

Voice of Healing Evangelist J. Gordon Lindsay's Words Still Ring True Today

Heaven or hell ... heaven or hell ... heaven or hell ... One hundred years from now where will we all be? If it's heaven, what will be your standing? What will be your eternal reward? What will be your eternal position with Jesus?

And what of your family, friends and neighbors? And what of all the lost people you know? Where will they be? God wants to fill your belly with inspiration for the fulfillment of the great commission and a reaping of the precious fruit of the earth that remains.

"For we cannot help but declare what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

The true work of evangelism is one of the most neglected in the church, and yet it is one of the most important. I'm not even sure that many of us understand this ministry. Contrary to popular thought and opinion, evangelism is not just the announcement of the Good News of the gospel, but it is also a call to warn people of the judgment to come as the apostle Paul did before Felix the governor.

"After several days, when Felix arrived with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess, he sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ. As he lectured about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix was afraid and answered, 'For now, leave! When time permits, I will send for you'" (Acts 24:24-25).

Paul did not hold back. He warned the governor of the eternal consequences of living in sin. The above verses tell us that these themes of righteousness, self-control and of the

judgment to come that Paul expounded on were all part of the faith in Christ Jesus, and of the gospel he preached. I'm not so sure we understand that this is all a part of the gospel. People must know they are sick before they can appreciate and receive the cure. Sin is sickness, and Christ is the cure. Paul didn't just preach the cure—he preached the sickness too.

Notice also how Paul “argued” and spoke passionately—something we need much more of today. Sometimes we can be such a passionless people, but Paul was a man of overwhelming passion.

“While Paul waited for them in Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. Therefore he disputed in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to there” (Acts 17:16-17).

“When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul was pressed by the Spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ” (Acts 18:5).

As messengers of God we stand between the living and the dead. A dying preacher once said, “I've taken a good look into eternity, and if I could come back, how different I would preach.”

If we're not careful, our preaching can become heady, but heart-less—informative but passionless. It can lack revelation of the other world and the life to come. Desperate times require desperate preaching. The urgency of the hour requires an urgent message. When a house is on fire and its inhabitants are perishing, an urgent response is demanded. And so, will we not help those whose souls are on the edge of the fire of hell?

Paul's spirit was “grieved and roused to anger; he reasoned, argued, testified and was completely engrossed with preaching.” This beloved man was possessed with another

spirit. God gripped him. The words he penned throughout his epistles are full of strong emotions and consuming passions that still vibrate in the hearts of those who are also consumed with eternity.

The words that Paul spoke to Felix alarmed and terrified him. Somehow we've come to believe that words which soothe and comfort are the only words we need to be speaking. How grave a mistake that is! How many have perished because there was no voice of inspiration to arouse them from their slumber? We must speak to the lost as if it were our last opportunity, with tenderness, love and passion dripping from our lips, and weeping, if possible, through every argument. We must learn the art and skill of compelling sinners to Christ.

It's so easy for the local church and its ministers to become complacent and to take on a form of academia and ecclesiasticism that kills the spirit of revival and the zeal for evangelism. There has been a great deal of secularization in so many of our congregations across America and the world.

Listen to the words of Gordon Lindsay:

"The tendency of the paid clergy in general has been to ecclesiasticism, the development of a form of religion and the freezing of it into a static condition. An office in the church can be made into a professional thing, a means of making a living. A man caught in the toils of its vicious cycle is to be pitied. God calls every minister to be a guardian of the souls of men."

We need to take the gospel out of the secularization state and out of the academic sphere and apply it to the individual in terms of life and death and heaven and hell. Let's put the gospel into the personal realm of human experience. The ministry of evangelism reminds men that beyond this world there is an after-life, and all of humanity is but one heart-

beat away from eternity; to either enter heaven, the abode of the righteous, or hell, the regions of the damned ... forever!

All the forces of evil are arrayed against the gospel penetrating the minds and hearts of sinners. The devil's strategy has always been to institutionalize the Church and to turn it into a powerless religious system where it has little consciousness of eternity and no zeal for the conversion of lost souls. If the devil can turn the Church into a business that deals mainly with the dollar in mind, or into a charitable organization that is satisfied with humanitarian projects only, or into a social club or an entertainment center, he has succeeded, and he will rear his proud head back with glee for doing so.

The church has been ordained by God to be above all else, a soul-saving organism.

In the light of eternity what are the things in this life that really matter? In comparison to the eternal destiny of the human race, how insignificant are so many of life's trivialities! There is nothing we can take with us to heaven except people.

Jesus' final message to His disciples still rings true, and all the more as we see the day of His return approaching: "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved and he that believes not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

May the damned be less.

And may the Lord saturate us with an undying zeal for the souls of men.

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