

Evangelise!

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[0:00] Luke 14, verse 16.

It's the story of the Great Supper. Then said he, the Lord Jesus, unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many, and sent his servant at suppertime to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it. I pray thee, have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came and showed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said, to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, the maimed, and the holt, and the blind.

[1:07] And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

I want to urge you today to reach out. It's really the key message here, isn't it? To reach out. To reach out. To evangelise. An evangelist is a nobody who is seeking to tell everybody about a somebody who can help change anybody.

That's evangelism in a nutshell. And I want to urge you to be that today, to be that one, that witness, that evangelist, as we all can evangelise, and ought to, as we should be a committed community, reaching out to our community, to our neighbourhood, around about.

And we see, you could say simply three things here, three directives you could see in this passage for us to take heed of today. And the first one is to go out.

The first directive to God's servants are to go out. Verse 21 and verse 23. The Lord, the Master, that we could picture as Christ, or as the Father, sending out the servants to call and bid the people to invite them to come.

[2:30] We could see those who are sent as nearly every Christian could be pictured as those servants that were sent. That we are called and the Lord invites us or the Lord exhorts us to go and to go out.

To go out. To go out of your way. And that can mean for any of us, really whenever we witness this, going out of your way, isn't it? Whenever anyone opens their mouth and wants to tell another about the Lord, about our Saviour, it's putting yourself out, isn't it?

It's getting out of the comfort zone. It's stepping out. It's getting out of the church. It's getting out of the church and it's taking the message out of these four walls where it needs to go.

And it says there that we are to go out quickly. In verse 21, it says, Go out quickly. Go out quickly. There's an urgency to this commission.

There's an urgency to this message, to this exhortation from the Master. Go out quickly. There is a divine imperative that we are to go out.

[3:33] To go out. A red alert. A red alert. This is an emergency. This is critical. When the ambos get the call, when the ambulance service gets the call, that there's an emergency, then they don't mess around.

There's no checking whether your tie's straight or whether your fingernails are clean or whether your breath smells nice or whatever. Nothing is there to hinder.

Nothing is there to delay. To stifle. To cause any delay to them getting out there. And likewise, as it says in 1 Samuel 21 verse 8, it says, The king's business requires haste.

The king's business requires haste. Now that's a good excuse for when I speed in the church bus. No, not really. But, you know, like we could put faster pastor on some of these church buses.

But no, not really. We shouldn't be breaking the law. But let us be faster. Let us be more urgent. Let us be more urgent. Let us be more in earnest. As the Master said, Go out quickly.

[4:37] He didn't say go out when you feel like it. Go out when you get the inclination. He says go out quickly. Obey. And for each one of us Christians, young and old, here tonight, it's a message, it's a command that we are to go and to keep on going.

The gospel is not something we go to church to hear. It's something we go from the church to tell. That is where we need to be out there and about the work.

And don't wait till you feel like it because chances are you may not really ever get to feel like it. If you wait till you feel like it, it may not ever happen. And that's true for any of us. But there's always something else.

There's always lots of things to occupy our time and to occupy our interests. But the gospel is not something that's optional. It's not something that we should question or delay our obedience to. We should go out quickly. And step out. Step out of the comfort zone. Go out. It says go out. And the master told the servant, go out. Go out into the streets.

[5:42] The city streets. You can go out into the city streets and pass out tracks and spread the gospel. Go out into the lanes. The small streets. The small streets. From house to house.

From family to family. To knock on the doors. To invite people. To leaflet drop. In the lanes. Then he says go out. And he talks about the people. The second time around he says to reach them.

To reach who? The poor. To reach every poor family. So in other words, all people. We don't make a distinction that we only offer it to certain classes or certain people who meet a certain viewpoint that we might have or a certain style of life that we might have.

We're to reach the poor. So that really means from anyone from the lowest to the highest. The maimed, the halt, the blind. We could think of that as representing, for example, hospital visitation. I know there's some folk in our church that have got that kind of sense of caring and compassion to go and visit people who are not well. The maimed, the halt, the blind. And then he says the highways.

[6:50] The houses, the businesses. Could be there's opportunities to reach out to those that are on the main streets. It could be through opportunities to invite to special events or ways that we can grab people's attention with the message.

Into the hedges, the country roads, the rural areas. You know, it would be great in a way, as I've said before, that we're not just constrained to one suburb even, to one locality.

But just because we meet in a building doesn't mean that this is a confining place. It means it's just a place that we gather. And we can gather in different places, in different areas.

And God willing, I'd like to see us reach out further afield to more southerly, more northerly, to other areas as God helps us to, that we can extend the reach of the message.

And your mission field is the next unsaved person that you meet. It's true, isn't it? Really, our mission to build is the ones that we have our contact with in the day by day.

[7:56] And do we think of that? Do we just consign the book of Acts to some past time? Or should we rather catch the spirit of the book of Acts? The book of action was the Acts.

It was the book of action, the church in action. And likewise, it's interesting, as it's been said, that the book of Acts doesn't really close. It's still ongoing. It's still in a sense that God's church is still in action and we should be still active.

And in Acts 8, 4, it says, they went everywhere and this was a time of persecution when really they might have been packing their bags and, you know, taking their troubles on board and maybe feeling sorry for themselves.

When that happened, what happened? They went everywhere preaching the word. When the persecution happened, they actually got more vibrant and more revived. Because of the persecution and maybe we need some more persecution, brothers and sisters, in Australia.

I think maybe we've got it so easy that we think, why do we make an effort, you know? Because really, we have got it so easy compared to many lands of our world today.

[9:04] So, think of it. Go out. And that means every one of us to think of, how can I go out? To step outside the comfort zone. It's been said, you cannot witness to the wrong person about Christ.

You know, some people think they've got to have a warm and fuzzy or a certain inkling or an impression or some kind of light from heaven as to who they should speak to about Christ. But really, you can't witness to the wrong person about the Saviour. Because if they're outside of Christ, then they're greatly in need of the very message that you can impart to them. And some stories about witnessing, there's a man called Back.

He was converted while a student in Copenhagen, Denmark. Walking down the street one day, on a Sunday afternoon, he noticed a young man crossing the street to give him a track. Someone rushed up to him to give him a gospel track. Back crushed the track in his hand, muttering that people should mind their own business. The young man did not respond, but instead turned aside to pray as tears began to run down his cheeks.

[10:09] Noticing the man's tears, Back thought, he has given his money to buy this track. He has given his time to distribute it. And now he has given his heart in prayer for me.

And the young man's compassion towards Back's pride and to Back's crude behaviour, it brought deep conviction. And half an hour later in his room, Back pasted the track together and before he had finished reading it, he was down on his knees asking God for forgiveness.

So a simple gospel track. You know, you might think, what can I do? A track could be, maybe that is the greatest thing that you could ever do is to give out a track. Don't discount tracks.

They're very important. Here's another example of a track. There's a man called Goodger and he made it his weekly practice to hand out gospel tracks from door to door.

And one day in South Carolina, he stopped at a house and he rang a bell and because he heard sounds inside, he knew someone was home. So he kept on ringing that doorbell. Ding dong, ding dong.

[11:13] And even though no one came and finally a man appeared and took the track that he offered and rudely slammed the door in Goodger's face and a week later, Goodger returned to the same house.

And this time, the man answered almost immediately, inviting him in. He said, he took him to the attic and he showed a sturdy rope dangling from the rafters with a box below it.

And the man said, Friend, when you rang the bell last week, my head was in that noose. I was ready to jump. But you were so persistent that I decided to go down and see who it was. After receiving your track, I read it through because the title interested me and through it, God spoke to me and instead of jumping off that box, I knelt beside it and gave my heart to Christ, to the Lord. And how thankful good you was that he had been diligent in his witnessing. Without that leaflet, the man may have gone into eternity unsaved. So be encouraged to go out.

Go out. Secondly, compel them. The other directive to the servants was to compel them. Verse 23, need to get serious about those that are outside of Christ, to compel them.

[12:23] It means taking serious action. It means taking some serious intent. And I pray that this church may be more aggressive in its soul winning. That we might be a church that's interested in people, interested in reaching people.

A church that gets serious about the soul winning business, the eternal business, the business of souls, eternal souls, of eternal destinations, of eternal message.

An eternal message of God's message. God's message for mankind. It's for people. It's about people. Real people. People with excuses. Some of these folk that were invited that had excuses. And oft times when you witness, people had excuses. And some good, some bad, but really not good enough to excuse them from the challenge of salvation and of the invitation.

If they refuse it, there's no excuse to refuse that invitation. Because people are going to a Christless eternity. And friends, tonight, He has called you.

[13:27] You are His servant. Each one of you here today, every single one of you here tonight, young and old, if you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you are His servant. And He's given you a message.

A message to your families, your friends, the folk about you, where you go about your lives. And to tell people how to get saved, that's critical and vital tonight.

And let me tell you another account. Reverend John Barker, Harper rather. This man's name is John Harper. He was a Baptist preacher. He was travelling with his daughter, Nina Harper and Miss Jessie Leach from London en route to Chicago.

And this is a true story. This preacher, Harper, was on his way to Chicago to begin a series of revival meetings at the Moody Church located in Chicago.

He'd been at the church before during November, December and January of 1911 and 12. And his success there resulted in his being invited back to conduct another series of meetings.

[14:31] And on this evening of April the 14th, this Reverend Harper and Miss Leach were standing on the deck. They were admiring the sunset. It will be beautiful in the morning, remarked Reverend Harper before retiring for the night.

After the collision, Reverend Harper awakened his daughter. The boat struck something and picked up his daughter and wrapped her in a blanket. It's the middle of the night, carrying her up to the deck.

There he kissed her goodbye and handed her to crewmen who put her into the lifeboat. Number 11 with Miss Leach.

Reverend Harper went down with the ship. Nina recalled that she was sitting on her aunt's lap when she saw the Titanic sink. She remembered watching the lights go out and hearing the screams of the drowning.

In New York, little man couldn't understand why her father did not come to her in this strange new land. I left Papa on the big boat and he told me to go with Aunt Jessie.

[15:35] She said, Now I want Papa. But Papa never came and Nan and Miss Leach returned to England a week later. Out of this tragedy, however, God can still bring triumph.

The story is told that one passenger, John Harper, was on his way to... Sorry, I'm repeating here.

That this passenger, John Harper, he was on his way to preach at Moody Church in Chicago and trying to stay afloat in the ocean, John Harper drifted towards a young man who was holding onto a plank and Harper asked the young man, he said, Young man, are you saved?

The man said, No. A wave separated them. After a few minutes, they drifted within speaking distance of each other again and again Harper called to him, Have you made your peace with God? The young man said, Not yet. A wave overwhelmed John Harper and he was seen no more. But the words, Are you saved? kept ringing in the young man's ears and two weeks later, a youth stood up in a Christian Endeavour meeting in New York and told his story and said, I am John Harper's last convert.

Here, God used John Harper in the ways says, He was breathing his last breath to witness to a man and see him one for the Saviour. This is a vital, important message.

[17:03] A vital message. Just as it was vital for that soul at stake, it's vital for every soul as at stake tonight that we can, as soul winners, we can help change the course of his destiny.

As it says in James 5.20 that there's a wonderful promise there that we can take to heart. It says there, James 5.20, Let him know that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins.

What a blessing it would be, brother, sister, tonight, if you were to get to glory and there would be one or two, a number that you might have told about the gospel, about the saviour, about his saving love and grace, that they might be there to greet you or might come after you and you would welcome them.

Ones that you've had a part to play in telling them of the saviour. We should be the evangelistic church that this community needs. This community needs a soul winning church.

We need to be a church that compels them, that takes it seriously, that gets a little bit of the saviour. We should be a little bit of the saviour. We should be a little bit of the saviour.