

The Angels of Soul Winning (Part 2) – Isaiah 6:1-8

I. Introduction:

- A. I read a statement a few weeks ago which I saved to put into the bulletin some day, but I'll use it right now.
1. Jim Petersen asked, *"Why didn't Jesus go back into the temple after His resurrection?"*
 2. That is an interesting question with several possible answers, but none about which we can be dogmatic.
 3. Petersen went on: Jesus *"limited Himself to a few visits with His disciples. But IF He had returned to the temple, the nation of Israel and eventually the whole world would have acknowledged His Messiahship."*
 4. Isn't that true? If Christ had **publically** demonstrated that He had arisen from the dead, within a few months, the whole world would have been beating a path to His opulent apartment in the temple.
 5. But that was not what He did.
 6. The Lord chose to use the apostles and the first 120 disciples – the early church – and then, ultimately, you and me to evangelize the world.
 7. Yes, great things would have taken place had Jesus appeared publically in the temple, but perhaps there is greater glory brought to the Lord when *"the weak things of the world"* are used by the Holy Spirit to magnify God's name.
 8. Another evangelistic avenue could have been to use the holy angels to carry the gospel to the world.
 9. Wait a minute – that is what He did, if we emphasize the meaning of the word *"angels"* – *"messengers."*
- B. You and I are commanded to: *"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."*
1. *"Go YE."* Go ye fishermen, ye former social outcasts, ye housewives & mothers, ye rich people & poor.
 2. Go ye preachers, and ye who aren't qualified or called to stand behind a lectern or on a pulpit.
 3. Go ye strangers and pilgrims to share the good news with a world in desperate need of the gospel.
 4. **We** are the *"angels."* You and I are the *"messengers"* of the gospel.
- C. In an earlier lesson under the heading: *"The angels of Soul Winning,"* I began to consider some of the qualifications of an effective soul-winner.
1. We looked at the necessity of **personal salvation**, and beyond that, the importance of an **assurance** of personal salvation, and we also touched on the need of a **consistent Christian life**.
 2. As we move forward, instead of using the word *"qualifications,"* perhaps we should say *"characteristics"* of an effective soul-winner.
 - a. The word *"qualifications"* might suggest that if someone doesn't possess all these things it is impossible for him to be one of God's messengers or His evangelical *"angels."*
 - b. The word *"qualification"* suggests something which is essential.
 3. But the Lord can use poorly qualified, chipped and ugly pitchers to carry the water of life – as well as valuable and ornate goblets.
 4. The Lord can use a Jonah to carry the gospel to Ninevah, when we might think that an Elijah or Elisha might have been a better choice.
 5. While other characteristics might be helpful & useful, all He really asks of us is that we be **clean** vessels.
 6. *"If a man therefore purge himself from these (the sins of the flesh), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" – II Timothy 2:21.*
 7. Again, just because someone **doesn't perfectly reflect** the points I'll share in the next lesson or two, I hope your **deficiency** doesn't become an **excuse NOT** to be the witness the Lord commands us all to be.
- D. Assuming that you would like to be used of the Lord to lead others to the Saviour, here are some things to ask the Lord to give to you, and here are things we need to commit ourselves to develop.
1. Some are **more important** than others; some are **essential**; some are **very important**; some are **helpful**
 2. We've considered the importance of Christian character in general, now lets get a bit more specific.

II. The angel of evangelism needs to hover around the throne of his Master when he's not out in service.

- A. Think about the image we have been given in *Isaiah 6* with seraphim and godly men in the throne room.
1. God doesn't call and commission His angels out from the tavern or dance hall, but from His presence.

2. God doesn't randomly invite publicans and sinners to serve Him, until after He has performed a miracle of grace upon them and cleaned them up somewhat.
 3. He might send an evangelistic angel from Samaria into the Gaza desert, but I believe God sent him to Samaria in the first place.
 4. The angels which the Lord generally uses are all like Isaiah, anxiously awaiting God's words: *"Who shall I send, and who will go for me?"*
- B. Of course, I am speaking metaphorically, because God doesn't fill a Great White Throne on earth right now.
1. But while we can't see Jehovah sitting high and lifted up, it is a fact that the Lord resides in the soul of each of His servants. So how do we *"hover around His throne?"*
 2. By diligently **listening FOR** His voice and then **listening TO** His voice.
- C. What were **the hundred** and **twenty** doing before the great evangelistic Day of Pentecost?
1. *"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" – (Acts 1:14).*
 - a. They were awaiting the promise of the Father, and waiting for the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. In other words, they were like the angels in **Isaiah 6**, waiting **on** and waiting **FOR** the Lord.
 - c. Did they know what was coming up? Did they expect Pentecost to go the way it did? Probably not.
 - d. But it wasn't important they know the details of their future service.
 - e. What was important was their willingness and readiness to do God's will.
 2. What was the **church in Antioch** doing before God began to use Barnabas and Saul?
 - a. *"They ministered to the Lord and fasted" – (Acts 13:1).* They were *"hovering around His throne."*
 - b. While praying, they were fasting in order to better focus on God, laying aside the things of the world.
 3. What was **Peter** doing before his successful evangelism of Cornelius?
 - a. *"Peter went upon the housetop to pray..." (Acts 10:9).*
 4. What was the **prophet Isaiah** doing before he began his evangelical campaign?
 - a. He was brought into the presence of the Lord, where he heard and saw great things – (**Isaiah 6**).
- D. How can you and I hover around the throne of God?
1. The first thing is to **consciously choose** to **enter** the Lord's Holy of Holies.
 2. We need to deliberately *"enter our closet"* in some way to get away from the influences of the world.
 3. We need to climb to the *"housetop"* in order to pray and to read God's Word, listening to His voice.
 4. Maybe it is nothing more than to turn off our hearing aid – either literally or metaphorically.
- E. How do God's earthly angels hover around the throne? Through prayer and the reading of God's Word.
1. I'm not talking about **studying** the Bible at this point; I'm referring to **simply reading** it in order to allow the Holy Spirit to speak.
 2. The Bible brings us into the presence of the Lord, the author of that message. The Bible is His voice.
 - a. In its pages we see God as He really is, and not as other people speak of Him in their theology books.
 - b. There in the scriptures, we are reminded **why** the unbeliever needs Him and **how** they might see Him.
 3. The best evangelists and witnesses are *"People of the Book."*
 4. They read God's Word personally, and they love to hear God's Word taught and preached by others.
 5. They are motivated by hearing, once again, the things which first brought them to the Saviour.
 6. They are blessed by considering the various aspects of salvation's blessings.
 7. They thrill to hear the testimonies of other believers no matter from where they come, whether in God's Word or in life.
- F. We must remember that unbelieving sinners generally are encased in layers of protection against the encroachment of God – sometimes many layers.
1. They are enwrapped in more graveclothes than Lazarus – pride, religion, theology, good works, foolish imaginations, superstitions, drugs, stubbornness, entertainments and insanity of many kinds.
 2. The only way to effectively cut through that defensive armor is with the Sword of the Spirit.

- a. *“The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” – (Hebrews 4:12).*
- 3. Sometimes sinners need their hands put to the fire and their defensive castles broken down.
 - a. *“Is not my word like as a fire? Saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”*
- 4. The better we know the Word the better we will be able to share the truths of the Bible with those in need.
 - a. *“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understand unto the simple” – (Jeremiah 23:29).*
- 5. The battle for souls is not fought with philosophy, advertizing, trickery or any of the other tools of man.
- 6. It would be good, but not essential, if we memorized scriptures well enough to hear the Lord speak when a Bible isn't in our hand, and to have it ready to share when others need it.
 - 7. *“Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture (which the Ethiopian was reading), and preached unto him Jesus.”*
- G. We hover around God's throne when our eyes hover over the pages of God's Word.

III. And in order to be good evangelistic angels we need to be people of prayer.

- A. As we linger, listening to the gracious words and directions of our Master, we need to take advantage of that opportunity to speak with Him.
 - 1. God is not a dictator and despot that people should fear to address.
 - a. He longs to hear our requests. And He tells: *“ye have not because ye ask not.”*
 - 2. The Lord is God & thus despite all He is doing, ruling the universe, it is impossible to interrupt Him.
 - a. He is the ultimate multi-tasker.
 - 3. Jesus said, *“Men ought always to pray and not to faint” – Luke 18.*
 - a. I know that evangelism was not the Lord's subject when He spoke those words.
 - b. He was talking about not quitting, but rather about persevering in prayer, even when, in human terms, it seems pointless to try.
 - 4. But extending Jesus' words, the fact of the matter is: the first person to faint when it comes to evangelism is the one who has not spent much time in the presence of the Lord.
 - 5. Especially early on, when we aren't experience in it, evangelism requires some degree of courage.
 - a. Godly, courage comes with a clean heart and a recognition of the nearness of Christ.
 - b. Paul said, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengthenth me” – (Philippians 4:13).*
 - c. Was Paul boasting? No, he wasn't boasting because he wasn't thinking only of himself.
 - d. Don't you think that he often plead with the Lord, *“strengthen me, O God.”*
 - e. When he stood before Governor Festus and King Agrippa, or the intellectuals of Athens, don't you think he might have asked God for special strength and wisdom?
- B. One of the great blessings and advantages **WE** have as God's angelic evangelists is our confidence in the omnipotence and sovereignty of the Lord.
 - 1. We know God is in control of all things, including hearts of kings, turning them whithersoever He chooses.
 - 2. We know He *“worketh all things all things after the counsel of HIS own will” – (Ephesians 1:11).*
 - 3. We know that the Lord has His own special sheep in a great many pastures.
 - a. It's our job to find them, and to show to them their Saviour, letting the Lord do the rest.
 - b. Jesus said, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” – (John 10:27).*
 - c. And *“all that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I shall in no wise cast out” – (John 6:37)*
 - 4. What confidence that should give us. And at the same time, how that knowledge should humble us.
- C. One of the first things for which to pray is the submission of our wills to that of the Lord.
 - 1. Remember, the Lord initially created **all** the angels, **but** some of them rebelled against their Creator.
 - 2. We know that it was a **struggle** for **Peter** before he went to Caesarea to lead Cornelius to the Saviour.
 - a. He had a problem with discrimination and even prejudice – a kind of national or racial problem.
 - b. God had to crush Peter's pride in regard to his law-keeping and, in a sense, his Jewish hand-washing.

- c. *“Lord I’ve never fouled my hands by way of contact with **that** kind of people. Those men are sinners.*
 d. *I’ve never eaten with **those** people before, nor have I eaten anything unclean – not kosher.”*
3. Not only should we plead with God to open the hearts of the people whom we might evangelize, but we need to beg God to open our hearts as well.
- D. When we pray, we access God’s omnipotence and eventually we will see God’s will.
1. After our hearts are made right, we should be praying for divine direction and leadership.
 2. And coupled with that there must be a willingness to joyfully **follow** that leadership.
 3. The Lord is not going to guide us when He knows we aren’t going to follow that guidance or if our obedience is reluctant like the self-centered teenager.
- E. God’s heavenly angel told God’s other angel **Philip** to go *“toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert, and he arose and went”* running into that sovereignly designed meeting with the Ethiopian.
1. The Lord was in complete control of that evangelistic connection.
 - a. Why was the man from Candace’s government reading the scriptures? Because God put it into his heart. He could have been reading a hundred other things, or simply admiring the beautiful desert.
 - b. Why was the man willing to listen to this Jewish stranger? Because God put it into his heart to listen.
 - c. Why was the man’s heart tender and open? It was God’s will.
 - d. In part, it was the Lord who filled Phillip’s heart and mind with just what to say.
 - e. The other part was Philip’s own preparation, making himself familiar with God’s Word.
 2. These are things for which we should pray.
- F. We must remember that the work of evangelism is not really our work, but the Lord’s. And God is sovereign.
1. Human self-reliance is a blight upon every aspect of God’s service.
 2. We need the Lord in this effort far more than He needs us.
- G. Paul said in **Romans 10** – *“Brethren my heart’s desire & prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”*
1. I hear people pray in a general sort of way for God to save souls. With Paul’s example there is nothing wrong with that.
 2. But don’t I hear in that statement a broken heart and earnest pleading with the Lord?
 - a. Did Paul ever pray: *“O God, I beg of you to save the soul of my old dear teacher, Gamaliel?”*
 - b. *Lord, he won’t let me near him any more, so Lord send your gospel to him through some other means”*
 3. And what about those men who were traveling with Saul to Damascus the glorious day of his salvation? Did Paul later pray for them who had come so close to the Lord that day?
 4. Paul had at least one sister, at least one nephew and probably other relatives. Didn’t this soul-winner also beseech God for each of them?
 5. How many of Paul’s kindred were eventually saved by the grace of God, but perhaps primarily through the ministry of other evangelists, all because the man of God begged God for their souls?
 6. When he was confined to his own house in Rome, don’t you think he spent hours upon hours in prayer pleading for God’s glory and the salvation of specific souls he had known throughout the years?

IV. Conclusion

- A. I have several books written by men who only nominally nod their heads toward the sovereignty of God.
1. They lay out page after page of qualifications which they consider necessary to be a great soul-winner.
 2. And they do that because they firmly believe that success depends on those qualifications and efforts.
 3. While not discounting the importance of these things mentioned today and others we’ll get to in another lesson, clearly the key to our usefulness is the Lord’s blessing through us.
- B. Therefore as far as I am concerned, in order to be a good evangelistic angel, we must begin at the throne of God, listening to His voice and pleading for His grace and power.