

Gospel Preaching Commanded

By A.W. Pink

There are those who misrepresent the doctrine of election in this way: Here I am sitting down at my table tonight with my family to tea. It is a cold winter's night, and outside on the street are some hungry starving tramps and children, and they come and knock at my door and they say, "We are so hungry, Sir, Oh, we are so hungry and cold, and we are starving: won't you give us something to eat?" "Give you something to eat? No, you do not belong here, get off with you." Now people say that is what election means, that God has spread the gospel feast and some poor sinners conscious of their deep need come to the Lord and say, "Have mercy upon me," and the Lord says, "No, you are not among My elect." Now, my friends, that is not the teaching of this Book, nor anything like that. That is absolutely a false representation of God's truth. I do not believe anything like that, my friends, and I would not insult you by asking you to come here night by night and listen to anything like that.

1. Compel Them To Come In

Now, then, here is the truth. God has spread the feast, but the fact is that nobody is hungry, and nobody wants to come to the feast, and everybody makes an excuse to keep away from the feast, and when they are bidden to come they say, "No, we do not want to," or "We are not ready yet." Now God knew that from the beginning, and if God had done nothing more than spread the feast, every seat at His table would have been vacant for all eternity! I have no hesitation in saying, there is not one man or woman in this church tonight but who made excuses time after time before you first came to Christ. You are just like the rest. You made excuses, so did I, and if God had done nothing more than just spread the feast, every chair would have been vacant; therefore, what do you read in that parable in Luke 14? Because the feast was not furnished with guests, God sent forth His "servants." Oh, put your glasses on. It does not say "servants," it says God sent forth His "servant" and told Him to "compel" them to come in that His feast might be furnished with guests. And there is not a man or a woman in this church tonight or in any other church that would ever sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb unless you had been compelled to come in, and compelled by God.

Well, you say, what do you mean by 'compelled?' I mean this, that God had to overcome the resistance of your WILL, God had to overcome the reluctance of your heart, God had to overcome your loving of pleasure more than loving of God, your love of the things of this world more than Christ. I mean that God had to put forth His power and draw you; and if any of you know anything of the Greek or have a Strong's Concordance, look up that Greek verb for "draw" in John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." It means "use violence." It means to drag by force. There is not a Greek scholar on earth that can challenge that statement—I mean, and back it up with proof. It is the same Greek word that is used in John 21 when they drew the net to the land full of fishes. They had to pull with all their might, for it was full of fishes. They had to DRAG it. Yes, my friend, and that is how you were brought to Christ. You may not have been conscious of it, you may not have known inside yourself what was taking place, but every last one of us was a rebel against God, fighting against Christ, resisting His Holy Spirit, and God had to put forth almighty power and overcome that resistance and bring us to our knees; and if any of you object to that strong language, then I am here to tell you, you do not believe in the teaching of this Book on the absolute depravity of man.

Man is lost, and man is dead in trespasses and sin by nature. Listen, it is not simply that man is sick and needs a little medicine; it is not simply that man is ignorant and needs a little teaching; it is not simply that man is weak and needs a little hope: man is dead, dead in trespasses and sin, and only almighty power from heaven can ever resurrect him and bring him from death unto life. That is the gospel I believe in, and I do not preach the gospel because I believe the sinner has power in himself to respond to it. Well, you say, then what is the use of preaching the gospel if men are dead? What is the use of preaching it? I will tell you. Listen! Here was a man with a withered hand, paralyzed, and Christ says, "Stretch forth thine hand." It was the one thing that he could not do! Christ told him to do a thing that was impossible in himself. Well then, you say, why did Christ tell him to stretch forth his hand? Because divine power went with the very word that commanded him to do it! divine power enabled him to. The man could not do it of himself. If you think that he could, you are ready for the lunatic asylum, I do not care who you are. Any man or woman here who thinks that that man was able to stretch forth his paralyzed arm by an effort of his own will is ready for the lunatic asylum! How can paralysis move?

Well, I will give you something stronger than that. You need something strong today, you need something more than skim-milk; you need strong meat if ever you are going to be built up and grow and become strong in the Lord and the power of His might. Here is a man who is dead and buried, and his body has already begun to corrupt so that it stank. There he was in the grave, and Someone came to that graveside and said, "Lazarus, come forth." And if that someone had been anyone less than God Himself, manifest in flesh, he might have stood there till now calling, "Come forth." What on earth was the use of telling a dead man to come forth? None at all, unless the One Who spoke that word had the power to make that word good.

Now then my friends, I preach the gospel to sinners, not because I believe the sinner has any power at all in himself to respond to it: I do not believe that any sinner has any capacity in himself whatever. But Christ said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," and by God's grace I go forth preaching this Word because it is a word of power, a word of spirit, a word of life. The power is not in the sinner, it is in the Word when God the Holy Spirit is pleased to use it. And, my friends, I say it in all reverence; if God told me in this Book to go out and preach to the trees, I would go! Yes sir. God once told one of His servants to go and preach to bones and he went. I wonder if you would have gone! Yes, that has a local application as well as a future interpretation prophetically.

2. Preach The Gospel To Every Creature

Now the question arises again, why are we to preach the gospel to every creature, if God has only elected a certain number to be saved? The reason is, because God commands us to do so. Well, but, you say, it does not seem reasonable to me. That has nothing to do with it; your business is to obey God and not to argue with Him. God commands us to preach the gospel to every creature, and it means what it says—every creature—and it is a solemn thing. Every Christian in this room tonight has yet to answer to Christ why he has not done everything in his power to send that gospel to every creature! Yes, I believe in missions—probably stronger than most of you do, and if I preached to you on missions, perhaps I would hit you harder than you have been hit yet. The great majority of God's people who profess to believe in missions are just playing at them. I make so bold as to say of our evangelical denominations today that we are just playing at missions and that is all. Why my friends, there is almost half of the human race—think of it!—in this 20th century—travel so easy and cheap, Bibles printed in almost every language under heaven, —and as we sit here tonight, there is almost half of the human race that never yet heard of Christ, and we have to answer to Christ for that yet! You have and I have. Oh, yes, I believe in man's responsibility. I do not believe in man's "freedom," but I do in man's responsibility, and I believe in the Christian's responsibility in a double way; and everyone of us here tonight has yet to face Christ and look into those eyes as a flame of fire, and He is going to say to us, I entrusted to you My gospel. It was committed as a "trust" to you (See I Thess. 2:4). It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

Oh, my friends, we are playing at things. We have not begun to take religion seriously, any of us. We profess to believe in the coming of Christ, and we profess to believe that the one reason why Christ has not come back yet is because His Church, His Body, is not yet complete. We believe that when His Body is complete He will come back. And my friends, His "body" never, never, will be complete until the last of His elect people will be called out, and His elect people are called out under the preaching of the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit; and if you are really anxious for Christ to come back soon, then you had better be more wide awake to your responsibility in connection with taking or sending the gospel to the heathen!

Christ's word, and it is Christ's Word to us, is "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." He does not say "Send ye." He says "Go ye," and you have to answer to Christ yet because you have not gone! Well, you say, do you mean by that that every one of us here tonight ought to go out to the mission field? I have not said that. I am not any man's judge. Many of you here tonight have a good reason which will satisfy Christ why you have not gone. He gave you work to do here. He put you in a position here. He has given you responsibilities to discharge here, but every Christian who is free to go, and does not go, has to answer to Christ for it yet.

"Go ye into all the world." Well then, you say, Where am I to go? Oh, that is very easy. You say, easy? Yes, I mean it: it is very easy. There is nothing easier in the world than to know where you ought to begin missionary work. You have it in the first chapter of Acts and the eighth verse: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem [that is the city in which they were] and in all Judea [that is the State in which their city was], and in Samaria [that is the adjoining State], and unto the uttermost part of the earth." If you want to begin missionary work, you have to begin it in your home-

town; and my friends, if you are not interested in the salvation of the Chinese in Sydney, then you are not really interested in the salvation of the Chinese in China, and you are only fooling yourselves if you think you are! Oh, I am calling a spade a spade tonight. If you are anxious about the souls of the Chinese in China, then you will be equally anxious about the souls of the Chinese here in Sydney; and I wonder how many in this building tonight have ever made any serious effort to reach the Chinese in Sydney with the gospel! I wonder? I wonder how many here tonight have been round to the Bible House in Sydney and have said to the Manager there, "Do you have any New Testaments in the Chinese language, or do you have any Gospels of John in the Chinese language? How much are they per hundred? or per dozen?" And I wonder how many of you have bought a thousand or a hundred, and then have gone round to the houses in the Chinese quarter and have said, "My friend, this is a little gift that will do your soul good if you will read it."

Ah, my friends, we are playing at missions, it is just a farce, that is all! "Go ye" is the first command. Go where? Those around me first. Go what with? The Gospel! Well, you say, "Why should I go?" Because God has commanded you to! Well, you say, "What is the use of doing it if He has just elected certain ones?" Because that gospel is the means that God uses to call out His own elect, that is why! You do not know, and I do not know, and nobody here on earth knows, who are God's elect and who are not. They are scattered over the world, and therefore we are to preach the gospel to every creature, that it may reach the ones that God has marked out among those creatures.

(From a sermon preached in Sydney during his Australian ministry in the 1920s)