

Robert Murray McCheyne

Will Your Life Count?



One of Scotland's great preachers wrote upon his college graduation, "Life is vanishing fast, make haste for eternity." Just 7 short years later, Robert Murray McCheyne left this world for a better.

Brought up in a wealthy lawyer's home, he and his brother were given to pleasure, until David found Christ as his Savior. It was David's sudden death that led Robert to Christ.

He said later, "Oh, Christless man, you have pleasure, but it is only for a season. Laugh on if you will . . . Your candle will soon be out. Your games, your dance, your social parties, will soon be over. There are no games in hell."

He was ordained minister of St. Peter's Church of Scotland in New Dundee in 1836. His parish of 4000, he said, was given to idolatry and hardness of heart. But soon 1500 were attending services under his remarkable preaching.

Urgency and alarm characterized his messages. He said, "Every day that passes is bringing you nearer death, judgment, and eternity."

He was known for holiness of life, and prayed always for revival.

It is said of him, "The power of his preaching doubtless came through his communion with God and his passion for lost souls." He declared, "I think I have never risen a morning without thinking how I could bring more souls to Christ."

He became very sick in late 1838, but went to Palestine to inquire into the state of Israel. He nearly died.

It was under the ministry of Wm. C. Burns at St. Peter's, during McCheyne's absence that the revival he prayed for broke loose.

Services were held every night for weeks, often into late hours. The whole town was moved. The fear of God fell on the ungodly who packed the churches. The revival continued when McCheyne returned. Tears were common. Services were held in the open air as the crowds listened "in an awful and breathless stillness." 39 prayer meetings were held weekly in connection just with St. Peter's. When he first arrived at St. Peter's he could hardly find teachers for the Sunday School. Eventually there were 19 Sunday Schools attached to the church.

In February 1843 he preached in northwest Scotland 27 times in 24 places, traveling through deep snow. A few weeks later he went home to be with His Lord and His Love.

His monument reads, "He walked closely with God, an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. He ceased not day and night to labour and watch for souls, and was honoured by his Lord to draw many wanderers out of darkness into the path of life."

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