

# Our Task In The Revolution

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 21 February 1988

Preacher: Harry Robinson

[ 0 : 00 ] The purpose that we should be, by your grace, very different people than we are. And not only is it your purpose, but it is your grace and sovereign power that can make us to be what is your purpose we should be.

So as we hear your word, give us such grace that we may allow your word to accomplish in us that which is according to your purpose for us.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. I decided to stand out in the middle so that I could address you people.

And normally I go up there and I have my back to you. But we're very honored to have you as guests at St. John's this morning. And we want your life to be totally changed from this day on. So that's just a mild hope. But that applies to you too. So don't feel it. Or picking on it. Or indeed. I won.

[ 1 : 34 ] It's apparent to everybody that what is required is a revolution. And many people in many parts of the world have become so desperate to see that happen that they have taken it in hand.

To do just that. A complete change with a subversion of authority and the establishment of a new order.

The old values will not serve. The existing order must change in terms of its fundamental precepts. That's what a revolution is.

Now revolutions have happened at various times in history. The kind of revolution I'm talking about is in England there was a glorious revolution as it is known.

Some people consider it less than glorious. But there it was. And it changed the whole direction of our subsequent history. The impact of that revolution goes on in our lives all the time.

[ 2 : 45 ] Battles were fought. People were burned. Others were killed. Others executed and hanged. But the glorious revolution went ahead.

Then came perhaps what is by modern society at least considered the most successful of revolutions. And that was the American Revolution in which they threw the tea into Boston Harbor. And fought a few fights after that and established the independence. And what's that magnificent statement? You know.

The one they all appeal to. Anyway, you know. I'm sure you understand what I mean. There is a name for it.

What is it? The what? Not the Constitution. That thing where three score years. No, no. That's the Declaration of Independence.

[ 3 : 46 ] That was it. And that was the result of the American Revolution. And then there was the French Revolution, which is mostly famous in our minds for the fact that people had their heads cut off by a new and sanitary system, which was called the guillotine.

And everybody went to it. It was quick. It was painless. You didn't have to think about it very long. It just happened. And if you were in the way of the revolution, the guillotine cleared you out of the way so that the revolution could go ahead.

And then in our own century, there has been the Marxist Revolution in Russia, in which millions upon millions of people died. The Communist Revolution in China.

And again, which has changed an old order that was established for centuries and created a kind of new nation that is in a way beginning again.

And that was the revolution. And many countries of the world feel that their future, their prospects demand a revolution.

[ 4 : 59 ] And so all over the world, revolution is breaking out one place and another, hoping to reap the results of the famous revolutions of history.

And to create a whole new world in which people can live. Well, that's the revolution. And it goes on. Some revolutions seem to have been good.

Some have been bloody beyond all imagining. Some awful and some apparently inevitable. And in many revolutions, all that people learn is violence.

And then that violence becomes a disease. And the only product of that revolution is perpetual violence that goes on and on and on and nobody can stop it.

Such a scourge is it. Now, democracy was one of the great inventions which we are very partial to in this part of the world. And democracy gave one vote to each person.

[ 6 : 07 ] And the purpose of democracy is to try and conduct a peaceable revolution. In other words, you don't have to shoot anybody. You don't have to hang anybody.

You don't have to guillotine anybody. You just go and vote against them. And they get the message. And that works well in certain instances. But there are other instances in which it doesn't work so well.

People are terrified of the possibility of democracy in South Africa. One man, one vote, all of history suggests, won't work in that country.

But what else can we do? And so the dilemma of the revolution there is stalled in the agony of what's happening in South Africa.

You have in Haiti the attempt to introduce a democratic vote, to create a peaceful revolution, to do away with the violence and the shooting and the killing, and by democratic means to light the revolution.

[ 7 : 21 ] Well, the difficulty, of course, is coming up now. Now that revolution has been proved to be a practical means of doing things, there are a lot of people that want to get in on it.

But it doesn't work on a one-man, one-vote way of doing things. The native people of Canada could never precipitate a democratic revolution.

They are a minority group. They could never get enough people to vote with them. The Sikhs in India are a minority group, and they can never perpetrate the revolution that they want because they can't do it.

Ceylon, Sri Lanka is torn apart because a minority group wants to initiate a revolution and will never get a majority democratic vote to do it.

Well, that's how revolution works or doesn't work. And you may be of the opinion that we are involved in a kind of peaceful status quo kind of world, and we don't need revolution.

[ 8 : 34 ] But revolution is going on all the time, and we desperately need revolution. We desperately need change, deep fundamental changes in the circumstances of life on this planet.

Well, that's the kind of thing that's needed. I'd like to suggest to you that one person, whom I thought was extremely wise, said that revolution is so important that it can't be left in the hands of revolutionaries.

And I think that's true. It's far more important than anything that a guy with a gun and a sack full of dynamite can bring to pass.

The other thing about revolution is, can revolution be successfully completed within the span of one lifetime?

Most of us, or some of us, perhaps believe that given enough time, the revolution would take place. But I personally don't have that much time.

[ 9 : 46 ] And so I've got to hurry up the process. And again, violence seems to be the only way to do it. And that's the problem of the time it takes to precipitate a revolution.

And another problem is, who can you trust to lead a revolution? Revolution is so important that it must have the right leader, it must take time, and it must not be committed into the hands of a few revolutionaries.

Now, there are revolutions brewing in our midst, of which we are all aware. There is a sexual revolution that wants a whole new human covenant in terms of sexuality.

A redefinition of who men are and who women are. And what heterosexuality is and what homosexuality is. They want to tear apart the whole structure of the family as a unit and put it together in some different way.

And that revolution is going on all around us. And it gives one a feeling of helplessness and despair that the results of that revolution might be infinitely worse than the values against which they are revolting.

[ 11 : 20 ] There is a need for a total revolution in man's relationship to his environment. The rape, pillage, and plunder process has to change drastically.

We know there must be a revolution there. But how is it to be brought about? In respect to revolution again, Rambo has got a goal.

You know, Rambo cannot be the great figure of the 21st century, loaded with arms and guns and daggers and knives and powerful to do anything that he wants to do.

That image is not going to bring about the revolution. Violence simply precipitates aimless revolution.

The goals are lost. There needs to be a revolution in terms of a massive new understanding of humankind. We can't afford to have French and English fighting, Jew and Gentile fighting, Protestant and Catholic fighting, the Sikhs fighting, the Basques fighting, the Tamils fighting, the Aboriginal peoples fighting, ethnic and cultural revolutions going on all the way around.

[ 12 : 47 ] There needs to be a revolutionary new understanding of who man is and woman, of what humankind is all about. We need something like that because we can't tolerate the inevitable revolutions of so many groups seeking to find a freedom which they consider perhaps rightly to be their inalienable right.

So I ask you the question, who is going to lead the revolution? Now we come to my text for this morning.

Will you, will you turn to Isaiah 42, verse 1? Page 636 in the Bible.

We are told there who is to be the leader of the revolution. And the leader of the revolution is described by God as he speaks, the Lord God speaks through Isaiah the prophet and says who the leader of the revolution is to be.

You want a revolution, he says? Behold my servant. Look at him. And then he gives the qualifications of this servant.

[ 14 : 19 ] This is the one who is going to serve my purposes. To serve the purposes of the Lord God in the whole realm of human existence.

Behold my servant, the one whom I uphold. You may not vote for him democratically, but I will uphold him. I will uphold him against all opposition.

I will uphold him against all betrayal. I will uphold him against all the forces of man. I will uphold my servant because he is the one whom I have chosen to lead the revolution that must happen.

He is the one in whom I delight. He is the one on whom I have put my spirit. He is to lead the revolution. And Isaiah says, speaking for the Lord God, behold my servant.

And then he goes on to say what his work is to be. And if you look there, you will see that his work is to bring forth justice to all the nations.

[ 15 : 36 ] Now, justice is something that doesn't exist in our world in its perfect form. We have lower courts and higher courts and provincial courts and courts of appeal and superior courts and privy councils and all sorts of people that we can carry our issues to in the hope that somewhere, the Supreme Court of the United States, the Supreme Court in Canada, we are constantly looking for justice.

And they made this monumental decision a couple of weeks ago and the whole land is turned on its ear because knowing that they may be right on the one hand, they have not produced justice in its fullness on the other hand.

And the purpose of the revolution is to bring God's justice so that everybody will get justice.

Now, you know if you are any age at all that justice doesn't come easily. You can't get it.

There are too many conflicting interests for justice to be given to you. But the work of this servant of God is to bring forth justice to the nations.

[ 17 : 02 ] And this is the opposite of to incite violence among the nations. That's not what he's here to do. We understand violence much better.

But he's doing something quite different. In fact, instead of being on the trigger end of the machine gun, he's at the muzzle end of the machine gun.

Instead of dropping the bomb, it's dropped on him. But, he will be upheld. That's the difference with this one whom God has given this work to do.

He will faithfully bring forth justice. And then it talks about the method by which he's going to do it.

And you will be delighted to know that he's not going to use the media.

That's in verse 2. He will not cry or lift up his voice or make it heard in the streets. That's not the way he's going to work.

[ 18 : 15 ] He's not a Hitler who's going to bring together thousands upon thousands of stormtroopers and create a frenzy in a huge mob and drive them to the point of insanity with his oratory.

He's not going to run a Republican or a Democratic convention. He's going to work on that great principle which Malcolm Muggeridge once cited by saying 10,000 people cannot be right. And that is understood in terms of this revolution. And he goes on to say that the gentle broken people are the people who are going to be his shock troops.

they are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the hungry, people hungry for righteousness. They're going to be the pure in heart and the merciful and the peacemakers and the meek.

The broken reed will not be broken and snapped out of the way because it's interfering with the revolution. the dimly burning wick will not be snuffed out.

[ 19 : 32 ] Those people will be used to bring the revolution, the gentle people. And it will take time.

He goes on to say that the critical path of this revolution is that it's going to avoid ultimate failure. says of him that he will not fail.

Under the pressure of the revolution he won't collapse. That under the pressure of the revolution the burning light will not go out.

It won't fail and he won't lose courage. And he says the revolution will go on and on and on and on and it will not stop.

It will go on he says until justice is established in the earth and the coastlands wait for his law.

[ 20 : 47 ] That is the furthest corner of the world. The most remote place in the world. The justice of God will come to that place.

And the revolution has to go on until that happens. The revolution is to establish his justice in all the earth and in every part of the earth.

And even though men have this they speak the language of violence much more eloquently.

Nevertheless the violence will not interfere with the ultimate goal of this revolution to bring justice to the ends of the earth.

Bring God's justice and establish it in the most remote corners of the world. world. Let me tell you something. The New Testament is essentially the witness to the community that saw itself as totally committed to the servant.

The servant who would bring justice to the remotest corners of the world. Christian community understood the servant to be Jesus Christ and to find their whole life in the commitment to the revolution which would not fail and which there would be no discouragement.

[ 22 : 24 ] There's an interesting statement which is from a sermon by John Stott in which he talks about the nature of this gentle revolution. he says of a sociologist at University of California in Berkeley that he wrote we should not underestimate the significance of the small group of people who have a new vision of a just and gentle world.

In Japan a very small minority of Protestant Christians introduced ethics into politics and had an impact beyond all proportion to their numbers.

They were central in the beginning of the women's movement labor unions virtually every reform movement. Then this sociologist added the quality of a culture may be changed when two percent of its people have a new vision.

Now we are many more than two percent. we could have a far greater impact on society if we understood the revolution if we were truly the salt and light of the world.

Maybe God is bringing us down to two percent so we can demonstrate that wonderful truth. our community is to be the committed servants of the servant of God to maintain the revolution to know our status that as bruised reeds we will not fail as dimly burning wicks we will not be discouraged that there is to be no compromise on the objectives of the revolution that justice will be established and the coastlands wait for it.

[ 24 : 24 ] And the revolution doesn't just affect this world because the goal of the revolution is that finally death itself will be overcome and the power of evil will be broken and the promises of God which he has made to us in his servant will be realized.

And the purpose of you being here and you being here and you being here this morning is that you are committed to this revolution and you must know that you will not fail and you are to draw from

one another the courage and the encouragement to go up and carry on the work of the revolution in the place to which God has called you and in that particular dimension of the revolution which is committed to you.  
Amen.