

#1 of 12 - 5 & 10 on the 15th

(a monthly series on Christian missionaries who poured out (5) their lives in Christ's strength and power (10) sent out around the 15th of each month)

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Hudson Taylor

“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God.’” -- Mark 11:22

This is the first in a monthly series this year entitled *Victorious Christians You Should Know* from Warren Wiersbe's book by this title, introducing you to one amazing Christian from the past each month.

Church history is so important! It's both encouraging and inspiring to hear how Christians have sought the Lord, lived for Him, been sustained by Him to accomplish great things in the Kingdom of God, and then die and pass into eternal life. We are the church in our time! We must both take up the cause of Christ in our day and also live for Jesus with dedication and passion – laying down our lives so that the life of Christ might be lived in us and through us. I hope these short sketches will inspire you to read more about each Christian life and go out to live a more earnest and uncompromising Christian life.

Hudson Taylor

James Hudson Taylor was born in England in 1832. He was born into a devout Christian home with a father who was a lay evangelist and a mother known for her passionate prayer. Hudson's father was greatly burdened for lost souls in China even before Hudson was born, praying that the Lord may send someone to reach them with the gospel. In this home Hudson was raised to love and trust the Bible as God's word and to believe that an earnest personal relationship with God was possible through faith.

In his teens Hudson was serious about seeking God's will for his life. By focused and continued prayer, Hudson asked God to lead and direct his life. He eventually felt a distinct call to the people of China. He was able to read a book about the Chinese people provided to him by a local congregational minister. After reading the book, he told the minister that he believed it was God's will that he go to these people and preach Jesus to them. The minister asked Hudson how he ever intended to get there. Hudson replied that like the

apostles of old he would trust God to supply what was needed to fulfill the call. The older minister replied, “Ah, my boy, as you grow older you’ll get wiser than that!” But to the contrary, this passion to live by faith and to glory in the provision of the Lord became the foundation of the *China Inland Mission*. Hudson never promoted for funds, but he prayed and trusted God to raise up what was needed – that God may get all the glory! As he prepared for the mission field, Hudson became well known for extreme economy, personal self-denial, and simplicity. He had to largely support himself from age 16 onward. He understood well what it meant to trust God for daily provision well before he went to China!

The China Inland Mission became known for many ground-breaking and effective aspects of mission work. First, it was *inland*. This meant that Hudson and his staff did not stay in the western expatriate communities congregated at the ports. They ventured into the heart of the country that was totally unreached. Second, Hudson was known for intentionally accommodating himself in every cultural way that he might better present Bible truth to the people (1 Corinthians 9:22.) He wore traditional Chinese dress and grew his hair long so as to draw into a Chinese ponytail. He did not attempt to school Chinese people in western ways, but he schooled them in the ways of Christ. Third, he demonstrated the tremendous strength that can come from ministry together with a devout wife. Hudson and Maria Taylor were often referred to as a match made in heaven. Together they strengthened each other’s weaknesses, and they lifted each other up to become greater together than they ever could have been alone. Fourth, together they were fearless in facing struggle, disease, and seemingly insurmountable struggle. Fifth, he was cooperative with and engaging of other missionaries. Hudson wanted to see the lost come to Jesus, not to his or anyone else’s ministry. So he sought western Christians to enter Christian missions, not just his mission.

His life was marked by three key verses.

1) *Mark 11:22 ‘Have faith in God.’* — Hudson had a real and powerful faith in a real and all-powerful God. He would carefully seek God’s will by Scripture and prayer. When he was confident that he knew what God would have him do, he would proceed where he was led by faith. He was thoroughly convinced that God’s work will never fail! Hudson lived what he called “the exchanged life.” This meant the life of Christ exchanged for ours in real daily living. He believed that every Christian has the opportunity to daily walk with Jesus in a real way that bears the joy and strength of Jesus in our lives. Our struggles, fears, and weaknesses – exchanged for the peace, joy, and provision of God.

2) *1 Samuel 7:12 'Ebenezer, hitherto has the Lord helped us.'* — Hudson's ministry was everywhere marked by full dependence on God. If the Lord did not open the doors, provide for the needs, and bring the increase in souls — the ministry would have failed. The China Inland Mission was not built on the charisma of the founder, nor on the wealth of London, but on the power of God displayed in weak servants of Jesus.

3) *Genesis 22:14 'Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will provide.'* — Hudson and Maria had the two words inscribed — *Ebenezer* and *Jehovah-Jireh* — on plaques which they always kept on the mantle wherever they resided. Every time supplies would become desperately low at a mission facility Hudson was famous for saying, "*Then the Lord's time for helping us must be close at hand.*"

Hudson Taylor died at age 73 in inland China, still pursuing the missionary evangelistic call on his life. He was buried in Chinkiang, China. By his death he had stirred an entire generation of Christians to view foreign missions in a different way. Countless Chinese came to salvation through his ministry, and the *China Inland Mission* became the foundation of the modern house church movement of unknown millions of Christians in China today.

Further reading on the life of Hudson Taylor:

• *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret*, by Dr & Mrs Howard Taylor, Moody Press

• *Hudson and Maria Taylor; A Match Made in Heaven*, by John Pollock, Christian Focus Publication