a two weeks' evangelistic campaign. At the end of it only one little unpromising boy had made a profession of faith in Christ, and Dr. Hawthorne and the church were a bit chagrined over the result. But that boy was A. T. Robertson, who became the greatest Greek and New Testament scholar of the twentieth century.

A similar thing took place in Scotland. A church went through a whole year with only one profession of faith, and, when that was reported at the annual convocation, they said: "None except Wee Bobbie, and he's so sma' he's no worth the countin'." But Wee Bobbie became Robert Moffatt, the flaming torch that illuminated the night of Africa and blazed the trail for the great and marvelous David Livingstone, his son-in-law.

Never despise the day when a child is won to Christ. Only the Lord knows what that contribution may mean to the cause of Christ.

Have you ever introduced a person to Christ? If not, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. How will it look for you to go alone into heaven when you might have taken others with you? If you do not bring someone to Christ, there will be a missing note in your song, a missing joy in your experience, and a missing star in your crown. Bringing somebody to Christ is the greatest service you can ever render for Him.

When and where did you ever talk to anybody about the salvation of his soul and seek to introduce him to Christ? Have you really tried to win anybody to Christ? The question is not going to be, "How many did you win to Christ?", but "How many did you really try to win?" We are not responsible for results, but we are responsible for our testimony.