

THE ROOF BREAKERS

Scripture Passage: Mark 2

Rev. Kim Sundo

I have lived under North Korean communism and the Communists did persecute me. I have come to understand what it means to suffer for Christ's sake. As a pastor, I preach in Korean eight times a week. English, therefore, is not my native language, and I fear to speak in English. It is difficult to explain my thinking in English. However, I'm not the only one that experiences difficulty with another language. For example, Dr. Robert Schuller has come to preach in our church from time to time. Now, Dr. Schuller likes to tell many funny stories, but sometimes an American joke does not make sense to us and it is hard to translate into Korean. We tell the congregation, "It is time to laugh, so let us laugh together." Just to make him happy. We are roof breakers. Evangelistic mission means roof breaking.

Mark, chapter 2. I would like to make seven points from this portion of the Scripture. First, spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Today many people listen to news. They will not listen to the good news but they will listen to bad news anytime. But, we have to let them listen to the good news, let them listen to Good News of Jesus Christ. Today we compete with mass communication. Is it enough to have an hour of preaching and worship in a week that has 168 hours? How do we then spread the good news to the people? We have to let them listen to the good news through our incarnational ministry. Christianity is not a word become word. Christianity is a word become flesh. In Korea, young pastors try to learn some techniques of communication, such as language games. But it is not enough to let them just listen to good news. We have to break roofs in an incarnational ministry.

I am a pastor of a local church and from time to time, I also speak to other pastors as well. I ask the question, "What is a pastoral ministry?" I tell them that a pastoral ministry has three "Ls". The first "L" is living relationship - a relationship between God and the people. This is a pastoral ministry. The second "L" is a loving

ministry - loving one another. The third "L" is language relationship. We use the language of the word but most of our congregations listen to the language of relationship rather than the language of the word. So we have to let them listen to the good news through our incarnational preaching, through our incarnational ministry. This is the age of individualization, the age of images - people watching television, two to three hours a day. Is it enough to worship God for one hour per week while there are 168 hours? The young people do not want to listen to preaching that lasts for 30 to 35 minutes. They want short preaching. They cannot eat beef steaks; they eat vegetables and soup. That's all. So I say again, let us communicate the spirit of the good news of Jesus Christ through our incarnational ministry. We have to show others the image of Jesus Christ through our life of good news.

Second, this is about people and a paralysed person. What is God's message concerning people? Jesus came to this world to save the lost. It is imperative that we see paralysed people around us - spiritually paralysed people, mentally paralysed people, the physically, socially, and economically paralysed. Ours should be a concern for paralysed people, dehumanised people. They are all paralysed. What is the great gift of God to his people? I said it was relationship, a most gracious gift of our Lord. Love people and use things. Today this relationship is reversed. We use persons and love things! That is why many people are paralysed. How are they to be saved? Bring them to Jesus Christ. Let them meet Jesus Christ. But it is very difficult to show them Jesus Christ; there are so many barriers, so many crowds, and so many hindrances. So how do you meet Jesus Christ in the secular life world? Be concerned for them in their actual life situations. Look at paralysed people. They are confused about the real meaning of life. They are paralysed people. Let us show these people God's love. Jesus is always concerned about sick people, about paralysed people.

The third point is cooperation. Four people who carried their paralysed friend. That shows cooperation. Now is the time for cooperation, not for competition. People say that this is a competitive world, but as Christians we must cooperate with each other for saving souls throughout the world. Vision 2000 means cooperation

with one another; the evangelisation of Asia must be through the cooperation of the churches in Asia, working together, not for our own glory, but for the glory of God. But, cooperation must be done with enthusiasm. Enthusiasm in Greek is *Entheos* and *Entheos* means God. Therefore, enthusiasm must be present in evangelism. God uses us as his hands and his feet; God wants to use us for evangelism. For this reason, evangelism requires cooperation.

Fourth, I should point out the vertical, since the crowd keeps us from seeing Jesus horizontally. It was almost impossible to get into the room where Jesus Christ was staying. But they did not quit. The four men looked up at the roof. *Anthropos*, human beings in Greek, means looking up, not looking down, looking down at a false dimension of life. We need to look up to the divine level. So the four did not give up. They looked at the possibilities. The four men received the vertical idea in their need, through their prayer for deliverance. Zacheus, Jericho's most influential Jew, was a Roman tax collector. Being lonely, he wanted to see Jesus Christ. He climbed into the sycamore tree and waited, looking for Jesus from there. Let's look up. Let's get hold of the vertical idea. Once, Robert Schuller asked a Pastor why his church was not growing. He said, "Well, we don't have the money; we don't have any people." Robert Schuller said, "You have two kinds of lacks. One, you have a lack of ideas. Second, you have a lack of adventure." We, also need new ideas to evangelise the world. So to change the world, how do you approach the paralysed people to see Jesus Christ? Let's ask God to provide us with new ideas in how to evangelise Asia.

One of our businessmen said, "If we are to have prosperity in our business field, we should have three 'i's: innovation, ideas, and international information.

In evangelism we should have innovation in our church and new ideas, vertical ideas to go to the top of the roof and break through it to bring paralysed people to Jesus. In Asia, when we evangelise, we should have new ideas, we need vertical ideas in prayer.

Last May Day I had a chance to visit Moscow. We talked about evangelism for a post-socialist country. One afternoon, we had chance to meet with Mr. Gorbachov, the former President of the Soviet Union.

We had about ten questions to ask of him. I said to Mr. Gorbachov, "You said you were baptised when you were young. Is it true? Are you baptised? Do you still believe that baptism is the grace of God?" He was silent for a time and then he said, "Yes. My first name is Dietrich Gorbachov. After baptism I changed my name to Mikhail Gorbachov. Mikhail means Mark of the New Testament." I asked him again, "I heard that whenever you engage in the perestroika movement, your mother is seen praying for the movement. Is this true? Do you believe in the power of prayer?" He said, "Not only is my mother praying but my father is also praying for me." He talked about prayer. He said human beings are the highest creation of God. We have the responsibility for justice, peace, love and freedom. So he made this confession. Finally, I boldly told him, "You need prayer. You are a lonely person; the people of the Soviet Union isolate you. You need prayer. If you don't mind, shall we pray together?" He said, "Shall I kneel down here?" "No, no. Let us hold hands together and stand." I held his hand. He held my hand strongly. We prayed together for a while. Not trembling, but just holding, calm and steady. I felt his sincere presence. We prayed. After prayer, he said, "Shiba, shiba." Shiba, means thank you. His face was changed. He needs our prayers.

We should have vertical ideas to evangelise in socialist countries. Do not quit evangelising. Even Mr. Gorbachov, he wants our prayers. Let's go looking up at the roof. Let him get down to see Jesus Christ. Not only is for paralysed people but sometimes for paralysed church people as well. We are so easy-going. We talk about evangelism but we do not look up at the roof, to break the roof in order to get the paralysed people down to Jesus Christ.

Fifth, adventure. To break the roof is an adventure. To carry a man up to the roof and to break the roof is an adventure. Whenever you have an adventure, miracles will happen. St. Paul, talking to Timothy, his spiritual son, in his letters emphasises vision, venture, and vitality for Timothy. Timothy was a naive young man, and he needed adventure for the ministry of the churches.

Twenty three years ago, I was working at the Air Force Academy as a Cadet Chaplain. I left the Air Force to serve the Kwang Lim

Church, which means Burning Bush. At that time, we had only 175 members. It was a small weak church. Then I had a dream. The largest Presbyterian Church in Seoul was called Yong Nack Church. The largest Pentecostal Church in Seoul was pastored by Paul Yongi, a friend of mine. The Methodist Church in Korea, however, was small and weak. At that time, the largest Methodist Church in the world was in Houston, Texas - the First Houston Methodist Church. I went to visit this church and Robert Schuller's Church. My dream came: I want to serve the largest Methodist Church in the world. I received the vision and I needed to work hard to carry out the vision. Every Wednesday night, I preached on the book of Acts for 30 minutes. After the Bible study we went out visiting house to house as a personal activity. One Wednesday night, 66 people enrolled to come to church. Since then, every Wednesday we have personal evangelism activities after Bible studies. The church kept growing. After 20 years of hard work, we now have 60,000 members, the so called largest Methodist Church in the world. With prayer and a vision, God will help you to groom your church. This is an adventure. Without adventure, there is no effective evangelism at all. Faith means adventure with prayer.

Sixth point: we have to pay the price for that sacrifice. The disciples sacrificed in breaking the roof; they will have to pay for breaking the roof. This is not a great matter; breaking the roof doesn't really matter. What matters is that we have to save souls, the paralysed persons. Worship without sacrifice is a sin; privilege without responsibility is a sin. Today, many Christians hesitate to pay the price, hesitate to sacrifice for the life of evangelism. In Latin, the word sacrifice is *sacrinfacile*, which means to make holy. Sometimes Korean Christians want to stay where they live; they do not want to go forward in sanctification. How do we become sanctified? Through sacrifice. *Sacrinfacile*. Through sanctification, your life will be renewed. Through sacrifice, miracles will happen. In my church ministry, I always stress tithing. Most of the congregation tithe. I tell them that if you do not tithe, you do not know the ABC of Christianity. On one occasion, John Wesley said, "Whenever you say, I'm converted, but if your money pocket is not converted, you are not converted yet." Even as a poor church in Korea, we are, at present, building a Moscow Mission Centre. We are buying a hotel

in Japan. We are planting a few churches in these areas. This year we plan to build three local churches. We buy the land and pay three million US dollars for the church building. Money is not the problem. Faith and dreams are important. In the West, I listen to talk about the budget. Let me tell you again, money is not a problem, but let's have faith and vision. Let's pay the price for evangelism, for the growth of church. Four men are carrying the stretcher with the paralysed person lying down, and they bring him to the roof, breaking the roof. They will have to pay the price because they destroyed another person's roof. Sacrifice: sanctification.

Seventh point: let's have a positive faith. We have two kinds of faith in Korea: positive faith and negative faith. Sometimes, the Korean people never keep faith. But I admire the enthusiastic faith of the western people and the European people. When they get up in the morning, the American people say, Praise the Lord ! Thank God ! Good Morning ! - even during the rainy season; even on a rainy morning ! What positive faith! When the Korean people get up in the morning, they do not praise God, but say, I'm going to die today. This is the old, 'I'm so tired' way. The four people carrying the paralysed have positive faith. They believe their friend can be healed by the power of Jesus Christ. I like the passage in Philippians 4:13 where it says, "I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens me."

As a pastor, I teach people five principles for ministry. The first is positive faith. Let us have positive faith more than negative faith. We always talk about sin, but, by the grace of God, He has cleared our sins. We strongly believe that. Some Korean pastors talk about sin, but place no stress on the grace of Jesus Christ. Let them have positive faith. Second, create an abundant life. Jesus came into this world because he wants to give us abundant life. Third, the practice of love, the act of love. Christian love is the practice of love, of living in loving relationships. Fourth, a life of integrity: faithfulness. Whenever I speak on church growth, I note that we have to establish credibility, an often- seen lack in the church. We need to build credibility within the congregations. How long does it take to build credibility? At least four years; it's just not done in two or

three years. Some young pastors whenever they are appointed to new churches want to make quick changes, but they have not built up credibility. This is an important point for leadership. I always stress the need for a life of integrity in our congregational life. The fifth point is obedience in unity, the unity in Faith, Love and Hope. This is always a positive point of view. We are, after all, the roof breakers. This means evangelical action, not theory, not seminars, and not talk about evangelism. We need to activate evangelism in life situations. Let's break the roof. In conclusion, what is the power we need to share with them?

First is the power of forgiveness. Christianity is a religion of redemption, of forgiveness. If there is no power of forgiveness, Christianity has no meaning. We are facing a crisis situation in Korea: pluralism in religion. If we accept pluralism in religion, we have lost the uniqueness of Christianity. There is no meaning to evangelism, no meaning to such existence, no meaning to Holy Communion, no meaning to the apostolic creeds, and no meaning to baptism. The second is the power to protect us through the pluralism of religions. We have to proclaim the power of redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. The power of sin destroys. We have to solve the problems of sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. Third, we have to share the power of healing. Christianity is a religion of healing. Now in Greek, Soteru is salvation, but another meaning is to heal. Soteru means healing. Jesus Christ has three kinds of ministry - preaching, teaching and healing. We have to do these three. We have to share the power of healing. Many sick people attend church, we have to meet their need. Silently, not orally, they gesture to the priest or pastor for help - help me, my goats are without horns, my husband needs an operation, he has cancer, he is bankrupt. They say help me, help me; they are sick, they are diseased. Let their need be met through our ministry. A healing ministry is most important in our day. We need to proclaim power of healing. Finally, the power to change. Most people want to be changed. The paralysed person wants to be changed, to change his body and his life. Up to this point, he couldn't walk; he always laid on the mat, on the stretcher. Jesus said, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." The paralysed person stood up, took his mat and walked out. His life was completely

changed. This is evangelism through the Gospel, through Jesus Christ. Let their lives be changed to live eternally, the vertical life, the totally changed lives. Not quantity, but quality.

In closing, I would like to share the story about Winston Churchill during the 2nd World War. The German planes flew over London, dropping bombs, and burning the city of London. As he looked at the burning London, Churchill exhorted the people to shed blood, sweat and tears for their land. Finally the United Kingdom prevailed over Germany. Churchill went back to his old home in Chatwell and wrote memorable books. His former school asked him to come and speak to the students. They eagerly anticipated listening to the famous Winston Churchill. He came to the auditorium, and the students silently looked to him. Attentively, they listened to Churchill speaking. The old man, carrying his stick, came to the podium and said, "Never give up, never give up, never, never, never." He then went back to his seat and sat down. Never give up, never give up, never, never, never. Amen.

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PARTNERSHIP IN EVANGELISM -IV

Ajith Fernando

Some of you have been asking for the notes of the last two studies and I am very sorry I do not have them. The reason is that they are handwritten with all sorts of revisions along the way; some of it is in Sinhalese and some in English. I'm very sorry about that. Therefore, let me just say that it has been a real joy for me to minister the word at this conference. I appreciate your warm reception to what I have been trying to say and I would ask you for your prayers for me.

Last night Saphir Athyal talked about how we complicate matters by writing books. Next year I am going to be working on a book which I think is quite important. My style is a little more popular. It is not a scholarly book but it is a book on the supremacy of the Christian Gospel. Many say that Christ is supreme but not the Gospel. I want to share the Gospel, what the Gospel is and see how it responds to challenges that come to the Gospel from New Age pluralism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and more. It is a handbook for those who are sharing the Gospel. It is a book for those involved in evangelism.

We are in the middle of our description of Barnabas and the church in Antioch; we have looked at various features about the life of Barnabas. Now we will look at some things regarding these two ministries as shown in the Bible. We first turned to Acts 11: 26 and stopped in the middle of verse 26. Now we will look at the second part of verse 26 that says that for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught a great number of people. The teaching of the word or the apostolic teaching has a very important part in the Acts of the Apostles. Forty days before Christ left the world, he taught them about the kingdom. The description about the first believers is found in Chapter 2:42, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching."

Why is teaching so important in the Christian Gospel? Because Christianity is a religion of revelation. We believe that God has spoken and that he has spoken about the uniqueness about Christianity in