



CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

What Should Motivate us to go to War in Evangelism?

As a young person with a fairly clear “gift” of evangelism, I used to think my number one task was to win souls and to teach others how to do the same. But, as I discussed in chapters one and two, this pressure to see conversions opens the door to many negative behaviours, including putting pressure on non-Christians to “make a decision,” and watering down the gospel message. The desire to avoid putting such pressure on people has caused some Christians to shy away from entering the battle for souls altogether.

A major key to being liberated in evangelism...

Now, however, I know there is a higher motive in evangelism than winning souls. My main motive in giving the gospel to non-Christians is to glorify Jesus. This realisation has been liberating for me. When I go out to proclaim the gospel, instead of saying, “I must win whoever I talk to about Jesus, and get them to say ‘the prayer’ or I have failed,” I now sense Jesus saying to me, “Just relax Julian. Remember, your main motivation is to exalt Me



“My main motive in giving the gospel to non-Christians is to glorify Jesus.”

and to lift Me up. After you have done this, if you sense from the Holy Spirit that the person is ready, lead them to Me. But if you discern that they are not ready, and they don't convert on the spot, you can rest because you have achieved what is most important to Me in evangelism - bringing glory to My name. Conversion for the person who does not convert on the spot may well come later, through the infallible follow-up of the Holy Spirit."

When I run seminars, I often ask people what they think should be our main motivation in evangelism. Typically they say one of the following:

- "We want to obey God's command to go into the world and proclaim the gospel. We are under the authority of Jesus."
- "We want to love people. When we present the gospel to non-Christians, we plant an incorruptible seed in their hearts which God promises to grow. Many later decide for Jesus and then their whole destiny is changed. So there is nothing more loving we can do than co-operate with God to introduce non-Christians to Jesus and eternal life."
- "We want to show our love for God. Did He not say, 'If you love Me, you will obey My commands?'"
- "We want to win souls. Jesus said 'I came to seek and save the lost.' If this was Jesus' motive, it ought to be ours too."

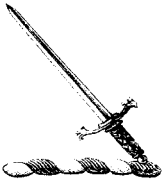
These are all valid and biblical motives for evangelising, but none of these is the primary one. Let me say it again: the main reason we should proclaim the gospel is to give glory to Jesus.

Scholars agree – do it for the glory of God...

Many eminent Christian leaders agree about this. **Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones**, for example, says: "The supreme object of the work of evangelism is to glorify God, not to save souls."¹ **Dr John MacArthur** writes: "One of the greatest ways we can give glory to God is to declare the gospel. [Its message] radiates the glory of God like nothing



1 Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *The Presentation Of The Gospel*. London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1949, pp.6-7



else in the universe. When we declare the gospel we are declaring the clearest and most powerful aspect of God's glory. Thus, [declaration of the gospel] is one of the highest and purest forms of worship because it most clearly affirms the glory of God."² **Dr John Piper** says the same thing: "The universal lostness of man is not the only focus for missionary motivation. Arching over it is the great goal of bringing glory to Christ."³ Please grasp firmly this strategy from heaven in the war for souls. The people you lead in your church must know this, and evangelise with this motivation at the forefront. If any lesser motivation becomes primary, like tender flowers exposed to the blazing heat of the sun, your troops will soon wither and die when the battle for souls heats up.

Evangelism is worship...

Another way to look at it is to think of evangelism as worship. **Dr Stott** says, when we go into the world and proclaim the gospel we are *worshipping God*. He says worship is "worth-ship, an acknowledgement of the worth of Almighty God."⁴ Think about it. When you give the gospel to non-Christians, you are explaining how great Jesus is. You are therefore worshipping Him. Furthermore, when we put aside our pride, struggles, fears, inadequacies and busy schedules to go into the world and evangelise it, and when we suffer persecution, rejection and shame for it, we are acknowledging that "Jesus is worth it." Again, God will see our attitude as an act of worship.



What couples who are in love do...

Think about what a man does when he is in love. He will travel around the world to see the object of his affection, spend large amounts of money on phone calls and gifts, listen for hours to her stories and problems, and put off appointments and other pressing engagements in order to write declarations of love. No problem is

2 Dr John MacArthur. *The Legacy Of Jesus*. Moody Press, 1986, p.36

3 Cited in: George Verwer. *Out Of The Comfort Zone. Grace! Vision! Action!* OM Books, 2000, p.50

4 Dr John Stott. *Our Guilty Silence. The Church, The Gospel, And The World*. Inter Varsity Press. 1997. p.27

too big, no request too burdensome. One friend of mine said that when his wife was pregnant with their first child, she would wake him up in the early hours of the morning and ask him to go to a 24-hour petrol station and buy her ice-cream or chocolate. He did it willingly. Why? Because she was worth it! Similarly, when we come to the point in our lives where we will do anything to get this gospel message to non-Christians, no matter what the personal cost, we are worshipping Jesus with our attitude.

Is evangelism worship? What does the Bible say...?

Take a look at how the scriptures equate evangelism and worship: “Then I saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth — to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the



“Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day.”

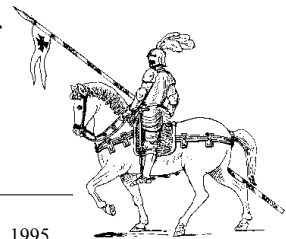
Psalm 96:1-2

earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:6-7). Or what about this one? “Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds

among all peoples” (Psalm 96:1-3). These two scriptures show how evangelism can rightly be viewed as worship.

How evangelism glorifies Jesus...

The next question is, “How exactly does going to non-Christians with the gospel glorify Jesus?” Let’s start by defining what we mean by *glorify*. According to one lexicon, it means “to cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged.”⁵



Let's now replace "some person or thing" in this definition with the word *Jesus*. When we glorify Jesus we cause His dignity and worth to become manifest and acknowledged.

If we define the word *worth* to mean a "quality that commands

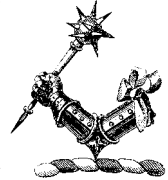


"At the final Judgment, Jesus will not ask us, 'How many souls did you save?' Rather, He will ask us, 'Did you glorify Me by proclaiming or spreading the gospel?'"

esteem or respect; merit..."⁶ our definition can be expanded. To glorify Jesus is "to cause Him to be dignified, esteemed and respected and to have His merits manifest and acknowledged."

Finally, let's define the word *manifest*. This means "to reveal, or demonstrate plainly."⁷ If

we add this to our previous definition, the term "to glorify Jesus" can now be defined as *to cause Jesus to be dignified, esteemed and respected and to demonstrate plainly His merits.*



We could paraphrase this and say that the greatest motive for going to non-Christians with the gospel is to reveal the "merits of Jesus" so that non-Christians see Him as He really is – the greatest of all heroes.

Yes, you can bring Jesus much glory...

Non-Christians will never see Jesus glorified unless someone or something *causes* this to happen. That "someone" is you and I. Don't for a moment think it is someone else. We know from the preface and introduction that one of the devil's key devices to undermine evangelism in the West is presumption. Everyone presumes everyone else is out there evangelising.

At the final Judgment Jesus will not ask us, "How many souls did you save?" Rather, He will ask us, "Did you glorify Me by proclaiming or spreading the gospel? Did you make plain My merits to non-Christians? Were you faithful to My command to go into all the world and preach or spread the gospel?"

6 *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, fourth edition

7 *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, fourth edition

Good works and the glory...

As I have spoken on this subject of glorifying Jesus in various countries, some Christians have protested,⁸ “Proclaiming or spreading the gospel is not the only way of glorifying Jesus! Doesn’t the Bible say that we can also glorify God by our good works?” We know the answer is an emphatic “yes” (Matthew 5:16). We know too that a good work done secretly and privately is pleasing to Jesus (e.g. Matthew 6:6; 6:18). However, I want you to consider the case of Mrs Smith below.

Mrs Smith the Christian— a good person, but not a channel of glory for Jesus...

Mrs Smith, for example, is a generous servant. She bakes cakes for people in the neighbourhood, visits them when they are sick, remembers their birthdays and runs errands for people. What she says to people is always encouraging and life-giving. No one has ever heard her gossip, criticise, or stab people in the back. However, although Mrs Smith is a Christian, she never mentions her faith or the Person that she is imitating – Jesus. So who is getting the glory? Mrs Smith. The critical question is this: “Why is Mrs Smith silent about Jesus? Is it because she is ashamed of Him?”

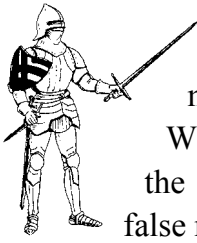
It is supremely important that Jesus receive the glory for what Christians do and say in the world. Scripture clearly teaches this:

- “I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another” (Isaiah 42:8).
- “And I will not give My glory to another” (Isaiah 48:11).
- “Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to Your name be the glory, because of Your love and faithfulness” (Psalm 115:1).



If we don’t speak up about Jesus as we do our good works, we

⁸ I was taking a seminar once and a hand shot up in protest. “We can glorify God if we are alone on a desert island, surely?!” The answer, of course, is “Yes.” God sees the heart and the motives. However, the difference between glorifying God alone on a desert island and glorifying God while living among other people is simply this: on the island, there is no possibility of confusing anyone else about what motivates us to do good works. Secondly, there is no possibility of showing off and receiving the glory for ourselves since there is no one watching except God!



might easily be misunderstood by those watching, as was the case of Mrs Smith. Worse still, those watching might see us as good Buddhists, Muslims, or Hindus. When this happens, in the minds of those watching us, the glory for our good works will go to the gods of these false religions, not to Jesus.⁹

How to “up” the glory going to Jesus...

To make sure Jesus gets the glory for our good works, we need to build what I call “a bridge.” The bridge we build to connect our Christian actions with Jesus can be either weak or strong. The stronger the bridge, the more glory goes to Jesus. Let me give you an example:

I like to pick up hitchhikers. As a young Christian, before I understood anything of what I’ve written in this book, when I dropped off the hitchhiker I would always say, “God bless you!” or something similar because I wanted them to know I was a Christian. Or, if I did a good work for a non-Christian I would say, “Have a good day. God bless you.”



Why build a weak bridge, when you can build a strong one...?

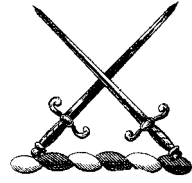
Many of us do similar things because we want to give glory to Jesus. We might, for example, wear fish-shaped badges on our clothing, attach a Christian bumper sticker to our cars, carry a Bible, let our neighbours know we go to church on Sunday, and refrain from smoking or swearing. Although these bridges might suggest we are Christians, they do not “make plain the merits of Jesus.” They don’t explain who Jesus is, why people need Jesus,



“Weak bridges keep Jesus vague and mysterious in the minds of non-Christians. And a weak bridge means we often receive glory for ourselves.”

⁹ Remember, good works are not unique to Christianity. Buddhists, atheists, Hindus and many other groups in society do them, but not a shred of glory for these goes to Jesus.

how Jesus can save, what Jesus has done and His limitless merits – or what motivates our Christian behaviour.



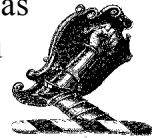
Weak bridges keep Jesus vague and mysterious in the minds of non-Christians. Weak bridges increase the possibility that *we* will receive the glory. As **Dr Leighton Ford** puts it:

“We are to let our light shine before men that they may see our good works, but then we must reveal the source so that they may glorify our Father who is in heaven.”¹⁰

Rather than dropping the hitchhiker off and saying “God bless you,” I now know it is better to build a strong bridge to Jesus by taking him or her through the gospel, which is the strongest bridge possible, or at the very least giving away a tract. Quite simply, the stronger the bridge, the more Jesus is glorified. Glorifying Jesus is, ultimately, what we ought to be aiming at, day by day, hour by hour.¹¹

Here is another example. Let’s say I am the world’s greatest violinist. My talent and time are given to me by God. I could use this talent and time to attract praise for myself, or I could glorify God by publicly acknowledging that my talent came from Him and was given by Him.

I could say to the audience after a recital, “I want to thank Jesus for the talent He has given me. Good night and thank you for coming.” Or, for the really bold, an even stronger bridge would be to say graciously, “I want to thank Jesus for the talent He has given me. To those of you tonight who have applauded this talent and enjoyed it, I would like an opportunity to explain why I became a Christian. If you’d be so gracious as to afford me this opportunity, I’d be grateful. If you would like to go at this point, please feel free to do so. Let’s have a two-minute break so that those who need to leave now can do so. To those who are leaving,




10 Dr Leighton Ford, *The Christian Persuader: A New Look At Evangelism Today*. Harper and Row, 1976, p.78

11 In 1643, 121 Puritan ministers met for 1163 days. Of the many questions they wanted to answer, perhaps the most important one was: What ought to be the supreme motive of all we do and say in the Christian Church? They concluded: “Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.” This was the pinnacle statement of the discussion at Westminster. The document these ministers produced is called the Westminster Confession of Faith.

good night, and thank you so much for coming.” After some people have left, the gospel could be presented.

How to build the strongest bridge of all...

Why is the gospel message the strongest bridge we have? For a start, it is replete with “the excellencies and merits” of Jesus and it makes Jesus the greatest of all heroes. Through it, we boast



“God saves people through words.’ We must use words to communicate God’s salvation.”

about Jesus. It also explains not just why Christians do what we do, but also Who is motivating and empowering us. It causes our listeners to focus on Jesus and His story, and not on our


own story or good behaviour. As such, it directs all the glory to Jesus. As we tell it, He increases and we decrease. If we don’t connect our good works to Jesus through the gospel, the danger is we might increase and He decrease.



Look how the writer of Chronicles connects the proclamation of the gospel with the glorification of God: “Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds among all peoples....ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name” (1 Chronicles 16: 23-29).

Why words are so important...

This implies that when we speak to people about salvation through the gospel, day after day, we are glorifying the Lord. Notice the words *sing*, *proclaim*, *declare* and *ascribe*. What do these all have in common? Words. You see, *words* are important. God created the world with them, and Jesus defeated the devil and stilled the storm with them.



“The gospel message directs all the glory to Jesus. As we tell it, He increases and we decrease.”

It was with “a word” that the servant of the centurion was healed (Matthew 8:8). In Romans 1:16, Paul calls the words of the gospel, “the power of God for salvation.” God saves people through


“words.” We must use words to communicate God’s salvation. It is not enough to simply let our light shine, to perform random acts of kindness, or to flood the world with good works. Knowing that our primary motive is to bring glory to God does more than just take away the pressure to win souls. It should alter how we go about every activity in life and church. We must make the connection for non-Christians with words, between what we do and for Whom we do it.

How to become a star...

Psalm 19 is yet another illustration of how God delights to use words to glorify Himself.

“The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display His marvellous craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make Him known. They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies; yet their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to all the world” (Psalm 19:1-4, NLT).

“The heavens and the skies,” says the psalmist, “speak” to humanity about the merits of God.¹² For example, when we look at the sky on a clear night, certain thoughts about God come to us. They might remind us of His omnipotence, majesty, greatness, creative



“So when we proclaim the gospel, we join with the rest of creation in bringing glory to His name.”

genius, beauty or omnipresence.



We might use other words to describe how God is speaking to us as we gaze into the night sky, but whatever ones we use, we feel humbled and awestruck. Creation “speaks” to us about God and in this way it glorifies Him. When we proclaim the gospel, we join with the rest of creation in using *words* to declare His greatness to the world.

¹² Not literally of course. We don’t hear God audibly as we look at the night sky. But the grandeur of the night sky elicits thoughts in our mind. We may say these thoughts are “God speaking to us.”

The gospel is replete with the attributes of God...

As a ministry, one day we decided to examine in detail the content of the tools we use to proclaim the gospel. We discovered the message contained no less than 24 attributes of God, qualities that “cause Jesus to be dignified, esteemed and respected. They also plainly demonstrate His merits.”¹³ There are other lessons to learn from the stars and the sky about how we can glorify Jesus through the proclamation of the gospel. Did you realise that the stars are shining during the day when the sun is at its brightest? It’s just that we can’t see them because they are outshone by the brilliance of the sun. Why do they shine most brightly at night? Because the sun has gone down and they are set against the background of the black sky. There is a lesson for us here as to how we can bring the greatest glory to God in this world. Let me explain:

Where to shine most brightly...

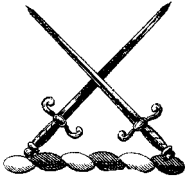
Many places in Scripture associate Christians with light. For example, Jesus calls His disciples “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14); and He says of Himself, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

By contrast, a spiritually dark place is where the kingdom of darkness reigns and rules. This is anywhere outside of the Kingdom of God, where Jesus does not reign and where behaviour, attitudes and thoughts not pleasing to God are operative. Look at Ephesians 5:8-10: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth), and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness.”

Similarly, when Jesus was arrested He told His captors that “darkness reigns” (Luke 22:53). Paul describes Christians as having been rescued from “...the dominion



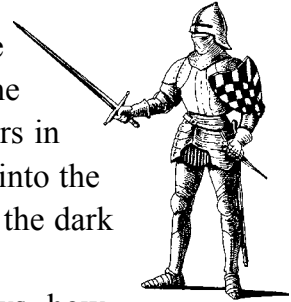
13 The gospel speaks of His holiness, moral purity and transcendence; His humility, shown by His descent from heaven; His eminence, grace and benevolence; His mercy, compassion, love, and humanity which were demonstrated on the cross; His judgment, which shows His justice and wisdom; His divinity and righteousness; His persistence and longsuffering, for He remained resolute in the face of persecution; His infinity, majesty, omnipotence, veracity and faithfulness.



of darkness” (Colossians 1:13). When we go out into the non-Christian world with the gospel, we are going into spiritual darkness.

Now, where are Christians going to shine most brightly and bring most glory to Jesus? In a Sunday morning church service where all the people of light gather? There we will be like the stars shining in the full light of day against the background of a blue sky. Or will we shine brightest in a dark place, where all the people of darkness gather, as the stars shine against the night sky?

This is why Jesus told us to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mark 16:15). The “go” in this scripture is His command for the stars in church to get out of the place of light, and to go into the darkness, where they will shine brightest. It is in the dark places that He will be most glorified.



In Philippians 2:14-15, Paul actually shows how Christians who proclaim the gospel shine like stars: “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe *as you hold out the Word of life* – in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour for nothing.”



“When we go out into the non-Christian world with the gospel, we are going into spiritual darkness.”

The apostle reminds us here that it is our *words* which make us shine – a direct reference to the gospel. The gospel itself is also described as light; Paul describes it as “a glorious light” (2 Corinthians 4:4 KJV).

Commenting on Philippians 2:14-15, **Dr John Stott** writes: “If his readers do not shine like stars in the sky, if they do not hold forth the Word of life [the glorious light of the gospel], like waiters serving out some dainty dish, then he would regard all his

Christian race and labour as having been in vain.”¹⁴

Let me say it again. Christians shine brightest when they move out of the church and combine good works with the spread or proclamation of the gospel.

How to avoid being a hypocrite...

Paul’s goal was to bring glory to Jesus. Therefore, for him proclamation was a priority.



“Christians shine brightest when they move out of the church and combine good works with gospel proclamation.”

“I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24).

In Paul’s mind, proclaiming the gospel and glorifying Jesus were inseparable. How is it, then, that so many of us worship Jesus on Sunday with music and praise, and in other ways during the week, but we struggle to worship Jesus through personal evangelism, the strongest bridge to His glory?

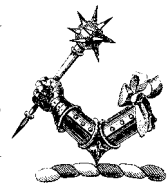


“...worship which does not beget mission is hypocrisy. We cannot acclaim the worth of God if we have no desire to proclaim it. Worship expresses itself in witness.”

Dr John Stott

Herein are three great challenges for us. The first is to continue to worship Jesus on Sunday, expressing and acknowledging from the core of our being His greatness, worth, merits and attributes. The second is to continue to worship Jesus with every aspect of our lives during the week. The third is to worship Jesus by deliberately and consciously adding evangelism into your life.

Dr Stott makes the point that “worship which does not beget mission is hypocrisy. We cannot acclaim the worth of God if we have no desire to proclaim it.




¹⁴ Dr John Stott. *Our Guilty Silence. The Church, The Gospel, And The World.* Hodder and Stoughton. 1965, pp.62-63

Worship expresses itself in witness;¹⁵ witness fulfils itself in worship. The unifying theme is the glory of God and of His Christ, and there is a great need for this to be the supreme incentive of our modern evangelism.”¹⁶ Stott suggests witness and worship are inseparably linked. “Each is maimed without the other. Each, if true to itself, leads to the other, thus producing an unending cycle.”¹⁷

What the famous missionary Hudson Taylor couldn't bear...



The sight of Christians vigorously worshipping God on Sunday and then silent in witness during the rest of the week was what burdened the missionary **Hudson Taylor**. “In Brighton in June 1865, Hudson Taylor was so burdened for China



“Hudson Taylor was unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security while millions perished for lack of knowledge.”

that he found the self-satisfied, hymn-singing congregation intolerable. He looked around him. Pew upon pew of prosperous merchants, shopkeepers, visitors, demure wives with bonnets and crinolines, scrubbed children trained to hide their impatience, the atmosphere of smug piety sickened him. He seized his hat

and left. Unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security while millions perished for lack of knowledge, [Taylor] wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony. And there on the beach he prayed for twenty-four willing, skilful labourers.”¹⁸

My prayer for you is that you will decide, for the glory of God, to become one of the skilful labourers, no matter what it costs.

15 I discuss in chapter two the difference between “witnessing” and proclaiming the gospel. They are not always the same thing.

16 Dr John Stott. *Our Guilty Silence. The Church, The Gospel, And The World*. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965, pp.31-32

17 *ibid*, pp.30-31

18 Cited in: Dr John Stott. *Our Guilty Silence. The Church, The Gospel, And The World*. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965, p.28



Summary...

Every time a non-Christian hears the true gospel, delivered with love, tenderness, humility and grace, Jesus is glorified. That, ultimately, is what matters in evangelism. Quite simply, when we go out and evangelise and this motive is primary, Jesus sees us as His stars. The writer of Daniel expressed this truth well when he penned these beautiful words:

“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).