

Brother Tillit S Teddlie lived to be a 102 years of age and wrote many songs found in our hymn book. A favorite hymn of many is the song entitled “Into Our Hands the Gospel Is Given,” (sometimes entitled “Swiftly We’re Turning”) [page 340 in our hymn books]. While Bro. Teddlie had written the words and melodies to more than 100 songs, he paid Mrs. Roy Carruth \$3 for the words to this song to which he later wrote the music in 1939. He remarked that the most important things in singing are (1) scriptural words and (2) singable melodies. The words teach us, and the melody helps us to remember that instruction. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

I appreciate so many of Bro. Teddlie’s songs, but the song entitled “Into Our Hands the Gospel Is Given,” has special significance as it should be the beacon for each or our lives. Indeed the words to this song have spiritual meaning. No doubt this song has also influenced countless other Christians in seeking and teaching the lost. For the next few minutes I want us to consider some lessons that can be seen from this song of teaching.

First, the song illustrates the IMPORTANCE OF PROMPTNESS. Time is of the essence. The first verse begins: *“Swiftly we’re turning life’s daily pages; swiftly the hours are changing to years. How are we using God’s golden moments? Shall we reap glory? Shall we reap tears?”*

The words of this verse are a sober reminder that time is fleeting and how are we using that time. Throughout the Bible, the reference to life is always pictured as something that passes quickly. James describes it as a vapor. *(James 4:14) Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

(Job 9:25) Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. The term “post” was used to describe a messenger. During the O.T. times, a post-man was used to carry messages; especially during times of war. The king would communicate his commands to his front line by messages delivered by the post-man. *(Jer 51:31) One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end.* Because of the urgency of those messages, those post-men were always in a hurry. You might see him come running toward you but he would soon be out-of-sight. He wasn’t seen for very long. So it is with life – “My days are swifter than a post.”

So the words of the song “*Swiftly we’re turning life’s daily pages; swiftly the hours are changing to years*” are ever so true. But the last few words of the verse are the hard hitters. *How are we using God’s golden moments? Shall we reap glory? Shall we reap tears?* The concern is not so much that life is swiftly changing; but rather what are we doing with the time we have. How are we using those golden moments. Jesus recognized this reality when he said *(John 9:4) I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.* The words to this song emphasize the urgency and promptness of the gospel. While we hesitate or deliberate, others remain untaught about Christ and are perhaps swept off into eternity in that condition. There was a time when Jesus was selecting disciples to become his apostles and he found James and John, the son of Zebedee. He called them *(Matt 4:22) And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.* There was no hesitation on their part in doing what the Lord asked them to do. We have been asked to go and teach. Let us use God’s golden moments to do just that.

SECONDLY, MANY ARE SEEKING. In a world of hopelessness and emptiness, many realize something is lacking in their inner lives. They become the seekers, the searchers, sometimes not even knowing where to turn because of the devil’s wiles and

twists and turns of false messages. In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus describes those who are truly seeking as having “*a good and honest heart*” those who will “*hear the word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience.*” (Luke 8:15). Lest we grow weary in teaching or decide others are not interested, may we consider that we were once in darkness, needing the light and hoping for a guide.

Verse 2

*Millions are groping without the gospel, quickly they'll reach eternity's night;
Shall they sit idly as they rush onward? Haste, let us hold up Christ to the light.*

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost and has entrusted that responsibility into our hands. Into our hands the gospel is given. By comparison, the message in the Sermon on the Mount is that most people will be lost. Many will be on that broad road that leads to destruction. People will not be saved until they are first made aware that they are lost and need salvation. That's where we come into the picture. Near the end of His ministry, Jesus commissioned all Christians to teach the gospel to all those lost in sin (Matt. 28:18-20). ***(Mat 28:19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*** This we sometimes call the great commission.

The text instructs us to go and to teach. What are we to teach? The counter verse to Matt 28:19 is Mark 16:15 and there we are told to ***(Mark 16:15) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*** While it may be important to teach the world about the nutrition and health, or the importance of conservation, that's not our commission from the Lord. We are to teach/preach what the early Christians taught – the gospel (good news) about Jesus and what he did for us. ***(Act 8:5) Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto***

them. A few verses we learn (Act 8:12) *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.* Skip down to (Act 8:35) *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.* Right after Paul's conversion, we are told (Acts 9:20) *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* And while on their missionary journeys we are told simply that (Acts 14:7) *And there they preached the gospel.*

There is a lot of emphasis on preaching the word because up the reality that millions are groping without the gospel.

3. THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IS PERSONAL. The song "Into Our Hands The Gospel Is Given" begins with the emphasis on the gospel being a person commitment. Again with reference to the commission given by Jesus, Christians have an individual responsibility to teach the gospel to all those lost in sin (Matt. 28:18-20). Notice what Jesus said to his apostles in John 15. (John 15:1) *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. (2) Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* However, this task will never be achieved in its fullness; many will never hear the purity of the gospel unless it becomes personal to us. The gospel is given into our hands, first to obey and then to teach to others.

FOURTH, THE MOTIVATION TO LIVE A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE. The gospel gives an answer of the hope that is in us. *Souls that are precious, souls that are dying, while we rejoice our sins are forgiven.* We our-selves rejoice because our sins are forgiven. The man from Ethiopia after he was baptized went on his way rejoicing. (Act 8:39) *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way*

rejoicing. Likewise was the jailer in Philippi. *(Acts 16:33) And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. (34) And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

While we may rejoice, the song doesn't end there. Note the ending of verse 3 as the song asks, "*Did he not also die for these lost ones?*" Our response then surely will be: "*Then let us point the way unto heaven?*"

INTO OUR HANDS

Swiftly we're turning life's daily pages, Swiftly the hours are changing to years;
How are we using God's golden moments? Shall we reap glory? Shall we reap tears?

Millions are groping without the gospel, quickly they'll reach eternity's night;
Shall they sit idly as they rush onward? Haste, let us hold up Christ to the light.

Souls that are precious, souls that are dying, while we rejoice our sins are forgiven
Did He not also die for these lost ones? Then let us point the way unto heav'n.

Chorus:

Into our hand the gospel is given, Into our hand is given the light.
Haste let us carry God's precious message,
Guiding the erring back to the right.

Invitation. Are you subject to the Lord's invitation?