

The Dangerous Life

Evangelism

By Jeff Rose

sermonaudio.com

Preached on: Sunday, July 22, 2012

Christ Bible Church

6900 N. Valley Trails Drive
Pleasanton, CA 94588

Website: www.christbiblechurch.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/christbiblechurch

Good afternoon. It has been a journey. We flew down here Thursday and had the grand opportunity of being able to preach at a conference, an evangelism conference, where I had the privilege and honor of bringing three messages all dealing with the supremacy of Christ, the holiness of God and dealing with the dangerous life of believers, what's it's truly like to be a believer in Jesus Christ, especially in a day of compromise like our nation is today. It really demands true godly men and woman of Jesus Christ to stand up at this hour in our history and confront not only the sins in our own heart but confront the sins in our own nation instead of participate in them under the banner of grace. This morning, I was at pastor Downing's church and had the great privilege of preaching there as well which I really enjoyed the Fellowship and I certainly had been looking forward to come into Pastor Joe's church and I am very grateful, very privileged and very honored that you would invite me here to come and be able to share God's word. I thank all of you for having me as well. I pray that this message will encourage you.

My greatest desire is not to run around and condemn everybody for not being a street preacher, that's obnoxious. I believe the Reformation came because everybody realized that God wanted to be involved in all areas of life. When the modern people of those times finally got the Bible in their own language thanks to Martin Luther, God instrumentally using Luther, people understood for the first time in their lives that God wanted to be involved in all areas of life. If they do all things unto the glory of God and wherever God has called you, there is where you are supposed to flourish.

God has not called everybody to be a street preacher. He has called me specifically to do this work and we lived in Scotland for a couple of years. My wife and my daughters. I now have five daughters, the youngest being five months and the oldest 11 years old and we've lived in Scotland for two years. We've traveled across the United States in a 1986 Southwind RV that inside of it nothing works. My wife and I and my daughters, we traveled across the United States preaching on street corners, college campuses and behind pulpits. I'll tell you, that old RV was a wooden spoon in our lives, really kind of stripped off a lot of pride and made me realize just how much in life I really didn't need and how much I truly enjoyed my family because in those days, in those months, living in those kinds of conditions, really brings out your true colors and it was really a great opportunity to grow close to my family.

I'm back in the United States and I live in New Jersey and we have a ministry called Jeremiah Cry Ministries. We have about 19 so-called leaders on our team that spread out across the United States and throughout the UK and their assignment is to exalt Jesus Christ into the open air, sent from their local church. We are raising up as many leaders as we can. Our goal is to see a universal team put together for the Lord Jesus Christ where everybody is going out functioning from their local church, exalting the Lord Jesus Christ in the open air, taking the true gospel not just into the open air but back into their homes, back to their marriages, back to their children, back into their workplaces. Seeing Christ truly lifted up and exalted over all areas of life. This is our great vision for Jeremiah Cry Ministries.

With that being said, if you could turn in your Bibles to Romans 1, please. I'm going to tell you something, I can get a bit lively I guess sometimes when I preach, I kind of lose myself once in a while so I may wander away from the microphone because I'm not used to being stuck to a microphone unless I can take the microphone off but it doesn't look like I can. Turn to Romans 1. We're going to start in verse 16 and we're going to work our way to verse 25

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Let's pray.

Father, I just thank you for this opportunity to exalt the mighty name of Jesus Christ today. Father, I thank you for the people of God that are here today that represent you and I pray, Lord, that you would open up their heart and that this message would not only just reach them but it would change them, it would transform them, it would thrust them out into the world, Lord, back into their homes, back into the cities, Lord, to bring

the glorious message of Jesus Christ. I pray, Father, that their homes would be transformed by the power of God, that they would return to gospel powered marriages, gospel powered children, gospel powered workplaces, gospel powered local churches. I pray, God, in this hour in our history that you would raise up men and women who would not compromise your word. May the Spirit of God come today. May the unction of the Lord Jesus Christ be upon this message. All for the glory of Jesus Christ, the King of kings. Amen and so be it.

The title of this message is "Staying Biblical in an Age of Compromise." Staying biblical in an age of compromise. Today there is a desperate need to understand what happens to a culture when the gospel message is changed. The primary attack of the enemy is not Islam, it's not homosexuality, it's not the Mormons, the primary attack of the enemy is targeted against the gospel and the totality of what and who it represents and that's God himself. These attacks are not necessarily coming from without but much of it comes from within, from what we would define as today's contemporary American Christianity. The agenda of the contemporary American church seems to try to redefine the message of Jesus Christ, abandoning his holiness, abandoning his law and abandoning his kingdom authority. The enemy never comes dressed in an attire that would give him away but will come anyway that would be hardly discernible. Charles Spurgeon once said, "Discernment is not knowing what is right and wrong but knowing what is right and what is almost right." The greatest way the enemy tries to stifle the will of God is by perverting the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is why you can trace every great move of God by its return to the true gospel and every decline and failure to its neglect thereof. The gospel is always at the heart of all the attacks and a returning to the truth of the biblical gospel always, always results in revival.

The greatest fight we have today is not defending the truth but preaching it. May the health of our Lord Jesus Christ come back to the pulpit again in our nation. Nations are led by the pulpit. The church of Jesus Christ. Many today in the evangelical circles have allowed their fear to shape the so-called gospel that they preach. The very way they perceive and define the gospel has been championed by their fear of man and not of God. I love the local church. I love the church of Jesus Christ and I can't stand that people bash the church. I love the church. I love my brothers and sisters but we have to understand that today there is much out there that is not Christianity that calls itself Christianity. We must come to the sobering reality that many people out there that call themselves Christians are not Christians. They want to be ecumenical. They have a Jesus but it's not the Jesus from the Scriptures. And when a man or a woman stands up today in this hour and begins to preach the Jesus from the word of God, he's ostracized. Challenged on every front when someone wants to stand up for truth. People get offended and many of those that get offended call themselves Christians. And it starts here and it starts today with us, with me.

It's not about being an American, British or German or any other nationality. It's about God and the gospel has always and always will be about God. "Fear not, Abraham. I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." John Piper said, "If we come to God for any other reason than God himself, we come in vain." We come for God. He's our great and

exceeding reward. If we come to God for any other reason besides God, we come in vain. We come for the wrong reasons. We don't know how your life is going to turn out. I don't know what circumstances you're going through. I don't know what kind of pain you've been through and what you're going through or your adversity. But I know one thing: God is always faithful and he is sovereign and he will see you through. And we must come to God for the sake of God himself. He is your reward. Whether you are poor or rich, whatever problems you may be going through, God is your reward. God is your reward. If you can keep that in the forefront of your brain and heart, it will carry you through any kind of tragedy.

The further we get away from the true gospel, the further we get away from the means and methods by which God has ordained the gospel to be preached. This is why when a guy like myself will stand up on a soapbox and preach he looks like a fool, he looks like a clown, he looks like an idiot up there. And when we talk about Jesus Christ being the only way, you're looked at like a fool. We must return to the ways by which God has called us to proclaim his truth and that is through his word understanding who Jesus Christ, understanding how the word of God defines him and not being afraid to stand up and declare truth. Listen, life is just a flash. You're going to be here and gone. When I stand before the judgment seat of Christ, I won't stand before Chris S. I won't stand before Don H. I won't stand before Pastor Joe. I will stand before King Jesus and give an account of whether or not I've compromised his word. You will stand before him as well and what will you say on that day when you stand before him? Will you stand before him as a compromised Christian or will you stand before him as a faithful Christian who stood up in this world and confronted sin instead of participating in the very sins that we're called to confront?

The gospel isn't just some get-out-of-jail free card or being let off the hook. It's about a holy God reconciling sinful man to himself through his holy Son, Jesus Christ. Luke 16:15 said, "For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." We must be biblically aware of what's going on in the world. Jesus said if a king goes out with 10,000 men to fight another king who comes against him with 20,000 men, he will sit down first and decide if he is strong enough to face the other king. There is a principle of corrected understanding. This is how we view the world before we go out to the world, before we come in contact with others with the gospel of Jesus Christ realizing that man in and of himself is not a victim as humanism preaches but man by nature is a criminal. He's committed crimes against God. He stands before God as a criminal, broken the divine law of God. By nature, he's a child of wrath. He's born in sin. He's a hater of God, an enemy of God. He's a clenched fist in the very face of God. We must understand when we go into the world, we're not going out with a humanistic gospel because of victimized society, we're going out to a world that's peppered with criminals that must be reconciled unto a holy God and the only way that can happen is through Jesus Christ and him alone.

John Whitehead said in his book, "The End of Man"" "People are more than a mere product of their environment. Men and women project their inward thoughts out in the external world where, in fact, their thoughts affect their environment. Ideas must have

consequences which can be productive or destructive depending on their basis or foundation. Jesus said it's not what goes into a man externally but what comes out of a man internally. The condition of our nation is nothing more than man's wicked inward, dark heart expressed outwardly and externally in the world around us." And nothing, and nothing but the pure Almighty gospel, not the half-mighty gospel but the Almighty gospel is the answer to man's dilemma.

We are in a war. We're not on a cruise ship, we're on a battleship stationed at the very gates of hell. We're in a war. We're in a battle. We must see to it that we are soldiers. God has no dishonorable discharges. You're either in or you're out, one of the two. Martin Luther said, "If I profess with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition every point of truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved and if he's steady on all the battlefields besides, it is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point." Where is the battle raging in our nation today? Where the covenant of marriage is being absolutely destroyed and trampled on by the homosexual movement while we sit back and do practically nothing. We've become the boy in the bubble. We're afraid to be contaminated by the world around us. We're secure in our pretty little churches hearing our pretty little messages, passing around our pet doctrines. We have whole volumes in our heads but no fire in our heart. We have come up with so many theological excuses why we can't go into the world, why we shouldn't do this or why we should do that. I can tell you one reason why you should: because Jesus said, "Go into the world, all the world, and proclaim the gospel." We have 54 million children that have been murdered since 1973. I've had people tell me, "Well, abortion is not my calling." When it is 54 million children, it is your calling. When the crisis gets that high, it's all of our calling. We all have to get involved. This defeatist, escapist mentality that we have today in the church is obnoxious. We are called to the front lines. We're called to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. Who else is going to do it if we don't? We can't pass the buck off on everybody else. We certainly can't trust the government to do it. They are legislating it.

There are four reasons in Scripture why God will judge a nation as seen in the word of God. Idolatry. Immorality. I'm not even going to fill in the blanks because we all know. Innocent bloodshed. And broken covenants. We've got one million marriages a year ending in divorce. If the enemy can destroy the nucleus of the family, who cares about the gospel that you're preaching out on the street corner. Men, if you can't lead your families, what's the point of taking the gospel out into the world? There's no power. If there's no power in your home, there's no power in the gospel that you're preaching, that you are declaring to everybody else when you can't even lead your own house. The qualifications for an elder, I understand, he must be able to lead his own home but I think those principles apply to every Christian. We all need to have integrity and character. Many leave their homes. Men need to love their wives as Christ commanded them to love their wives as Christ has loved the church. Women need to come back and love their husbands and respect their husbands. Children need to be raised in the admonition of the Lord instead of cast aside as some inconvenience. Even if it's your ministry.

I have listed what I have termed the fourfold purpose of preaching the gospel. This, I believe, is really an outline, an articulation of who we are and what we are as a ministry and as believers in Jesus Christ. The first point being, the fourfold purpose of preaching the gospel, the first point: it's for the glory of God. Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." Now all the world isn't just the street corner. He said all the world. This means we need gospel powered marriages. We need to see the gospel empowering our whole being in all areas of life. It's the message of a King enthroned and all powerful. We must understand our motives must be right and our motives must be grounded in God and we go for the glory of God regardless if we ever see a change or not. Our motive must be for God and him alone. Isaiah cried out, "For mine eyes have seen the King." Psalm 4:4 says, "Stand in awe and sin not." I am tired of this half mighty pathetic version of the gospel being peddled in the contemporary churches today. Whimpering, quivering man-filled messages leading people by the droves to hell. The words of Job still ring in our ears today, "But men have forsaken the fear of the Almighty." Psalm 96:3 says, "Declare his glory among the heathen. His wonders among all people." That's everywhere.

We must realize that God himself is in control. He is sovereign. He is above all. A lot of people say to me when they see me preaching on the streets and they like to say, "Well, that doesn't work. That doesn't work. How many people get saved every day? How come the people aren't stopping and gathering around you?" Well, we know they do stand around us but not every time we go out and preach, people stand. Not every time we go out and preach do people gather around. Sometimes they do but that's not the point because God is sovereign over all and he's sovereign over the salvation of his people.

How many of you are hunters in this room? Any hunters? I grew up in a small town where there wasn't a whole lot to do. The one thing that I really liked to do was go out and bow hunt. Now, I wasn't very good but I love the whole idea of inching up into a tree, sitting up there and being able to shoot an arrow at something. I thought that was the coolest thing ever. Well, I had a good friend of mine that was an excellent archer. I mean, he was unbelievable so I went out and got what he got. I got the best bow I could find. I got myself a nice compound, put 80 pound pull. I got the small graphite arrows with the Copeland twister razor head on the end so that I knew that if I hit whatever I hit, it would do the most damage. I got the best tree stand that money could buy. And I would go out and I would get up into the tree and I would hunt for deer.

But I remember one day me and my friend we decided to go out and hunt and it was just before dark. I went to my spot and I inched my way up into the tree and I could hear him probably a good 60 yards away inching up into his tree. And it was just before dark and I hadn't seen anything and all of a sudden I heard this super loud crashing sound and I thought to myself, "He either got a deer or he fell out of the tree, one of the two." So I got down and I ran over there. I ran over to him and I said, "What happened? What happened?" He said, "I just shot a deer. I got one!" And inside I was kind of disappointed because it wasn't me. I was a little bit jealous and I said, "Oh yeah, really? Where was he standing?" He said, "Right over there." So I go inching over there, right? And I looked

down on the ground and guess what I find to my surprise? His arrow. So inside I'm kind of chuckling, right? I'm like, I pick up his arrow and I go, "Brother?" He's like, "What?" I go, "You missed. You missed." And he comes up to me with that look in his eyes because he knew how to hunt, he knew what he was doing. I didn't. He goes, "Brother, I didn't miss that deer. I didn't miss him. My arrow went clean through him and he didn't even know it." He said, "If we go up about 70 yards up this trail, we'll find that deer laying over dead." I said, "Okay." So we walked up the trail and sure enough there was that deer dead as a doornail. His arrow was so sharp it went right through that deer and it didn't even know it until it got 70 yards up the trail and fell over dead. It went right through the vitals. A passing through shot and when it goes through the vitals, it goes all the way through the animal and the animal doesn't even feel it until he falls over dead.

In Isaiah 49:2, it says, "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; for the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even unto the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and the joints and marrow and a discernor of the thoughts and the intent of the heart." So when we're out preaching the gospel, the Bible says the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. So when we're preaching the gospel, we're declaring the faith. Those arrows are flying right through the people and they don't even know it until they get 70 yards up the road and they're laying in their beds that night and the words that you were preaching begin to haunt them and they fall over dead at the altar of a blood-stained cross. This is the word of God that we preach. Just because you don't see them fall right over immediately doesn't mean it wasn't a passing through shot. It went clean through them. Give it a little bit. Give it a little time. It may be 70 yards, it may be seven years, it may be 70 years but God's word does not return unto him void.

We preach the word of God to the lost whether they turn or not and Scripture declares in the beginning God's word was proclaimed whether people turned or not. Now bear with me, look at Noah's life. The Bible says that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. The whole world was against Noah. I can just hear all the heckling that was going on while Noah and his sons are building the ark. He must have taken courage with his boys to proclaim the righteousness of God before a wicked and unbelieving world. God's patience lasted for 120 years before he poured out his judgment. The ark would at this point become Noah's pulpit. I can hear old Noah saying, "They're gathering around again, boys. Hold the hammer, Shem. Dad's going to preach. Take the ladder, Japheth, I must warn them again for the end is near." I can see him standing on the edge of an almost completed boat crying out to a sinful world around, "Turn from your sin! Dead end! Dead end! The wrath of God is coming." They mocked and they laughed and they cheered and they wagged their heads at Noah much like they do today when the gospel is preached. I can almost hear his family say, "Dad, no one is responding. They all think you're nuts and out of your mind. Maybe you should change the message a little. Maybe you could lighten up a bit. You're not being relevant enough. Tell them you're here to minister to their felt needs. Tell them God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their lives." Noah was right and the whole world was wrong.

In her book "The Criminalization of Christianity," Janet Folger explains in a radio interview with a man whose name is Jeff Satinover, this man holds a degree from Princeton and doctorates from Yale, MIT and Harvard. She asked him about where we are in history and he explained that according to the Babylonian Talmud, the book of rabbinical interpretation, the Scriptures written 1000 years before Christ, there has been only one time in history that reflects where we are right now. According to these writings, at only one other time in history were men given to men in marriage and women given to women. You want to venture a guess as to when? No, it wasn't the time of Sodom and Gomorrah. Homosexuality was rampant there but according to the Talmud, not homosexual marriage. What about ancient Greece? Nope. Rome? Nope. Babylon? No again. The one time in history when homosexual marriage was practiced, Satinover reports, was during the days of Noah and according to Satinover, that's what the Babylonian Talmud says was the final straw that led to the flood in judgment. In Matthew 24:37 it says, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Today, many want to remove the foolishness of the gospel in order to make it more acceptable and more palatable to simple humanity and you may be able to do that and make a lot of friends this way but popular preaching, pretty preaching, never brings revival. John Wesley said, "When the gospel is preached, people either get mad or they get saved, either revival or a riot." The prophets were rejected. The apostles were rejected. Christ was rejected. And you will be rejected. Are you willing to pay the price?

Number 2: the gospel is the only answer to the dilemma of man. Yes sir, the gospel is the only answer. There is no other answer. Jesus Christ is the only way. In John 14:6, Christ said himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man," no man, "cometh unto the Father, but by me." It's not the law preached in the street that makes sinners angry, it's when you say Christ is the only way and this is the hour that we are in when everybody says, "Be tolerant of everything, be tolerant of all religions." You must say, "No, because my Bible says that Christ is the only way. There is no other way. There is no other gospel. There is only one gospel, one Bible, not three, not four. There's only one Bible with 66 books from Genesis to Revelation and no other."

It seems today much that is passed off as the gospel is nothing but an uncertain sound, noise, whimsical, sensual, new age nonsense. In 1 Corinthians 4:8, it says, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself for battle? For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lusts shall they heap up to themselves teachers having itching ears." During the Scottish wars of independence of the 14th century, Scotland was known for its war songs. When they would play a certain tune, the clans would gather together for battle. When they would play a certain tune, it would communicate to their people exactly what to do. The English could not understand how the Scots could gather so quickly when they were so spread out but they figured it out. It was the bagpipes and the certain song that was being played. It communicated to them exactly what to do. They were able to rally their army at a moment's notice and bring deliverance to their people from the invading English tyrants. But the English figured it out so they outlawed the pipes, they outlawed the tunes

thinking if they could silence their pipes, if they could quiet the noise, silence the people then they could conquer them. But the Scots kept on playing those outlawed tunes on those outlawed pipes until their country experienced their freedom in 1314 in the battle of Bannockburn.

It seems today that many want to silence us or if they can't silence you, they want you to change your message. Do not be silenced and do not change your message. Stay strong. Persevere to the end. What tune are we singing today? Are we using our pipes for worshiping the Almighty? Are we using our pipes to declare and sing the song of salvation to the lost? Are we using our pipes to rally the troops and prepare them for battle? Or are we guilty of trumpeting an uncertain sound. Whatever happened to the kind of preaching that upbraided cities and nations and turned the world upside down? We need the breath of Almighty God once again in our daily living, our homes, our marriages, our children. We cannot be satisfied with a Sunday only and outreach mentality but the whole compass of life indwelt with the Spirit of the living God, not this false fire of man, jumping jacks for Jesus mentality. We need to sing the song of the redeemed for the glory of God, winning the lost and rallying the troops to gather for battle. We need the fire that started in Jerusalem and spread throughout the nations with St. Mark in the deserts of the Egypt, to the rivers of Gaul with St. Martin, down through Ireland with Saint Patrick and into Scotland with St. Columba.

But we see that gospel of grace being quenched for almost 1,000 years under Roman Catholicism. But God's word always perseveres. It cannot and will not ever be silenced because in Scotland, the fire burst through up with a man by the name of Patrick Hamilton. He was Scotland's first martyr. He arrives upon the scene with a powerful witness heralding the Almighty gospel of grace and was soon, because his message was so dangerous, he had to be stopped. A message like that was so powerful that it could not go on. It must be stopped and they burned Patrick Hamilton at the stake. According to a well known saying was said that the reek of Hamilton infected all upon whom it did blow. His martyr death riveted forever in the hearts of his friends, the truth that he had taught in his life. Oh, and it infected another man alright. As Hamilton burned at the stake, he passed off the baton to another man by the name of George Wishart. This man comes on the scene of bright and fiery torch for the Lord Jesus Christ and he was more dangerous than Patrick Hamilton. He was so dangerous that he had to be surrounded with bodyguards and one particular bodyguard carried a two-handed broadsword and would walk back and forth behind him protecting him and protecting the message that was going forward. These are violent times that call for violent action. This is a dangerous message. It had to be protected and one night George Wishart goes to his most faithful companion and he says to him that God requires one sacrifice and one sacrifice would be sufficient. His bodyguard looks at him and says, "Oh, I will go with you." He says, "No for the Lord says one sacrifice would be sufficient." He knew that his time was over. He knew that it was over and he too went to the stake and was burned for his faith.

Historians go on to say that the mantle of Patrick Hamilton and the mantle of George Wishart fell upon one man and that one man was his most faithful companion with the two-edged sword, his bodyguard who was named John Knox. John Knox became one of

the most powerful reformers. They said that John Knox should have been killed because he backed the Queen up in her own castle and condemned her idols. John Knox told the truth and he called sin what it was and dealt with it. It was said that the Queen of England feared the prayers of John Knox more than she did all the armies of England. It said John Knox feared no man. He confronted sin. Whatever he was dealing with in his times as we do today. It's no different today. We preach the same gospel to the same sinful hearts. Humanity is still sinful, it still needs the gospel. It doesn't need better education. It doesn't need to be rehabilitated. They need to get saved and be made right with God. They need the Spirit of the living God to dwell in them and to change them and transform them for the glory of God.

It was said that John Knox was made a galley slave. He was captured in St. Andrews and put on a galley boat where he was a galley slave for many months and during these months, he had to learn French because everybody on the ship spoke French. God's providence because he learned how to speak French so when his time was over of being a galley slave, he went into Geneva and met up with a man named John Calvin who spoke French and was able to articulate to him and teach him these doctrines and he was able to take and learn because he had learned French and take them back to his country. God brought about reformation as John Knox taught up all of Scotland to the glory of Jesus Christ.

The third point in the fourfold purpose of the gospel is the church. We must remember that all evangelism and all proclamation comes flowing from the rivers of the local church. I bought 15,000 books from a friend because I sell books. This is how I keep my family supported. Paul made tents, I sell books. But when I bought all these books I realized one thing, they were Christian books and as I went through all these books 2 or 3 times, I realized that a majority of them were on evangelism. There's every kind of evangelism you could possibly think of: there was door-to-door, seven steps, newspaper evangelism, radio evangelism, TV evangelism. Every kind of evangelism you could think of but do you know what they all missed in all these books? The local church. It was all fragmented. He was all in pieces. It was showing evangelism as something that we do outside of the church. It's the guy that's mad at the church. It's something he does and then he comes back to the church and offends everybody. But in reality, evangelism flows from the force of the local church. It's the body of Christ. Wherever God has placed you, you flourish. This is God's idea of evangelism. Evangelism doesn't mean me going out and doing my thing. Evangelism is coming from the local church. I don't only represent Jesus Christ when I'm out there but I represent the body at large and I represent the body locally. Accountability and you're under discipline. It's all of us together or it's not at all. God knows no spiritual orphans. There are no mavericks in the Scripture. They all come flowing from the local church.

Point 4: the believer. This is us. 2 Timothy 4:5 says, "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." Here Paul was talking about a powerful transforming principle of bringing public proclamation into all areas of your life and by doing this it was the very principle that transformed us more into the image of his Son and without this, there could be no maturity, they could be no

change, there could be no more transformation or conforming to the image of God. That was a transforming principle that Paul understood and he said, "Through the work of an evangelist make full proof of thy ministry." 98% of the body of Christ do not share their faith nor do they live a life that represents Jesus Christ. The transforming principle in becoming more like Christ. Many of our problems that we face today in the church are directly linked with our disobedience to the Great Commission.

I want to finish with this last story. I want to tell you about a story of an open air preacher who did not flinch but obeyed God. How many of you have heard of the great open air preacher, are you ready? John Harper. Raise your hands. Raise those hands up. There are a couple. John Harper was born in a town in Scotland in 1872. He was born to Christian parents. He knew and loved God and went to church all of his life. Sometime after he turned 18, he began preaching on the streets of his town. One man who knew John Harper said, "He was a great open air preacher and could always command large and appreciative audiences." People speak with pride of the effect of his magnificent voice in the open air and tell how firmly he could deal with all kinds of hecklers. No one could floor him. His great and intelligent grasp of the Bible truths enabling him to successfully combat all of his assailants. And it was said of his preaching that his words came hissing from his heart. It was a very common sight to see souls being dealt with in the open air, some even kneeling down in the rain and making confession of sin.

Here is a man of great prayer. It was said that Harper knew what few men seem to know: that the true power with men must be preceded with communion with God. He would spend hours in persistent wrestling with God in prayer for the salvation of perishing souls. This is really the outstanding feature of his consecrated life. He seemed to be unable to live without souls being won to Christ. "Souls! Souls! Souls!" one author said, "colored his whole entire life."

After a few years of doing that, he was noticed by some Baptist ministers. He was asked to be the minister of a small church that only had 25 members. His church gradually grew larger when people began to realize what a good pastor he was. He had become such a well-known pastor that he was asked to preach at the Moody Church in Chicago for a few weeks. His original plan was to sail on the Lusitania but he later decided he wanted to wait a week and sail on a new ship called the Titanic. God's providence. Saved from drowning three times at 2, 26 and 32, he had almost drowned. At 2, he had fallen into a well and was later revived by his mother. At 26, Harper was swept out to sea by a reverse current and almost died. At 32 he faced death on a leaking ship in the Mediterranean. Perhaps it was God's way of testing and preparing his servant for his last open air mission on the Titanic. Harper's said, "The fear of death did not for one moment disturb me. I believe that sudden death would be sudden glory."

John Harper was married but later widowed and left him only with a six-year-old daughter named Nana. It was the night of April 14, 1912. The RMS Titanic sailed swiftly on the bitterly cold ocean waters heading unknowingly into the pages of history. Onboard this luxurious ocean liner were many rich and famous people. At the time of the ship's launch, it was the world's largest man-made movable object. "Not even God himself

could sink this ship," declared the shipbuilders with the pride of Victorian England. But at 11:40 p.m. on that fateful night, an iceberg scraped the ship's starboard side showering the decks with ice and ripping open six watertight compartments. The sea poured in. Onboard the ship that night was John Harper and his much beloved six-year-old daughter Nana. According to documentary reports, as soon as it was apparent that the ship was going to sink, John Harper immediately took his daughter to a lifeboat. He bent down and kissed his precious little girl. Looking into her eyes, he told her that she would see him again some day. The flares going off in the dark sky above reflected the tears on his face as he turned and headed towards the crowd of desperate humanity on the sinking ocean liner. As the rear of the huge ship began to lurch upwards, it was reported that Harper was seen making his way up the deck yelling, "Women and children and unsaved to the lifeboats!"

The boat then split in half as if it was broken over someone's knee and made a giant explosive sound. At this point, many people jumped off the decks and into the icy, dark waters below and John Harper was one of these people. "Striking the water was like 1,000 knives being driven into one body at once," says the second officer aboard the Titanic. That night 1,528 people went into the frigid waters. John Harper was seen swimming frantically to people in the water, leading them to Jesus before the hypothermia became fatal. "The sounds of people drowning are something that I cannot describe to you and neither can anyone else. It's the most dreadful sound and there is a terrible silence that follows it," says the testimony of a Titanic survivor. Mr. Harper swam to one young man who had climbed up on a piece of debris. Rev. Harper asked him between breaths, "Are you saved?" The young man replied that he was not. Harper then tried to lead him to Christ only to have the young man who was near shock reply, "No!" John Harper then took off his life jacket and threw it at the man and said, "Here then. You need this more than I do," and swam away to other people. A few minutes later, Harper swam back to this young man and succeeded in leading him to salvation. Of the 1,528 people that went into the water that night, six were rescued by lifeboat. Only six were rescued by lifeboats. One of them was this young man on the debris.

Four years later after the the Titanic went down, a young Scotsman rose in a meeting in Hamilton, Canada and said, "I am a survivor of the Titanic. When I was drifting alone on that awful night, the tide brought Mr. John Harper of Glasgow also on a piece of wreck near me. 'Man,' he said, 'Are you saved?' 'No,' I said, 'I am not.' He replied, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved.' The waves bore him away but strange to say brought him back a little bit later and he said, 'Are you saved now?' 'No,' I said, 'I can honestly say I cannot say that I am.' He said again, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved.' And shortly after he went down. And there," he said, "alone in the night with two miles of water underneath me, I believed. I am John Harper's last convert." Was it worth it? God had prepared him his entire life for that one moment, for that one individual.

It was said at the time that the ship had hit the iceberg, that Harper himself, he was not in first class, he wasn't in second class, he was in third class with the cattle. He was in some room laying on his face crying out for the souls of these people on the Titanic before they

even hit the iceberg. He was ready at a moment's notice. When tragedy struck he was ready. And he put others first before himself. John Harper understood what it meant to truly live as Christ and to die is gain.

I exhort you brothers and sisters, "stand therefore having your loins gird about you and having on the breastplate of righteousness and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Those who know their God shall be strong and do mighty exploits. If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." Job said, "Your words have upheld him that was falling and you have strengthened the feeble knees." In Hebrews it says, "Therefore strengthen the hands that are weak and that in knees that are feeble. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not. Behold your God will come with vengeance even God with the recompense, he will come and save you. For it is the power of God, it is the power of the gospel unto salvation."

Let's pray

Father, I thank you for this opportunity to speak to your people today and I pray, Father, in Christ's name that your power will go forth. I pray that many here today who have heard the message will be permanently ruined for thy glory. I pray, God, that you would purge us all, all of us, of our idols and you would use us for your glory and your glory alone. In Jesus' name. Amen.