

**Introduction:**

- *Lord, give me Scotland, or I die.* – John Knox (c.1514-1572), Scottish clergyman and Protestant Reformer
- *I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls for Christ. While I was asleep, I dreamed of these things, and when I awoke, the first thing I thought of was this great work.* – David Brainerd (1718-1747), American missionary to the Native Americans.
- *Lord, give me souls or take my soul.* – George Whitefield (1714-1770), Anglican priest and leader of the “Great Awakening” in Europe and the new American colonies.
- *Give me Lisu converts, and I can truly say I will be happy even in a pigsty.* – J.O. Fraser (1886-1938), missionary to the Lisu people of China.
- *I am very tired, but must go on ... A fire is in my bones ... Oh God, what can I say? Souls! Souls! Souls! My heart hungers for souls!* – General William Booth (1829-1912), founder of The Salvation Army.
- The prayers of these men come from the heart. The question tonight is, “What is in your heart?”
  - We don’t pray for the lost because:
    - we do not have concern
    - we do not have urgency
    - we just plain forgot
  - *“Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before.”* 1 Sam 3:7 NLT

**I. Why Pray For The Lost? Four Reasons.**

A. The lost are on the heart of God.

1. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16, NKJV)
2. *“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”* (John 3:17, NKJV)
3. *“The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.”* (2 Peter 3:9, NLT)

B. Jesus died/gave His life for the lost.

1. *“For, there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.”* (1 Timothy 2:5-6, NLT)
2. *“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”* (John 15:13, NLT)
3. *“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”* (Romans 5:8, NLT)

C. Paul’s Example: A longing heart...

1. *"Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved."* (Romans 10:1, NLT)
- D. The condition of the Lost
1. They are blind: *"Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God."* (2 Corinthians 4:4, NLT)
  2. They are bound: *"Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants."* (2 Timothy 2:26, NLT)
  3. They are judged/condemned: *"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son."* (John 3:18, NLT)
  4. They are hopeless: *"You lived in this world without God and without hope."* (Eph 2:12 NLT). They are helpless, dead, without understanding and the list goes on! "Taken together they show how desperate is the plight of those without Christ. They are blind and think they can see. They are dead and think they are alive. They are captive and think they are free. They are helpless and think they can do anything. They are without understanding and think they know everything. They are bound for hell and think they are going to heaven." They are so lost without divine intervention...They die and slip silently into an eternity of weeping and gnashing of teeth. They need someone to pray.

## II. How to Pray For The Lost

Now we know the "why" what is the how?

- A. First we have to realize they are dead. Spiritually they are dead. What do you say to a dead person.
  1. They can't hear, see, think, understand, feel. They are dead. This is what we are working with! Spiritually dead people. Makes no difference if we are believing for family, friends, co-workers, strangers.
  2. Therefore there is nothing we can say or do to change that. We need the intervention of God do some work on them. Realize they can't respond without the help of God! That right there is mercy...but it is His will that none would perish!
- B. Second, a spiritually dead person needs several things to happen. Let me give you four things and then we will go back to them.
  1. They need to have their eyes opened.
  2. They need to have their hearts softened.
  3. They need to have the understanding enlightened.
  4. They need to realize the urgency of their need. This is where the importance of our prayer come in.
    1. They need to have their eyes opened. This blindness is unbelief.

- a) The god of this world has blinded. 2 Cor 4:4 *"Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God."* Satan cause people not to see.
  - (1) He uses a veil. kalypto - to bury, to hide, to cover. Like a basket over a candle. Somehow he manages to bury people under their past, their sin, their pain. Life puts layers on them till they are calloused of heart.
  - (2) He uses deception. Deception causes you to look at everything but what the reality of your life is—you are dead and bound to hell.
  - (3) He uses darkness. What ever he can do to keep a person in darkness he will. This can be education, disappointment, tradition, religion etc.
- b) The lost have to see the truth. Their eyes must be opened and only God can do that. Our prayers and our proclamation do this. Mt 13:15-16
- 2. They need to have their heart softened.
  - a) When we speak of a hard heart we speak of pride.
    - (1) Ex 7:13,14, 22 Speaks of Pharaoh's hard-heartedness. We know that to be pride. A proud heart does not acknowledge its need.
    - (2) Ezk 3:7 Israel will not listen because of their hard heart.
  - b) A sinners hard heart must be softened in order for them to hear the Gospel.
    - (1) They must put off of pride. They must have their hearts opened to the Gospel.
    - (2) God does this in many ways. They could just soften up. They may experience brokenness in life (now they see their need). We have to stay out of the way as God is working. Especially when He is breaking pride.
  - c) When we pray we are asking God to soften their hearts.
- 3. They need to have their understanding enlightened. They must have revelation.
  - a) The light has to come on! 2 Cor 4:6 *"Let there be light!"*
  - b) Jesus on several occasion says to his disciple 'are you without understanding?' or He opens the eyes of their understanding so that they are no longer in darkness.
  - c) Eph 4:18 speaks of darkened understanding but God cause them to see.
  - d) *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,"* (Ephesians 1:17, ESV)
- 4. They must come to the urgent realization of their need.
  - a) Conviction - brings about urgency. Conviction is the way out. Condemnation leaves a person bound.
  - b) *"Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.* (2 Co 6:2 NLT)

- c) Acts 2:37, "*Brothers, what must we do?*" They saw their need and urgency moved them to repentance.
  - d) Cause them to hunger and thirst for You, Truth, Your Word. Ps 42 *As the deer pants for the water brook so my soul longs for you. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them."* (Isaiah 41:17, ESV)
- C. Our prayers prepare hearts for the entrance of His Word: Both Logos and the Son! Only God can do this work but partners with us in praying for family, friends, cities, countries.

### III. They need someone to tell them about Jesus.

- A. Once the heart begins to be softened and the mind opened to the truth. A light must be shone into that dark place. This happens with the proclamation of the Word.
- B. So our prayer becomes:
  - 1. Lord put people in their path to give them the Gospel/truth.
    - a) "*therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*" (Matthew 9:38, ESV)
    - b) "*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?*" (Romans 10:14, ESV)
  - 2. Lord put people in their path who will demonstrate your love.
  - 3. Lord speak through whoever and whatever to get them into your Kingdom.
  - 4. Lord set up "Cornelius connects" Acts 8 - Philip and the Ethiopian. Acts 10 Peter and Cornelius.
- C. Help me to be salt and light.
- D. Help me to move them closer to the cross by my testimony and your Word. Not everyone gets saved when they first hear. We cannot give up on them. "*Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*" (Colossians 4:5-6, ESV) Help me to figure out/discern if I am planting, watering, or harvesting. "*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.*" (1 Corinthians 3:6, ESV)
- E. Lord give them the faith to believe. Acts 20:21 And the will to respond. Romans 10:9

### Conclusion:

- We need God to touch our hearts once again that souls become and urgency to us.
- People matter to God. Men's hearts are hard and dark. Therefore we pray: one, for their hearts to be softened and their eyes opened. Two, that people would be sent and go into the fields that are ready to be harvested.