

Lives Worth Imitating – Hudson Taylor September 1, 2019

This morning I want to explore the life of one Hudson Taylor. Most people I have mentioned his name to this past week have never heard of him. Hopefully you won't be able to say that again after today.

Hudson Taylor and the word, China, should always go hand in hand. His mother and father were fascinated with China, although they lived in England. When Hudson's mother became pregnant, his parents prayed that God would raise him up to be a missionary to the Chinese. And when Hudson was only 4 years old he declared his intent to grow up and do just that.

- **Hudson Taylor was born on May 21, 1832** to James and Amelia Taylor who were devout Methodists. His father was a chemist and a local Methodist preacher.
- **Hudson was sold out to God at age 17.** (But it came in a dramatic and creative way)
When Hudson was 15 years old he started working as a junior clerk at one of the local banks. The fellow employees were quite worldly in their lifestyles and ridiculed Taylor's views on God, which led him to question his conservative Christian upbringing. Over time, he adopted their perspective and concluded that he could live his life anyway he wanted, because there was no God to whom he must answer. Shortly after that he developed an **eye infection** which forced him to quit working at the bank and go to work for his father. His father became quite irritated by Taylor's moodiness, but his mother looked deeper and was concerned with his spiritual condition and began praying for him to return to the Lord. A few months after his 17th birthday, Hudson was looking for something to read to pass the time. He looked through a basket with some pamphlets in it and found one that looked somewhat interesting.

What Hudson was unaware of was that his mother had gone to visit her sister 50 miles away. On this same day, his mother was deeply troubled over her son's spiritual condition and went into her bedroom and locked the door and resolved to pray until she was convinced that Hudson's salvation was assured by God. She prayed for several hours for Hudson, until she felt an overwhelming conviction and peace that God had drawn Hudson back into a right relationship with Himself.

Meanwhile back to Hudson. He read that pamphlet which described a coal miner who was dying of tuberculosis. While on his death bed some Christians visited him and shared the Gospel with him. The dying man had been most struck with Jesus' cry upon the cross, "*It is finished!!*" This dying man was pricked in his heart by that statement and accepted the Lord. Hudson, pondered the question, "*What was finished?*" Immediately the answer leaped into his mind that his debt of sin had been fully paid by Jesus on the cross and all that was left for him to do was to accept Jesus' sacrifice. Hudson later described this event: "*And with this dawned the joyful conviction, as light was flashed into my soul by the Holy Spirit, that there was nothing in the world to be done but to fall down on my knees, and accepting this Savior and His salvation, to praise Him evermore.*" He immediately knelt down and asked Jesus to become his Savior.

Two weeks later, Hudson's mother returned home and upon seeing he declared he had great news to share with her. She responded that she already knew and that she'd been rejoicing over this news for 2 weeks now. Later Hudson picked up and opened a notebook that he thought was his but discovered it was actually his sisters notebook. His eye landed upon a single sentence: "*I will pray every day for Hudson's conversion.*" From the date of that entry he realized that she had been praying daily for his salvation for a month at the time he was converted.

- **God confirmed His call for Taylor to preach in China** within a few months of his new birth, Taylor's call to be a missionary to China was confirmed during a night of intense prayer. He began preparing for this trip by studying the Chinese language and it's customs. He realized that this would be a physically challenging life so he began working out regularly outside, sleeping without a

mattress on a hard board, and began to pale back his eating. He moved into a very depressed part of the city where there were mostly homeless and destitute people and began spending every available minute sharing Jesus with them and ministering to them. He tried to live on as little as possible so as to free up money to help them with their needs. Throughout his life he gave away two-thirds of his income and lived the life of beggar. He once wrote: *"My experience is that the less I spend on myself and the more I give to others, the fuller of happiness and blessing did my soul become."* During this time he became familiar with George Mueller who lived his life and based his ministry on never asking others to support him or his ministry but wholly trusted in God. Taylor committed to this same approach to life.

- **In 1854, at 21 years old, Hudson landed in China as a missionary of the Chinese Evangelistic Society.** However it was at a time with great unrest, with a religious rebellion sweeping the country – during the **Taiping Rebellion**, (during which 100 million people were displaced from their homes and 20 million people dead). It took him 6 months to learn the Chinese language and then he launched into **10 extended journeys into the interior regions of China**. This lasted for about 4 years.
- **On January 20, 1858 he married another missionary, Maria Dyer.** They were married for 12 years.
- In that same year, 1858, after 4 years working under them, Taylor resigned from the Chinese Evangelistic Society. He didn't like how it was run and the fact they borrowed money to run the ministry.
- **God gave Taylor the vision for China Inland Mission** (But once again we see God's creativity) In 1860 Taylor came down with what probably was **hepatitis**, and he and his family had to return to England. This medical leave was one that deeply grieved Taylor because he believed it was a major setback to the work they'd begun in China. However, God knows what He'd doing always, and it was during this "setback" that God brought to fruition His future plans to greatly expand the mission. Perceived setbacks are often the occasions for God's working out of His plans in our lives. Taylor had been wrestling with what the future direction of this mission was to go. It was during his attendance at a worship service that God cast the vision by causing unrest in his heart and soul. Taylor writes: *"On Sunday, June 25th, 1865, unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security, while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony; and there the Lord conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to GOD for this service (the founding of China Inland Mission). I told Him that all the responsibility as to issues and consequences must rest with Him; that as His servant, it was mine to obey and to follow Him – His, to direct, to care for, and to guide me and those who might labor with me."* This was the birth of the **China Inland Mission**. Taylor was 33 years old. On May 26th, the following year (1866) Hudson, Maria, and their children sailed with the largest group of missionaries that had ever sailed to China – 16 besides themselves. Overnight the mission force in China expanded 25%.
- **On July 23, 1870 his wife Maria died** of cholera. She was 33 years old. When Maria Dyer died at age 33, she had given birth to 8 children. Three died at birth, two in childhood and those that lived to adulthood all became missionaries with the China Inland Mission their father founded.
- **A year later Taylor sailed for England again, and while he was there he married Jennie Faulding**, they were married for 33 years.
- **In 1900 the brutal Boxer Rebellion** raged against all Christians and foreigners in China. The China Inland Mission was hit hard: 58 adults and 21 children were killed.
- **In 1905 Taylor died at the age of 73.**

God's achievements through Hudson Taylor:

- Taylor spent 51 years in China.
- At the time of his death, the China Inland Mission was responsible for bringing over 825 missionaries to the country and
- CIM began 125 schools and
- CIM directly resulted in 18,000 Christian conversions as well as the
- CIM established more than 300 mission stations of work with more than 500 local helpers
- CIM was a witnessing presence in all 18 provinces.

Secrets to Hudson Taylor's success:

1. **He knew and treasured God's Word.**
2. **He totally depended upon God for his provision** – both in his life and in his mission work. His motto: ***"Depend upon it, GOD'S work done in GOD'S way will never lack GOD'S supplies."*** And he certainly found that to be true. **Philippians 4:19 (NIV)** *And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*
3. **He identified with the people he sought to reach.** He dressed like the Chinese and grew a pigtail. He went on preaching tours in inland China, something that was considered way to dangerous.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NIV) *Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*

4. **He had a passion to reach the unreached Chinese and he poured out his life for this divine calling.** He wrote about his passion to reach the unreached in China: ***"My soul yearns, oh! How intensely for the evangelization of the 180 millions of these unoccupied provinces. Oh, that I had a hundred lives to give or spend for their good."***

When he arrived he was alarmed with the leisure lifestyle most of the missionaries lived. They didn't do much to evangelize the Chinese but instead lived in one of the 5 major seaport cities working mostly as translators for businessmen. God had laid on Taylor's heart a burden to reach the Chinese in the inland regions. Regions no one else wanted to go to. In a letter to possible missionary applicants he wrote: ***"We are going on into the interior. If any one is not prepared to rough it, he had better stay home. The only persons wanted here are those who will rejoice to work – really to labor, not to dream their lives away; to deny themselves to suffer in order to save."***

5. **Hudson Taylor knew how to pray.** From the time he felt called to China until the end of his life he woke at 5am to pray. He said later in life, ***"For as long as I've been alive the sun has never risen in China without finding me in prayer."*** For him, and Jesus, prayer was not a duty but a necessity. Someone in attendance at a prayer meeting Taylor led wrote the following experience: ***"His appearance did not impress me. He was slightly built, and spoke in a gentle voice. Like most young men, I suppose I associated power with noise, and looked for great physical presence in a leader. But when he said, "Let us pray," and proceeded to lead the meeting in prayer, my ideas underwent a change. I had never heard anyone pray like that. There was a simplicity, a tenderness, a boldness, a power that hushed and subdued one, and made it clear that God had admitted him into the inner circle of His friendship. He spoke with God face to face, as a man talks with his friend."***

Resources:

Listen to John Piper's sermon entitled, "The Ministry of Hudson Taylor as Life in Christ – Desiring God 2014 Conference for Pastors.

Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret

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- Hudson was sold out to God at age _____
- In 1854, at 21 years old Hudson landed in _____
- On January 20, 1858 he married _____
- In 1865 God gave Taylor the vision for _____
- On July 23, 1870 _____
- In 1905 Taylor _____

God's achievements through Hudson Taylor:

- Taylor spent _____ years in China
- CIM was responsible for bringing _____ missionaries to China
- CIM began _____ schools
- CIM had a hand in _____ Christian conversions
- CIM established more than ____ mission stations with 500+ local helpers
- CIM was a witnessing presence in all _____

Secrets to Hudson Taylor's Success:

1. He knew and treasured God's _____
2. He totally depended upon God for his _____
3. He _____ with the people he sought to reach
4. He had a _____ to reach the unreached Chinese and he poured out his life for this divine calling
5. He knew how to _____

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