

Paul H. Dixon: It was April the 13th, 1970 and Apollo 13 was streaking toward the moon. All of a sudden at 10:08 PM an explosion rocked that spacecraft and there came the voice of astronaut Jim Lovell. He said, "Houston, we've got a problem." And what a problem they had because for the first time in the history of the space program, we had men out in space and we didn't know that we could get them back again.

From all over this nation and around the world, people with expertise offered help. People gathered in churches and gathered in homes to pray. We eagerly listened to the radio and watched on television and read the newspaper reports because we were anxious over three lost men. Finally, there was the splash down in the ocean. They were picked up by the helicopter and flown to the ship and when they stepped off of that helicopter, someone asked John Swaggart if he had prayed. He replied, "I sure did. And I believe the prayers of a lot of people are the only reason we're back here today." A nation, a world concerned about three lost men went to God. We would get justice concerned about practically an entire world that is lost around us, eternally lost without Jesus Christ as their savior.

My first message to you this year was on the Cedarville College student and his Bible. The second message was on the Cedarville College student and his prayer life. My message today is on the Cedarville College student and a lost world. Would you turn with me please to the 19th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. The classic passage in the life of our Lord on the lostness of men.

"And Jesus," verse one, "entered in past through Jericho. And behold," every time you find the word behold in the Gospel of Luke, underline it, something fantastic is about to happen. "Behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus which was the chief among the publicans and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus." I have that, see, circled in my Bible. Who he was-

"And could not for the press because he was little of stature. And he ran before and climbed up in a sycamore tree to," here it is again, circle it, "See Him for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up," that's always an amazing thing to me, that God would look up to Zacchaeus. It's one thing for God to condescend to even look down upon man, but for God to look up as he did on this occasion, and circle it, saw Him. Twice that Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus.

That's wonderful. Better yet the scripture says "Jesus saw him and said unto him, Zacchaeus make haste and come down, for today I must," an interesting study would be to study the 'I must' of the Gospels, the 'I must' of Jesus. "I must abide at thy house. And he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. When they all saw it, they murmured saying that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, 'Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I've taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him for,' and Jesus said unto him,

'This day is salvation.' Come to this house for as much as he also is the son of Abraham," underline it, circle it, memorize it. "For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." I want to give you three simple things to write down, to take back to your dormitories to take with regarding the lostness of man. Number one, there is the need today to have the great conviction that men are lost. The need to have the great conviction that men are lost. Oh, you say Brother Dixon, everyone believes that, every Christian. At a large gathering of Christian college students, some 13,000 students were gathered who were interested in missions. When the poll was taken, 'do you believe that the heathen are lost?' Only 60% of those college students had that Conviction. If I were to survey this Cedarville College student body, I'm convinced it would be almost a hundred percent. We believe the heathen are lost. That's why we believe in missions. That's why we have M-I-S. That's why we have missionary conferences. That's why we have F-W-M. That's why many of us are going to the foreign fields. But I'm not asking it to be a belief.

I believe it must go beyond that. It must become a conviction. Now, perhaps it's just in my thinking. Maybe it's semantics, but what I am saying is this, when it's a conviction, it's a driving force. It is not just a passing thought. It's not something we just give lip service to. It's something that motivates us. It's something that occupies our thinking, a conviction that men are lost. That was the conviction Jesus had. It's interesting that in John 3:16, the word perish is the same Greek word that is translated lost in Luke 19:10, in Matthew 10:28, "fear not them who can destroy the body but rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body and hell."

The Greek word for destroy is the same word that is translated perish in John 3:16 and lost in Luke 19:10. The Bible has much to say about man's lost condition. He is said to be perishing, going to eternal destruction, under condemnation, under the wrath of God. To be spiritually blind, to be spiritually dead, to be without hope, to be without God, to be without illumination, to be without liberty, to be without excuse. That's lost. This is serious.

It was such a conviction with the Lord Jesus that as you study his life, he spent much of his waking moments out with lost people. He was concerned about them. He ministered to the masses. He ministered to the men groups. He would skip meals. He would not sleep at nights. He would go out in the middle of the night to meet a Nicodemus. He would go out of his way to meet a Samaritan woman, an adulterous woman. He rubbed shoulders with the lost people. He prayed for the lost people. He witnessed to the lost people.

Every great movement has always started with someone or some group having this conviction. A John Knox who would prostrate himself on the floor at night and say, "Give me Scotland or else I die." A Henry Martyn who would go to India

and say, "Here, let me burn out for God." A George Whitfield who would get into his boat and cross the Atlantic 12 times because he believed that 13 American colonies were lost. Jim Elliot and his friends who graduated from Wheaton College and went to Ecuador and died in their mid-twenties with those Indian spears sticking through their backs because they had the great conviction that an obscure tribe of Auca Indians was lost and they had to be reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I recall when I was a student hearing an evangelist. An evangelist by the name of Jack Wyrzten. I was not converted until I was a senior in high school, at little [inaudible] background. When I went off to Bible college, I'd never read a single book of the Bible. Everything was new to me. They talked about Southern Baptist and I thought they meant all the Baptists who lived in the South. They talked about mixed swimming and I thought that they meant that you didn't swim together in the different races. That's what I thought mixed swimming meant. Found out it meant something else a little bit later.

Jack Wyrzten gave his testimony one day and as I listened to Jack Wyrzten that week, I found out something early in my Christian life that I detect in listening to some of you, you still haven't learned. And I go through, move through my Christian life and it appears that some people go their entire Christian lives have never learned this. I was fortunate and I had the circumstances to happen that I learned it early. I found out you need two kinds of preachers in your life. You need instructors and you need motivators.

There are some people who just like instruction. I was saved under an expositor. My pastor spent two and a half years in the book of Revelation on Sunday night and three years on the book of Genesis on Sunday mornings. He not only preached every verse and every word he preached every jot and every tittle. Wonderful Bible teacher. I loved him. I love him today I was saved under an expositor, an exegete. Jack Wyrzten wasn't an expositor. Jack Wyrzten was a motivator. Many times I'm with pastors and they have conferences on the Sunday school and they bring in all the knowledgeable people-

Do that about three years. And they said, "Hey Paul, could you recommend someone now to come in who'll tell us to go out and do something rather than just taking all these notes?" We have all the information, now we need to build the Sunday school. Many times we get all the instruction and don't do anything with the instruction. You need the instructor in your life and you need the motivator in your life. Now, some people just like the instruction.

Oh man, they don't like the guy who comes in and he shares experiences and he gives illustrations and he gets excited. Usually death on evangelists. I've preached Christian colleges all across this country, and I've had the students to come who've always had a rich ministry on on the college campus, and I've had them come after a period of time and say, "Oh, we had such preconceived

notions about you. It took us a while to get through the fact that you were an evangelist for us to listen to you." And the students would share this with me.

Then there are others and all they are the motivation and they don't like the Bible conference speaker. Those who like the instructors would travel 10 miles to hear the Bible teacher. They wouldn't walk across the street to hear the evangelists. Those who liked the motivation would drive 10 miles to hear a Van Impe or someone like that, but they wouldn't walk across the street to hear the Bible teacher. You need both. If all you have is instruction, you'll be deader than four o'clock. You'll have a lot of knowledge. If all you like is the motivation, you'll have a lot of zeal, but it won't be according to knowledge. You have to have both instruction and motivation.

Oh, you say, "Why can't every preacher be both?" I guess it's because we're human beings just like you are. We're sinners just like you are. That means we're out of balance. And the ideal is to be balanced, but there aren't very many of us totally balanced. And all of you who are going to be preachers, I trust that you'll be that person who will be able to put it all together. Well, Jack Wyrzten was a motivator. And Jack Wyrzten told how that when he was a young businessman, he would meet at noon with other businessmen in New York City and they would meet in a specific room and they would pray. And as they would gather and pray and they would pray for lost people, one day in the middle of their praying, they were located in a place where you could hear the people walking overhead. And every-

... walking and every day they heard it. But all of a sudden in the middle of their prayer, they stopped and looked at each other and just started to weep. They said, "God, those are people. We can't see them, but hundreds, thousands of people, and probably most of them are going to hell and someone needs to reach them with the gospel." He said, "We wept and wept." And that day, word of life was born. The seed was sown, the conviction was given. Oh, we must have the great conviction that men are lost.

Number two, we must hear the great cry that men are lost. I love this account. I love Zacchaeus. We get a sketch of Zacchaeus. We know he was Jewish because Zacchaeus is a Jewish name. We know his employment, he was a tax collector. In fact, the head tax collector, top IRS man in those days. And he was wealthy, and the only way you became a wealthy tax collector if you were a crook. So here he was, a rich, crooked, Jewish tax collector who is also a short man. And this little, short, cocky, Jewish, crooked, wealthy tax collector walks around with the chip on his shoulder, daring everyone to knock it off. And he hears that Jesus is coming to town. He wanted to see Jesus just like everyone else, but there was such a crowd, he couldn't get to the road.

Probably tried to look over their heads, but he's too short on tiptoes. Maybe tried to look through their legs. No way, too deep. Can't stop a guy like this. Don't you like someone like it? I do. I like someone you can't stop. And

Zacchaeus is going to see Jesus. He looks down the road and there's a climbing tree. You ever see a climbing tree that's not full of 9, 10, 11 year old boys on a parade day? Here kids are probably hanging all over the tree, zacchaeus runs down, starts shimmying up the tree. How many times have you seen a businessman climb a tree to see a parade? I wouldn't do it. None of our administrators would do it. None of our faculty would do it. Dr. Phipps. He might, I'm not sure.

He's climbing up that tree and he's pushing the kids out to the ends of the limbs and he's sitting right there in the crotch of the tree, grinned from ear to ear. You know a guy like this, you can't stop him. And when he succeeds and everyone thought you could stop him, he's so proud. And he's up there in that tree grinning from ear to ear and Jesus walks, stops under the tree, looks up and says, "Zacchaeus." Wonder he didn't have a heart attack. Probably thought, "Man, I knew I had a reputation, but I didn't know he knew about me."

"Zacchaeus make haste, come down, today I must abide at thy house." The scripture says he made haste, came down. Only one way you make haste out of a tree, jumped out of the tree. He comes sailing out of that tree and got saved somewhere between the limb and the ground. You say, how do you know that? Two ways. Jesus and Zacchaeus go home arm in arm. And by the way, all the religious leaders criticize this. There he goes, going home with a sinner. We had better take time to eat and drink with sinners because Jesus did. He always-

... had tough sinners. They go home arm in arm, and the way I know that Zacchaeus was saved is his life was changed. I have little time today for those people who tell me they're saved and their life hasn't been changed. Zacchaeus said, "Everything I've stolen, I'm going to give it back fourfold." That's what the law taught. You see the word, 'if' in verse eight could legitimately be translated, 'what.' "What I have taken anything from any man, I'll restore him fourfold."

Secondly, I know he was saved is the word of God says so. Jesus said, "This day is salvation, come to this house."

Zacchaeus was lost and Zacchaeus was empty and he was crying out for help, but no one heard him but Jesus. The very fact that he's up there in that tree. The riches had not satisfied, the prestige had not satisfied, his position in life, and he's crying out for help and only Jesus was tuned in. Well I am trying to tell you this morning is all around us are people who are crying out for help. They don't know-

... we do and we need to be tuned in. We need to hear that cry. Sometimes I get the idea we think no one wants what we have. I get all the pessimistic stories about such a bleak day and a dark day. I want to tell you, you are living in the greatest day for evangelism that has ever existed. You are living in the greatest day to serve the Lord and reach a world that there has ever been. I wouldn't

want to live in Spurgeon's day, I wouldn't want to live in Moody's day. I want to live right now and do the job that God has given us to do.

A few weeks ago I was flying from San Francisco to Tulsa. When I fly, I pray for God's direction as to who will be seated next to me. Anymore you don't have a choice, the computer assigns you a seat. So I know that God can very definitely direct in that assigned seat. It was about a four hour trip because we had to go from San Francisco to LA and about 45 minutes in LA and then on to Tulsa. I sat down next to a young businesswoman. We had not been in the air 30 minutes and she started sharing with me some of her great needs. And I started giving her the gospel. And she shared with me that she had been divorced and she shared with me all the affairs, six different men, and I suppose she was 31 years old. A 12 year old boy living with his grandparents, a lot of money, beautiful home, great car, everything else. And all of a sudden she just started weeping, right on the airplane. Tears started flowing down her cheeks. Now I had the opportunity of giving the word a God and having a ministry in that woman's life for four hours-

... on that airplane. I am telling you that today is the day of the hungry heart. I am saying that all around us there are people who are crying out for help like Zacchaeus. Not only is there the need to have the great conviction, number two, there is the need to hear the great cry. And number three, there is the need to heed the great commission. Jesus said, "I have a commission. My commission is to seek and to save that which was lost." Why did you come, Jesus? "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost." This was foremost in his mind.

Do you remember what happened before he left? He called his followers around and he said, "Now I want you to go. I want you to go into all the world and I want you to preach the Gospel. I want you to make disciples. I want you to baptize them." A few days later he said, "Now in case you didn't get that, I want to run it by one more time. You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all-"

"... and in Sumeria and unto the uttermost parts of the world." And then you take the book of Acts and you find an alive church doing what he told him to do. They started out in the early church in Jerusalem that had 4 million people and they had 120 witnesses. That's one Christian for approximately every 30,000 people. And by the time you get to Acts 5:28, the people who lived in Jerusalem said, "Those Christians have filled this city with their doctrine." We haven't even filled Cedarville. And there's one of us to every two people. There was one of them to every 30,000. And they didn't have any tracks, no completed Bible, no buses, no WCDR, no television, no buildings to meet in. How did they do it? Everyone fulfilling his responsibility to obey the commission that the savior had given.

One of the great dangers that we face and every Christian institution faces, is that we become some kind of a monastery. And we all shut ourselves out from the world and we have our dorm prayer meetings and our private devotions. We study the Bible together and we have our discipleship groups and we have all of our Bible classes. Oh yes, we do have Christian services and we send out our teams and we give lip service to evangelism. But each one of us, President, administrators, faculty, staff, every student, we are saved and we are accountable to be a witness for Jesus Christ. And there isn't any time out say, "Well, I'm going to take four years out and then I will do that." Oh no. Yes, we have responsibility to take care of our academic areas and to take care of them well, but I am convinced with a discipline of time, we can all get busy at this thing of reaching people for Christ.

I'm sure you're concerned about your friends back home. Write some letters, make some telephone calls. One of my good friends called me while I was a college student that I'd witnessed to, to tell me long distance that he'd now been saved. Witness to those friends. We must reach our community. We must do it in good taste, and carefully. I realize if all of us turn loose today at noon, 1,500 of us and counting faculty and staff or so, 1,650 of us and there are 2,500 of them, they're going to feel like that we're suddenly dropping down on them with a bang. And that's not the idea.

You know why things happened? I think all of us are waiting for the other guy to do it. Therefore it's just not being done. Did you ever go down our main street after it gets dark? You ever see all those young people standing around? Did you ever watch them lining those streets, standing on the street corners? You talk about emptiness, you talk about lostness.

God give us a burden for our community. God give us a burden for everyone who needs to be reached for Christ, young and old alike. We must reach our community. We must reach our county. Cedarville College located in Green County has a responsibility in reaching the lost. We must reach our state. There is no school like this in the state of Ohio. If we're going to reach the multitudes, it must start out of this institution. We must reach this nation, and this world for Jesus Christ.

To do that, we must have the same conviction and hear the same cry and heed that commission as our Savior did who said, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost." We cannot do the saving, but thank God we can share in the seeking. Shall we bow for prayer? Our Father, thank you for saving us and giving us a commission. Help us to chew up this message and to see how we can apply at every one of us. Bless us through this day. Meet the needs of our college family. In Jesus name, Amen. God bless you.