

Subject: *The Urgent Call to Evangelism*

Scripture: *Luke 16:19-31*

Last Tuesday was the anniversary of 9/11 and we were reminded how many people died in those terrible attacks. Just think of the lives that were lost:

- Total number killed in attacks in New York: **2,753**
- Number of firefighters and paramedics killed: **343**
- Number of police officers killed: **60**
- Age of the greatest number who died: **between 35-39**

Every time I think of it a sinking feeling comes to my heart. I wonder how many of them went to Heaven and how many went to Hell. Trinity Church is located right next to Ground Zero and there is a small cemetery on the church property. The cemetery has been there for many years and those upright monuments to the dead are constant reminders that it is appointed unto man once to die. I wonder if the people who worked in those twin towers ever thought about their death as they passed by that cemetery day after day.

On 9/11, many of the first responders died as they answered the call of duty. We admire their courage and commitment and thank God for people who put their lives on the line every day. God's people have a call to answer. It's an urgent call to evangelism. It is urgent because people are dying and going into eternity every day, some are going to Heaven and some are going to Hell. Think about these facts for a minute:

- Worldwide, 3 people die **every second**
- 180 people die **every minute**
- Nearly 11,000 die **every hour**
- More than 250,000 people die **every day**
- They go either to **Heaven or Hell**

The urgent call to evangelism comes from four directions:

1. The Call from Above

- **Matthew 28:18-19** ¹⁸ *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* ¹⁹ *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Jesus invites lost sinners to come. He commands us to go.*
- **Isaiah 6:8** *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

2. The Call from Within

- **2 Corinthians 5:14-15** ¹⁴ *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:* ¹⁵ *And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.* This is not our love for Christ, but His love for us. His love compels us to tell others. In that same passage, **2 Corinthians 5:20** *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

3. The Call from Without

- **Romans 10:13-15** ¹³ *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* ¹⁴ *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?* ¹⁵ *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* People need the Lord. They need someone to tell them the truth. They will be saved if they only believe in Christ. They can't believe if they don't hear. They can't hear unless somebody tells them.
- **Acts 8:30-31** ³⁰ *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?* ³¹ *And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.* People don't understand the Bible. That's where we come in. Some of us have been in church all our life and we ought to know enough to help them. You don't have to be a Bible scholar to be a guide. As a Christian, you ought to know more than a lost person.

4. The Call from Below

- **Two people (rich man and Lazarus)** - What a contrast in these two men. They had two things in common: they both lived and they both died.
- **Two places (Heaven and Hell)** – Heaven is described as Abraham's bosom. That is a Jewish way of understanding it. On the other hand Hell is an awful place. It is a place of unbearable suffering ("torment" is mentioned four times (vs. 23, 24, 25, 28). It is a place of unquenchable fire. It is a place of unforgettable memories. It is a place of unchangeable separation. It is a place of undesirable companions. It is a place of unquestionable justice. We have noticed what the rich man said, but think about what he did not say. The rich man didn't say a word in his own defense. He knew that he deserved to be there. Someone said, "Hell is truth seen too late."
- **Two prayers (Help me...Help my brothers)** - The rich man may have prayed very little on earth, but that is different now. First, he prayed for himself. He cried out for Abraham to help him. But that was impossible. There was "a great gulf fixed." Then he prayed for his five brothers. He wanted Lazarus to "testify to his five brothers so they wouldn't go to Hell. The word "testify" means to solemnly declare or warn. He pleads, "Send Lazarus and let him warn them about this awful place." But that was impossible. No one can go from Heaven and no one can go from Hell to warn the lost. That's where we come in. We have the opportunity and the obligation to tell them. Just think if it were possible for someone to leave Heaven and witness to the lost. Think of what they would say: "It's better than you can ever imagine. It's worth it all." And just think if it were possible for someone to leave Hell and witness to the lost. Think of what they would say: "It's awful. It's worse than you think. Please don't go there."

Satan has convinced some people that there is no Heaven and there is no Hell, but his most convincing lie is this...there's no hurry. Just put it off a little longer. There's no need to get serious about your soul. That's the greatest lie of all.

- **"A man is a fool who thinks, because he does not believe in Hell, that his opinion shuts the door and puts out the fire."** - Billy Sunday

"Rescue the Perishing"

