

Megachurch Pastor: What the World Needs Now More Than Anything

An elder in our church told me something right before he died that I will never forget.

He had served the congregation faithfully for 60 years, and as his frail body prepared to step into eternity, he told me, "Dudley, one of my biggest regrets in life is that I cannot recall actually leading someone to Jesus Christ."

My heart grieved along with his. This man had knowledge of the Scriptures. He knew the Lord. He had likely sat in more than 3,000 church services in his lifetime, and he sang worship songs, tithed and served others. But one thing was missing: He never used what he knew to bring salvation to one person. Not one.

Friend, this does not have to be the regret of any Christian. Right now, there are many people looking for answers. They are looking for hope. They are afraid of what tomorrow will bring with this COVID-19 pandemic and the economic and social ramifications of the virus.

We have the hope of the world living inside us! We have the message of truth, hope, grace, love and salvation through Jesus Christ. He is the calm in any storm. He is our peace and our ever-present hope. And it's our duty as Christians to share Christ with others.

Compelled by Christ's Love

With every fiber of my being, I believe we serve a mighty God who invites us into a powerful partnership with Him, and that He will equip us to do His will here on earth. In my most

recent book, *Compelled: The Irresistible Call to Share Your Faith*, I wrote that the most pressing crisis at hand is that there are people who are lost without Jesus—prisoners to their sin, searching for answers, lonely, hurting, confused.

Some are suicidal, thinking there is no way out of the situation they're in currently. Many need spiritual, physical and relational healing. The message of the cross is lifesaving, and I'm convinced beyond any doubt that the best life anyone could possibly live is one that serves God and obeys His Word. This includes sharing His Word with others.

My passion is to see this current generation of believers become so compelled by the love of Christ that we cannot help but try to persuade our fellow man that He died for all. I want to see the modern-day church more closely resemble the early church, which was fearlessly and singularly focused on spreading the gospel—to the degree that the early disciples were accused of turning the world upside down by those who opposed them (Acts 17:6). I truly believe that same boldness can be mustered in the church today to transform the world for Jesus!

Paul explained unequivocally in Ephesians 2:1-3 that without Christ, we are dead in our transgressions and deserving of God's wrath. That's bad news—a tragic reality for everyone on this planet who has not put their faith in Jesus Christ. Now let me show you what Paul wrote in the very next few verses, because it is unfathomably good news:

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and He raised us up and seated us together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4-7).

Paul also explained this same idea more simply as this: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). We have been saved by the excessive love, mercy and grace of God.

And since it exceeds us, we should not keep it to ourselves. The *greatest* assignment we have ever been given by Almighty God is to grab ahold of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in front of us—which is sharing the gospel with others before they enter into eternity.

Our God wants everyone to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). He “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all. This was the testimony given at the proper time” (1 Tim. 2:4-6).

Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity

Through His extravagant grace, your heavenly Father has made a way for everyone who puts their faith and trust in Jesus Christ to have everlasting life. Yet many people have never heard a clear and simple explanation of how forgiveness and redemption take place through faith in Christ alone. It’s our obligation to tell them. Paul left no room for debate when he wrote:

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring good news of good things!’” (Rom. 10:14-15).

When we truly examine what the Bible says about evangelism, I believe we will find that becoming a messenger who brings the Good News is a compelling call. In fact, I think we will discover that this calling is so wonderful, so fulfilling,

that it is quite irresistible. It's almost as though we have no choice but to preach the gospel.

"Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for the requirement is laid upon me. Yes, woe unto me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16).

You have a once-in-lifetime opportunity to pick up the gospel and take it to desperate souls. Yes, we are being asked to be socially distant right now to stop the spread of the coronavirus, but we don't have to be spiritually or relationally distant. Pick up the phone and call a loved one. Tell them about Jesus. Write a letter. Mail someone a Bible or your favorite devotional book. Post something biblical, loving and encouraging on social media that will point people to Jesus.

No one is out of God's reach, and He uses Christ followers like you to carry His message of truth.

What an incredible honor! Starting today, may you look for creative ways to share your faith, asking the Lord for the courage and the opportunity to share the Good News with those who need it the most. {eoa}

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