

# Love Your City, Don't Leave It

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We do not need to understand when we talk about cities? Are we talking about tall high-rise buildings, beautiful highways and efficient transport systems? What does it mean to love your city and not leave it? Cities are where there is the greatest concentration of people. We need to reach the people who live in the cities with the gospel. That is the reason why we must love our city and not leave it. Like fisherman, we must go where the fishers are.

Cities are keys to the nations. It is in the city that you find the generator of progress, the pro-genitor of new lifestyles and the centre of education. The city is the seat of most governments. Win the city and you win the nations.

## Challenge of the Cities

Cities, however, are Satan's strongholds where every kind of conceivable wickedness is found. They are fountain heads for anti-Christian sentiment. People are materialistic and seem to indicate that they have no time for God.

There is phenomenal growth in the number of cities today. Let us look at some statistics:

In 1900, there were 11 cities with a population of one million or more; in 1950, there were 71 such cities and it is estimated that by the year 2000, there will be 312 such cities, of which 58 will have a population of 5 million or more. Mega cities are indeed springing up. This indicates a tremendous shift from rural to city living. What a challenge for us!

More than 55% of the world's population is found in cities. 10 cities in the world will boast of a population of 20 million by the year 2000 and of these 6 will be in Asia. They are Tokyo, Yokohama, Shanghai, Jakarta, Bombay and Calcutta.

Someone said this: "Every second, one non-Christians is added into the city. In every hour, 3600 dies without Christ."

## God Loves Cities

God love cities and they have a part in His plan. He showed great concern for them.

In the book of Jonah, God told Jonah to arise, go to the city of Nineveh and declare the salvation of the Lord because He saw that the city was doomed forever. He was moved with compassion for Nineveh. The Bible records many instances, in which God called different individuals to the cities.

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to the city of Macedonia. Paul saw in his vision, a Macedonian man crying out: "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

The Word of God, therefore, clearly indicates the need to take the challenge and reach out to cities.

## Pentecost is the Answer

Jesus told His disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. It was a Pentecostal experience which made the weak, timid and discouraged disciples full of faith, boldly preaching the gospel message wherever they went. The Holy Spirit has gifts that will equip us for the task that is before us (1 Corinthians 12). Jesus Himself also acknowledged the vital role of the Holy Spirit in His ministry (Luke 4:18).

The Pentecostal experience is for you today. "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are afar off – for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:17, 18, and 39). With the power of the Holy Spirit within us, we can take authority over the works of Satan, rebuke him, bind him and cast him out of the city.

We are people of signs and wonders. God wants us to be such. If God is on our side and we are sensitive to what he is saying, then it is possible to see the Kingdom of God being established.

I would like to share with you a Biblical strategy from the book of Joshua. In it, God told Joshua that He had given the land to him but he would have to go and take possession of it. I myself have put these principles into practice and have seen God give the victory.

## **The Biblical Strategy**

### ***Forget the Past and Believe God For the Present***

Moses was a great hero in the eyes of Joshua. The temptation is to think that God would not use anyone to do greater things than Moses. Therefore, God had to say to Joshua, "Moses, my servant is dead and I will give you every place where you set your foot" (Joshua 1:2, 3). God wanted Joshua to know that the days of Moses were of the past and the days ahead could be greater days of miracles and victories for God was leading the way. God is seeking to use men who will be willing and obedient. We must be willing to let the past be history and have faith to see God greater than the challenges. Our cities can be reached with the Gospel. There is a hope for our cities.

### ***It is God who gives us the land or City***

"I will give every place where you set your foot..." (1:3). We must remember that it is the Lord who will give us the victory over the city. God is our refuge and strength. We have no might or power. If we will go in the power and might of the Lord, we will win over our city for Jesus. Our God is a giving God. He gave bread, meat and water when Israel asked for it. Why don't we ask God for the cities? You receive not because you ask not, the Bible says.

### ***Know that you are a Victor in Christ***

God said to Joshua, "No one will be able to stand up against you all days of your life" (1:5a). Do not be discouraged or put off by threatening and outward display of worldly strength. We are more than conquerors, Paul said. No weapon formed against us will succeed. Therefore, we must be bold and courageous in our going with the Gospel. We must also be wise like serpents but harmless like doves.

### ***Finally, believe that the Lord is with you***

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you..." (1:5b). You are not alone in your ministry. Compare this with Matthew 28:20. The one who promised us the victory is also the one who goes alongside with us. If we go with Him, we will succeed and the church will be a triumphant church in the city.

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