

## **The Method Behind Missions**

Series: Mission Possible 2017

Romans 10:14-15

July 16, 2017

The story goes of a woman who was in dire need of a beauty makeover. She went to her salon with a fashion magazine photo of a gorgeous, young, shimmering-haired model. She showed the stylist the trendy new cut she wanted and settled into the chair. After a moment or two, she realized that the stylist had begun humming a catchy tune as work began on the woman's thin, graying hair. She was delighted by the stylist's cheerful attitude until the woman recognized the melody. [HUM TUNE] The stylist was humming the theme from "Mission: Impossible."<sup>1</sup>

Well, we don't believe the mission is impossible. On the contrary, we've been talking about our Mission Possible for the last few weeks.

We have looked at the 3 fundamental truths of missions. First, missions is the heart of Christ. Every beat of His heart throbs to save souls. Second, missions is the hope of the lost. Without the Gospel, the lost are helpless, hopeless and hell-bound. Finally, missions is the health of the Church. Only as a church fulfills her missionary obligation does it justify its existence. The church that does not evangelize will fossilize!

Then we heard from persons involved in mission: our church's youth mission team, Ryan Smith and his Jamaica mission trip, and Keith Wasserman from Good Works in Athens.

Last week, we learned that we have a mandate to be engaged in missions. We've been given authority through the power of Jesus Christ. We've been given an assignment to "go and make disciples of all nations." And we've been given the affirmation that Jesus is with us always.

Today is our final message in our Mission Possible 2017 series, so I invite you to turn to page 6 in your bulletin as we talk about the method behind missions.

When I was in high school, our church received a new pastor. Jack was a fiery preacher that the Lord used to continue the revival going on in that church for the last several years.

Now, Jack was an avid sportsman. He was a golfer. He played on the church softball team. And though he was a short man, he loved to play basketball. Often, my dad and I would meet Jack and some other people at the YMCA for some pick-up basketball games, and usually, I got stuck guarding Jack. Now, Jack didn't like to drive the basketball like my dad used to do; well, dad usually barreled his way into the lane like a fullback on a football team. Jack like to be that point guard that distributed the ball and occasional take a long jumper.

But Jack's forte was his defense. He was really good at watching my eyes, especially when I thought I saw an opening for an NBA type perfect pass. I don't know how many times he would stick his foot out and block my bounce pass. One particular day, he seemed to kick the ball on every pass, and I said, "Stop doing that." And I'll never forget, right on the basketball court, Jack quoted part of today's Scripture from Romans 10:14-15:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cybersalt.org/cleanlaugh>

*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? That is why the Scriptures say [and this is what Jack quoted on that YMCA basketball court], “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”<sup>2</sup>*

Ok, besides this obscure passage from Isaiah 52<sup>3</sup> about feet, Paul asks some important questions, questions Christians often ask about the eternal destination of people who have never heard the Gospel. You know, “What happens to the people of a tribe in the deep jungle forest who has never heard about Jesus?” That’s what Paul is asking here, but these are not curiosity questions; they are rhetorical questions that elicit a response.

How can the unsaved call on Jesus 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?<sup>4</sup>

I want you to think about these questions, not in reference to some lost tribe in the darkest jungle. If you believe there is a heaven, and if you believe that there are people who will not go to heaven – child rapists, mass murderers, evil doers – which means that you believe there is a hell, and if you believe what the Bible says that no one comes to the Father – gets into heaven – except through Jesus<sup>5</sup>, and if there is someone in your family – not someone you’ll never meet in a dark forest, but someone you know and love who does not know Jesus Christ, does not know the saving power of the cross, and who will when they die find themselves for all eternity separated from the love and comfort of God in eternal torment and judgment. If you believe all of this, then you need to do something about it. then I want to share 3 methods behind missions. Three methods to help change the eternal destiny of your unsaved family member, friend, and yes, someone you do not know..

#### **First, the Prayer.**

Often, the thought of sharing our faith scares the beejeebers out of us.

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If I told you that you need to share your faith with your lost family members, it would probably bring terror into your heart. And that is because we fail to do this first method behind missions: pray. We think of the enormity of the task and forget the enormity of the power of God. We say to ourselves, “That is an impossible job to convert my alcoholic uncle, my rebellious child, my drug addicted nephew. It can’t be done.”

Listen to what Matthew 9:35-38 says:

*Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to*

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 10:14-15 (NLT)

<sup>3</sup> Verse 7

<sup>4</sup> Romans 10:14 (NLT)

<sup>5</sup> John 14:6

his disciples, *“The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”*<sup>6</sup>

Jesus looked at the crowds following Him and referred to them as a field ripe for harvest. Many people are ready to give their lives to Christ if someone would show them how. Jesus commands us to pray that people will respond to this need for workers.

We pray for other things: healing, cancer, surgery. Have you ever said, “Gary, I want to pray for my lost loved one as I witness to them about my faith.” Have you ever prayed that?

No, instead we look at how big the task is and immediately deem it impossible. When Jesus looked at what seemed to be an impossible task, He said, “Pray.”

Paul asks in verse 14, “How can the lost believe in Jesus if they have never heard about him?”<sup>7</sup> The answer to his rhetorical question is, “Nobody will, unless we tell them, and we must first pray.”

### **Second, the Pursuit.**

Paul continues in verse 14:

*“...And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?”*<sup>8</sup>

We don't have to create some mythical lost tribe in the deepest forest. We all have family members and friends that do not know Christ, and how will they learn about Him if we don't tell them?

### **FINDING MYRA ON MATCH.COM**

In telling others about Christ, an effective witness must include more than being a good example. Eventually, we will have to explain the content, the what and the how of the gospel. Modeling the Christian life is important, but we will need to connect the mind of the unbeliever and the message of the gospel. We should never say, “Well, I just will live my Christian life, and they will get it.” Yes, we need to live a God-honoring life, but we must also pursue them with the message of the Gospel. Jesus didn't just heal people, feed people; He also taught people the way to everlasting life with the Father. He went to their villages. He went into their homes. He met them for private conversations.

We must take God's great message of salvation to others so that they can respond to the Good News. How will your loved ones and neighbors hear it unless someone tells them? Unless someone engages in the pursuit?

### **Our final method behind missions is the Price.**

Verse 15:

*And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?*<sup>9</sup>

We are personally responsible for sharing the Gospel with those we know, within our sphere of influence. But we are also responsible to send others to places we cannot go or are not called to go. Most of us are not called to be missionaries in Mexico or Jamaica or Africa or India or China. But we are called to help those persons who are.

Look at this personal note we find from Paul to the Philippian church in Philippians 4 in your bulletin:

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 9:35-38 (NLT)

<sup>7</sup> Romans 10:14 (NLT)

<sup>8</sup> Romans 10:14 (NLT)

<sup>9</sup> Romans 10:15a (NLT)

*As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness. At the moment I have all I need—and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.<sup>10</sup>*

The Philippian Church supported Paul as he shared the Gospel with people unknown to the Philippians. They sacrificed so that others might be saved.

God provides for those making sacrifices.

- Abraham gave his son Isaac and God provided a ram.<sup>11</sup>
- Hannah gave her only son Samuel and God provided.<sup>12</sup>
- Widow of Zarepath gave her last meal to Elijah and God provided for her and her son during the 3 year drought.<sup>13</sup>
- Simon Peter gave his boat to Jesus and God provided.<sup>14</sup>
- The young lad gave his lunch to Jesus in the midst of a crowd of 5,000 and God provided.<sup>15</sup>
- The Philippians gave gifts to spread the Gospel and God provided.<sup>16</sup>

So Paul assures the Philippians and us in verse 19:

*And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.<sup>17</sup>*

Will God provide for you if you give generously to missions? Jesus promises it. Look at Luke 6:38 in your bulletin:

*Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.*

My friends, write this down:

God knows my needs; He knows the mission's needs; He will provide for both.  
ST. PAUL APPEAL.

*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? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"<sup>18</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Philippians 4:15-19 (NLT)

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 22:1-14

<sup>12</sup> 1 Samuel 1:11,20-28; 2:21

<sup>13</sup> 1 Kings 17:1-16

<sup>14</sup> Luke 5:1-9

<sup>15</sup> John 6:1-13

<sup>16</sup> Philippians 4:10-19

<sup>17</sup> Philippians 4:19 (NLT)

<sup>18</sup> Romans 10:14-15 (NLT)