

Mobilizing ourselves (PCN) to Pray

Matthew 18:20 *“For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.”*

Intro:

Mother Teresa appeared on the Robert Shuler television program in 1989.

Shuler reminded Mother Teresa that she was on national and international television, including her native country, Yugoslavia.

Robert Shuler asked Mother Teresa if there was any one thing she would like to convey to all of her listeners.

And her response was, “Yes, tell them to pray. And tell the parents to teach their children to pray.”

In a nutshell Mother Teresa said that prayer preceded all good works. She said we connect with Jesus Christ before we can truly connect with our neighbor.

Have you ever wondered why it seems that so many Christians who witness, going in the name of Jesus – come back empty handed as far as effectively winning or having any kind of spiritual impact on the unsaved?

Have you ever wondered why there seems to be such a lack of concern over those who are unsaved or unchurched?

I recall when I was growing up in church that we would have special prayer meetings and people would request prayer for their unsaved loved ones.

Of course, they would also request prayer for every ache and pain they had and for a long time many of the prayer requests were for what ailed people rather praying for the lost.

I believe one of the main reasons for this lack of fruitfulness, that is most churches not seeing the unsaved being saved, is that we have **failed as a collective church to sufficiently involve God** – Immediately I hear someone say, “But how have we not involved God – Let me give you what I feel is the answer: **through prayer** – in our reaching the unsaved.

I want to refer to this as **Pre-Evangelism Praying**.

The Word of God is clear and concise when it shows us that we must involve the omnipotent, that is the Almighty and All-powerful God of the universe to reach down and work in people’s lives before we can do anything effectively.

As a matter of fact, when we work without God’s help we usually end up doing more harm spiritually to people than helping them.

One of our newly converted couples came to me Wednesday night and they were so concerned that they weren’t doing enough for God.

Oh, folks, listen to me, I so appreciated this. Why is it that those who are new believers are so eager to do something for Jesus?

Folks, this gets me excited about when I hear this from our new believers in Christ.

And I don’t mean this to put any of the rest of us down, but it behooves all of us to have again this kind of excitement and enthusiasm to want to serve Christ.

For many of us, we have drifted from that excitement. It could very well be what I’ve mentioned in my last several sermons: ***“You’ve lost your first love.”***

Pre-evangelism praying is a must, (Praying before we talk to people about Jesus), if we are going to witness God working in people's lives and witnessing mighty conviction of sin in their lives.

I don't know if any of you remember when unsaved people would actually get physically sick and go to the doctor to find out what was wrong with them and the doctor couldn't find anything wrong with them physically.

And the real problem was they were actually sin sick.

I recall people coming to the church and going to the altar to get saved and afterwards feel perfectly alright.

“Why is it so important to involve God in the life of the person we are trying to reach for Jesus before we try to share the Gospel?”

Let me give you that answer: Because Satan will do everything in his power to keep in his kingdom those who already belong to him.

And, listen, Pre-Evangelism praying is the only thing that will bring the omnipotent God of heaven into the struggle of rescuing souls from Satan's kingdom and transforming them into Jesus' kingdom.” - Evelyn Christenson

13 For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, Colossians 1:13

It's very important for us to understand that **winning the lost for Christ is a battle for lost souls.**

Let me repeat what I just said: It's vitally important for us to understand that winning the lost/the unsaved for Christ and His Church is a battle for lost souls.

Actually **it's a Spiritual Warfare that is being waged that involves two supernatural**, but not equal, powers.

So, if we understand that - Then what we have to do is mobilize ourselves as a body of believers to engage in this battle in order to see our loved ones saved so they can go to heaven with us when it comes time for us to go, whether that be in the Rapture of the church or when we die.

There are two biblical examples that show us why we should pray and we must – **pray intensely these pre-evangelism prayers**.

Let me talk to you about the Parable of the Seeds.

Turn your Bibles with me to Luke 8:4-12

(Now – let me share something with you – It's important for you as a Believer to bring your Bible with you to church. For all us here this morning, we are getting ready to do something that we've really never done. So, we must get serious about this! I realize we put the Scripture on the screen for everyone, but this can't be a substitute for you to bring your Bible and turning to these Scriptures.

Let me try to explain the importance of this and why – You see – All of us need to use our Bible – bring a highlighter or a pen and mark these Scriptures so that you can use them and be reminded of them when you are reading your Bible for devotion. Most every week we give you an outline. Go to Office supply and get a three ring note book that would hold these sermon outlines, so you can refer to them at any time.

We can't allow the Screen to become a substitute for using our own Bibles.)

4 "While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, He told this parable: 5"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. 6Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. 7Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. 8Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

When He said this, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

9 His disciples asked Him what this parable meant. 10 He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, " 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

1) Seed Stealing

Jesus taught us that the seed that fell by the side of the road was trampled under foot and the birds ate it up.

Look with me to **vv. 11-12**

Jesus was teaching that a **supernatural warfare** is going on at this point of the struggle.

Jesus said **The Seed** is the Word of God. **(The Gospel of Jesus)**

The devil is the one who comes like a bird and snatches up the seed from **the unprepared heart**, the heart of the person we haven't really spent time in prayer for, so that people in Devil's grip cannot believe and be saved.

So what we have to learn is – we are in a Spiritual battle for the souls of those we love.

The heart of mankind has to be prepared by the Holy Spirit before we can effectively share Jesus with them, otherwise we will not see the seed take root and grow in the heart of the one we are trying to reach for Jesus.

So the lesson is that we must seriously pray before we can see the Word of God and our Witness to people be effective.

2) Blinded Eyes

In this Spiritual Battle Satan is very active in blocking any efforts to reach our unsaved loved ones for Jesus.

He does this by **Blinding the minds of the unbelievers.**

Let me give you Scriptural proof for this found in II Corinthians 4:3-4

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age(the devil) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The Word of God says these people who are unsaved and unchurched are perishing.

An Old Hymn called Rescue the Perishing:

Rescue the Perishing; Care for the dying;
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.
Weep over the erring one; Lift up the fallen;
Tell them of Jesus, the Mighty to Save.

Though they are slighting Him, Still He is waiting,
Waiting for the penitent child to receive.
Plead with them earnestly, Plead with the gently;
He will forgive if they only believe.

Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter

Feelings lie buried that grace can restore.
Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness,

Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.

Rescue the perishing, Duty demands it, Strength for thy labor
the Lord will provide.

Back to the narrow way Patiently win them;
Tell the poor wanderer a Savior has died.

Rescue the perishing; Care the dying.
Jesus is merciful; Jesus will save.

Folks, what is happening is the devil, the god of this world is blinding
our unsaved loved ones.

He has them imprisoned in his evil kingdom by clouding their minds
so they cannot even think about spiritual things.

He has put spiritual blinders on them.

Have you noticed when we try our best to witness to those who are
unsaved or we try to invite them to come to church what happens?

You see our Gospel sharing and witnessing are lost because Satan
gobbles up the Gospel seed.

Supernaturally he clouds their minds and keeps them from seeing
spiritually.

Even when we diligently live Jesus in front of them, they're not able to
see the glory of Jesus Christ because of Satan's tactics to keep them
blinded to the Gospel.

So What is the Answer?

PRAYER! PRE-EVANGELISM PRAYER!

**Before we try to share the Gospel of Christ to these people, we
must pray to an omnipotent God who will reach down and
remove the veil Satan has firmly planted there.**

So, Believer friends, we are in a Spiritual Battle when it comes to trying to get people unsaved to come to Christ and His Church.

God has to do a supernatural work in people before we try to reach them with human efforts.

This is called Prevenient Grace. This is the Grace of God through the Holy Spirit that goes to a person and the Holy Spirit prepares that person to be ready to consider Christ as their Savior and Lord.

In the early 1980's a special group started a prayer ministry called: **"Triplet Praying."**

- Three together praying is not uncommon in the Bible.
- Jesus had His inner circle of three – Peter, James and John.
- Ecclesiastes 4:12 says rightly, ***"A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart."***
- Jesus promises His presence when two or three are gathered in His name.
- The Mt. of Transfiguration gives the example of Jesus taking three with Him.
- Just before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus took three with Him into the inner Garden of Gethsemane.

What is Triplet Praying?

This is encouraging three Believers getting together and each one of them praying for three unsaved people (making a total of nine), and these three believers getting together once a week for a minimum of 15 minutes to pray exclusively for those nine and especially for their salvation.

For example: If the Pataskala Church of the Nazarene would have full participation, we would have approximately 300 adults praying in Threes, praying for nine, which would equal 100 groups, each group praying for nine, we would be praying for close to a 1,000 unsaved people to be saved each week.

Story:

Today, Brian Mills told me, (Evelyn Christenson), prayer Triplets are an accepted part of church life around the world. He beamed as he told me of one church where thirty people found Christ without any campaigning or knocking on doors – just Triplet Praying. Pre-evangelism Triplet Praying really works.

Illustration:

I was honored to be on staff back in the late 1970's at Lancaster, Ohio, where John Maxwell was the Senior Pastor.

The Lancaster Church as known as one of the leading Soul-winning Churches in the holiness movement.

I remember every Thursday we would have a group of soul-winners who got together and prayed that the Holy Spirit of God would go before them to people they would be visiting to prepare them to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It's no wonder this church grew from 350 to approximately 1400 people per Sunday while I was there.

It was the prayers of the soul-winners that made it effective.

The Uniqueness of Triplet Praying

1) Where to Pray: The three Believers praying for their unsaved nine should already be spending time together in a church, office, school, community, or neighborhood.

The suggestion is that you pray where you already are.

As I've already been preaching and suggesting - Coming an extra half-hour before church would be a great time for you to get together with your Three for Pre-Evangelism Prayer.

2) No Great Expense: This does not require anyone to spend extra money to organize a prayer group.

So money is not a factor!

3) Time needed: Any group already established can spend 15 minutes a week praying for the unsaved.

Any Believer truly burdened for the lost can carve out that much time.

However, Triplet praying is not limited to fifteen minutes.

The group can pray as long as God burdens their heart to pray for the unsaved.

The main thing is spending 15 minutes in prayer for nine people who need Christ in their lives.

3) Accountability: When a person is committed to a small group, they are much less likely to skip meetings or stop going altogether.

All of us feel more faithful when we are accountable to at least one other person.

Also, praying alone can weary us.

4) Encouragement: Sharing answers to prayers and especially seeing one of your nine come to Christ is a great sense of encouragement and gives a new resolve and zeal to the whole group.

This can also be a time when all share their disappointments in reaching their three for Jesus and others can encourage the others to stay faithful in praying, upholding one another in prayer.

Remember we definitely are in spiritual warfare.

Relationship of pray – ers: Close spiritual relationships between the three or more praying is one of the positive dimensions of Triplet Praying. There is a tendency to share most deeply our walk with the Lord with those whom we pray with. You can be honest and transparent in a group like this, sharing burdens and other personal feelings.

5) Jesus in Our Midst: When Jesus said in Matthew 18:20 that *“Where two or three are gathered together in My name,*

there I am in the midst of them,” He was promising a very unique experience.

It’s not that He isn’t present in other prayer meetings, but a very rare dimension of Jesus seems to emerge when a group of two or three faithfully continues to pray together.

Where to Find the Other Two Prayer Partners

Each person should first of all pray who God wants in your Triplet group.

Be sure they either share your concern for the lost needing Jesus, or they will catch the burden from you and or God.

For a successful Triplet Prayer Group, the three believers should already be in close proximity to each other some time during the week.

They should live, work, or worship close enough to enable them to get together weekly without undue effort.

Also in choosing your two prayer partners, make sure they truly know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

There is not New Testament promise that God will answer the intercessory prayers of anybody except those who are true followers of Jesus.

Jesus said in John 14:6, ***“No man comes to the Father, but through Me.”***

However, if someone really isn’t a true believer, don’t be surprised if they suddenly realize they also need to accept Jesus – and then they do!

Where to Organize Triplet Prayer Groups

In our Church: This is most ready made place for getting your group together.

However, if you live a considerable distance from your local church, you could actually have two believers who live closer to you.

Here is a testimony: “Some churches have been revolutionized by adopting Triplet Prayer Groups as a congregation, with attendance at regular church meetings tripling. Other churches saw a harvest reaped through church-related missions (evangelistic events), and all indications are that the people who had been prayed for were the ones who received Christ during such missions.”

“One person had already come to Christ and others were being exposed to the Gospel who never had been before.

Other positive effects such as deepened prayer among the congregation, the unity of the church body, and the passing on of Triplet Group Praying to other churches and denominations are blossoming.

How does this effect our Youth?

Brian St. Clair of Reachout Ministries of Norcross, Georgia tells of phenomenal results to Triplet Group Praying among teens. Prayer meetings are being held in schools and they have seen God’s power sweep across schools and multitudes of students coming to know Christ.

A youth pastor in Hawaii had 200 of his kids in prayer Triplets – and 80 for whom they were praying for accepted Christ.

Wherever Triplet Prayer Groups are involved, there are incredible changes on those campuses themselves.

What not to do in a Triplet Prayer Group

Don’t spend time in chatting or having food or beverages during your prayer time.

The time you have together is dedicated entirely to praying for those who need Jesus.

The time should be devoted to praying for the nine people who need Jesus.

Why pray once a week?

Jesus gives us this example in Luke 11 when He told about the person asking his neighbor for bread at midnight.

“And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.”

These verbs in the original Greek **ask, seek and find** are in the tense that says it like this:

***“Keep on asking
“Keep on Seeking
“Keep on knocking”***

So it really means for us to keep on persisting in prayer.

Mobilizing ourselves to begin praying as a Triplet Prayer Group.

Starting a new ministry in our church is not always easy to do.

While prayer is something that is not new, Triplet Praying is new.

Some of you have small groups already, but you would need to break your group into three's and then intentionally list your nine unsaved people whom you will pray for and then pray for them at least 15 minutes a week.

