

ON MISSION TO SHARE JESUS

SERMON

BOBBY WELCH

STICK BY THE STUFF

1 SAMUEL 25:12-13

Some years ago, *Life* magazine had two eye-catching pictures in the same publication. The first was a picture of a log in the Ozark Mountains, where a raccoon and a dog had been chained so that they would fight until one killed the other. This activity was viewed as a historic mountain sport.

Nearby was a full-page picture of a desperate woman in the act of committing suicide. In that fraction of a moment, she jumped from the New York City skyscraper to her death.

James L. Sullivan, upon seeing this picture, wrote a letter to the editor asking why the photographer did not reach out his hand to catch the arm of this desperate woman. He could have dropped his camera equipment and easily prevented her suicide. Why was he more interested in a dramatic picture than in saving her life?

The reply Dr. Sullivan received from the editor was a sad commentary on our times. He was told that there were thousands of complaints about the raccoon and dog fight, but only one other person had objected to the carelessness of the photographer who was apparently not interested in saving the life of this desperate, suicidal woman.

What does this graphic illustration mean? It means that many people in our world are committing their first-rate energies, attentions, affections, and priorities to tenth-rate causes. It is the same in many of our churches and in the lives of many Christians. We lose sight of what Jesus told us to do.

In 1 Samuel 25:12-13, we are reminded to stick to the assignment given us. That certainly applies to reaching our world for Jesus.

The Commander Told His Followers to *Stick by the Stuff*

David was the commander and chief of his army, and he commanded some of his soldiers to “abode by the stuff” (1 Sam. 25:13, KJV). That is, he told them to *stick by the stuff*. To the courageous soldier, this was not a glamorous and glorious assignment. To many Christians, even pastors and staff members, dealing directly and personally with people about their soul’s destiny and their life in the Lord may seem like a very lackluster ministry. Too many today are caught by the urge to move quickly toward the spotlight, but slow to *stick by the stuff* of personal, private work.

We must never forget that God had only one Son, and He gave Him the primary assignment of being a person-to-person, door-to-door evangelist. Jesus *stuck by the stuff* in spite of the strong pull and temptation of public recognition (see Matt. 4:1-11). Of course, nothing is wrong with a public teaching or preaching ministry, but it can never be allowed to overshadow our personal work.

“But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:57-58, NIV). Our assignment is to *stand firm*. “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21, NIV).

Evangelism, equipping, and outreach are the perfect way for me and you, not only to learn how to share our faith and minister to others, but also to keep us consistently *sticking by the stuff*, just like the Commander told us to do. We must be sensitive to hear the call of our Commander.

The Stuff Is Very Important

What is the *stuff* to which David referred? Undoubtedly, it was the *stuff* required to win the battle.

General George Patton of World War II military fame was always complaining about never having enough fuel to keep his men and their tanks pressing ahead in the battle. Patton knew there were more certain victories to be won, but the *stuff* they needed to win was not available!

That is the condition many people find themselves in today. If you look at our denomination and churches, the battle is deadlocked, and we are on the verge of losing in a way never known before. It is the same with our families and friends. Too many and too much is being lost because we have not stuck by the important stuff!

The stuff that wins the spiritual battles for souls is the person of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, prayer, soul-winning, and equipped and committed people of God. That is the stuff that wins our family, our friends, and the world. We must stick by the important stuff!

We must continue, through outreach evangelism, to be focused on what is important, but also continually teach others how those things are to be used effectively by God in and through our own lives in order to win and disciple our world in our lifetime. A lost and needy world needs us. Don't miss God's opportunity to reach out to them, because its the important *stuff*!

People and the Lord Are Counting on Us to *Stick by the Stuff*

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim. 2:2, NIV).

Our world is counting on us, the church. We have people throughout this church and in every Sunday School class who are just waiting for someone to help them grow in Christ and learn to win their family and friends to Jesus. No one can win your world but you—and we want to help you learn to do that. You are counting on me and I am counting on you to *stick by the stuff*.

Somehow we get the idea that lost people dislike, despise, and never want to see or hear a Christian. That is a lie directly from the pit of hell. People are hungering for the gospel and have no one to share it with them.

You may say, “I have never been bold in sharing my faith for fear of being thought a fanatic.” One person's testimony was that the Lord impressed upon him to share what he knew with two of his unsaved friends. To his amazement, instead of considering him a fanatic, they both were open and appreciative of all he had to share with them. His greatest joy was seeing one of his friends make a profession of faith.

Hungry, lost, and waiting souls all around you, will love and appreciate you throughout all eternity if only you will learn how to help them.

Jesus referred to Christians in the church at Laodicea as lukewarm (see Rev. 3:14-16). Lingered Christians in all of our churches are a lot like those in Laodicea. The good news is that uncommitted Christians can become committed, Great Commission Christians if we will help them step up and teach them to demonstrate the call for the highest level of commitment to the task before us—winning souls to the kingdom.

Likely you have heard it said, “If you cannot go, then send someone in your place.” This is not the way the Lord saw it or said it. The Lord Jesus simply said, “You go.” The Lord's command and commission for each of us to go as a soulwinner can never be satisfied by proxy. The Lord is counting on you to do it!

The Commander is Returning to See if We *Stuck by the Stuff*

These whom David had commanded and commissioned to *stick by the stuff* knew well that their leader would return and would see if they had fulfilled his instructions. This should be a compelling motivation for all of us to take advantage of every opportunity to be effective at our assigned responsibility.

The New Testament indicates five things that seem to be grounds for heavenly rewards:

- 1) *Soulwinning* (see 1 Thess. 2:19)
- 2) *The love of Jesus' second coming* (see 1 Tim. 4:8)
- 3) *Enduring trials* (see Jas. 1:12)
- 4) *Victory over the old nature* (see 1 Cor. 9:25)
- 5) *Feeding the flock* (see 1 Pet. 5:4)

Rewards are given for these different areas of the Lord's service, so we might use the rewards and crowns to lay before God in glory.

I do not know what the world is coming to, but I do know Who is coming to the world. And because Jesus, at His coming, is going to judge us for our works and reward us in order that we might glorify the Father, we should want to be found urgently at work as unto the Lord.

Dr. Jerry Vines, in his sermon on the ascension of Jesus, told a story of a Christian children's home for mentally handicapped boys and girls in Kentucky, where they teach them the Word of God. They simply cannot keep the windowpanes of the home clean. Do you know why? Those little children keep their noses and faces and hands on the windows day after day. They are looking for that blessed hope!

Let me ask you something? Do you stand at the windowpanes of your heart looking for Jesus? Do you serve in your church, love your Lord, and witness for souls—looking for that blessed hope?

When our daughter was young, I can remember one morning, after a hard rain during the night, she came to the breakfast table and asked me, "Daddy, did you look out the window at the sky this morning?" Then she went on to add, "I don't mean at the weather, but for that something special—Jesus' coming. It would be a good day for it, wouldn't it, Daddy?"

I was so happy to say, "Yes, honey, I did look out the window for Him this morning. And yes, it would be a great day for Him to come." "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20, NIV).

The best way I know to be effective in a local church and Sunday School, and to *stick by the stuff*, is through evangelism and soul winning. Our Lord and Savior calls you to *stick by the stuff* and win and disciple your world in your lifetime. God bless you as we co-labor together for the sake of souls.

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