

Sold Out

The Sufficiency and Supremacy of Christ in Missions

Keith Walters and Nick Cooper

An Ignite Fuel Group
(Teacher's Manuscript)



Lexington, Kentucky

Sold Out: The Sufficiency and Supremacy of Christ in
Missions

(Teacher's Manuscript)

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An Introduction to the Teacher's Manuscript

This teacher's manuscript is designed to be used in conjunction with this study's respective class handout. This handout will aid your class in taking notes during this weekly study. The teacher's manuscript follows the same outline structure as the class handout to facilitate easy notetaking.

It is recommended that you teach each study to yourself during the week preceding the particular study. This should be done by using the teacher's manuscript and filling out the class handout. The presentation style for each study varies depending upon the way the author felt best for the text(s) being discussed. Some weeks the study is designed to facilitate much discussion and others will be less time spent discussing and more time spent listening to God's Word. The direction in which the study is leaning will be clear by the amount of italicized questions in your manuscript.

These studies are quite lengthy and are designed to equip you as a teacher to respond to any questions which may arise during the study. With that in mind it is necessary to remember that the studies themselves need not be lengthy. You are responsible to lead the group through the entire study covering both the main and sub-points adequately. The length of the study results from the plethora of biblical references provided to support each point. As a teacher it is your responsibility to narrow these down to approximately two references which will best communicate the intended meaning to your group. All of the references

found in your teacher's manuscript are also provided on the class handout for those interested in further study. In the interest of time, please decide prior to class which references you will be discussing in the study.

To prepare yourself to teach it is imperative that you both study through the material beforehand and apply what you have learned to your own life; remember that you are not merely teaching them, you are teaching them how to obey (Matthew 28:18-20). If you are unsure how long the study will take then time yourself teaching to an imaginary audience until you feel comfortable. If there is ever anything which you do not understand please contact one of us for clarification.

It is crucial for you to understand that these studies rely heavily upon discussion. Your group may not feel comfortable doing this, but it is an important and meaningful aspect to this study. The following tips are ways to facilitate discussion. First, you must do whatever you can to help them feel comfortable discussing with one another in a small-group setting. Second, you must give them time to discuss. Silence is often awkward and as the teacher you must resist the temptation to simply give them the answers when they refuse to speak. This awkwardness is on your side, simply remain silent and eventually someone will say something. Once they begin discussing it is important not to criticize them for saying something incorrect. Continue to ask clarifying questions which cause them to think and lead them to the correct answer. Eventually your group will grow comfortable and discussion will become natural.

Typically, each session lasts approximately an hour, with thirty minutes of study and thirty minutes of

prayer and fellowship. You will begin the study with a brief prayer for both the teaching of God's Word and any pressing needs which the group may have. You will then take the group through the particular study for that week. Fuel Groups are not a place for debate or argument; if someone takes offense to something that has been said then after the study is over you can establish a time when you can meet and discuss the topic. Do not engage in an argument; inform the individual that they can talk to you after the study and move on. If the entire group is confused about something, take the necessary time to clarify the issue; if only one individual is confused then inform them that you will explain it to them at the close of the study. After the study has concluded the group will spend the remaining time praying for one another and in fellowship. Fellowship is not simply time spent with friends. Biblical fellowship is that time which the body of Christ spends encouraging, exhorting, and rebuking one another for the sake of spiritual maturity to the glory of God. Please make sure you lead your group in maintaining that focus.

As a teacher much is expected of you from your leaders, but most importantly, from God. You would do well to memorize the following verses and study them in their surrounding context as you prepare to lead this study.

“Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (I Timothy 4:16).

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15).

“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1).

What follows is the introduction to the class handout which you should read at the beginning of your first meeting. Because of this introduction and the need to get to know one another, it is natural for the first study to take longer than the ones to follow, so inform them that the remaining studies will not be as lengthy.

We have four main goals for each of our Fuel Groups: spiritual growth, genuine fellowship, mutual care, and the ministry of the Spirit.

The first of those areas is spiritual growth, or sanctification, which is the process by which we become more like Christ. Sanctification is accomplished through studying God’s Word and applying what you learned during the study. A second key area of discipleship is genuine fellowship, where the body of Christ spends time together, prays together, and invests in one another for the purpose of seeing how the Lord is working in each other’s lives. The third key area is mutual care. Mutual care is simply doing whatever it takes to see that the physical, spiritual, and mental needs of the group are consistently being met in order for ministry to continue at all times with excellence. The final key area of discipleship is the ministry of the Spirit. It is in this area where we help one another discover and use the gifts God has given to each of us to use for His glory in ministry and serving others.

We were created to enjoy and glorify God; our fuel groups are where we come together and help one another fulfill that purpose. Furthermore, our Fuel

Groups exist for the purpose of missions. These studies do not simply exist to meet your needs; they exist to equip you to meet the needs of those around you so that you can impact your campus, your city and this world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The class handout will aid you in taking notes during your weekly study. If you miss a study or are confused about your current study, do not hesitate to approach your Fuel Group leader and ask for clarification. Typically each session lasts an hour, with thirty minutes of study and thirty minutes of prayer and fellowship. We usually begin the study with a brief prayer for both the teaching of God's Word and any pressing needs that the group may have. The leader will then take the group through the particular study for that week. It is important at this point to establish that Fuel Groups are not a place for debate or argument; if you take offense to something that has been said then after the study is over you can approach the leader for clarification and they will set a time when you can meet and discuss the topic. After the study has concluded the group will spend the remaining time praying for one another and in fellowship. Fellowship is not simply time spent with friends. Biblical fellowship is that time which the body of Christ spends encouraging, exhorting, and rebuking one another for the sake of spiritual maturity to the glory of God, please make sure you maintain that focus.

May the Lord use this study to mold you into the likeness of His Son.

Until the nets are full,

The Ignite Staff



The Purpose of Missions: Worship I

Introduction

The society in which we live is extremely pragmatic and within pragmatism there is a common theme, namely that the ends justifies the means. With that as our culture's motto, any action can be undertaken as long as it guarantees a favorable outcome. This is not the case with Scripture. Not only does God specify both the end for which He acts but the means by which that end must be obtained. Furthermore, the end itself determines the means by which it is arrived at. Because of this, it is best to begin not with the first mention of God's purpose for the nations in Scripture but the end at which God's purposes will arrive.

What then is this purpose? Why does missions exist?

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't.

Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. . . . Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory."¹

- “Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns’” (I Chronicles 16:31)!
- “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psalm 46:10)!
- “Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth” (Psalm 67:4).
- “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).
- “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb’” (Revelation 7:9-10)!

God's chief purpose in history is His calling out, redeeming, and setting apart a people for Himself.

¹ John Piper, *Let The Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God In Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 17.

Now that we have examined the end let us turn to the beginning and ask

Why did God create? Or more personally stated, why did God create man?

I. Man was Created to Glorify God

You were made to glorify God; that is your purpose. God's glory is why you exist.

- “I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made” (Isaiah 43:6-7).
- “The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise” (Isaiah 43:20-21).
- “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins” (Isaiah 43:25).
- “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out” (Luke 19:38-40).
- “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (I Corinthians 10:31).
- “He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:5-6).

II. Man was Created to Pursue Joy

When you think of all the ways in which people pursue joy this sounds crazy. People search their whole lives to find joy, and inevitably come up empty. This pursuit of joy is known as hedonism: “the pursuit of and devotion to pleasure.”

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

If our purpose were to pursue joy, to pursue our pleasure, then wouldn't this lead us down a thousand wayward paths?

Does this sound compatible with the purpose of God?

III. Man's Goals of Worshipping God and Pursuing Joy are One

What we are talking about here is not the raw untamed hedonism of worldly men but *Christian Hedonism*. This is not the hedonism whose god is pleasure but the hedonism whose greatest pleasure is God. When understood as such it is easy to understand how man's goals of worshipping God and pursuing joy are indeed one, namely because they both culminate in the glory of God.

John Piper describes it like this. “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”²

² Ibid., 31. For an elaboration of what he means here see John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* and Sam Storms, *Pleasures Evermore: The Life-Changing Power of Enjoying God*.

- “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11).
- “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4).
- “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord . . .” (Philippians 3:1).
- “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).

Christian Hedonism is the glorious message of I John 5:3, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.” A burden is oppressive; it is something difficult to bear. Keeping God’s commands are not burdensome because of your love for and joy in God.

Going back to Piper’s statement that, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”³ Let us consider one of Paul’s statements in Philippians.

“Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:18b-21).

How is Christ honored, magnified, in Paul’s body?

There are two ways to magnify: like a telescope or like a microscope. “Microscopes make tiny things

³ Ibid., 31.

look bigger than they are. Telescopes make massive things look more like what they really are.”⁴ Paul honored Christ in his body because Christ was shown to be as He is, supremely and immeasurably valuable, even more valuable than life itself.

IV. Missions Exists that Man might Know and Joyfully Worship God

If “Missions exists because worship doesn’t”⁵ and man was created to glorify and enjoy God, then missions is the means by which God is calling out those who will worship and enjoy Him.

Application

When you go home meditate on these verses and begin to examine yourself and see if your life aligns with the purpose for which God created you.

⁴ <http://www.hopeingod.org/WelcomeFromPastorJohn.aspx>
[accessed 8-29-2007]

⁵ John Piper, *Let The Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God In Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 17.

Two

The Purpose of Missions: Worship II

Introduction

Last week we focused in on several things: the purpose of missions and the purpose of man. In the end we brought these two goals together and concluded that, if “Missions exists because worship doesn’t”⁶ and man was created to glorify and enjoy God, then missions is the means by which God is calling out those who will worship and enjoy Him.

This week we are still going to be discussing the purpose of missions only with a slightly different focus. Last week our primary focus was upon man who was created, and this week we will focus on the God who creates. We will be looking at many of the same verses as last week only now our focus will be on what they reveal about our Creator.

⁶ John Piper, *Let The Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God In Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 17.

Can someone who was here last week tell us why man was created? What is man's ultimate purpose?

What do you think that tells us about God who created man for that purpose?

I. The God-centeredness of God

God is the most God-centered individual in the universe; no one is more satisfied with and zealous for His glory than Himself. Just look at the Scriptures.

- “There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God” (Psalm 86:8-10).
- “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols” (Isaiah 42:8).
- “I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made” (Isaiah 43:6-7).
- “The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise” (Isaiah 43:20-21).
- “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins” (Isaiah 43:25).
- “For my name’s sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may

not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another” (Isaiah 48:9-11).

- “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).
- “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13).
- “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (I Corinthians 10:31).
- “For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:5-6).
- “He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:5-6).
- “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord . . .” (Philippians 3:1).
- “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).
- “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him” (Colossians 1:16).

What is at the center of all God's actions? What is God's ultimate purpose in all He does?

Jonathan Edwards has summarized this thought by saying, "Thus we see that the great end of God's works, which is so variously expressed in Scripture, is indeed but ONE; and this *one* end is most properly and comprehensively called, THE GLORY OF GOD."⁷

II. The Completeness of God

After the first point, it is now important to move into a second point, which serves as both a caution and an exhortation.

In using the terminology "glorify God" and "give glory to God" it might lead to the improper understanding that God is either lacking in glory or that we can add to His already sufficient glory.

The issue here is not over terminology but the understanding of this particular terminology. After all, the prophet Jeremiah exhorts us to "Give glory to the Lord your God" (Jeremiah 13:6) and Isaiah commands us to "give glory to the LORD" (Isaiah 24:15).

Paul makes God's completeness clear as he addresses the Areopagus, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed

⁷ Jonathan Edwards, "A Dissertation Concerning the End for Which God Created the World," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol.1 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 119. See also John Piper, *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathon Edwards* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1998), 246.

anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything” (Acts 17:24-25).

So how then do we glorify God?

Nature provides a wonderful illustration of how this works. During the day, the sun provides us with light and at night, the moon provides us with light as well. However, the light from the moon finds its source in the sun and apart from the sun, the moon cannot shine, and technically speaking the moon does not shine, it reflects the sun’s radiance. In the same manner, we are to glorify God, not by adding to His glory but by reflecting the glory that is uniquely His.

- “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).
- “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me” (I Corinthians 15:10).
- “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).
- “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus

Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (I Peter 4:10-11).

III. The Trinity and the Glory of God

We cannot simply speak of the glory of God as if God is a singular entity; He exists in three Persons. We worship the Triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and so we must understand the glory of God as it relates to the Trinity.

God the Father has revealed His glory in Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:5-6), He has revealed Himself in Christ (Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 1:18; 8:19), and He desires to be worshiped through Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:5-6). Furthermore, God has given us His Spirit, according to the riches of His glory, so that we might be strengthened (Ephesians 3:14-17) and as a guarantee of our inheritance (II Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30).

God the Son came and died in order to bring us to God (I Peter 3:18) and in so doing glorified God the Father (John 13:31-32; 17:1-5). God desires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth and God the Son is truth (John 14:6). Only through the Son, can we be set free from the bondage of sin and given the Spirit of Life (Romans 8:1-11).

God the Spirit transforms us into the image of God (II Corinthians 3:17-18). Having been set free from bondage to sin and the flesh by the Son we are now free to worship by the Spirit (Philippians 3:3). The Spirit also seals and guarantees the inheritance we have in Christ (II Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30). Only by relying upon the Spirit can we correctly handle the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17-18) whereby men can be saved (Romans 10:9-17) to the glory of God the Father (Isaiah 43:25).

IV. A God-centered Missionary Passion

Taking all that we have learned over the past two weeks into account, what is the driving force behind missions?

The driving force behind missions is the goal of missions. Worship is both the fuel for missions and the aim of missions. It is the fuel for missions because missions is worship; only when God is your all-satisfying treasure can you proclaim Him as such to the nations. It is the aim of missions because its ultimate end is that individuals from the nations will find in God their greatest joy and treasure.

Application

Throughout the next week, look back over the verses we discussed tonight and examine yourself. Is God your all-satisfying treasure? What needs to change in your life so others can see Christ as your all-satisfying treasure? Do you have a God-centered or a man-centered understanding of missions? How can you live a Matthew 5:16 lifestyle?

Three

A Theological Foundation for Missions: Old Testament

Introduction

Now that we have spent two weeks examining the aim and goal of missions, namely the glory of God, we need to go back to the beginning and work our way through Scripture and examine God's purpose towards that end. One of the great tragedies prominent in the thinking of Christians in America is the idea that the nations are an afterthought and God's primary purpose lies elsewhere or that God's purpose for the nations is merely a response to sin and not part of His original plan.

Before we dive into the material, does anyone know where the nations came from?

If you are like me, you probably thought the nations came about because of God's judgment at the

Tower of Babel; however, this is not the case. The first mention of the term “nations” in Scripture is used to describe the descendants of Noah. Rather than the nations being the result of judgment, they are the result of God’s preservation from judgment.

“These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations” (Genesis 10:1-5).

In examining the Old Testament there are numerous ways in which God’s purpose for the nations are revealed. Three of these will be the focus of today’s discussion: God’s covenants, the actions of specific individuals, and the action of God. Within Scripture, we are presented with several covenants that God makes with man. Each of these covenants lays out a specific purpose for the nations and it is to this that we now turn.

Does anyone know the names of these covenants or where they are found in Scripture?

I. According to God’s Eternal Purpose

A. The Serpentine Covenant

1. Covenant Established

a. Genesis 3:14-19

2. Promises Directed Towards the Nations

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring;

he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

B. The Noaic Covenant

1. Covenant Established

a. Genesis 6:17-22

b. Genesis 8:20-22

c. Genesis 9:8-17

2. Promises Directed Towards the Nations

“And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth’” (Genesis 9:12-13).

C. The Abrahamic Covenant

1. Covenant Established

a. Genesis 12:1-9

b. Genesis 15

c. Genesis 17

d. Genesis 18

e. Genesis 22

2. Promises Directed Towards the Nations

“I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3).

D. The Mosaic Covenant

1. Covenant Established

- a. Covenant Given: Exodus 19
- b. Covenant Confirmed: Exodus 24
- c. Aspects of the Covenant
 - i. Moral: Exodus 20:1-17
 - ii. Civil: Exodus 20:22-23:33
 - iii. Ceremonial: Exodus 25:1-31:18

2. Civil Laws Directed Towards the Nations

“You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard. Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed” (Exodus 23:9-12).

E. The Deuteromic or Palestinian Covenant

1. Covenant Established

- a. Deuteronomy 28-30
- b. “These are the words of the covenant that the LORD commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb” (Deuteronomy 29:1). Sinai and Horeb are two names for the same mountain and thus it is clear that this covenant is distinct from the Mosaic covenant.

2. Promises Directed Towards the Nations

“You are standing today all of you before the LORD your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water, so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the LORD your God, which the LORD your God is making with you today, that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, but with whoever is standing here with us today before the LORD our God, and with whoever is not here with us today” (Deuteronomy 29:10-15).

F. The Davidic Covenant

1. Covenant Established

a. II Samuel 7:8-16

b. I Chronicles 17:7-14

2. Promises Directed Towards the Nations

“I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever” (II Samuel 7:14-16).

This verse is a very complicated verse to understand. At surface value, it would seem to promote the heresy that Christ was sinful; this is certainly not the case. It helps to understand that this prophecy, like many other prophecies, is multifaceted in that it is literally fulfilled as God disciplines Solomon (I Kings 11) and ultimately fulfilled in Christ (Hebrews 5:8-9) as Christ paid the penalty for sin, by His own blood, and becomes the perfect High Priest. The implications of this text for the nations are clear.

G. The New Covenant

1. Covenant Established

a. Jeremiah 30-33

2. Promises Directed Towards the Nations

- This is what the LORD says: “Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, ‘O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel!’” (Jeremiah 31:7).
- “Hear the word of the LORD, O nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: ‘He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd’” (Jeremiah 31:10).
- “‘The time is coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD. ‘This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’

declares the LORD. 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,' declares the LORD. 'For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more'" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The implications of this new and better covenant were made explicit by the words of Christ and the writer of Hebrews.

- "And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'" (Luke 22:20).
- "Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant" (Hebrews 9:15)

II. Old Testament Individuals

A. Solomon

After the temple is completed and brought into it, Solomon prays a prayer of dedication for the temple, which reveals his understanding of Israel's role as a witness, for the Lord, to the nations.

"Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which

the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.” (1 Kings 8:41-43).

B. Isaiah

- “I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness” (Isaiah 42:6-7).
- “The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isaiah 52:10).
- “And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples” (Isaiah 56:6-7).

C. Jonah

In the book of Jonah God calls Jonah to travel to Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria one of Israel’s most hated enemies. Near the close of the book we learn, in one of the most profound statements of

Scripture, the reason why Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord.

“And he prayed to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster’” (Jonah 4:2).

III. The Missionary Activity of God in the Old Testament

When we read of the missionary activity in the Old Testament who is ultimately at work?

God is ultimately at work; He is the ultimate evangelist, He is the ultimate missionary. Looking back over the verses we covered today lets focus in on God’s action.

- “I will” (Genesis 3:15).
- “I make” (Genesis 9:12).
- “I will” (Genesis 12:3).
- “I am making” (Deuteronomy 29:14).
- “I will make” (Jeremiah 31:31).
- “I have called you” (Isaiah 42:6).

Application

Do you feel privileged and humbled that God would include you in His purpose to make Himself known and exalted? Has studying the Old Testament challenged your understanding of Missions? We covered a lot of material this week and with all of the Scripture references, there is bountiful material for study throughout the week so take some time to study

one of the covenants or one of the individuals mentioned.

Four

A Theological Foundation for Missions: New Testament

Introduction

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:16-20).

Looking back to verse 16 we read, “Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.” At first glance, it

would appear that the eleven were the only ones there; however, in I Corinthians 15:6 Paul informs us that Jesus “appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time.” In Matthew 28 and Mark 16, the angel’s words to the women at the empty tomb also seem to indicate that they would see Him in Galilee as well. So here, we are within a week or two of his ascension in Jerusalem and Jesus appears to His disciples and a large crowd in Galilee, which is not surprising as many of His followers were located there. In fact, the eleven remaining disciples were from Galilee.

Christ appears before this crowd and the eleven disciples “And when they saw him they worshiped him” they fell and prostrated themselves before Him; “but some doubted” we are not given any hints as to the specific nature of this doubt and so I am not going to spend time speculating about it. What this does is testify to the integrity of Scripture as Matthew honestly records these historic events as they occurred.

I. The Sovereign Reign of Christ

v.18: And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Christ stands before His disciples and the gathered crowd and proclaims that He has been given “*All authority*” Christ has absolute power; nothing exists over which he does not rule.

Furthermore, He continues to speak of Himself explaining that He has this authority “*in heaven and on earth*” It is not just that Christ has absolute authority in a given realm, He has absolute authority everywhere. There is nothing outside His jurisdiction and nothing outside of His control. As the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper has so clearly stated,

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”⁸

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent” (Colossians 1:16-18).

If you want to read more on this, I have listed several cross-references in your notes (Psalm 2:8; Daniel 7:13-14; John 5:22-23; Philippians 2:8-11).

As we continue into verse 19, we could potentially miss one word that unlocks the whole meaning of this passage and the foundation upon which the Apostles built the Church.

Do you know what that word is?

The word is “*therefore*,” and we must, as many people have said, find out what therefore is there for.

What is this word “therefore” trying to tell us?

It is telling us that this passage does not present two separate thoughts, “*Christ has authority*,” and “*Go make disciples*.” It presents one thought, “*Go make disciples, because of Christ’s absolute universal authority*.”

⁸ Abraham Kuyper, “Sphere Sovereignty,” in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998) 488.

Now that we know what this word is trying to tell us how does it bring unity to the overall thought of this passage?

As I study this text, I can think of two ways in which this word “therefore” brings unity to the thought of this passage. First, upon His authority; only the sovereign God can demand, can require, the worship of the nations. Second, upon His worth; only the sovereign God deserves the worship of the nations. If the purpose of missions, or more specifically making disciples, is drawing the nations into the white-hot worship of God, then intrinsic within that is the nature of the God who is worshipped. We cannot separate the worship of God from the God who is worshipped. Which is why Chandler stressed that worship must be in spirit and in truth.

Now that we understand the unity of this passage, we can examine “The Supreme Command of Christ.”

The Supreme Command of Christ? But isn't the greatest commandment ""You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind"" and ""You shall love your neighbor as yourself?""

I do not see these passages as being at odds but rather see the Great Commission as the immediate application of the Greatest Commandment. In loving God we must love what God loves, namely His glory manifested to the nations and the greatest act of love towards ones neighbor must be teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded.

II. The Supreme Command of Christ

v.19-20a: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and

of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

What is the central command/focus in this passage?

“Make disciples” is the central verb of this passage and the rest of Christ’s command focuses on achieving this goal. The focus of this command is not merely on one who learns; it is often used of a pupil or an apprentice and in that sense, you can begin to understand the breadth of this term. As is speaks of one who not only learns but who follows; this is not merely a training of the mind. It profoundly affects the whole of life, a fact that is clear as the disciples of Jesus followed Him everywhere seeking to be conformed to His likeness.

Not only was this a call to learn and a call to follow, it was a call to die. “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27). Rome came to power in Judea in 63BC and it is estimated that they crucified 30,000 during their rule. Furthermore, Judas of Galilee, who helped found the Zealots, led a revolt against Rome, which resulted in nearly 2,000 men being crucified along the roads of Galilee,⁹ an event that many of Christ’s hearers would have vividly remembered.

Before moving on lets not miss the profound statement being made here. Until this point, a disciple or an apprentice was dedicated to their teacher and now a dramatic shift takes place; because Christ is no longer physically present to make disciples but through the teaching of His Word,

⁹ John MacArthur, *Hard to Believe: The High Cost and Infinite Value of Following Jesus* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 135.

He continues to transform individuals and conform them to His likeness.

In this text, Christ gives three specific means by which disciples are to be made.

B. Going to the Ends of the Earth

While in your English text this word appears as the imperative “go” it is actually a participle and can be translated “going” or “proceeding” and it indicates a point of departure.

This verse is often referenced in pleas for specific destinations, “go to Africa,” “go to Asia,” or “go to South America” and specific destinations are fantastic, however, the destination is not the point of this passage, the departure is.

His concern is not specifically where you go, it is that that you go somewhere. Do you see the difference? One focuses on destination and the other departure. Christ is not saying, “Do this” He is saying “just do something.”

To be even more specific it could be translated “having gone” or “having traveled” and in that sense, it expresses what they are already in the habit of doing. This is clear throughout the Gospels and the book of Acts; they are always going somewhere. Which is one of the things you have in common these eleven disciples. In Acts we read of Paul who “. . . reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there” (Acts 17:17). They were constantly on the move; however, wherever they went or whatever they were doing their focus remained the same. You come into contact with thousands of people on this campus and in this city every day and if

you hope to be an effective witness your focus must be the same as theirs.

A. Baptizing in the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit

First, it is clear both symbolically and semantically that baptism is by immersion. Symbolically in that, only baptism by immersion accurately pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Semantically in that, the normal use of the word baptism (βαπτισμός) or any of its derivatives is immersion.

Second, this serves as a public testimony to the Gospel and a personal identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

It is especially important to note that baptism is “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” which both identified the triune oneness of God by the use of the word “name” in the singular, as opposed to “names” in the plural, and it was a open admission to the deity of Christ.

Furthermore, it is important to note that baptism is actually “*into* [εις] the name . . .” this is the same word used in Romans 6:3-4 and Galatians 3:27. This is not affirming baptismal regeneration, where the act of baptism saves you, but rather this serves to reaffirm The Sovereign Reign of Christ as “this implies that they come into the ownership of the Triune God.”¹⁰

C. Teaching Obedience

Of all the aspects of the Great Commission, this is by far the least understood and arguably the most

¹⁰ David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2000), 21.

important to the vitality of the church. The modern church is inundated with discipleship programs, discipleship classes, discipleship curriculum, and discipleship camps but I am convinced that we do not understand what it means to make disciples nor what it means to be a disciple.

This is not merely a call for Gospel proclamation, for evangelism, or for short-term mission trips. This is a call for a lifelong commitment. Just as a disciple is dedicated to his teacher so must you be dedicated to teaching others.

Even at that, this is not merely a call to teach but to teach obedience. It is not enough that men know who Christ is or that they know what Scripture teaches, they must know how obey it, to submit themselves to it, and to apply God's Word to their lives and the lives of others.

“For all things are for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God” (II Corinthians 4:15 ASV). The grace is not multiplied by the church and then directed to the many, it is multiplied through the many; individual disciples of Christ just like you are responsible for this multiplication.

One of the central themes of the Protestant Reformation was the priesthood of believers (I Peter 2:9). Now by this the reformers were not talking about the postmodern idea of the priesthood of believer where you are a church in and of yourself, but rather that we are priests to each other as we minister to the body of Christ, which is the church.

This is exactly what we see occurring throughout the early church. Let us take a quick look at

Thessalonica. “And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything” (I Thessalonians 1:6-8). The Thessalonians imitated Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy and the Lord, and in doing so they themselves became an example, a model, a pattern which believers throughout Macedonia and Achaia could follow. They were teaching them to observe and to obey all that Christ has commanded.

Just as God created the man and woman in His own image and commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28) so to He commands you, His disciples, His new creation (II Corinthians 5:17), to be fruitful and multiply yourselves in the likeness of His Son (Romans 8:29-30).

I have given you a handout that helps to explain the way this works so take some time this week and study that handout and Ephesians 4:11-16 to see how you can begin fulfilling that command to make disciples.

We have examined Christ’s Sovereign Reign upon which He has the authority to issue His Supreme Command and now He offers us one of the most encouraging passages in the whole of Scripture . . .

III. The Sure Promise of Christ

v. 20: And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Every word used here is emphatic, He even repeats Himself to further emphasize the nature of this promise saying, “And behold [He is basically saying look, listen up, pay attention], I Myself am [or I, I am] with you all the days until the completion of the age” (authors translation).

This promise is not a new thing. God has dwelt among His people throughout the ages. In II Samuel 7, David desires to build a house for the Ark of the Covenant to which the Lord replies, “Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling.”

Christ both has the authority to command the Great Commission and through His continual presence He will bring it to fulfillment through disciple making disciples like you and I.

Conclusion

Just as God created the man and woman in His own image and commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28) so to He commands you, His disciples, His new creation (II Corinthians 5:17), to be fruitful and multiply yourselves in the likeness of His Son (Romans 8:29-30).

On this unknown mountain in Galilee Christ did not offer an invitation to change the world. Invitations can be accepted and invitations can be denied. Christ stood before the gathered crowd and delivered an ultimatum. As college students in the twenty-first century, you have opportunities that were unknown to generations past. You will be offered jobs all over this state, nation, and world. You have unparalleled opportunities to travel. Will you see these

opportunities a merely a means to financial prosperity or as a means to make disciples of the nations? Right now the nations are at your doorstep will you seize this divine opportunity and make disciples on this campus?

Five

The Method of Missions: Prayer

Introduction

In his book, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World*, David Garrison exclaims, “Church Planting Movements are steeped in prayer.”¹¹ Later, when speaking of prayer for the nations, he goes on to say, “Prayer is the soul’s deepest cry of rebellion against the way things are, seeing the lost of this world and crying out, ‘This does not glorify God, and so, by God’s grace, it must change!’ Prayer comes from God and ascends back to God on behalf of those who do not know God.”¹²

It is important at the outset that prayer is not merely a step in the missionary process; prayer must

¹¹ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Bangalore, India: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 173.

¹² *Ibid.*, 176-177.

permeate the process in it's entirety. Far too often we only think to pray when things go wrong and get hard, we view prayer as a last resort. Against this attitude Charles Spurgeon says, "how dare we pray in the battle if we have never cried to the Lord while buckling on the harness!"¹³

How then can we combat this mindset and have a proper understanding of prayer?

I. The Saturation of Prayer

"In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:16-18).

What does this text tell us about prayer?

"Prayer is the power that wields the weapon of the word. And by the word of God we do battle against sin and unbelief in our own lives and in the world."¹⁴ We are to be on alert and persevere to this end, that we might wield the Word of God in prayer.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Paul is clearly delivering a pastoral exhortation toward diligent and exhaustive study, which allows one to

¹³ Helmut Thielicke, *Encounter With Spurgeon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 117.

¹⁴ http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/3/1841_The_Weapon_Serves_the_Wielding_Power/ [accessed 10-9-07].

rightly handle, or cut straight, the word of truth.¹⁵ By combining this with our understanding of Ephesians 6:18 it becomes clear that Scripture must not merely be known, or studied, or proclaimed; it must be prayerfully known, its study must be saturated in prayer, and it must be proclaimed in prayer. James Rosscup has this in mind when he says, “If the preacher [or in this case you, the missionary] is to deliver God’s message with power, prayer must permeate his life and furnish a lifelong environment for the fruit of the Spirit.”¹⁶

II. The Mindset of Prayer

A. Humility

- “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:10-14).

¹⁵ Kenneth S. Wuest, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1952), 136.

¹⁶ James E. Rosscup. “The Priority of Prayer and Expository Preaching,” in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching: Balancing the Science and Art of Biblical Exposition*, ed. by Richard Mayhue and Robert L. Thomas (Nashville, Tennessee: W Publishing Group 1992), 63.

Prayer is not a means of self-exaltation but rather a means for humility. In prayer we express our dependence upon God.

- “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:26-27).¹⁷
- “Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:5-7).
- “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16).

¹⁷ “The groanings are not utterances in unknown tongues. . . In a way infinitely beyond our understanding, these groanings represent what might be called intertrinitarian communication, divine articulations by the Holy Spirit to the Father.” John MacArthur, *Romans 1-8*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 467.

B. War

War? How do you pray with a mindset of war?

“We cannot know what prayer is for until we know that life is war. . . . Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den.”¹⁸

Nearing the end of his life Paul exclaims, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (II Timothy 4:7). He clearly understood life to be a time of war, by continuing to examine the Scriptures it is clear that war occurs both within us and outside us.

- “For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death” (Romans 7:22-24)?
- “For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death” (II Corinthians 10:2-7)?
- “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities,

¹⁸ John Piper, *Let The Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God In Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 45.

against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

How does what we learned from Ephesians 6:16-18 modify our understanding of this war?

We are to wield the Word of God in prayer for the purpose of combating evil.

III. The Focus of Prayer

Ultimately, prayer, like everything else God has created, exists for His glory.

- “Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate” (Daniel 9:17).
- “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13).

When one of His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray Christ responded, “Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil’ (Matthew 6:9-13).

Far too often, we hear this prayer recited casually without realizing the massive implications of this text. Far too often we pray “your will be done” assuming that God’s will is our will.

If God's ultimate aim, what He ultimately wills for all things, is His glory then real question is, "how will God be glorified?"

We know from I Corinthians 10:31 that things as simple as eating and drinking can glorify God and from Romans 15:5-6 that the unity of the church glorifies God. But if we continue to search the Scriptures things begin to get difficult as we learn from I Peter 4:16 that suffering as a Christian glorifies God and from John 21:19 that death can glorify God. By praying the Lord's Prayer,¹⁹ you could be asking God to cause you to suffer or even die.

Are you at that point? Are you ready to pray "your will be done" if it means Cancer? Or the death of a family member? Or if it means God calls you to be His persecuted witness in a foreign country?

IV. Cultivating a Lifestyle of Prayer²⁰

A. "Get your encouragement from your Father (Luke 18:1-8, 9-13)."

B. "Remember that God cares about everything in your life (Philippians 4:6, 7; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18; 1 Peter 5:7)."

C. "Think of prayer as an absolute essential."

1. "Pray, or faint (Luke 18:1)"

¹⁹ It would be more correct to consider this the Disciples Prayer as Christ was teaching His disciples how to pray.

²⁰ This section has been quoted from, James E. Rosscup, "BI 504: Biblical Exposition of Prayer" (Class Syllabus, The Master's Seminary, Fall 2004), 119-123.

2. "Pray, or not trust God (Proverbs 3:5-6)"
3. "Pray, or not bear fruit (John 15:7-8)"
4. "Pray, or not have wisdom from God (James 1:5; cf. Joshua 9:3-27)"
5. "Pray, or not see God's Word aright (Psalm 119:18)"
6. "Pray, or not have God's enablement in life and ministry (Psalm 119:28)"
7. "Pray, or sin against God (1 Samuel 12:23; 2 Chronicles 7:14)."
8. "Pray, or have not (James 4:2)"

D. "Follow basic pointers for prayer."

1. "Take time! You cannot 'find time.' Prioritize the time God gives you and you will be more effective for the things eternally important."
2. "Set a specific place to pray, as Jesus had a 'solitary place' (Mark 1:35) and spoke of entering into an inner room or closet (Matthew 6:6)."
3. "Pray many times during the day, and at night (Psalm 55:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)."

4. "See persons as prayer signals (Nehemiah 1:11; 2:4; etc.; Luke 22:31, 32)."

Application

There is a lot to think about this week. Have you given prayer its proper priority? Does it saturate the whole of your life? If not what steps are you taking to correct this? Do you have a biblical mindset when you approach prayer? What is the focus of your prayers, not just the words, but also your heart attitude; do you really mean what you pray? While continuing to work on these other things how can you better cultivate a lifestyle of prayer?

✠Six✠

The Method of Missions: Proclamation

Introduction

At the heart of missions and central to what the missionary does is the task of proclamation. If, as we read last week, “Prayer is the soul’s deepest cry of rebellion against the way things are, seeing the lost of this world and crying out, ‘This does not glorify God, and so, by God’s grace, it must change!’”²¹ We must come to see proclamation as an equally deep crying out against this rebellion; a crying out to rebellious humanity saying ‘You do not glorify God, and so, by His grace, you must change!’ Fundamental to all the missionary does is the fact that he has something to say; he is the prophetic voice crying out in the

²¹ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Bangalore, India: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 176-177.

wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight” (Matthew 3:3).

Today we are going to focus on a single text; not because there are not other texts which speak to the role of proclamation in missions nor is it because this passage is better than the others, but understanding this particular passage has profound implications for your understanding of missions.

¹Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. ²For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

⁵For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. ⁶But the righteousness based on faith says, ‘Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.’ ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³For

'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

¹⁴How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!' ¹⁶But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:1-17).

I. Israel Our Example (v.1-7)

To take care of some introductory matters so that we can understand where Paul is going in this passage, what does Paul mean by his statements in verses one through seven?

Paul begins by stating his desire, namely Israel's salvation; however, he is in a dilemma as they have sought to establish their own righteousness, a righteousness that is from the law. In verse five Paul affirms that righteousness based upon the law demands perfection in keeping the law. Understanding that no one can keep the law perfectly puts us in a dilemma. However, the function of the law is not righteousness, rather ". . . the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24 NASB). This is precisely why Paul describes Christ as "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes," because "For our sake he [God] made him [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might

become the righteousness of God” (II Corinthians 5:21).

With all of that said what is Paul trying to communicate in these verses? What does God want us to learn from this?

John Piper clearly explains this text saying, “What Paul is doing here is explaining for us why Israel missed the point of her own law. His aim for us is that we would not miss the point of that law or the law written on our hearts. . . . God Almighty, Creator of the universe, Ruler of all things, has intervened in history for the last 4,000 years to deal with a people called Israel – why? – so that the whole world might understand themselves and their struggles and their Maker and the way of salvation by Christ. He deals with the microcosm for the sake of the macrocosm. He deals with one finite people for the sake of all peoples.”²²

II. The Inclusivity of the Gospel (v.8-13)

Now whenever you hear the word “inclusivity” you should automatically go on alert, but what we are not talking about is the inclusivity of Universalism that teaches all will be saved. By inclusive we mean that God’s call to salvation is not limited to a particular race or nationality or socioeconomic class, it is open to all. This is not a new concept for us, as we recently examined God’s plans for the nations as He revealed them in the Old Testament; however, this was revolutionary and incredibly controversial in Paul’s time.

²²http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/10/134_The_Word_of_Faith_that_We_Proclaim_Part_1/ [accessed 10-17-07].

Continuing to move through this passage, we see that his strange statements in verses six and seven are explained when one reads verse eight. “The journey of verses 6 [and] 7 is unnecessary because God has clearly revealed the way of salvation: It is by faith.”²³ Contrary to Israel’s flawed understanding of God’s purpose salvation is not distant; God has opened His salvation to all and has brought the “word of faith near to us.”

Paul continues to expand on the Gospel’s inclusivity by saying, “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Here he has given us two aspects crucial to salvation. First, confession with your mouth (cf. Matthew 10:32-33). Second, belief in your heart.

Why is this so? What connects these two?

Because, “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45).

Now that we understand the connection between the heart and the mouth what is the central point of confession? How does this differ from what you usually hear in modern Evangelicism?

Christ’s role as Savior is clear; however, the Scripture stresses His Lordship. Christ’s ability to save is dependent upon His being Lord, and here salvation is presented as being dependent upon recognizing and submitting to His Lordship.

²³ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 1539.

Would someone like to summarize verses eleven through thirteen?

Before we move to the next section I want to briefly address another verse which carries the same central thought as the verses above but says it in such a way that we may mistake it for meaning something very different than what it says.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people” (Titus 2:11). This verse is often referenced in support of Universalism; however, understanding this text in relation to its immediate context and the whole of Scripture it is clear that this text is referring to salvation, in Christ, as available to all types of people, as opposed to being restricted to the Jews.

III. The Exclusivity of the Gospel (v.14-17)

What is the central message of verses fourteen through seventeen? Can God be just and condemn those who have never heard the Gospel?

- “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Romans 1:18-20).
- “Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard

and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" (Romans 2:4-5).

If we turn back to Romans 10:14-17, read these verses in reverse order, and turn Paul's questions into propositional statements then it would read, "If no one is sent to proclaim the word of Christ, then they cannot hear, if they cannot hear they cannot believe, and if they cannot believe then they cannot call upon the name of the Lord and be saved."

When speaking about this verse Russell D. Moore exclaimed, "If pop Evangelicalism is right, that the man on the island is going to be ok because he has never had an opportunity to believe . . . then let me suggest to you what you should do as the next generation of Evangelical Christians. Shut up! Stop witnessing! Stop evangelizing! Stop putting out tracts and plan right now that when you have children you will never sing "Jesus Loves Me" and let's band together as a church . . . and never speak the name of Jesus again with the hope that in several generations His name will be forgotten from entire face of the earth and then the entire world will be a bunch of men and women on the island, who are after all innocent before God and the entire world will be saved."²⁴

Ultimately, we must understand that the man on the island is not hypothetical, it is not only plausible, it

²⁴ Russell D. Moore. What About the Man on the Island?. Give Me An Answer: Why One Way? Collegiate Conference, Louisville, KY: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003. [Sermon]

is an epidemic and there are entire people groups and countries who have never heard.

Application

What does this mean for missions? For evangelism? What about Afghanistan, or North Korea, or Russia, or Peru, or India, or Cuba, or Indonesia? What does this mean for these peoples? What about you?

Sevens

The Method of Missions: Suffering

Introduction

Today's topic is particularly difficult to grasp because it is relatively foreign to us. When you think of suffering and persecution you likely begin thinking of world missions and foreign lands. If there is one aspect of your theology that is largely absent when it come to fulfilling the Great Commission it is likely to be a theology of suffering; namely, an understanding of the role of suffering in fulfilling the purpose of God.

Much of what we discuss tonight will be controversial and it will likely challenge your understanding of God. One of the things you would notice if you were to read indigenous/native theologies of Latin America, Africa, Asia, or the Middle East is that they will address different issues than American theologies. One of the reasons for this is that we usually only study, and subsequently

address theologically, issues which are particularly important to us. Within our current social and political climate widespread persecution is not an issue which most American Christians are facing, and because of this we have not taken the time to address suffering theologically. For this reason this will challenge your understanding of God, because your theology is incomplete in this area.

Due to the nature of this topic, we will try to allow God's Word to do most of the talking during this session.

I. Suffering and Persecution as a Promise

Far too often we think of persecution or suffering as something relegated to a select and elite few and not something promised, something guaranteed, to all who would follow Christ.

We touched on this several weeks ago when studying the Great Commission and what it means to be a disciple, but it is necessary to go back and look at this again and understand that this is not a promise given after one is a seasoned follower of Christ, but a requirement issued at the very call to faith.

- “Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to

mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple'" (Luke 14:25-33; cf. Matthew 10, 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-27).

- "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:15-18).
- "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (II Timothy 3:12).
- "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But

let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And ‘if the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?’ Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (I Peter 4:12-19).

What can we learn from all of these verses?

Suffering and persecution are guaranteed for every disciple of Christ, even more so suffering is God’s will.

How does this affect your understanding of God?

“Six Reasons God Appoints Suffering for His Servants”²⁵

(1) “Suffering Deepens Faith and Holiness”

II Corinthians 1:8-9; I Peter 1:6-9

(2) “Suffering Makes Your Cup Increase”

Matthew 5:11-12; II Corinthians 4:17-18

(3) “Suffering Is the Price of Making Others Bold”

Philippians 1:14

(4) “Suffering Fills Up What Is Lacking in Christ’s Afflictions”²⁶

²⁵ This section has been quoted from, John Piper, *Let The Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God In Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 86-102.

II Corinthians 1:5-6; Colossians 1:24; I
Thessalonians 1:5-6

(5) “Suffering Enforces the Missionary Command to Go”

Mark 13:9; Luke 21:12-13; Acts 8:1; 11:19

(6) “The Supremacy of Christ Is Manifest in Suffering”²⁷

Matthew 5:11-12; Romans 5:3-5; II Corinthians 12:9-10; Philippians 3:7-11; Hebrews 10:34; James 1:2; I Peter 4:19

II. Suffering as a Means of Fulfilling the Great Commission

A. Suffering Shows Christ as the All-Satisfying Treasure

- “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12).
- “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18).
- “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For

²⁶ See “Suffering Shares the Gospel” below for an explanation of this.

²⁷ See “Suffering Shows Christ as the All-Satisfying Treasure” below for an explanation of this.

the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (II Corinthians 4:17-18).

- “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:7-11).

In all of these verses, where are believers supposed to find satisfaction? Where, or rather who, is our greatest treasure?

B. Suffering Shares the Gospel

It is not by accident or by chance that most of the passages from the Gospels speak of bearing one’s cross and immediately follow with Christ foretelling His own death. In fact, Scripture reveals a stunning connection between our sufferings and Christ’s sufferings.

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that

you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed” (I Peter 4:12-13).

What is the connection between our sufferings and Christ's sufferings? How should this affect our attitude in suffering?

The connection is that the sufferings belong to Christ and we are privileged to share in them, because we do not deserve to suffer for Christ. Furthermore, this should cause us to rejoice when we suffer; just as the Apostles did, “Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (Acts 5:41).

How does suffering share the Gospel?

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you” (II Corinthians 4:7-12).

From this text, we see that through suffering the life of Jesus is manifested in the body, the flesh, of the one who suffers. *What specifically is occurring in this text?* Looking at two other texts will clarify what is occurring here.

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's

afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” (Colossians 1:24).

What is still lacking? Wasn't Christ's work on the cross complete? Paul's words here almost sound like heresy! The only other place where the Greek phrase “fill up what is lacking” appears is in Philippians 2:30, “for he [Epaphroditus] nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.”

Paul is writing to the church in Philippi, who had sent Epaphroditus to care for him. Here he informs the church in Philippi that Epaphroditus had completed what was lacking in their service.

So what was lacking? How was the church in Philippi's service to Paul incomplete prior to their sending of Epaphroditus?

“The gift to Paul was the gift of the church as a body. It was a sacrificial offering of love. What was lacking . . . was the church's presentation of this offering in person.”²⁸

Understanding Philippians 2:30 allows us to understand what Paul means in Colossians 1:24. “What is lacking is that the infinite value of Christ's afflictions are not known in the world. They are still a mystery (hidden) to most peoples. And God's intention is that the mystery be revealed”²⁹ and they are revealed through our suffering. “Christ intends for

²⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 78.

²⁹

http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/e/2/806_Called_to_Suffer_and_Rejoice_To_Finish_the_Aim_of_Christ's_Afflictions/ [accessed 10-23-2007]

the great commission to be a presentation to the nations of the sufferings of his cross, in the sufferings of his people. That's the way the commission will be finished folks!"³⁰ Simply stated, suffering is one of the means by which we incarnate the gospel into culture.

Application

“So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured” (Hebrews 13:12-13). Take some time this week and meditate on this verse and Luke 14:25-33 and begin to ask God to prepare you for whatever suffering He wills in your future.

³⁰ John Piper. Doing Missions When Dying Is Gain, October 27, 1996. [Sermon]

∞Eight∞

The Method of Missions: Indigenous Church Planting

Introduction

Due to time restrictions, the focus on this session is not going to be developing a full-blown church planting strategy. Rather we will focus on several rough concepts which form the foundation upon which a biblical church planting strategy can be built.

Before we begin to define church planting and discuss these foundational concepts we must begin by asking a simple question, which also happens to be the first blank in your notes.

I. Why Plant Churches?

So why should we plant churches? Can you think of any passages in Scripture that may help us answer this question?

It is biblical! If you were to flip to a random book in the New Testament chances are you would turn to an epistle written to a church plant or an epistle written to a pastor working with a planted church or an epistle written by a church planter or a narrative detailing the first church plants or a narrative detailing how Christ prepared His disciples to plant His church.

In his book, *Planting Missional Churches*, Ed Stetzer sees the Acts 1:8 imperative as a command to plant churches. He even sees the book of Acts as being outlined as follows:

- I. Church Planting in Jerusalem (Acts 1-7)
- II. Church Planting in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12)
- III. Church Planting in the World (Acts 13-28)³¹

Our emphasis on Paul as a missionary often causes us to miss the fact that his primary concern as a missionary was glorifying God by planting biblically sound churches.

While this is obvious, we often overlook the fact that every church was at some point a church plant.

II. What is Indigenous Church Planting?

Before going further it is important that we define what we are actually talking about. The definitions are quite lengthy and have been included in your notes. Before we can define what we mean by “indigenous” or “planting” we must define “church.”

Church:

³¹ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches: Planting a Church That's Biblically Sound and Reaching People in Culture* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 48-49.

“A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.”³²

Indigenous:

“The word ‘indigenous’ means something native, domestic, national. It is that which springs from and develops within a particular culture. An indigenous church is a contextualized church. It is able to grow within the culture where it finds itself.”³³ If an indigenous church is one that is able to grow in a particular environment then it is important to define what is meant by the term “grow.” As used here it is referencing organic

³² <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp#vi> [accessed 10-30-2007]

³³ Charles Brock, *Indigenous Church Planting: A Practical Journey* (Neosho, Missouri: Church Growth International, 1994), 89.

growth, “so that the Church may be a living organism within an environment.”³⁴ Furthermore, “it must not be allowed to grow in a foreign form but in a form suitable to the world in which it lives.”³⁵ Organic growth stresses both proportion and indigeneity. The stress upon proportion means that the church must be in a state of equilibrium where growth occurs equally on all planes; failure to do so results in distortion as certain aspects are emphasized while others are neglected.³⁶

Can you think of any examples of indigeneity in Scripture? Perhaps thinking of how the apostles handled various conflicts between Jewish and Greek believers may help. Is anyone familiar with the story of Acts 15? Who can summarize it for us?

Church Planting:

“Biblical church planting follows the pattern of the apostolic church for global disciple making. It is also a methodology and strategy for bringing in the harvest, raising up leaders from the harvest, and sending leaders to work in the harvest fields. It is evangelism resulting in congregationalization. Under the leadership and work of the Holy Spirit, biblical church planting seeks to translate the gospel and the irreducible ecclesiological minimum in to any given social context, with the expectation that the new communities of believers in turn will continue the process in their contexts

³⁴ A. R. Tippett, “Indigenous Principles in Mission Today,” in *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973), 128.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

³⁶ A prime example is modern pop Christianity’s stress on numerical growth at the expense of genuine spiritual growth.

and throughout the world.”³⁷ This third sentence is critical to understanding what is mean by church planting. It is not a building campaign. It is not a promotion strategy. It is not the transfer of individuals from other local churches. The primary concern of church planting is preaching the cross to rebellious humanity and seeing those who have been purchased by His blood gather to form community. (Have them underline the second sentence, as it is extremely important to recognize that the resources for gathering the harvest are in the harvest.)

III. How are Churches Planted?³⁸

To keep things simple we are going to look at how the apostle Paul, Silvanus also called Silas, and Timothy went about planting the church in Thessalonica.

“For we [**sower**] know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you [**soil**], because our gospel [**Seed**] came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit [**Spirit**] and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake” (I Thessalonians 1:4-5).

- Spirit: The Person of God
- Seed: The Word of God
- Sower: The Man Sent by God

³⁷ J. D. Payne, (classroom lecture notes, 33820—*Introduction to Church Planting*, Fall 2007).

³⁸ The concept of Spirit, Seed, Sower, and Soil has been developed and explained in Charles Brock, “Absolute Essentials and Excess Baggage,” in *Indigenous Church Planting: A Practical Journey* (Neosho, Missouri: Church Growth International, 1994), 28-42.

- Soil: The People Called out of Rebellion by God

Do you think there are any more essentials to church planting?

What are some non-essentials that are often believed to be essential?

- A Building
- Musical Style
- Seats
- Form of Preaching
- Worship Service Structure
- Length of Service
- Time of Day when the Church Gathers
- Etcetera

IV. Churches Planting Churches

If we miss this point then our entire time of study tonight is a waste. Far too many churches possess a shallow Missiology; we have failed to think long and hard about what it means to be a missionary. Many churches have missed the point. You can pour money into mission boards and agencies, sponsor missionaries, send short-term teams, and even send out missionaries, but if you fail to plant churches, you are failing to fulfill the Great Commission. Part of becoming a disciple of Christ is gathering with other disciples for the purpose of edification and in the same way part of making disciples is teaching them to gather in fellowship. Christ's promise was not that He would build an army of disconnected individualistic lone- ranger disciples. He promised to build His

church (Matthew 16:18). Read the book of Acts. His disciples had no doubt that central to fulfilling the Great Commission was indigenous church planting.

A simple way of phrasing this is that the church must grow by multiplication and not mere addition, a theme taught within the Great Commission itself. If we are to make disciples and teach them to obey all that Christ has commanded (Matthew 28:18-20), then we must teach them how to make disciples, who will make other disciples, as well. It is not a call to gather individuals together for instruction but a command to multiply disciples among the nations.

Application

“And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’” (Luke 10:2). Take some time this week to read the Great Commission and then read Acts to see how the disciples responded to this. How would you have responded if you were in their shoes? How will you respond in yours? What if you were to move to a city or town with little or no Gospel witness? What if you lived where there were several solid churches but you noticed a particular population segment was not being reached with the Gospel? How would you respond?

∞Nine∞

The Mindset of Missions: Thinking Missionally

Introduction

During the past several sessions, we focused on the method of missions, and now we are shifting gears to focus on the mindset of missions. Today we are going to focus specifically on what it means to be missional and how you can live missionally.

I. Understanding the Missional Lifestyle

What does it mean to be missional?

I will make it a little easier and take a step back and ask, what is a missionary?

A missionary is an individual who seeks to incarnate the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a particular culture.

So now who can tell me what it means to be missional?

The meaning of the word “missional” becomes very clear if we approach it like a grammar class. “Missionary” is a noun and missional is an adjective; adjectives are used primarily to modify nouns. So when I say, “Look at the brick house;” with brick being an adjective and house being a noun you know that the house is made of bricks. The same thing occurs when using the term “missional.” A missional individual is an individual who seeks to incarnate the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a particular culture and so the goal of this fuel group is that you would leave here thinking and living like a missionary.

Can anyone think of an example of this in Scripture?

“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings” (I Corinthians 9:19-23).

So how do you think and live like a missionary?

II. Cultivating a Missional Lifestyle

A. Exegeting the Text

Exegeting the text is a complex way of saying studying, understanding, and explaining Scripture. “Proper exegesis will tell the student what the text

says and what the text means, guiding him to make a proper personal application of it.”³⁹

To do this properly we must follow five guiding principles

(1) Literal

Scripture must be interpreted literally.

(2) Historical

Scripture must be interpreted within its historical and cultural setting.

(3) Grammatical

Scripture must be interpreted according to the rules of grammar.

(4) Contextual

Scripture must be interpreted within the context of the surrounding Scripture.

(5) Redemptive

Scripture must be interpreted as it properly relates to Christ.

B. Exegeting Your Context

Exegeting your context is a complex way of saying studying, understanding, and explaining the context in which you are ministering.

Why is this important?

³⁹ John MacArthur. “The Mandate of Biblical Inerrancy: Expository Preaching,” in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching: Balancing the Science and Art of Biblical Exposition*, ed. by Richard Mayhue and Robert L. Thomas (Nashville, Tennessee: W Publishing Group 1992), 29.

Because we have to understand *who* we are teaching God's word to so that we can explain it in such a way that they will understand.

Do we usually take time to do this? If we don't do this then what do we usually do?

We usually assume that everyone thinks just like us.

How can we better exegete our context?

We must learn to observe the following:

(1) Time Patterns

How do people manage their time?

Where are they during certain times of day?

Is their primary concern keeping a precise schedule or enjoying an event?

(2) Thought Patterns

How do they structure their thoughts?

Are they linear, cyclical, or do they follow another pattern of thought?

(3) Value Systems

What do they value and how do they express their values?

(4) Communication Systems

How do they relate to one another?

Individualism \leftrightarrow Group Orientation

Formality \leftrightarrow Informality

Past \leftrightarrow Future

Direct \leftrightarrow Indirect

Change ←or→ Permanence

C. Engaging the Culture

Now that you have studied both the Scriptures and the context, you are ready to engage the culture, or more specifically, individuals in culture.

The final task of the missionary, you, is to communicate and incarnate the Gospel of Jesus Christ within a particular culture in a way that is both faithful to God's Word and easily understood within your context.

The sermons in Acts are wonderful examples of exegeting the text, exegeting the context, and engaging the culture (Acts 2:14-41; 3:11-26; 7:1-53; 17:16-34; 22:1-21).

Application

Is your life that of a missionary? How can you effectively become a missionary in your society? Take some time this week and study the sermons in Acts to see how you can better proclaim the Gospel in your context by learning how they proclaimed it in theirs. Let us be diligent to exegete both the text and our context and become missionaries in our community.

✠Tencœ

The Mindset of Missions: Learning to Risk

Introduction

Risk . . . whether we like it or not this is an important aspect of the missionary endeavor. Much could be said to introduce this topic; however, the topic will be better understood as we move through this study.

I. God and Risk

Can God risk? Why is it impossible for God to risk?

- “Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have

spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it” (Isaiah 46:9-11).

- “He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding” (Daniel 2:21).
- “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’” (Daniel 4:35).
- “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father” (Matthew 10:29).
- “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men” (Acts 2:22-23).
- “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will” (Ephesians 1:11).

God is sovereign. His rule is both absolute and universal; nothing exists outside of His control and nothing can challenge His authority.

II. Man and Risk

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year

there and trade and make a profit'—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (James 4:13-17).

What can we learn from James?

For you risk is real because you do not know everything and if you think risk is a myth and *you* are in control then your arrogance is evil. Not only is it evil but it is useless as well; after all "And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life" (Matthew 6:27; Luke 12:25)? Not only that, but as John Piper says, "life is risk, and risk is right."⁴⁰ Furthermore, "One of my aims is to explode the myth of safety and to somehow deliver you from the enchantment of security. Security is a mirage. It doesn't exist. Every direction you turn there are unknowns and things beyond your control."⁴¹

Is this really what we see in Scripture?

- "Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, 'Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.' And his armor-bearer said to him, 'Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul.'" (1 Samuel 14:6-7).

⁴⁰ John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2003), 79.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

- “Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the LORD do what seems good to him” (II Samuel 10:12).
- “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16).
- “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up” (Daniel 3:16-18).
- “But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

From these verses, it is clear that “the center of God’s will is not a safe place, but the most dangerous place in the world. God fears nothing and no one. God moves with intentionality and power. To live outside of God’s will puts us in danger, but to live in His will makes us dangerous.”⁴²

⁴² Erwin Raphael McManus, *Seizing Your Divine Moment: Dare to Live a Life of Adventure* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 147. See also Erwin Raphael McManus, *An*

If risk is central to what it means to follow Christ then how can we embrace uncertainty and become free to risk?

- “You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives” (Luke 21:16-19).
- “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).
- “As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:36-39).
- “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends

on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:7-11).

We are freed to risk because our eternity is secure in Christ; regardless what happens to our earthly possessions Christ is our treasure. Furthermore, God is sovereign and works all things according to His purpose, even suffering and death.

Application

Are you trying to live life risk-free or are you free to risk? What needs to happen for you to release your self-security for a risk taking confidence in Christ? Let us boldly say with the Psalmist and the writer of Hebrews “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me” (Psalm 118:6; cf. Hebrews 13:6)?

∞Eleven∞

Modern Missions Paradigms: Short-Term Missions, Long-Term Missions, and Missions in Creative Access Countries

Introduction

The goal of tonight's study is to briefly exam the benefits and shortcomings of short-term and long-term missions as well as discussing missions in creative access countries. There will be time for discussion and questions after each of the main sections.

I. Short-Term Missions

A. Definition

Most short-term mission trips last only for a few weeks and for the sake of this study, we will consider anything less than a year, short-term.

B. Benefits

- There are numerous benefits of participating in short-term missions:
- They can develop and enflame your passion to both participate in and support long-term missions.
- They can help to destroy deadly ethnocentrism by exposing you to other cultures and modes of thought.
- They can serve to aid long-term missionaries in achieving goals, which could not be achieved without help (i.e. mapping and survey projects).
- They can serve as an opportunity to consider longer-term opportunities in a particular region or culture.
- The modern push for short-term missions greatly stresses the involvement of the local church in training and sending short-term teams.

C. Shortcomings

- Compared to the time spent on the ground short-term missions are very expensive.
- Sadly, many short-term mission trips feature a tension between congregational experience and kingdom impact. Promoting trips based upon what it will do for you and how you benefit team members is often narcissistic.

- Rather than serving as an introduction to longer-term missions, the proliferation of short-term trips often encourages short-term thinking and discourages long-term thinking.
- Organizing and accommodating short-term teams often distracts long-term missionaries.
- Individuals who have not received proper training are often culturally insensitive which is then fueled by ethnocentrism and culture shock.
- Because their trip is short-term, they lack sufficient time to incarnate the gospel within the culture and their overall impact is not lasting. The barriers created by language and worldview also limit the impact of short-term missions.
- There is a severe threat that short-term teams will promote westernization and subsequently poison an indigenous movement. Examples of this would be someone saying we do _____ this way in America (this can deal with dress, order of service, location and time of service, communication patterns, prayer structure, supplies available, etc.).
- In regions where the gospel is opposed, short-term individuals do not have to bear the wrath that native believers will bear when they leave; this is not a biblical pattern for suffering in missions.

D. Toward a Sound Short-Term Missiology

Think Long-Term Commitment

Individuals on short-term teams must be tied to a long-term ministry. Failure to do so will rob native believers of discipleship.

Think Intensive Training

Individuals on short-term teams must be trained intensely both on issues of worldview and culture to prevent westernization and to curb ethnocentrism. Furthermore, individuals must be theologically sound; the last thing a long-term missionary needs to worry about is refuting your false teaching.

Think Incarnational

From the above training and the help of long-term workers on the field, short-term team members must be taught how to explain and live out the gospel in the cultural context of where they will be ministering (this may include things such as thought patterns, method of communication, dress, etiquette, etc.).

Think Selectively

The nature of selectivity is two-fold. First, churches must commit themselves to only partner with long-term workers who are willing to partner long-term; implied in this is that churches will only send teams to places where a long-term ministry plan is in place. Second, due to the necessary training and spiritual maturity necessary, some individuals may not be emotionally or spiritually mature enough to go on short-term missions trips. A poor witness or a theologically incorrect one is the last thing you want on the mission field.

II. Long-Term Missions

A. Definition

Any mission trip longer than one year; there are numerous two and three year trips available through

various agencies as well as even longer-term opportunities.

B. Benefits

- Missionaries will be well educated in the areas of missiology, worldview, and language. This allows them to overcome numerous boundaries that hinder short-term missions. Furthermore, this knowledge combined with the length of time spent on the field allows them to connect with the locals in a way that short-term teams cannot.
- The length of time spent on the field, exposure to the receptor culture, and suffering with and among natives allows them to incarnate the gospel into that culture in ways which short-term teams cannot.
- Their intensive training helps to prevent culture shock and ethnocentrism.
- Their theological and missiological training combined with the time spent on the field allows them to train up disciples and lead them into spiritual maturity.

C. Shortcomings

A foreseeable shortcoming would be if a missionary were to remain in one place for so long that they begin to rob indigenous leadership of ministry opportunities. With this said it is imperative that long-term missionaries begin with the end in mind, namely an exit strategy that enables one to leave when the local church is spiritually mature.

III. Missions in Creative Access Countries

Creative access countries are also commonly known as closed countries. These are regions where

official law, common practices, or cultural norms prevent the open proclamation of the gospel and/or missions work to proceed. This requires that individuals think creatively as to the means by which they gain entrance into certain countries.

Because of the sensitive nature of such a task, individuals must undergo extensive training to prepare them to blend into and express the gospel within a culture that violently opposes it. Furthermore, individuals who minister in such contexts must be willing and ready to suffer and die for the gospel.

Do you think that we should do missions work in these places? Why or why not?

Ultimately, our task is to make disciples and both the nature of the Gospel and the explicit commands of Scripture require that we take the gospel to places such as this. Fulfilling the Great Commission was not an easy task which is why 10 of the original 12 apostles died doing it!

Application

Have you been a on a mission trip before? More importantly, are you currently living as a missionary in your society? Are you spiritually mature enough to participate in a mission trip? Are you willing to go on a short-term mission trip and consider pursuing long-term opportunities? Take time this week and evaluate your life according to what we have learned over the course of our study what are some areas where you need to press toward maturity? In what areas are you failing to apply, to live out what you have learned so far?

∞Twelve∞

A Heart for Missions: Stephen, Jim Elliot, Haim, an Unnamed Girl, Karen Watson, and Those of Whom the World was Not Worthy

Introduction

We have spent the past twelve weeks discussing missions and what it means to be missional. Tonight we are going to take a sobering look at the lives of individuals who did just that. I hope you all find this to be both encouraging and emboldening as you step out on mission to reach the nations for the glory of God.

I. Stephen—Israel 34A.D.

Acts 6:8-7:60

II. Jim Elliot—Ecuador 1956

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

III. Haim—Cambodia c.1970

“Haim, a Christian teacher ‘knew that the youthful black-clad Khmer Rouge soldiers heading across the field were coming this time for him. . . Haim was determined that when his turn came, he would die with dignity and without complaint. . . Haim’s entire family was rounded up that afternoon. . .

[They] spent a sleepless night comforting one another and praying for each other as they lay bound together in the dewy grass beneath a stand of friendly trees. Next morning the teenage soldiers returned and led them from their Gethsemane to the place of their execution . . . [to] ‘the killing fields’ . . .

The family were ordered to dig a large grave for themselves. Then, consenting to Haim’s request for a moment to prepare themselves for death, father, mother, and children, hands linked, knelt together around the gaping pit. With loud cries to God, Haim began exhorting both the Khmer Rouge and all those looking on from afar to repent and believe the gospel.”

Then in panic, one of Haim’s youngest sons leapt to his feet, bolted into the surrounding bush and disappeared. Haim jumped up and with amazing coolness and authority prevailed upon the Khmer Rouge not to pursue the lad, but allow him to call the boy back. . . Haim began calling his son, pleading with him to return and die together with his family. ‘What comparison, my son,’ he called out, ‘stealing a few more days of life in the wilderness, a fugitive,

wretched and alone, to joining your family here momentarily around this grave but soon around the throne of God, free forever in Paradise?’ After a few tense minutes the bushes parted, and the lad, weeping, walked slowly back to his place with the kneeling family. ‘Now we are ready to go,’ Haim told the Khmer Rouge.

Few of those watching doubted that as each of these Christians’ bodies toppled silently into the earthen pit which the victims themselves had prepared, their souls soared heavenward to a place prepared by their Lord.”⁴³

IV. An Unnamed Girl—Asia c.1970

“The communist soldiers had discovered their illegal Bible study. . . Men with guns suddenly broke into the home, terrorizing the believers who had gathered there to worship. The leading officer . . . glared at the small congregation. ‘We will let you go,’ he growled, ‘but first, you must spit on this book of lies. Anyone who refuses will be shot’ . . .

[One by one they came forward and spat on the Bible.] Quietly, a young girl came forward. Overcome with love for her Lord, she knelt and picked up the Bible. She wiped off the spit with her dress. ‘What have the done to Your Word? Please forgive them,’ she prayed.

⁴³ Don Cormack, *Killing Fields, Living Fields: An Unfinished Portrait of the Cambodian Church—the Church That Would Not Die* (Crowborough, England: Monarch Publications, 1997), 233-234).

The Communist soldier put his pistol to her head. Then he pulled the trigger.”⁴⁴

V. Karen Watson—Iraq 2004

In a letter to be read only upon her death Karen wrote, “Care more than some think is wise. Risk more than some think is safe. Dream more than some think is practical, and expect more than some think is possible. I was called not to comfort or success but to obedience.”⁴⁵

VI. Those of Whom the World was Not Worthy

Hebrews 11

Application

Just do something! You have sat through this study for twelve weeks and have been equipped to go on mission, to incarnate the Gospel in culture, and now you are ready! Furthermore, if you have been diligent to apply what we have learned each week then you should already be on mission. If there is any way that this church can equip you to do the work of the ministry please let us know; we will do everything we can to equip and empower you. “But whatever you do, find the God-centered, Christ-exalting, Bible-saturated passion of your life, and find your way to say it and live for it and die for it.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ dc Talk and The Voice of the Martyrs, *Jesus Freaks, Stories of those who Stood for Jesus: The Ultimate Jesus Freaks* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Albury Publishing, 1999), 50-51.

⁴⁵ <http://www.towersonline.net/story.php?grp=news&id=171> [accessed 11-26-2007]

⁴⁶ John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2003), 47.