

Session 3

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[0 : 00] Well, folks, it's been really enjoyable today. I've gotten to know folks I hadn't met before, and I've reconnected with others who I have. So I'd like just to speak to you from that passage, both passages, really.

But if you start, if you look with me at Matthew chapter 9, if I use the illustration of a sandwich earlier to look at the Great Commission, for those of us who are a bit older, if I could use the illustration of a television.

Now, those of us who remember television before cable, that you had to adjust the television set, and you had to adjust the television set in two different ways.

You had the horizontal, because you didn't really want your TV to go up and down like that. So you wanted the picture to stay, and you also had to adjust the vertical so it was kind of in the center of the screen.

Maybe I might have got those wrong, but if we keep that in mind, the television, the horizontal and the vertical, Jesus here is ministering.

[1 : 08] Now, in a sense, the ministry of Jesus is unique. He does things we can't do. He has power. He has authority. He has the capacity that we don't.

But if you look at this passage, we hear in Matthew chapter 9 that Jesus encounters people who are sick.

They're afflicted. They're harassed. They're helpless. They're very vulnerable. They're described as sheep without a shepherd. Now, Jesus then turns to his disciples and says, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

So, one key to our mission, one key to ministry, and each one of us has ministry. Each one of us is on a mission. It begins with how you see.

Now, my afternoon activity, I went into the pool and into the sauna, the whirlpool. Great. But one problem with that is I have to take my glasses off, and I can't really see anything.

[2 : 14] So, I was surrounded by people, and I'm sorry, do I know who is this, Paul? I can't really see you clearly, but you look like. But when I put my glasses back on, I can see things clearly.

Jesus sees harassed and helpless and vulnerable and sick and afflicted people, and he concludes that the harvest is plentiful.

What do we conclude when we see the same thing? Do we conclude that today is a day of opportunity? Today is a day where the Lord has placed us exactly where he wants us to be and exactly where we want to be.

There are so many people who don't know about Jesus. Isn't that a great opportunity? There are so many people who don't have the first idea. So, it all depends upon your perception, your point of view.

A couple books that I'm going to commend to you. If you like small books, short books, two books by Roger Carswell. If you're called to preach, or if you ever have the opportunity to preach, definitely purchase, this is from the publishing house, ten of them, evangelistic preaching.

[3 : 28] Very short book, very good. The book I'm going to quote from now is called, And Some Evangelists. That passage from Ephesians chapter 4, where the Apostle Paul is describing the various offices within the church.

But Carswell is great because he takes examples from history about what evangelism looks like. And he takes us back 250 years.

And we're told that a man called John Wesley traveled for the first time to Newcastle. And he entered this in his journal. At this juncture, Roger Carswell interrupts the narrative and says, Our natural reaction would be to complete the sentence by words such as hell or judgment.

But Wesley saw things differently. Surely this place is ripe for him who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

I don't know about you, but I find that there's a lot of sinners in the city of Edinburgh. There's a lot of sinners who are in need of repentance. And if that's the message in the ministry of Jesus, then it does seem like God has placed us in the right place at the right time with the right message.

[5 : 10] But do we look at people the same way that Jesus looks at people? Do we look at people with compassion? Do we look at people with concern? Do we look at people and want to do something for them that will benefit them in time and in eternity?

So is there a love? And this is where we have the horizontal, our horizontal relationships. Is there a love that we have for people? And that can take many different forms.

So we can show compassion, concern for their physical well-being, their emotional well-being. But as Christians, surely we have a care for people's spiritual well-being, where they will be for the rest of eternity.

So John Wesley goes into Newcastle, and we're told, as that passage continues in his journal, he said he began by singing. He chose a place on one of the street corners in Newcastle.

He began singing Psalm 100, All People That On Earth Do Dwell. He said within a few moments, a couple hundred people gathered. They were quite curious to see what was happening.

[6 : 20] And he said, my name is John Wesley, and I will preach to you the gospel, the good news concerning Jesus Christ. And thousands of people in those few days came to hear Wesley preach the good news concerning Jesus Christ.

Another book I want to commend to you is, this is the most recent of many biographies, but this is Kevin Belmonte, D.L. Moody, innovator, evangelist, world changer.

Now, Moody, great quotation from Moody. He said, if this world is going to be reached, I am convinced that it must be done by men and women of average talent.

After all, there are comparatively few people in the world who have great talents. So, if we can take for granted that there are many people in the city of Edinburgh who are sinners in need of repentance, and that we as Christians have the one and the only message of salvation found in the one and the only Savior of the world that, remember those words from John chapter 4, the Samaritans came to believe for themselves by speaking with Jesus that he is indeed the Savior of the world.

If that's true of the city of Edinburgh, I think what Moody is getting at here is true of this room, that I'm speaking to a room of men and women with average, ordinary talents.

[7 : 51] There may be some extraordinary people here, and if there are, by all means, use your extraordinary gifts and talents. But if this world is going to be reached, God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things.

The first scene of this book, this was written by a man called William Reynolds. He was a gospel worker in Chicago, and in the very early career of D.L. Moody, he encountered this new young man who had come from the East.

And this was his impression. He said, the first meeting I ever saw Moody was in the little old shanty abandoned by a saloon keeper. You see, Moody set up shop in Chicago, and he set up a Sabbath school.

You see, he wasn't a minister. He wasn't the Reverend D.L. Moody. He was always Mr. Moody. And if he was asked to describe himself, he would describe himself as a Sabbath school worker from Chicago.

And the Sabbath school at that particular juncture was in a district of Chicago known as Little Hell, which gives you an idea of the clientele. But he said, I saw a man standing up with a few tallow candles around him, holding a Negro boy and trying to read him the story of the prodigal son.

[9 : 13] A great many of the words he could not make out and had to skip. I thought, if the Lord can ever use such an instrument as that, it will astonish me.

After that meeting was over, Moody said, Reynolds, I have only got one talent. I have no education, but I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to do something for him.

So if you think of that television with the vertical and the horizontal, can we agree that we love the Lord Jesus and that we want to do something for him?

And can we likewise agree that we love people and we want to do something for them? So if you have these two perspectives, the vertical relationship with God through Jesus, and we love Jesus, we love him because he first loved us.

And we have a love and a compassion for people because we realize that they are just where we once were. They don't know or they haven't heard.

[10 : 20] Nobody's taking the time. Nobody's made the effort to tell or to share or to show. And whether it's youth work in the north of Edinburgh, whether it's prayer ministry in Midlothian, whether it's running a Christianity Explored or an outreach event in Costa Coffee in Brunsfield, the venue, the circumstance is secondary.

But if those two loves are there, love to God, love through Christ, and love to people, then God will use you and me to accomplish his plan and his purpose.

Let me just give you an insight into this man called D.L. Moody. D.L. Moody was not well educated. He left school at the age of 10, fourth grade, maybe third grade.

He left school at a young age. And when he came to Boston, before he went to Chicago, he went to Boston, his desire was to make a fortune. And he was one of the best shoe salesmen that Boston and then later Chicago ever saw.

He had a natural way with people. He began attending a local YMCA. And he attended a Sunday school class. And his Sunday school teacher was a man called Edward Kimball.

[11 : 46] Now, Kimball described Moody in these ways. He says, Now, if you're a parent with a child and the Sunday school teacher gives a report and says, This was the man D.L. Moody.

of not only coming to know, let alone coming to serve in any meaningful way. This was the man D.L. Moody. Uneducated, untrained.

He was brought up in a Unitarian household. Unitarians do not believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They don't believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God or the Savior of the world.

And yet, D.L. Moody came to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And he described his conversion in this way.

He said, It was the love of God that broke my heart years ago. And it was the love of God that he preached and shared from that time forward.

[13 : 35] Now, I said that in many ways, D.L. Moody is an ordinary person. Well, he's extraordinary. It's estimated that he personally led 70,000 people to faith.

One of his great gifts was personal evangelism, one-to-one evangelism, speaking to people about their souls. It was said that people would say of D.L. Moody, he spoke to me as if my soul mattered.

On a train, in the streets, he made it a personal commitment that he would speak to at least one person every day before he went to bed.

One of the early biographies of Moody was simply described, Love the Men, the Life and Theology of D.L. Moody. And he said this, If you can really make a man believe that you love him, you have won him.

We might not have the depth of theology or the depth of understanding. We might not be able to answer the objections or answer the questions. But if you have a genuine love for Jesus and a genuine love for people, just wait to see what God can do.

[14 : 52] Just wait to see how God can use you or use me. Not because of who we are, but because of whom we serve. Of who we introduce people to.

So this man of fourth grade education, this man came in his lifetime. He was converted. He began attending the YMCA at the age of 17.

He became a Christian at the age of 18. And interesting, this same Kimball. Kimball's Sunday school class, he was saying to himself, he said, he felt that not one member of his Sunday school class was a Christian, had come to a faith in Jesus.

And as a Sunday school teacher, this vexed him. This concerned him. He felt that he had to do something. So he was committed to speak to each member of his class.

So if you're here and you're working and serving within the youth ministry, the Sunday school ministry, North Edinburgh, wherever it might be, and sometimes you feel as if you're making no impact, or if your efforts, your prayers, your teaching is in vain.

[16 : 06] Listen to this scene. Kimball said, I determined to speak to him about Christ and about his soul. So he went down to Holton's shoe store, where Moody was working.

When I was nearly there, I began to wonder whether I ought to go in just then during business hours. I thought that possibly my call might embarrass the boy.

And that when I went away, the other clerks might ask who I was and taunt him with my efforts of trying to make him a good boy. In the meantime, I had passed the store and discovering this, I determined to make a dash for it and have it over at once.

I found Moody in the back part of the building wrapping up shoes. I went up to him at once, putting my hand on his shoulder. I made what I afterward thought was a very weak plea for Christ.

I don't know just what words I used, nor could Mr. Moody tell. I simply told him of Christ's love for him and the love that Christ wanted in return.

[17 : 06] There's a theme here, isn't there? That that was all there was. It seemed the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him.

And there, in the back of the store in Boston, he gave himself and his life to Christ. It's estimated that in his ministry, he lived to the age of 62, he became a Christian at the age of 18, that he personally preached to 100 million people.

He was persuaded that God was calling him and his generation to reach their generation, the whole of their generation, for Jesus.

Now, we will have to say that they did not succeed in reaching their whole generation by the end of the 19th century. The work still goes on. But 100 million is not a bad start for someone with a fourth grade education.

He came to the United Kingdom on several journeys, but his first trip was in 1872, and he did not come as a preacher. He was not advertised. He was little known.

[18 : 26] But he was invited to a church in North London. And just to give you a flavor of these early years, he said when Moody preached in the morning, he felt there was a dullness or a heaviness.

He then preached that evening. He said it could not have been more radically different. It seemed as if the very atmosphere was charged with the Spirit of God. There was a hush from heaven upon the people, and by his own admission, he hadn't been much in prayer that day.

And as was his custom, he concluded his sermon by asking any who wished to become Christians to rise, and so he could pray for them. Almost all at once, scores of people stood.

It seemed like the whole audience had risen. Moody thought, they must not have understood me. They didn't know what I meant when I gave an invitation for seekers to stand. Surely, that is what has just happened.

So he thought to put the invitation more clearly, and repeated it. All those who want to become Christians, he said, just step into the inquiry room. At this, most of the sanctuary emptied.

[19 : 33] Virtually everyone present went to the inquiry room. There were so many people that extra chairs had to be brought in. Neither the local minister nor Moody could believe it. They had never seen God saved by hundreds.

Once more, Moody thought he had been misunderstood. He asked those that really wanted to become Christians to rise. Again, the whole audience stood. Moody truly had no idea what to do, so again, he played it safe and told all those who were really in earnest to meet the pastor there the next night.

By that evening, he was in Dublin. Over the next week, 400 people were added to that church as members. What does this say? This says that God takes instruments of ordinary ability but uses them in an extraordinary capacity.

Why? Because there is a powerful and a palpable love. A love that Moody had for his Savior Jesus and a love that Moody had for people.

How can we translate this love into our own circumstance? How can we take the love that we have for Jesus? Jesus. Because we do love Jesus. We love him for who he is.

[20 : 47] We love him for what he has done. We love him because he first loved us. And we love people. We love our families. We love our friends.

We love our neighbors. We love the people in Bruntsfield. We love our friends. We love our great care and our great concern is so many people do not know the same Jesus.

That they do not love the same Jesus. That they are not aware of his love for them. So, as Jesus sees these harassed and helpless people, as he sees these sick and afflicted people, he asks us to do two things.

He says, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. So, he asks us to focus our vision on what we see, to see what we see. And then he says, pray. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

The scene from later in Moody's ministry. He was in London at the time and several local clergymen asked to meet with him.

[22 : 01] Vickers in the Church of England. They wanted to know why this poorly educated American was so effective in winning people to Christ. And they said, Mr. Moody, can you explain this to us?

And at that point, he took the men to the window of the hotel room where they were meeting. And he asked them what they saw as they looked out the window.

And one by one, the men described the people in the park below. Then one of them stopped and said, Mr. Moody, what do you see? And he said, I see countless thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the Savior.

They saw the same scene. They were looking at the same park. They were observing the same people. And yet, this man saw something that they didn't see.

And what he saw moved him to tears, moved him to prayer, moved him to preach, moved him to witness. Each one of you has people in your life, unique circles of people that you have relationships with, friendships with, rapport with, people that you can talk to, people that you can talk with, people that you can pray for, people that you can pray with.

[23 : 29] Now, you might never have the opportunity of preaching in a pulpit. You may never have an opportunity of preaching to a multitude. But what would Edinburgh be like if each one of us witnessed to the gospel to the closest five people in our family group, our friends group?

If we committed to pray that God would speak to their heart? What would happen if one by one, ten by ten, hundred by hundred, what would happen if we saw God work in the city of Edinburgh?

As he has in the past and as he can do in the future. And where men and women, young and old, people who have no connection with any church, let alone your church or my church, where they meet with followers of Jesus and they meet with passionate people who have a passionate love for their Savior Jesus and a passionate love for them as people.

And we pray and we witness and we seek to demonstrate the love that we have for Jesus Christ.

At the end of Moody's life, he was 62 years of age, he had what we would describe as congestive heart failure.

[24 : 51] He was a large man and his heart simply gave up. It was November the 16th, 1899, not long before the end of the century.

He chose a passage to preach from Luke's gospel, Luke chapter 14, the parable of the great banquet. It was the last time he ever preached. He was in Kansas City and he said this, he said, many of you will get up and go out of this hall, making light of the preacher, laughing at everything you have heard, paying no attention to the invitation.

I beg of you, do not make light of this invitation. It is a loving God that invites you. He painted one last word picture. What would it be like, he wondered, if everyone there that night were to accept heaven's invitation?

What words would they say? Perhaps they would run something like this. to the king of heaven, while sitting in the convention hall on November the 16th, 1899, I received a pressing invitation from one of your servants to be present at the marriage supper of your only begotten son.

I hastened to reply, by the grace of God, I will be present. It's an interesting coincidence. The last sermon that D.L.

[26 : 10] Moody preached on the parable of the great banquet, compelled them to come in, was the most effective sermon by his own estimation that C.S.C.H. Spurgeon ever preached.

Spurgeon was a much different preacher than Moody. He was a settled preacher of a settled congregation. If you like statistics, during Spurgeon's 37 years at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in the New Park Street Pulpit in London, 14,000 members were added to the church.

church. And in 1858, when the Metropolitan Tabernacle was being rebuilt, the New Park Street Church was too small, he preached in the Surrey Gardens, the largest place to gather for anything in the United Kingdom at that time.

It could seat 12,000 people. And he preached the sermon from Luke's gospel, Luke chapter 14. And listen to the same passion that comes through from a servant on this side of the Atlantic.

He would have preached with a much different accent than Moody, yet Moody and Spurgeon were close personal friends. Spurgeon says this, he said, and now again is it all in vain.

[27 : 23] Will you not now come to Christ? What more can I do? I have but one more resort, and that shall be tried. I shall be permitted to weep for you. I can be allowed to pray for you.

You shall scorn the address if you like. You shall laugh at the preacher. You shall call him a fanatic if you will. He will not chide you. He will bring no accusation against you to the great judge.

Your offense, so far as he is concerned, is forgiven before it is committed. But you will remember that the message that you are rejecting this morning is a message from one who loves you, and it is given to you by the lips of one who loves you.

And you will recollect that you may play your soul away with the devil, that you may listlessly think it a matter of no importance. But there lives at least one who is in earnest about your soul, and one who before he came here wrestled with his God for strength to preach to you, and who will, when he has gone from this place, will not forget his hearers this morning.

I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to do something for him. Loving them in.

[28 : 41] Loving people. Loving Jesus. Loving the Jesus that saved us. Wanting to introduce the Jesus who saved us to men and women, boys and girls, young and old, of bringing this message, of bringing this Jesus.

Moody often said that doctrines were important, that creeds were important, but he said this, doctrines are all right in their places, but when you put them in the place of faith or salvation, they become sin.

If a man should ask me to his house to dinner tomorrow, the street would be a very good thing to take me to his house, but if I didn't get into the house, I wouldn't get any dinner.

Now a creed is a road or a street. It's very good as far as it goes, but if it doesn't take us to Christ, it is worthless. By contrast, he said this, as a rule I have had for years is to treat the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal friend.

His is not a creed, a mere doctrine, but it is he himself that we have. And if there's one thing that this world needs, if it's one thing that the 17,000 people groups in this world needs, if there's one thing that the city of Edinburgh needs, if it's one thing that the people of Bruntsfield need, if it's one thing that your family needs, if it's one thing that your friends need, if it's one thing the people that you work with need, if it's one thing that the people you live next door to need, they need him.

[30 : 16] They need Jesus. They need his grace. They need his forgiveness. They need his love. They need his compassion. And we may be the only people in their lives that have Jesus to share with them.

God is never limited. God can work with us or without us. But God has chosen to use us, ordinary instruments in his hands, to accomplish extraordinary work.

Whether it's through servants who go to the ends of the earth. Whether it's to those who stand in pulpits and proclaim Jesus. Or whether it's you and me who sit down over a cup of coffee to listen, to share, to tell, to show the love that we have for Jesus and the love that we have for people.

We need to pray. We need to speak. We need to serve. We love Jesus. And we simply want to do something for him. May God bless you as a church.

May God bless you individually. Members of families. May God use you wherever you are, whoever you are, that you might commend this Jesus. The Jesus that you love.

[31 : 32] That you might commend this Jesus to the people that you love. And that you might commend the people that you love to Jesus. Praying that he would open eyes that are blind.

That he would change hearts that are dead. That he would transform lives. So that his name would be praised. So that his kingdom would be extended.

And that his church would grow. May God bless us. And may God bless you all. Good day. Good day. Good day. Good day.

Good day. Good day. Good day. Good day. Good day. Good day.