

“Words to Winners of Souls”:
Fuel for the Final Year of the MEFC 2025 Vision
Sermon Notes

➤ **By the grace of God our church has the gospel *right*,
so...by the grace of God let's get the gospel out**

**O that every Christ-follower among us would...*

1. Burn with evangelistic passion (v.1a)

“Brothers, my **heart's desire**...for them...”

2. Plead in evangelistic prayer (vv.1b)

“Brothers, my...**prayer to God** for them...”

3. Imagine the evangelistic possibilities (v.1c)

“Brothers...that they may be **saved.**”

Next Sunday: “Friendship By the Book” - Various Proverbs

Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of January 7th - 13th

This week, it's our privilege to "interview" Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), the man on whose trail I've spent the last year reading, learning, and pondering. Hebrews 13:7 summons us to "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you, and considering the outcome of their way of life - imitate their faith" - and by that measure, this man is worthy of our consideration. Bonar was a 19th century pastor, poet, church leader, and perhaps the most beloved hymn-writer in the history of Scotland. Though his name is not nearly as well known today as it ought to be, it is known in the history of the church synonymous with an evangelistic passion that has served to ignite a flame in the hearts of his hearers. Your mission this week is to read and discuss this interview in your families, community groups, and with other brothers and sisters in the church. With one year remaining in our 2025 Vision, may God grant to us a double portion of the spirit of men the likes of Horatius Bonar.

Q&A With Horatius Bonar on Personal Evangelism

Q: Horatius, it's a gift to sit down with you for a few minutes for this conversation. Though I'm sure there are many keys to effective evangelism, what do you believe is absolutely more important than anything else?

A: "When we can tell...people, 'We beheld His glory, and therefore we speak of it; it is not from report that we speak, but we have *seen* the King in his beauty' - how lofty the position we occupy! Our power in drawing men to Christ springs chiefly from the fulness of our personal joy in Him, and the nearness of our personal communion in Him."¹

Q: So we serve what's in our cupboard, in other words?

A: "[Indeed] The countenance that reflects most of Christ, and shines most with His love and grace, is most fitted to attract the gaze of a careless giddy world, and win restless souls from the fascinations of creature love and creature beauty."²

¹ Horatius Bonar, *Words to Winners of Souls*. P&R Publishing: Philipsburg, NJ. (1844) 1995. p.13.

² p.13.

Q: Tell us more. How else might we reflect the heart of Christ especially as it relates to evangelism?

A: “He that saved our souls taught us to weep over the unsaved [Luke 19:41-44]. Lord, let that mind be in us that was in Thee! Give us thy tears to weep; for, Lord, our hearts are hard toward our fellows. We can see thousands perish around us, and our sleep never be disturbed; no vision of their awful doom ever scaring us, no cry from their lost souls ever turning our peace into bitterness.”³

Q: May that prayer be answered. While we’re thinking about prayer, what’s the role of prayer in the work of evangelism?

A: “Our families, our schools, our congregations, not to speak of our cities at large, our land, our world, might well send us daily to our knees; for the loss of even *one soul* is terrible beyond conception. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man, what a soul in hell must suffer forever. Lord, give us bowels of mercies! ‘What a mystery! The soul and eternity of one man depends upon the voice of another!’”⁴

Q: Amen, brother. Another issue that tends to grind evangelism to a screeching halt is the fear of man. I’ve never met a believer who didn’t struggle with it at least to some degree. What are your thoughts on the importance of courage in evangelism?

A: “The fear of man and the love of his applause have often made us afraid... Instead of bold[ness], there has been... timid[ity]... *We have been timid*. Fear has often led us to smooth down our generalize truths which if broadly stated must have brought hatred and reproach on us... We have feared to alienate friends, or to awaken the wrath of enemies... We have come far short of the example of the apostles, much more of Christ... Yet surely we are to follow His steps; the servant is to walk where his Master has led the way... We must not seek rest or ease in a world where He whom we love had none.”⁵

³ pp.23-34.

⁴ p.24.

⁵ pp.34, 41, and 48.

Q: Agreed. So, what's the next step for us? What encouragement might you offer a church like ours as we stand at the precipice of the final year of our 2025 Vision?

A: “[Consider] Acts 18:9-10 [Take a moment to look up the reference]. Let us see in these verses...Bold speaking...Complete Security...[and] Certain Success.

- I. ***Bold speaking [v.9]***...Whatever be the power, or the rage, or the number of enemies, fear not! Speak out, too, and do not be dumb. Speak out fearlessly, nobly, confidently, the words of truth, the message of God, the gospel of His grace. Let not the fear of man bring a snare. Let not your trumpet give an uncertain sound. Speak so that no man shall mistake the meaning of your message...Do not blunt or muffle your words...Speak aloud and speak clearly; not mistily, or circuitously, or with the enticing words of man's wisdom...that the...world shall hear, whether they like the sound or not. Lift up your voice, utter your testimony, obey your Lord, and deliver your soul [Luke 17:32-33; Revelation 21:8]”.
- II. ***Complete security [v.10a]***...Christ's presence is our true security...No weapon can reach the man thus sheltered...Much there may be of seeming, [though] nothing of real danger. All is safety. No weapon formed against us shall prosper...Come what will, we are safe...A present Christ. That is our security. It is complete and divine. We are immortal till our work is done.
- III. ***Certain success [v.10b]***...In the purpose of God there [is]...a people there already His, though still in idolatry and sin...[Christ says] I have a treasure hid in this field, a flock scattered through this wilderness. Ah, here is election clearly and simply announced, - the eternal purpose and predestination of God. Those ungathered ones are already Christ's. He has them. He reckons them His own...as if they were already in His kingdom...Therefore we work...because we know that we are backed by supernatural power...Let us work in faith...for both the work and the power are God's.”⁶

Amen and amen. Thank you, Horatius, for your time.

⁶ *Light and Truth - Acts and Larger Epistles*. Sermon 34 - pp. 162-165 in: “Safety and Success in Our Work for God”.

https://www.grace-ebooks.com/library/Horatius%20Bonar/HB_Light%20%26%20Truth%20Acts%20and%20Larger%20Epistles.pdf. Accessed 1/5/24 @ 5:30pm.