

## Passion For Souls

Jesus looked over the city of Jerusalem with compassion (Matthew 23:37), and he says, "...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Seeking and saving the lost is the passion of Jesus for his people to be saved. Jesus' passion for the lost led him to the cross. The first great passion of the Lord was, and is for the souls of men. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). In his intercessory prayer, recorded in John 17, he prays not only for those who were with him, but for all those who, through their word, should believe on his name, that they might be sanctified as he was sanctified, in order that the world might know that the Father had sent him into the world.

The passion for seeking and saving the lost is seen in Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). He traveled across countries and oceans to take the message of the Savior to lost souls. He told the elders of Ephesus; "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). It is seen in the passion of Moses, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. (Exodus 32:32).

Before evangelism is a program, it is a passion – a passion of the heart which issues in a saving action. The church must have a burning passion for lost souls. Seeking and saving the lost without passion is a moral impossibility. We do not automatically have a concern for evangelism. We do not drift into it, for it is a costly business. It cost God His Son. It cost Jesus gaping wounds, bloody sweat, mocking laughter, and his life.

When we discuss seeking and saving the lost, the question is, how much do we really love Christ? How much will we give up for him? Jesus said, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:33). "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34). A loving passion for Christ inevitably eventuates in a living passion for seeking and saving the lost.

## I Know How To Seek

It is not within man to save, Christ alone can save; but it is our job to seek! From the shepherd that, "...seeketh that which is gone astray," (Matthew 18:12), to the Father that "...seeketh such to worship him," (Jn. 4:23), all have the responsibility to SEEK. Whether we are seeking for ourselves, or seeking for others, the Bible has a great deal to say about "seeking." Especially in the New Testament, for the message has gone far and wide that salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10). That message emphasizes that everyone has sinned (Romans 3:23); everyone is in need of a Savior; and God has provided that Savior in Jesus Christ. All have a responsibility to obey that Savior and accept his invitation to come to him (Matthew 11:28-30). And we will not do that unless we seek him!

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). This clearly obligates every Christian to evangelize. If we are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, will we not be doing the very thing that our Lord did while he was on earth? We read in Scripture, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Jesus laid down the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) for every Christian to seek those who are lost and bring them to the Lord. That was not a command for the few, but for every Christian. We are Jesus' disciples, if we continue in his word (John 8:31). It is a seeking to help every man be presented as perfect in Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:28).

In Luke 6:46, Jesus said to certain Jews, who wanted to listen to some of the things he was saying, yet who did not really want to follow him, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" The clear principle here is that if we claim Jesus as our lord, and we claim to do his will, then we must realize that seeking the lost is part of God's will. If we fail to seek, then we have not carried out God's will for our lives. Seeking and saving the lost is a command of God, and we cannot be pleasing to God if we are not willing to obey. Whether we seek across the ocean, or in our own neighborhood, we show our love for God and lost souls when we seek.

## I Know How To Save

We know what we mean here – we know the avenue God has placed in His word that saves souls, and that is the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus Saves! "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). God would have all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), and has given His Son to save the lost. Paul wrote, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). When man was at his worst, while we were yet sinners, God sent His Son to die for us. We know how to save when we help people get into Christ (1 Timothy 2:10; Galatians 3:27), and the blood of Jesus washes away their sins (Ephesians 2:13; Acts 22:16).

### The Lost

There are two and only two classes of people when it comes to salvation: the saved and the lost. Those "in Christ" are saved and have life (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 5:20), and those outside of Christ are lost and have no life (1 John 5:11).

Paul wrote, "The wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23). Spiritual death! Separation from God (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Isaiah 59:1-2). Ephesians 2:1 reads, "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin." That is an absolute statement – SIN KILLS! "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Paul wrote, "Christ died for all, for all have sinned" (2 Corinthians 5:14). If everybody sinned, and sin separates from God, since everybody sinned – everybody is separated – SIN CONDEMNS! If there is one person out there in the world who has never come to Jesus for salvation, even if they have never had the chance to hear the sweet message of a Savior, they're still in sin! That person is afflicted with a death disease. They've got a death problem and they are going to terminate eternally from God – IF we don't get to them with the Great Physician! God is not going to pass condemnation on them because they've never had a chance to hear – they are already condemned because they are in sin! And if they're not obeying Christ – they are lost!

## **I Know How – Methods**

There are many methods for seeking and saving the lost. The seeking is easy – there are millions of souls who have not obeyed the Lord. If they have not obeyed the Lord they have not come to Christ to be saved. The saving is teaching people the way of the Lord that they might come to Jesus and be saved.

There are several good methods: Jule Miller DVD's, also known as The Visualized Bible Study Series (can be purchased through the Gospel Advocate Book Store); Searching for Truth DVD and booklet (distributed by wvbs.org). These are easy in that they teach themselves; sound in that they come from God's Word. The Fisher's of Men Course is a great tool for learning how to teach others; as well as The Safety Chain study put out by the Northwest Church of Christ in Lawton, OK. A representative will come to your congregation and teach how to use the lessons to bring people to the gospel. Ask your preacher or other members who have a love for teaching the lost. They surely have a favorite method in getting people to open their Bibles and learn the way of salvation. And, of course, the best way, may simply be to study your Bible, and then invite someone to study with you. If you know what you did to be saved, following the gospel of Jesus Christ, you can tell others what the Bible says they need to do, as well.

## **I Know How – Motivation**

The sacrificial love of God and Christ ought to motivate us to say something about Jesus to others. How can we look at the love of Christ, as it was manifested on the cross, and not feel compelled to tell others of that love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). If it is a fact that Jesus left heaven and came to earth to die for the world, and he did, and if God has chosen us as Christians to seek and save the lost, and he has, how can we say, "I am thankful for the love of God and Christ," but never say anything about Jesus to those who are lost? When we understand the fullness of the manner in which God has expressed His love to mankind, then we will want to tell others about the Savior.

If you were lost in sin, would you want someone to tell you? If you were going to spend eternity in the fires

of the horrible place known as Hell, would you want others, regardless of whether you like it or not, to tell you about salvation? Absolutely! The greatest command is to "love the Lord," and the second is to "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:28-31). Can we really say that we love our neighbors if we allow them to live in sin and spend eternity in hell, while we remain silent on the subject of their soul's salvation?

## **Conclusion**

Do you know how to seek and save the lost? What motivates you? Is it the love of God? Does the love for lost souls motivate you? Does the love for your own soul motivate you to seek? We must take seriously our task of seeking and saving the lost! If we will, we will also be more faithful to God ourselves, as it will challenge us to study; to see the meaning of life and the brevity of the same; to see the importance of what Christ came to this earth to accomplish – to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

I read this statement from a bulletin: "Souls throughout the world are in the balance." Do you believe that? If so, you won't have any trouble seeking the lost. Millions and billions of souls are lost in the world, across the oceans, and across the streets in our communities. The church definitely has a responsibility! You and I have a responsibility as individuals! And the last question would be - Will you make a difference?

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the  
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"I Know"

To hear or view the complete lesson go to  
[www.39thStreetChurchOfChrist.org](http://www.39thStreetChurchOfChrist.org)  
or contact the

39th Street Church of Christ  
15331 East 39th Street  
Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA

# **I Know...**

## **To Seek And Save The Lost**

by  
Michael Wyatt

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