**Grace to You** :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

**By All Means Save Some**
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
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**by John MacArthur**

Paul's one aim in making himself the slave of all was so that they might be saved. He was not trying to win a popularity contest. He was not seeking to make himself or the gospel appealing to them. His whole purpose was evangelistic. C. H. Spurgeon, preaching on 1 Corinthians 9, said,

I fear there are some who preach with the view of *amusing* men, and as long as people can be gathered in crowds, and their ears can be tickled, and they can retire pleased with what they have heard, the orator is content, and folds his hands, and goes back self-satisfied. But Paul did not lay himself out to please the public and collect the crowd. If he did not save them he felt that it was of no avail to interest them. Unless the truth had pierced their hearts, affected their lives, and made new men of them, Paul would have gone home crying, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" …

Now observe, brethren, if I, or you, or any of us, or all of us, shall have spent our lives merely in amusing men, or educating men, or moralizing men, when we shall come to give our account at the last great day we shall be in a very sorry condition, and we shall have but a very sorry record to render; for of what avail will it be to a man to be educated when he comes to be damned? Of what service will it be to him to have been amused when the trumpet sounds, and heaven and earth are shaking, and the pit opens wide her jaws of fire and swallows up the soul unsaved? Of what avail even to have moralized a man if still he is on the left hand of the judge, and if still, "Depart, ye cursed," shall be his portion? (Spurgeon, "Soul Saving Our One Business," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 25, 674-676)

That is precisely my concern about today's pragmatic church-growth strategies. The design is to attract the unchurched. For what? To entertain them? To get them to attend church meetings regularly? Merely "churching" the unchurched accomplishes nothing of eternal value. Too often, however, that is where the strategy stalls. Or else it is combined with a watered-down gospel that wrongly assures sinners a positive "decision" for Christ is as good as true conversion. Multitudes who are not authentic Christians now identify themselves with the church. The church has thus been invaded with the world's values, the world's interests, and the world's citizens.

By all means we are to seek the salvation of the lost. We must be servants to all, deferential to every kind of person. For Jews we should become Jewish; for Gentiles we should be like Gentiles; for children we should be childlike; and so on for every facet of humanity. But the primary means of evangelism we dare not overlook: the straightforward, Christ-centered proclamation of the unadulterated Word of God. Those who trade the Word for amusements or gimmicks will find they have no effective means to reach people with the truth of Christ.

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