

THE WORLD HATED (AND HATES) JESUS WITHOUT CAUSE

John 15:24-27

John 15:24-25 NAS:

²⁴ *"If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, **they would not have sin**; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.*

²⁵ *"But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, **'They hated Me without a cause.'**"¹*

This is a difficult passage to understand and deal with. At first blush it sounds like Jesus is saying that these Jews, most likely the Pharisees, would not be sinners if they had not witnessed His miracles. How could He say that? The Bible tells us that everyone has sinned. For instance:

1 Kings 8:46 NAS

"When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near."

Romans 3:23 NAS

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Now we know that people will often reach for any lame excuse they can come up with to keep from accepting responsibility for their actions. Before Jesus came people might have claimed a lack of knowledge about Him as an excuse for their sin, as we learn from Paul in his sermon at the **Areopagus** before the learned men of **Athens**, which is most often referred to as the sermon on Mars Hill. Paul says,

Acts 17:30 NAS:

*"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that **all people everywhere should repent.***

This is not a statement of God changing His mind but rather it is an illustration of His grace.

Now this brings us to a place in our study which we believe requires a short detour from the book of John in order to better understand what is being said in John 15:24 and Acts

¹ Psalm 35:19; 69:4; 109:3-5

17:30 about **people who seemingly did not sin or experience the guilt of their sin and God having overlooked the times of ignorance.** Perhaps the Amplified Bible can shed some additional light on the meaning of this passage:

John 15:24 AMP

If I had not done (accomplished) among them the works which no one else ever did, they would not be guilty of sin. But [the fact is] now they have both seen [these works] and have hated both Me and My Father.

That makes it sound a bit like James 4:17, doesn't it:

James 4:17 NAS

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

There are a number of verses in the Scripture that repeat the message of Acts 17:30. One of those is Romans 3:25 (NAS), and we will include here verses 21-24 and verse 26 to complete the context for better understanding:

Romans 3:21-26 NAS:

²¹ *But now **apart from the Law** the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*
²² *even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*
²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
²⁴ *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*
²⁵ *whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God **He passed over the sins previously committed;***
²⁶ *for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that **He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.***

Or to read it in more everyday language:

Romans 3:21-26 NLT:

²¹ *But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago.*
²² *We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.*
²³ ***For everyone has sinned;** we all fall short of God's glorious standard.*

²⁴ *Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.*

²⁵ *For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past,*

²⁶ *for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.*

Now these verses must raise some questions in your mind because they certainly did in ours. Could this mean that God overlooked the sin of all people before the birth of Christ, and if so where did they go when they died? Were evil people who did not trust in God given a free “advance to Heaven card?” Or could it mean that God overlooks all of the previous sins of people who come to faith in God?

When such questions arise in our study of Scripture, we like to address them so that we all have as complete an understanding of what we are studying as possible. This has been a very difficult passage for many to understand but we trust that the conclusion we have reached is based on solid biblical evidence.

First let us look to the Old Testament to find a foundation for this New Testament doctrine.

“*The soul who sins will die*” (Ezekiel 18:4, NAS). If God had not “overlooked” their sin and guilt He would have struck people dead on the spot as soon as they committed their first sin. That certainly would have quickly annihilated the human race. But instead God had mercy on them and in His grace He overlooked their need for immediate judgment and provided a way of escape, a way of that sin being forgiven, for those who would have faith in Him. Adam and Eve, although they immediately died spiritually, were not struck dead on the spot when they ate of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

We do not believe these verses in John refer to sins in an individual’s past; rather we believe they refer to the sins of those who lived before Christ’s atoning death on the cross. “Well,” you might justifiably ask, “*how were people saved in the Old Testament?*” Christ had not yet come, so how could they believe in someone or something they did not know anything about? Well this is where things start to become very interesting. Let us read together the passage from Genesis 15:1-6 NAS:

¹ *After these things the word of the Lord came to **Abram** in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.”*

² Abram said, "O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

³ And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

⁴ Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

⁵ And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

⁶ Then he (**Abram**)² believed in the Lord; and He (**the Lord**)³ reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Do you see how Abram received salvation and righteousness? He expressed faith and trust in what God told him, that's how. "True Bible faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences."⁴

This is quite a simple kind of faith. God speaks and we listen to His Word. We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be. The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown; but we obey God's Word just the same and believe He will always do what is right and what is best.⁵

The unsaved world does not understand **true faith**, probably because it sees so little faith in action in the Church today. **The cynical editor H. L. Mencken** defined faith as "illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible."⁶ Faith is not some kind of *feeling* that we can just create. It is our total response to what God has revealed in His Word. Three words in Hebrews 11:1-3 summarize what true faith is: *substance, evidence, and witness.*⁷

Hebrews 11:1-3 KJV:

¹ Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.

² For by it the elders **obtained a good report (witness).**⁸

³ Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do

² Parentheses mine.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Heb 11:1.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Parentheses mine.

appear.

Let us also read that passage from the New Living Translation, Hebrews 11:1-3 NLT:

¹ *Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.*

² *Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.*

³ *By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.*

The word translated “*substance*” means literally “*to stand under, to support.*” Faith is to a Christian what a foundation is to a house: it gives confidence and assurance that he or she will stand. So you might say, “*Faith is the confidence of things hoped for.*” When a believer has faith, it is God’s way of giving him confidence and assurance that what is promised will be experienced.⁹

The word *evidence* simply means “*conviction.*” This is an inward assurance from God that He will deliver what He has promised. In other words you believe for certain everything that God has promised.¹⁰

Witness (kjv, “obtained a good report”) is an important word in Hebrews 11. It occurs not only in verse 2, but also twice in verse 4, once in verse 5, and once in verse 39. The summary in Hebrews 12:1 calls this list of men and women “*so great a cloud of witnesses.*” They are persons of faith. This witness was His divine approval of their lives and ministries.¹¹ They are witnesses to us because God witnessed to them. In each example cited, God gave witness to that. And so we are basically being told that because those people demonstrated faith in God, God blessed them. We are able to learn from them how we too can be blessed by believing in and trusting in God. **The best way to grow in faith is to walk with the faithful.** You may read about great men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 and 12 if you would like some outstanding examples.

Warren Wiersbe has said that,

“Waiting is, for me, one of the most difficult disciplines of life. Yet **true faith is able to wait for the fulfillment of God’s purposes in God’s time.** But, while we are waiting, we must also be obeying. ‘By faith Abraham... obeyed’ (Hebrews 11:8). He obeyed when *he did not know where he was going* (Hebrews 11:8–10). He lived in tents because he was a stranger and pilgrim in the world and had to be ready to move whenever God spoke. Christians today are also

⁹ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Heb 11:1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

strangers and pilgrims (1 Peter 1:1; 2:11). Abraham had his eyes on the heavenly city and lived to fulfill God's will."¹²

That is exactly how we should live our lives.

Faith occurs when one accepts God as trustworthy and believes His word (Deuteronomy 9:23) and His promises, as is the case with Abraham in Genesis 15:1-6: "*And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.*"¹³ So we may conclude that those who have lived from the time of Adam and Eve had sufficient evidence, through the teaching of God and the prophets, that a Savior would be coming to cover their sins and that if they believed and trusted in God's promise through His Word, that kind of faith would provide forgiveness for their sins until Jesus arrived to actually pay that penalty on the cross.

But in that interim God decided to institute a **sacrificial system** involving animals to constantly remind the Jewish people that sin may only be forgiven by a perfect blood sacrifice, and the only One in the world who would ever be perfect without any sin whatsoever, would be the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Therefore the people were required to bring the best animals from their flocks and herds to be sacrificed to God in His Temple.

You see, back in the Old Testament, people would bring a perfect animal to the Temple as a sacrifice. The type of animal was dependent on the type of sacrifice being given. Back then, before Christ came, such a sacrifice was required by the Law God had given the Jews through Moses.

Now no one believed that the little lamb, or whatever animal was being sacrificed, actually could remove his or her sins. But it pointed to the coming of Christ, their promised Messiah whose sacrificial death would remove their sins. By obeying God's Law requiring a blood sacrifice they demonstrated their faith and trust in God that one day such a Savior would come and that His sacrificial death alone would pay for all the sins of mankind past, present, and future. Christ would be the only acceptable sacrifice for sin to God because He was the only person who would never sin. Now the very first explicit indication in the Bible of an animal sacrifice occurs in:

Genesis 4:3-4 NAS:

³ *So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground.*

⁴ *Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering;*

If you have ever wondered why God was pleased with Abel's offering over Cain's, it is most likely because Abel's offering was a blood sacrifice given in faith. This is very

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Achtemeier, Paul J.; Harper & Row, Publishers; Society of Biblical Literature: *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985, S. 298.

important to understand because God had undoubtedly told **Adam and Eve**, Cain's and Abel's parents, the same thing He made known later to the prophets, and that was that the **forgiveness of a person's sin could only be covered by the shedding of blood**. God promised that He would send a **Savior** at some time in the future, but that until then the shedding of the blood of an animal in sacrifice to God would postpone God's judgment on that person because it would represent that person's faith in God's promise that the true Savior would come to pay once and for all for the sins of all those who trust in God's promises, from the beginning of time to the time Jesus returns in the end times. Adam and Eve undoubtedly taught this essential truth to all their children and it is very likely that God would have taught it to both Cain and Abel as well.

In other words God told the people that if they believed in Him they would believe His promise that one day a **Messiah** would come to pay the penalty for their sins, but until then He wanted them to have a reminder that their sins could only be forgiven by the shedding of blood. Therefore, God told them they were to bring the best of their flock, the most perfect animal, and sacrifice it on the altar in God's Temple as a reminder of their need for the cleansing blood of the Messiah for forgiveness of their sin.

Hebrews 9:18-22 NAS:

¹⁸ *Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.*

¹⁹ *For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,*

²⁰ *saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU."*

²¹ *And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.*

²² *And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and **without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.***

This idea of sacrifice occurs over and over again in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Way back in the Garden of Eden, God dressed Adam and Eve with the skins of animals, which could very well have been sacrifices to God (Genesis 3:21). A distinction also was made between clean and unclean animals, which gives every reason to believe that it referred to the offering up of sacrifices (Genesis 7:2, 8), because animals were not given to man as food till after the Flood.¹⁴

The same practice is continued down through the age of the patriarchs.¹⁵ In the Mosaic period of Old Testament history definite laws were prescribed by God regarding the different kinds of sacrifices that were to be offered and the manner in which the offering was to be made.^{16 17}

¹⁴ Easton, M.G.: *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. Oak Harbor, WA: 1996, c1897.

¹⁵ Gen. 8:20; 12:7; 13:4, 18; 15:9-11; 22:1-18).

¹⁶ (Ex. 12:3-27; Lev. 23:5-8; Num. 9:2-14). (See ALTAR

Suppose you had been there when Abel brought a little lamb to God. Perhaps God would have tested him by saying something along these lines: "*Abel, do you think this little lamb is going to take away your sin?*" Abel would have responded to God, "*No.*" Then God may have said, "*Then why did you bring it?*" Abel's answer would have been, "*You, Lord, required it. You commanded us to bring this kind of offering.*" Hebrews 11:4 tells us "*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. . . .*" The only way Abel could have brought that sacrifice by faith was for either his parents to have told him about the sacrifice God required or for God himself to have told him to bring it.¹⁸

Again, if you had been there you might have said to Abel, "*Specifically what do you think God has in mind?*" And he would very likely have replied: "*Well, God has told my mother and father and me that a Savior is coming. We don't know when, but until He comes, we're to do this because we're to receive our salvation by faith.*"

And so when we read, "*He passed over the sins previously committed*" (Romans 3:25; Acts 17:30; John 15:24) it means that up to the time when Christ died, God saved people on credit so to speak. God did not save Abraham because he brought a sacrifice. God never saved any of them simply because they brought a sacrifice.

An animal sacrifice pointed to Christ. When Christ came, He paid for all the sins of the past as well as all the sins that would be committed in the future. His death, therefore, covered the sins for all time.¹⁹

In describing how God provided us with undeserved righteousness, Hebrews 9:22 refers us to the Old Testament and the sacrificial system, Leviticus 17:11 NAS:

¹¹ *for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the Lord. **It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible.***

Only now, the life offered as a sacrifice is not a spotless animal, but Jesus Christ. **God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins.** That punishment involved His death—Jesus voluntarily shed His blood for sinners. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, God can accept those who put their trust in Jesus. **Only the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross was the effective atonement for our sins.** Christ stands in our place, having paid the penalty of death for our sin, and only He could satisfy God's anger against us.²⁰

Old Testament believers looked forward in faith to Christ's coming and were saved, even

¹⁷ Op Cit, Easton.

¹⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, under: "Chapter 3".

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

though they did not know Jesus' name or the details of His earthly life.²¹

Unlike the Old Testament believers, we know about the God who loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son (John 3:16). The question to answer is: **have you put your trust in Jesus?** God is entirely fair and just, both in His inherent character, and in His dealings with sinners. Christ's death relates to both the past and the present.²²

The only answer to humanity's plight—death because of sin—was given by God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **This action fulfilled God's own Law and His promises to Israel.** The way to receive this answer for ourselves is through faith in Jesus Christ.²³

Hopefully we now have a somewhat better understanding of the background of forgiveness and faith in order to better understand these three verses.

John 15:24:

If I hadn't done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father;

Acts 17:30:

God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him;

and Romans 3:25:

For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past.

The Greeks listening to Paul on Mars Hill simply did not get it when Paul tried to explain to them that God was not an idol who could be constructed by human hands. God is far different than any idol. Also, the Athenians needed to understand that **although God had overlooked people's former ignorance** (not in the sense that he condoned it but rather that He had not yet judged it), He now commanded everyone everywhere to turn from idolatry and turn to Him. Paul wanted them to know that this was not just a theological debate, but rather a life and death reality. If they did not accept this teaching, they would have to face the consequences that would result from their rejecting it. **Whatever the nature and consequences of their former failure to respond to God, that would be nothing compared with the consequences of ignoring what was now being offered by the finished work of Christ.**²⁴ That is in effect what John 15:24 is saying. **No one who**

²¹ Ibid.

²² Barton B. Bruce et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 593.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Barton B. Bruce et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001),

has knowledge of the Word of God, His miracles, and the prophecy He has fulfilled, has any justifiable excuse for not believing. Now that the Light has come, those who willfully reject it **have no excuse.** And because the revelation in Jesus and by Jesus is so tied to the **Father**, then to hate Jesus is to hate God (John 15:24b).²⁵

John 15:24 points out that because Jesus performed miracles the likes of which no one else could perform, they knew for a fact that at the very least this man was a direct ambassador from God and therefore **anything that He said should be believed.** John 3:2 told us, “*No one could perform the miraculous signs You are doing if God were not with Him.*” But the nation as a whole rejected both Jesus and the Father because in their sins they loved darkness rather than light (3 John 19). The nation thought it was serving God in rejecting Jesus (John 16:2-3) but in reality it was serving **Satan** (John 8:44). Sin is basically irrational. Their hatred of Jesus was without any rational cause, which also fits the pattern of hatred for righteous people as seen in those who hated David.^{26 27} Again Warren Wiersbe writes:

“How does the Holy Spirit encourage believers when they are experiencing the hatred and opposition of the world? It is primarily through the **Word of God.** For one thing, the Spirit reminds us that this opposition is clearly expressed by various writers in the Scriptures. In John 15:25, Jesus quoted Psalms 35:19 and 69:4. The Word assured Him that the hatred of the world was not because of anything He had done to deliberately cause such opposition. We today can turn to passages like Philippians 1:28–30; 2 Timothy 2:9–12; Hebrews 12:3–4; and 1 Peter 4:12ff. We also have the encouraging words of our Lord found in the Gospels.”²⁸

Now the concluding verses of chapter 15.

John 15:26-27 NAS:

²⁶ *“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth **who proceeds from the Father,** He will testify about Me,*
²⁷ *and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

Here we see a chain of testimony. In verse 26 we read that the Holy Spirit first will testify

WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 536.

²⁵ Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B.; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures.* Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:327.

²⁶ Pss. 35:19; 69:4; 109:3.

²⁷ Op Cit., Walvoord.

²⁸ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary.* Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 15:18.

and then in verse 27 that the disciples will testify. In verse 27 the phrase, “*you will testify*,” is an imperative. In light of verses 24 and 25 we are to bear witness to Christ. We are to make the world aware of Him. Christ is giving a mandate here. Just before He returned to heaven, He would repeat that command to His disciples (Matthew 29:19, 20).

Jesus wished to reassure the disciples that the Spirit would testify to them about Jesus just as they would testify about Jesus to others. The most important aspect of this statement is that **the Spirit goes out from the Father**. In the light of verse 27 it is clear that this promised function of the Spirit was first and foremost for the disciples. They had been with Jesus and had the responsibility of being eyewitnesses to the historic events.²⁹

Jesus encouraged His disciples by the promise of the Spirit’s work in the world. As the work of Jesus was to promote the Father and not Himself, so the Spirit will teach them the truth about Jesus as the Messiah. And what the Spirit says is true for He is **the Spirit of Truth** (John 16:13). As **the Counselor** (John 14:26; 16:7), the Spirit presents God’s truth to the world. The Spirit is sent **from the Father** (John 14:26), just as the Son was sent from the Father. Yet this mysterious work of the Spirit is not done in isolation from the Church. The apostles then were also to teach other people the facts that they came to know. As the apostles witnessed to other people about the truth they learned about Jesus, the Holy Spirit would act in the lives of those same people persuading them, and people would be saved. That same combination of human obedience to the divine command (Acts 1:8) coupled with the witness of the Spirit is needed in every believer’s life.³⁰

Acts 1:8 NAS:

⁸ *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

“In his autobiography, **Colonel Harland Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken** fame says that he was always a God-fearing man. In every venture he gave God a tenth of the profits. Yet he knew that if he died, God probably wouldn’t take him to heaven. Worried, he traveled to Australia to a special church convention for the answer. He didn’t find it.

“One day, Sanders was walking down a street in Louisville, Kentucky, when **Reverend Waymon Rodgers** of Louisville’s Evangel Tabernacle invited him to some evangelistic services. Several days later, Sanders went. At age 79, he claimed the promises of Romans 10:9. “*When I*

²⁹ Carson, D. A.: *New Bible Commentary*: 21st Century Edition. 4th ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, S. Jn 15:18.

³⁰ Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B.; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:327.

walked out of that church that night, I knew I was a different man. All my tithing and good deeds had never given me the sense of God's presence that I knew then,' he says."³¹

The Holy Spirit is with you continually to help you accomplish God's will, which is to be a witness to the world of God's power and salvation through Christ. You may wonder what to say, but remember that your life often speaks more eloquently about what Christ can do to transform a life. As you "walk the talk," so to speak, as you live out your faith daily, God will give you the right words to say to those who cross your path. God may even give you the privilege and joy of leading to faith some of those to whom you witness. But if not, you can still be assured that you have been faithful to sow and water the seed of the Word, and God will bring to harvest those who will respond. Did you miss an opportunity that God gave you to witness on behalf of Jesus yesterday? Try not to let that happen today. When the opportunity presents itself, tell somebody about Jesus and then simply turn that person over to the Holy Spirit. Remember it is only by the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit that anyone comes to faith. But we provide opportunities for the Holy Spirit to convert someone when we tell them about Christ.

³¹ Tan, Paul Lee: *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: A Treasury of Illustrations, Anecdotes, Facts and Quotations for Pastors, Teachers and Christian Workers*. Garland TX: Bible Communications, 1996, c1979.