

## Fundamental Truths of Missions

Series: Mission: Possible 2017

2 Peter 3:9

June 18, 2017

Welcome again to worship today.

Last year, we began having a summer series that focused our attention on missions. Missions is part of our 4G strategy: Glorify, Grow, Give, and Go. And part of our goal in this series is to raise \$2,400 to fulfill our Covenant Partnership promise to St. Paul United Methodist Church. That's coming in a few weeks.

Today, I want to start us off by looking at the "Fundamental Truths about Missions." But before I do, I want to tell you a story. Dr. Jim Kennard tells of a missionary in Japan who came to him and said, "Jim, I've been studying Japanese for 6 months and I still can't witness in Japanese. Can you just tell me how to say 'Will you please read this?' and at least I can go on the street and pass out tracts and feel like I'm actually doing missionary work rather than sitting around learning Japanese 8 hours a day."

So Dr. Kennard told him to say in Japanese, "Dozo yonde kudasai."<sup>1</sup> The missionary kept repeating that phrase all the way to the street, but by the time he got there, he had unknowingly changed one single word. He saw a Japanese man come by and so he said what he THOUGHT was "Please read this," but got a curious reaction. The man asked in Japanese, "What?" and the missionary repeated the phrase, to which the Japanese man broke out in a fit of laughter.

Next, he tried it on a young lady, who turned red, politely covered her mouth to stifle a chuckle, took the tract and ran off giggling.

He got the same reaction at least 10 times, so finally he went back to Dr. Kennard and asked, "Why is everybody laughing at me?" Dr. Kennard said, "Well, what are you saying?" When he told him, Dr. Kennard broke out in leg-slapping laughter and said, "John, what you're really saying, 'Would you please MARRY ME?'"

Today, I want us to understand the importance of missions.

Turn in your bulletin to page 5 and let me give you three simple truths about missions that will answer those questions and provide the underpinnings of everything we will talk about during our series "Mission: Possible 2017."

### **Truth #1: Missions Is The Heart Of Christ.**

There's a telling phrase in John 4 before Jesus met the woman at the well. It says,

*So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way.*<sup>2</sup>

There were two highways from Judea to the northern territory of Galilee. One was shorter than the other. Devout Jews avoided the route through Samaria and preferred the longer route than to journey among the Samaritans they detested.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.google.com/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=translate+Dozo+yonde+kudasai#q=translate+Dozo+yonde+kudasai&hl=en>

<sup>2</sup> John 4:3-4 (NLT)

But Jesus took the shorter route, not to save time, but because there was a needy woman who needed to meet Him. Jesus's heart was so filled with love for the lost, He went the route other Jews would not dare take in order to reach one woman.

You see, God had only one Son, and He made Him a missionary. In Mark 1:38, Jesus said,

*"We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came."*<sup>3</sup>

Jesus came to die for sinners, and all His life He proclaimed to others that He was the way, the truth, and the life. Reaching people – saving people from sin – that was the heartbeat of Jesus. Even the name "Jesus" means "Savior."

In Matthew 18:11, Jesus made His mission clear:

*"For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."*<sup>4</sup>

If a missionary is someone sent to rescue the lost from sin, Jesus was the first missionary.

Missions – telling others about forgiveness from sin through Him – was the supreme purpose of Jesus. Every beat of His heart throbbed to save souls. Every person He healed physically, He then forgave them of their sin. Every person He dealt with, He first caused him or her to grapple with their sin and pointed them to Himself as the answer.

Missions is, first of all, the heart of Christ.

### **Truth #2: Missions Is The Hope Of The Lost.**

Without the Gospel, the lost are helpless, hopeless and hell-bound. Though the lost here on earth may not recognize it, the doomed in hell believe that missions is the hope of the lost.

In Luke 16, Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Though wealthy, the rich man was lost, and though poor, Lazarus was saved. They both died, and the rich man was in the flames, while Lazarus was in the joys of heaven with God. Jesus said that the rich man, suffering in hell, begged Abraham to allow Lazarus to return to earth to warn his family of the judgment to come.

Believe me, the condemned of Hell believe in missions! While we go through life in fun and games, while we consume our money on things that will pass away, and while we do not see the urgency of the hour, the condemned in hell certainly see the urgency of reaching the lost.

And those saved on the mission field also know the urgency of reaching the lost.

The story's told of an agnostic professor who visited the Fiji Islands. The professor said to an elderly chief, "You're a great leader, but it's a pity you've been taken in by those missionaries. No one believes that anymore. People are tired of the story of Christ dying on cross for the sins of mankind. We know better now. I'm sorry you're so foolish as to accept their story."

The old chief's eyes flashed as he answered, "See that great rock over there? On it, we smashed the heads of our victims. See the furnace next to it? In that oven, we used to roast the bodies of our victims. If it weren't for those missionaries and the message they brought that changed us from cannibals to Christians, you would be our tonight's supper!"

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<sup>3</sup> Mark 1:38 (NLT)

<sup>4</sup> Luke 19:10 (NLT)

Look with me in your bulletin to Romans 10:13-15. In verse 13, we see both the simplicity and the sufficiency of the Gospel:

*For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."<sup>5</sup>*

Even a child can understand that, and that's all one needs to do to receive full pardon for sins – to call on the Lord and ask Him in faith to save them.

But Paul recognized a problem: He goes on to say in verses 14-15

*But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?<sup>6</sup>*

The problem with reaching the world for Christ is not the simplicity of the Gospel, nor the sufficiency of the Gospel, but the scarcity of goers. Let me repeat that. The problem with reaching the world for Christ is not the simplicity of the Gospel, nor the sufficiency of the Gospel, but the scarcity of goers.

God wants everyone to repent. Are you concerned about what is the heartbeat of our Lord? The will of God the Father? A deep burden of the lost among us going to hell?

My question is: What are you doing to reach the lost with the Gospel? There are three responses you should have to the challenge of missions.

First, you can **go**. Maybe God would call you to become a missionary, and certainly we're all to be missionaries to our friends and co-workers and neighbors and loved ones.

If you cannot personally go, you can **pray** for missionaries and pray for God to send more missionaries. Several times, Paul exhorted those to whom He wrote to pray for him and his missionary endeavors because he needed their prayer support. Jesus said:

*So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."<sup>7</sup>*

Third, you can **send others**. That's what our Covenant Partnership with St. Paul is all about. They are going to places we can't go, so between now and July 16, we want to raise \$2,400 to help send them.

Maybe you cannot go, but every person in this room can pray and you can give to send others to go to the mission field to reach the lost around the world with the Gospel.

The first truth about missions is that it's the heart of Christ and second, missions is the hope of the condemned.

**Truth #3: Missions Is The Health Of The Church.**

After His resurrection, Jesus said in Mark 16:15

*Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."<sup>8</sup>*

The last command from Jesus's lips must have been the dearest desires of His heart. Since salvation has been provided for all people, it was Christ's last command and His deepest desire that salvation through Him be proclaimed to all everywhere.

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 10:13 (NLT)

<sup>6</sup> Romans 10:14-15a (NLT)

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 9:38 (NLT)

<sup>8</sup> Mark 16:15 (NLT)

Only as a church fulfills her missionary obligation does it justify its existence. Let me repeat that. Only as a church fulfills her missionary obligation does it justify its existence.

The mission of the church is missions – both here and throughout the world! The best remedy of a sick church is to put it on a missionary diet. The church that does not evangelize will fossilize!

The Apostle Peter writes in 2 Peter 3:9:

*The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.*<sup>9</sup>

The supreme task of the church is getting the Gospel out to every person. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

That's His will; that's His desire; that's His command to you and me.

Write this down: When God loved, He loved the **world**. When the Father gave His Son, He gave His Son for the **world**. When the Son died, He died for the **world**.

God's vision is the world. It's God's will that the Gospel go to everyone in the world – that everyone have the opportunity to know Jesus Christ.

Missions is God's main business, and if a church's business is not God's business, then that church has no business being in business!

I read that there's a bridge built across Panther Creek in Western Kentucky, built by the United States government during the Great Depression. It was a source of pride and a symbol of recovery during the Depression. Today, 70 years later, the bridge looks as new as the day in which it was built. You know why? Because there's no road leading to it or from it.

Friends, a bridge that doesn't carry traffic is a bridge in name only, and I'll tell you something else: a church that doesn't go with the Gospel is a church in name only.

Listen folks, this church is not a country club, or a social gathering-place to hang out with your friends, or a place to hear feel-good, self-help psycho-babble. This church is a place that worships Jesus – who is Savior of the lost – and the ultimate purpose of this church is to save sinners for whom Christ died. All other tasks are subservient to that first and foremost task.

We cannot reach everybody for Christ, but we can reach everybody we can.

May God put in your heart a burning desire to tell your friends, relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors – your FRAN – about Christ.

And may God put in your heart a will to give to missions; a resolve to sacrifice for the cause of worldwide evangelization; a determination to do all you can to reach the lost at any cost.

And may we all resolve to be prayer warriors for missions and missionaries.

And may some of you surrender your lives to become a missionary.

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<sup>9</sup> 2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)