



# LIFE NEWS

## **THE MESSAGE OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD**

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In the 18th century, one man stood apart as the most influential: George Whitefield. Whitefield was a friend of John and Charles Wesley as well as Benjamin Franklin. His reach in the 1700s has been estimated to be in the millions. He was an open-air evangelist and a traveling preacher. Whitefield preached in fields and cities around England and did several tours of America. His loud booming voice was a marvel for all to hear. It was this man's astounding preaching that was at the forefront of the first great awakening.

There is much we can learn from the man George Whitefield, but I think one point is most important: his message. Martin Lloyd Jones, a man known for his own preaching acumen, said it was not his zeal, and it was not advertising or organization. It was not his oratory ability. It was his message. It was the message that we are hopeless and going to hell, but Christ died to save sinners. Christ is the only way to Heaven. This message and the work of the Holy Spirit is the only reason Whitefield was successful as a minister. Imagine that... the greatest revival of American history was not marked by a show but by a demonstration of the Spirit's power to bring dead

people back to life. What George Whitefield committed to was to preach the Gospel and allow God to do what he always does: save people from their sin.

This is often missed in our world. We want the best show, mistake-free music, and preaching that is on par with the best orators. This is not the call of the preacher of the Gospel. Instead, the pastor is called to preach the Word. To proclaim the good news that Christ has died for the sins of humanity and has been raised from the dead. That man has no hope other than Christ and him crucified.

Paul made this the aim of his ministry. He says in 1 Corinthians 2 that he decided to know nothing among the Corinthians other than Jesus Christ and him crucified. If the Corinthians received nothing else from Paul, they would receive the Gospel; this is what Paul means when he instructs Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. This has been the call to preachers throughout the history of the church, including the call of George Whitefield.

Whitefield understood that the only thing that could save a sinner headed to judgment was the

sacrifice and righteousness of Christ. It was this knowledge that drove him to preach wherever he found himself. He was driven by this knowledge and his love for sinners under judgment. As Paul says, the unbeliever cannot believe if the Gospel is not preached to them. This is the burden of the preacher.

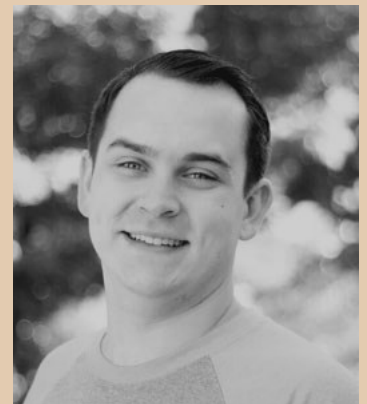
Not only the preacher, but every Christian is also called to this kind of ministry. We find that the call to make disciples did not die with the apostles and does not end with the pastors but is a call to all Christians everywhere to make disciples. How do we do this? We proclaim the Gospel. We determine to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Imagine our world if our primary focus was the proclamation of the Gospel. If we went into our homes and our workplaces understanding the gravity of the situation, that those around us face the judgment of a righteous God if they do not hear the Gospel. If we were truly motivated by the love of Christ who, for our sake and for our salvation, died so that we might live.

My prayer is that we would have a renewed passion to see the sinners in Visalia saved, not only by visiting Parkside and hearing the Gospel (which they most certainly will do) but through the proclamation of the Gospel by those who call themselves disciples.

Let it be said of us – just as it was of Paul and George Whitefield – it wasn't the method or their great speaking ability that made them successful but their dedication to proclaim the Gospel.

If you are reading this and want resources on how to share your faith, please do not hesitate to contact me at [\*\*jeremiah@parksidevisalia.org\*\*](mailto:jeremiah@parksidevisalia.org)

I would love to partner with you as you become a proclaimer of the Gospel.



by Jeremiah Shawver, Youth Pastor