

3 *The Passion of the Evangelist*

First, the true evangelist cannot rest at peace while souls are perishing, dying because they have never had the chance to experience the grace of Jesus Christ. The heart and soul of the evangelist focuses on the lost. He or she may minister to the saints in various capacities, but the heart inside constantly yearns to be in the harvest fields among the perishing. Many believers live perfectly comfortable lives, happy to be saved, oblivious to the lost all around them. But the man or woman whom Jesus has touched with His burden for dying souls finds a restlessness inside that is not so easily satisfied.

As Proverbs 24:11-12 warns:

Deliver those who are drawn toward
death,
And hold back those stumbling to the
slaughter.
If you say, 'Surely we did not know this,'
Does not He who weighs the hearts
consider it?
He who keeps your soul, does He not

know it?
And will He not render to each man
according to his deeds?

How easy it is to claim that we did not know, that we did not see the souls perishing all around us. Many people who lived right next door to the Nazi concentration camps during World War II claimed afterwards that they knew nothing about what was going on inside those places of death. Remember Jesus' response to the wicked who claimed ignorance in Matthew 25:44-46,

Then they also will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?" Then He will answer them, saying, "Assuredly, I say to you, *inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.*" (Emphasis added)

While riding in a coach one day in England more than a hundred years ago, the Lord gave a vision to William Booth, the mighty evangelist who founded and built the Salvation Army. Here is part of his description of that vision, lengthy but highly worth considering:

I saw a dark and stormy ocean. Over it the black clouds hung heavily; through

which thunder rolled; and every now and then vivid lightening flashed. The winds moaned, and the waves rose and foamed and fretted and broke, and rose to foam and fret and break again.



Young William Booth Preaching ¹

In that ocean I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shrieking and cursing, and struggling and drowning, and as they cursed and shrieked, they rose and shrieked again, then sank to rise no more.

Out of this dark angry ocean I saw a mighty rock rise up above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea.