

The Seriousness of Soul Saving

In **Romans 5:8** the Bible says, ***“But God demonstrated His own love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*** We have such hope and assurance! Yet despite knowing the gift of salvation and wanting to share it. Most Christian keep it to themselves.

God has removed our sins, as **Psalms 103:12** says ***“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”***

Christ has made filthy sin soiled souls, as **Isaiah 1:18** says, ***“though our sins are as scarlet, ***they shall be as white as snow.”***

We have heaven, we have a relationship with God, we have forgiveness of our iniquities, we are as snow before Him. We are saved, we are free, yet most of God’s people are quiet.

The average Christian has heard 4,000 sermons, sung 20,000 songs, participated in 8,000 public prayers....and converted **zero sinners**.

Most preachers and elders don’t do active community evangelism work in their local area.

Leaders don’t lead. They preach sermons and pray for such work, but never do anything, except on an annual gospel meeting, where they might get a few people for an hour to pass out flyers, a few days before the event.

How many people in the Lord’s church do you know who actively do evangelism? Sad truth most don’t. Many preachers and saints who have been in the church for 50 years don’t have any experience in outreach.

The Lord while sharing the truth to the towns, said to His disciples...in **Luke 10:22** ***“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”***

This should be our prayer. The kingdom is falling short of this. Where there should be many seeking the lost, there are only a few.

If we had received a 10,000-dollar prize, if we had gotten engaged, if we had a new baby, would we not share such exciting and wonderful news?

Yet many of us, keep the wonderful news of our salvation to ourselves. We are saved from Hell and remain silent. If we knew of a recently discovered cure for cancer, would we not tell our friends who suffer from it? Yet we know of the cure for sin and we remain silent.

The love we have for Christ and for others should compel us to share Him. Knowing God is bringing judgement.... our fear of Hell should move us to act.

2 Cor 5:11 "Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. 14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died."

Many Christians in the churches I have visited, pray for growth and opportunity's, yet never act. They teach the themes during Bible class, but never do what they admonish others to do.

We say God commands us to go into the world to reach others, as ***Matthew 28:18*** teaches, ***"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."***

Yet unlike the sin of adultery, forsaking the assembly, etc. This command neglected is not taboo.

Those 19-year-old "elders" in the Mormon church do 7 hrs. a day of door knocking or interactive Bible studies. Yet if church members spend 1 hr. to pass out flyers for an annual gospel meeting, (once a year) they think they are zealous for His house and are actively trying to help the community. It's a taboo in the Mormon and Jehovah witness culture, to NOT actively do evangelism. Why? I asked them...they said they do this, because the Bible commands it.

In this they follow the New Testament pattern better than most of us in the Lord's church.

If the Bible commands it, why aren't God's people actively doing outreach? Why is apathy in trying to save people from Hell, condoned, yet, adultery and forsaking His church condemned? Is not a sin, a sin?

Not doing evangelism needs to become a taboo. Evangelism needs to be encouraged in the churches. And apathy condemned in the sermons, error of indifference, discouraged.

Jesus said in **Matthew 4:19** *“come follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”* If we are to follow Him as disciples, we need to seek to reach the lost. We need to follow the example of Christ, He too, tried to reach out to others.

The Jehovah Witness and Mormon groups are two of the fastest growing groups in the US. Yet we are fading to near extinction. Why do you think that is. They are practicing what the Bible teaches. We are not.

And those who should be encouraging such work, undermine it. Door knocking is poo pooped, in the Lord’s church. People who have little experience in outreach, say it does not work. They may have done it for an hour or two and come to that conclusion.

It’s the equivalent of an overweight person going to the gym for an hour or two and giving up and saying the gym does not work. If a person thinks they are going to get a 6 pack and be cut and ripped, after a few workouts, they are not living in reality. So, it is with evangelism, it takes work, investment and time. But it does work.

The Jehovah Witness do door knocking with success. The Mormons as well. This is their main format for outreach. Yet to many people in the Lord’s church use excuses, like “it does not work” to try to validate their passionless lifestyle of indifference to the lost. Fact is door knocking does work. See my article on this method and its data. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/joseph-sullivan/door-knocking-cracking-the-myth/10153949111976139/>

If you saw a car on fire and a person stuck in it, would you not try to save them? If you saw a young person drowning, in the ocean would you not try to get help or get them? Yet we see people every day, who are walking to a eternal pit of fire and pain, and we do nothing.

How can we say we love or neighbor, enemy, etc as the Bible commands, if we are silent, when people we know, need our help and we say nothing? We need to give them warning. Ezekiel was charged with stewardship.

God wanted him to reach out to those in need of truth. He uses the analogy of a watchman keeping vigil over a city. God is saying, if my people are in danger warn them. If a army comes to a city or if danger comes, as the watchman gives

warning, when you, (Ezekiel) see spiritual danger come, you need to also give warning to them.

As the watchman will be accountable for not giving warning, so will you be. This can be applied to us. If we see someone we can help, if we have an opportunity to warn someone of oncoming danger, (Hell). And we do nothing, we will be held to account.

Ezekiel 33:1” The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, 4 then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head.

5 Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone’s life, that person’s life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood.’

7 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 8 When I say to the wicked, ‘You wicked person, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 9 But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.”

Even though, I am sure you would save a person from the fires of a burning car, and be a good Samaritan, most folks don’t care enough to save people from eternal harm. We are supposed to not just love people enough to help them in this life, but to also, snatch people from the spiritual flames, of Hell, as **Jude 23** commands.

In the **1920's-1950's**, the Lord's people were known as walking Bibles. These people ***"were as bold as lions."*** **Prov 28:1**. They were zealous for outreach. And we were one of the largest religious bodies in the US. Now people scratch their heads, when they hear about us. They have no idea who we are! This is tragic. We are shrinking fast. See stats. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/joseph-sullivan/the-numbers-the-decline-of-the-church-in-america/10153579829621139/>

General church of Christ estimates in the mentioned dates - "By **1926** this number had grown to over **435,000**, with estimates of **600,000** in **1941**. This growth was largely the result of evangelism by traveling preachers and ordinary members who were convinced Churches of Christ had restored New Testament Christianity."

See link <https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/protestant-denominations/churches-christ>

The decline....

- In online stats, "Churches of Christ that are non-institutional were estimated in 2009 to comprise 113,656 members across 1,898 congregations." See link [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_churches_of_Christ_\(non-institutional\)#Present_day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_churches_of_Christ_(non-institutional)#Present_day)

And that stat was many years ago. Think where we are now. (For more info on the difference between institutional/non-institutional church of Christ churches see my Bible article on the subject. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/joseph-sullivan/institutionalism-the-red-line-of-bible-authority/10154396962271139/>)

- Even in lumping us with other folks, as liberal "churches of Christ." The decline from the mentioned 1920's to 1940's, is still staggering.

See quote: "In the newly released directory, 21st Century Christian identifies **12,629** a cappella Churches of Christ with 1,578,281 (members) adherents nationwide. Those figures represent **526 fewer churches and 78,436 fewer people in the pews than just six years ago.**" - See more at:

<http://www.christianchronicle.org/article/church-in-america-marked-by-decline#sthash.Db9M4pPt.dpuf>

- That is from the general **2-million-member number, from all church of Christ groups**, largely from the liberal body, but would also include conservative as well. Does not take much math to know **2 million/2,000,000 members subtracted from a loss of 78,436 members is 1,921,564 members.... in JUST 6 years! At this rate, where will we be in another 10 or 20 years??**
- **Having 12,629 a cappella churches is a staggering number. Having 2 million members is also disconcerting. Take in consideration that these numbers are global, not national.**

It's so sad. People lament there are no young people in their church or families in their congregation. They are concerned that their assembly is so small. They mourn that their church is dying out. Yet these are the same people who do NOTHING ABOUT IT. To many congregations have only old people. When these people are gone, the church will be no more.

This is the main reason, we see through the years, church after church, winking out.... like stars in the night. We are losing more churches than we are creating them, (through evangelism).

If someone heard they had cancer, would they just sit around and complain about the problem or would they get busy to work on the problem, with doing research, to find the best doctors, and DO the most successful treatments? If we are aware of a problem in our local church, why are we not actively trying to fix it?

Below: Evangelism stats and accumulated researched data from the book: Hearts of Fire by Don Humphrey. Note: a lot of my sources in this article has come from this book.

Note: many of the stats are combining the general church of Christ, both liberal/conservative.

- **The church in Nashville losses 100 members more a year than they gain.**
- **A 400-member congregation were reminded by their preacher that they had baptized no one in 18 months.**
- **One large prestigious church only baptized 4 people during a previous year.**
Note: despite the negatives on this statement. Most years, many churches baptize no one, except family members from those in the congregation, (if that).

Are these churches in Texas and Tennessee any different from churches in other states, like California, Florida, Ohio, etc? No. This is a trend. A trend that has churches dying out across the US.

When it comes to congregations...

- **89 percent of churches have less than 200 people.**
- **73 percent of churches have less than 100 people.**
- **50 percent of churches of 50 people or fewer.**

Many churches have a “come to us” mentality. They think that if we have a building and we pray for the lost to be saved, a steady stream is going to start coming in each week. The gospel says in the **Matthew 28:19** for us to “**go**” and “**preach**” the gospel. Not sit and wait for things to happen. A mentality of sitting has never got us anything we wanted.

If you wanted to ask a girl out, did you sit around hoping and praying she would start dating you, or did you act? Prayer works with active faith. As **James** says, in chapter **2:19-20**, “**faith without works is dead or useless.**” If you pray for a opportunity to get an education, (if you are a young person), or for a job if you’re in the work force, would you not do the things necessary to get the result, like go to college, study, take tests? Or make a job resume, do interviews? So, it is with evangelism, we must pray, give it to God and then get to work and find ways to reach the lost.

The church is a museum! Is a complaint from many. To many churches are emotionless, stagnate, filled with dry husks. WE must change our attitudes to recognize the need to reach others and find our passion again.

We are commanded to be passion-filled people. Not passionless!

Romans 12:11 “**Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.**”

What would you think of a cafeteria where the staff members showed up for work at the proper time each morning, the management lets them in and then promptly locks the doors, and the staff spends all day making food for each other? Is that the role of a food business?

Most churches are no longer “soul saving” institutions. They are focused on just having worship for the members but in not sharing their spiritual food, (teachings of truth) with the lost local community. Churches are just involved with planning their services and the things involved with the building and worship, yet they ignore the bigger picture. That church is a place to bring people to Christ. Not just feed the saved.

To many of God’s people have a maintenance mentality, instead of a outreach attitude. Most churches don’t try to format a active outreach campaign. Most preachers and elders don’t lead the charge or actively do outreach. Churches with no evangelic vision are not going to grow in numbers through saving souls. Simple as that. Preachers, elders, Christians need to step up and lead others in such important spiritual pursuits.

Most churches would rather spend their money on updating the church windows or renovating the carpet or the furniture then get members and funds together to do monthly outreach in things like door knocking, flea market/campus work.

While doing these renovations may make the church building more modern and pretty, due to such financial overhauls, the membership will end up dying out, due to mis prioritizing the most important issues first. To many are building pretty tombs, for a dying church.

Most churches want to pay for a preacher to feed them with spiritual food (truth) in services and ignore the starving world without. This needs to change, when Christians do nothing, the only result will be nothing! If we want change, we must step up.

The Bible says we need to be wise and we need to try to save others.

Daniel 12:2 “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”

Note: I have notes/stats in this article from the book: **Hearts of Fire by Don Humphrey. Though Don has many great points. I do not endorse everything in the book.**

Evangelism links:

For evangelism idea's on materials like the Big Picture, Muscle and Shovel, etc. As well as methods like door knocking, campus work, etc. see my evangelism link here www.churchofchristevangelism.com

This link will have evangelism training sermons, motivational documents, on outreach, study tools, as well as a wide range of other useful resources.

For learning about street and campus evangelism work see my site's evangelism blog www.churchofchriststreetcampusevangelism.com

This site has free evangelism teaching tools to teach salvation and to ground. As well as an eBook tutorial on Street and Campus evangelism. Titled: "Evangelism 101." The site also has a (grounding) Bible study eBook titled: "Grounding Principles on Salvation, the Church/Bible Authority and Bible Study."

A good evangelism resource book: Bobby Bates "Fishing for Men. The Art of personal Evangelism." <https://www.amazon.com/Fishing-Men-Bobby-Bates/dp/B00L6JCSSG>

From Joseph Sullivan