

**SERMON: THE VISION WE NEED: “Bring them in from the fields of sin”**

**INTRO:** To do things repeatedly without knowing why may be a symptom of operating with lack of purpose. To confuse “means” with “end” is a sure sign of diminished vision.

**ILLUST: Walt Saw It First**

**Do we believe that God “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.”- Ephesians 3:20?**

**I) SOMETWHERE BETWEEN N.T. TIMES AND NOW WE LOST OUR EMPHASIS**

**A) The Aggressive, “Go-Preach-Make Disciples-Baptize- Teach,” Has Become “Do Not Forsake The Assembling of Yourselves Together.”**

- 1) This is “means” thinking, not “end result” thinking.
- 2) **ILLUST: Not Destination.**
- 3) All types of clubs and service organizations have meetings:
  - (a) Weight Watchers, Kinsmen, Kiwanis, NWTF, CCCHS
  - (b) The meeting are only a means to a greater end NOT the reason for existence.
- 4) **OBJECTION:** “This is different. We come together to worship God.” **ANSWER:** That would be valid if the Bible said it was and when we meet is when we worship. Is this of God or man?

**B) The N.T. Emphasis Is Two-Fold: Evangelization And Edification**

- 1) To evangelize is to tell others of Jesus
- 2) To edify is to encourage and build up those who have heard and obeyed
- 3) These two “E” words are summed up in two Great “C” words
  - (a) The Great Commission
  - (b) The Great Commandments
- 4) There are many ways to accomplish both the “E” and “C” words
- 5) We spend most of our time on the Edification and Great Commandments
  - (a) This is the natural response of always meeting with fellow Christians.
  - (b) Evangelization and Great Commission have become hard to do.
- 6) God spends much more time on the first “E” word and first “C” word.

**II) SO, HEAR THE BIBLE’S EMPHASIS**

**A) John** the Baptizer- Mk 1:13,14- came pointing to Jesus

**B) Jesus** came telling others they must believe in Him

- 1) He alone offered life eternal— **Jn. 12:32**
- 2) He taught his 12 to “practice” with the “Limited Commission.”
- 3) Then Jesus gave them the “Great Commission” – **Matthew 28:18-20**
- 4) He was very specific (Acts 1:8). This was all about saving souls!

**C) Peter** and John caught on- Acts 2-4

**D) Stephen** knew the correct emphasis- Acts 6,7

**E) Philip** used the O.T. to tell the Jesus story- Acts 8

**F) Paul** became a great witness for Jesus- Acts 9-28 also “Christ crucified,” etc

**CONCLUSION**

The emphasis we see around us and seem to subscribe to and the emphasis of the Bible are placed side by side in a poem by Pioneer evangelist C.T. Studd. He wrote,

**“Some want to live with the sound of church or chapel bell,  
I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.”**

We need to think seriously about our position on what the Bible says and begin thinking about what the N.T. emphasis brings out.

**READING: STORY BEHIND LOWER LIGHTS**

## ILLUSTRATIONS USED IN THIS LESSON

### WALT SAW IT FIRST

When Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL. opened in 1974, Mrs. Disney was sitting beside Walter Cronkite. Walt Disney had passed away a few years earlier. Walter Cronkite wanted to say just the right thing to Mrs. Disney, so he leaned over to her and said, *"Wouldn't it be great if Walt were here to see this today."* Mrs. Disney wisely replied, *"If Walt had not first seen this you would not be seeing it today."*

### NOT DESTINATION

A salesman drives from Toronto to Calgary to meet important client hoping to secure a large account. Along the way he stops many times, eats, sleeps, watches T.V. fills up with gas, has his car repaired, etc. All these things are part of the trip but no one of them is the destination. His focus is still ahead

### The Story Behind...

#### Let the Lower Lights be Burning

#### Selected

At one of D.L. Moody's meetings in America he related the story of a shipwreck on a dark and tempestuous night, when not even a star was visible. A ship was approaching the harbor of Cleveland, with a pilot on board. The captain, noticing only one light as they drew near — that from the lighthouse — asked the pilot if he was quite sure that it was Cleveland harbor, as other lights should have been burning at the harbor mouth. The pilot replied that he was quite sure, whereupon the captain enquired:

*"Where are the lower lights?" "Gone out, sir,"* replied the pilot.

*"Can you make the harbor, then?"* asked the captain, to which the pilot answered:

*"We must, sir, or perish."*

Bravely the old man steered the vessel upon her course toward safety. But alas! In the darkness of the harbor mouth he missed the channel, the ship struck upon many rocks, and in the stormy waters many lives were lost.

Then Moody made his appeal to his audience: *"Brothers, the Master will take care of the great lighthouse! Let us keep the lower lights burning!"*

Among Moody's hearers that evening was Mr. Philip P. Bliss, the well-known hymn writer, and the striking story at once suggested to him one of his most popular hymns:

Brightly beams our Father's mercy  
From His lighthouse evermore,  
But to us He gives the keeping  
Of the lights along the shore.

Let the lower lights be burning!  
Send a gleam across the wave!  
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman  
You may rescue, you may save.

