

HEROES OF THE FAITH # 1

E. Stanley Jones / Quotes and Life

- We grow small trying to be great.
- Everybody who belongs to Christ belongs to everybody who belongs to Christ.
- If you don't surrender to God, don't think you don't surrender. Everybody surrenders to something. I have surrendered to God and therefore I surrender to nothing else.
- The only thing you believe in is the thing you believe in enough to practice.
- Your creed is your deed.
- A reduced Christ is the same as a rejected Christ.
- Faith is not merely you holding onto God, it is God holding on to you.
- When you pray, you begin to feel the sense of being sent.
- Earth's blackest day and earth's brightest day are only three days apart.
- When we talk about what we believe, we divide. When we talk about who we believe in we unite.
- Christianity that does not begin with the individual does not begin. Christianity that ends with the individual ends.
- I am the embryo of the man who is to be perfect as the Father is perfect.
- Jesus asks for the only possession we have - ourselves.
- The gospel begins at the cross- with death. You can't kill a man who is already dead or defeat a man who has already accepted defeat. This man is deathless and happy.
- He is not the greatest who has the greatest number of servants, but he is the greatest who serves the greatest number.
- The gospel involves both the person (Jesus Christ) and the plan (Kingdom of God) The person without the plan yields personal piety only. The plan without the person yields social reform but not its essential source and power.

I like to read about great Christians from previous eras in order to broaden my appreciation for God's faithfulness in each generation. We will share these heroes of the faith messages to bring variety to you. Back in the early 1980's, a Spirit filled Methodist minister, Pastor Ives, introduced me to the life and books of E. Stanley Jones, who was an American missionary to India, born in Baltimore in 1884 and died in India in 1973.

He had planned to become a lawyer, but his conversion to Christ changed all that. In 1907 at the age of 23, a mission board sent him to India without any orientation about its culture or climate! His voyage from New York to Bombay took 6 weeks by ship and then continued with a 20 hour train ride to Lucknow in Northern India. On the train, Jones met a highly educated, English speaking Muslim with whom he sought to evangelize with a reading of the Sermon on the Mount. Instead of being converted, the man responded with these words:

'We have the same thing in our Sacred Book'

These words shook Jones as he had never encountered such a challenge. It is one that continues to this day with the view that 'all religions are the same, only the paths are different'.

Jones faced a dilemma early on in his missionary career on whether he was going to debate and argue with others about how they were wrong and Christianity was right, or whether he would pursue another method of reaching out to other religions.

During his first eight years he was a pastor, head of a publishing house, missionary to the villages and a district superintendent of large areas. His mission had concentrated their work among the lowest castes, which was the path of least resistance. Here is his description of how this began to change.

"Along with my regular work I had started a Bible class and study group at an Indian club house where leading Hindus and Mohammedans (Muslims) gathered. After tennis in the evenings we would sit together until darkness fell and study the New Testament and discuss spiritual matters. One day one of the leading government officials, a Hindu, remarked, 'How long has this mission been in this city?' I told him about 50 years. He asked very pointedly: 'Then why have you only gone to the low castes? Why haven't you come to us?' I replied that I supposed it was because they did not want us. He replied: 'It is a mistake. We want you if you will come in the right way.' Almost every moment since then I have been in eager quest for that right way. I have come to the conclusion that the right way was just to be a Christian with all the fearless implications of that term." - The Christ of the Indian Road -1925

After eight years of strain in India, Jones was painfully conscious that he was not intellectually prepared nor Christian enough to face this task. Most depressing of all, he was physically broken with nervous exhaustion and brain fatigue and had faced several collapses. He took a year's furlough in America but while holding successful evangelistic meetings in Philippines on his way back to India, he faced more collapses. He returned to India for a new term of service with a deep cloud over him and feeling broken. He went straight to the hills upon arrival and took a complete rest for several

months. He came down to the plains to resume ministry but felt just as weak so he returned to the hills again. When he came down again to resume his work, he realized that he could continue no further and would have to end his missionary career and return to America.

'While at a meeting in Lucknow in prayer, "a Voice seemed to say, 'Are you ready for this work to which I have called you?' I replied: 'No, Lord, I am done for. I have reached the end of my rope.' The Voice replied, 'If you will turn that over to me and not worry about it, I will take care of it.' I quickly answered, 'Lord, I close the bargain right here.' A great peace settled into my heart and pervaded me. I knew it was done! Life - abundant Life - had taken possession of me. I was so lifted up that I scarcely touched the road as I quietly walked home that night. Every inch was holy ground. For days after that I hardly knew I had a body. I went through the days, working all day and far into the night, and came down to bedtime wondering why in the world I should ever go to bed at all, for there was not the slightest trace of tiredness of any kind. I seemed possessed by Life and Peace and Rest - by Christ himself.'

Nine years passed and Jones was still experiencing Life on a permanently high level. He remarked that he had done nothing but take it! Christ to him had become Life. In 1938 Time magazine called him..... 'The World's Greatest Missionary Evangelist'

Up until the age of 87, Jones kept up a rigorous and active life. It is estimated that he preached more than 60,000 sermons, sometimes 5 to 7 a day. He always did his daily exercises which also included 30 pushups. Christ truly had become his life...spirit, soul and body. E.Stanley Jones was truly a Christ-like man who reached millions for Christ. God led Jones to focus on the essential truths of Christianity apart from all the trappings of it. He presented Jesus as the universal Christ, belonging to all cultures and races, and who was the answer to all human needs.

A WORLD CHRISTIAN

E. STANLEY JONES

Previously, we introduced you to the amazing life of E.Stanley Jones, who spent his life as a missionary to India and to the whole world. During the mid-20th Century, his devotional books were the most popular in the world. Compared to a book format, he described the daily devotional as one that brings transformation rather than just information. One thing I like about his devotional books is the continuity of the subject, whereas many such books just jump around to various topics. I have enjoyed going through his book called, **The Word Became Flesh.**

One American missionary I got to know in London shared this phrase with me, which has been a good reminder of the importance of finishing the Christian race well.

Many men have good beginnings.....fewer have good endings.

The apostle Paul finished well, because he practiced what he preached to disciple Timothy.

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. - 1 Timothy 4:16 NIV

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings.
- 2 Timothy 3:10 NIV (see also 1 Corinthians 4:17)

Paul lived a sacrificial life for the cause of Christ and His kingdom. In fact, that was the main message of his ministry.....the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.

Boldly and without hindrance he preached the Kingdom of God taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. - Acts 28:31 NIV

E. Stanley Jones made a great impact in the world because he followed that same pattern. One of his last books was titled: **The Unshakeable Kingdom and The Unchanging Person.** Stanley worked among other world religions, but never lost his focus on the uniqueness and centrality of Jesus Christ. He also had a Biblical focus on the kingdom of God as a present reality in the life of the Christian. His ministry in India was primarily towards the educated classes. He held thousands of lectures in India which ended with a time for questions. Stanley found that God always provided him the proper responses to even the most difficult queries. He also held roundtable discussions where various religions would participate. There would be no attack on another's beliefs but the presentation of what their religion had done for them. Stanley even wrote a book about this called **Christ at the Round Table.** He found that Christ always came out on top. (One Hindu said: 'We like to listen about a Man (Jesus) who practiced everything he preached.)

Jones: "When the early evangelists of the Good News were sent out on their own, they returned and told Jesus 'what they had done and what they had taught'. This evangelist must add a third to what he has done and what he has taught - **what he has learned.** It will not be primarily an account of what has been done through him but **what has been done to him.....** I saw that the gospel lies in the person of Jesus, that He himself is the good news, that my one task was to live and to present Him. My task was simplified. But it was not only simplified - it was vitalized.

.....**Christ is the center of Christianity,** that utter commitment to Him and catching His mind and spirit, and living His life constitute a Christian (Stanley donated his profits from book sales back into the ministry) We believe that there are three elemental needs of East and West:

1. An adequate goal for our character
2. A free, full life
3. God

We believe that Jesus in a supreme way gives these three things. The greatest news that has ever broken to the human race is the news that God is like Christ. One brilliant Hindu said to me (Stanley Jones). "Jesus is the highest expression of God we have ever seen." Men need more than a goal, they need a free, full life, for life is crippled and dwarfed. - Excerpts from **Christ of the Indian Road**

I appreciate E. Stanley Jones more than most others, because like him, I spent much of my missionary life working among Indians and those of the Hindu and Sikh religions. During my spiritual journey I also discovered the key message of the Bible is about the King and His kingdom, which is my teaching emphasis.

In Dec.1997, I went to India for three months to be the first teacher of a newly formed Bible school. Much of my teaching was about the kingdom of God. On the advice of Pastor Sharath, I did not focus on condemning the idols of the Hindus while doing evangelism. I followed the pattern of Jesus, who spent his time proclaiming, teaching and demonstrating the goodness and power of God. Anybody can attack, criticize and condemn what is wrong. The main focus of Jesus was to bring the good news of the kingdom of God. There are some in the body of Christ who specialize in exposing darkness in the world and even in the church. There is a place for that, but I have noticed that often those type of ministries do very little to display the power of God or even acknowledge the good fruit, they just look at the rotten apples. The Bible says..... **Test everything, hold on to the good** - 1 Thessalonians 5:21

Anyone can curse the darkness, but how much better to shine the light of the good news of the kingdom reign of Jesus Christ. That process begins with a change of heart, which leads to a desire to change the world, not be changed by it. God takes us from being worldly to become a world Christian with a kingdom mentality. E.Stanley Jones understood that and lived it.

E. Stanley Jones did not have a great beginning, but he had a great ending!

This is why he is one of my great heroes in the faith. He kept the focus on Christ and lived his life fully for the kingdom of God.

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