

Missions 2 - Job Number One

Last week we examined the central focus of the church on being on a mission to deliver the Gospel. Our first outreach is to our immediate area, our town and neighborhood. From there, we expand to other areas around us until we have reached out across the world.

Of course, not everything that can be said about any subject of importance can be covered in one sitting. What we need to consider today is the *priority* of the missions mindset. We could make the mistake of treating a missions program as only an *add-on* to the Christian life. We are supposed to live a separated life, which means that our life should be distinct in its character from the character of the self-centered world. Because of the natural limitations of our attention, it is possible to not develop all of our spiritual responsibilities. We don't want to merely be sitting on a holy pedestal for all the world to admire. Having a sense of mission is not just something to *add on* to our Christianity. It is job one.

1. Job number one

- We were re-created (born again) to serve God.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- We labor in the world only to provide so we can serve God.

2Thess 3:6-12 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

8Neither did we eat any man's

bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

9Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

10For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

12Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Paul was concerned that he not walk *disorderly* among the Thessalonians. From the context, you can get the understanding that this is a reference to working to earn money. In many other missions trips, Paul was supported financially by different churches. In Thessalonica he did things differently. He *could* have called upon them to support him, but he didn't.

1Cor 9:13-14 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

It was not because he didn't have the power to call on them for support, but because he wanted to be an example. Paul looked at having a job as a necessary burden to bear while he was pursuing his true, Godly, spiritual passion or preaching the Gospel.

People are often more concerned about their worldly existence than they are about preaching the Gospel. You might not ever get to own the house, get to vegetate in retirement, travel the

world, taste exotic dishes...and then you might. But we have to have our priorities in place.

One afternoon author Patsy Clairmont found herself on an airplane, sitting next to a young man. She writes, "I had already observed something about this young man when I was being seated. He called me 'Ma'am.' At the time I thought, 'Either he thinks I'm ancient, or he's from the South where they still teach manners, or he's in the service.' I decided the latter was the most likely, so I asked, 'You in the service?' 'Yes, Ma'am, I am.' 'What branch?' 'Marines.' 'Hey, Marine, where are you coming from?' 'Operation desert Storm, Ma'am.' 'No kidding? Desert Storm! How long were you there?' I asked. 'A year and a half. I'm on my way home. My family will be at the airport.' I then commented that he must have thought about returning to his family and home many times while he was in the Middle East. 'Oh, no, Ma'am,' he replied. 'We were taught never to think of what might never be, but to be fully available right where we were.'

— Focus on the Family, July, 1993

The world doesn't see the job the way we should as Christians.

William Carey had to overcome great odds to obey the call of God. In *The Challenge of Life*, Oswald J. Smith noted that "even the Directors of the East India Company opposed [Carey's] work. Following is the idiotic resolution they presented to Parliament:

'The sending out of missionaries into one Eastern possession is the maddest, most extravagant, most costly, most indefensible project which has

ever been suggested by a moonstruck fanatic."

Smith added, "In 1796, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed the following infamous resolution: 'To spread the knowledge of the gospel amongst barbarians and heathens seems to be highly preposterous.' One speaker in the House of Commons said that he would rather see a band of devils let loose in India than a band of missionaries. Such was the opposition to missions when Carey set forth. And yet, he was able to write, 'Why is my soul disquieted within me? Things may turn out better than I expect. Everything is known to God, and God cares.'" William Carey stood the test, and became the father of modern missions.

– Daily Bread.

2. Woe unto us

The next challenge we need to accept is the challenge to preach and woe unto us if we do not. But you might be thinking, "I've not been called to preach." Perhaps you have not been called to be a *pastor*, but all believers have been called to preach. It's just that we speak so commonly of what happens in the pulpit as preaching that we might lose sight of the fact that that is not the only preaching. Preaching the Gospel is nothing more than evangelism, soul winning, or challenging people with the Gospel.

- We preach whether people will hear or not.

Ezek 3:4-11 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

5For thou *art* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, *but* to the house of Israel;

6Not to many people of a strange

speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

7But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel *are* impudent and hardhearted.

8Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

9As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house.

10Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

11And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

- We preach because it is a holy obligation.

Ezek 3:17-21 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a

stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

21Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

- We preach without fear

Jer 1:8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

- We preach as if we are on fire.

Jer 20:7-9 O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

8For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

9Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*.

- We preach because of the fear of the Lord.

1Cor 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

- Preach until there is no one left to preach to.

Isa 6:9-12 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye

indeed, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

- We preach because the love of God constrains us.

We might look like we are out of our mind, but that's what love will do for you.

2Cor 5:13-15 For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

When Hudson Taylor was director of the China Inland Mission, he often interviewed candidates for the mission field. On one occasion, he met with a group of applicants to determine their motivations for service. "And why do you wish to go as a foreign missionary?" he asked one. "I want to go because Christ has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," was the reply. Another said, "I want to go because millions are perishing

without Christ." Others gave different answers. Then Hudson Taylor said, "All of these motives, however good, will fail you in times of testings, trials, tribulations, and possible death. There is but one motive that will sustain you in trial and testing; namely, the love of Christ".

– Source Unknown

3. Jesus first

Luke 14:27,33 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.
33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Some might wrongly think that all you can do all day long as a Christian is to pray, read the Bible, and listen to sermons. All we are saying is that Christ must be first. Missions are job one, but that implies that there is a job two. Bro. Christian Booker blessed me with a present one day. He told me about how he avoided taking overtime at work consistently which included Sunday. After a while he was asked if the reason he refused the overtime was because he had a second job. He quickly responded, "No, *this is* my second job. My first job is church." At the cardiac rehab, the nurses are concerned about stress. When they took down my initial information they asked what I did to relax. When they remembered that I was a preacher, I was asked if I pray and find relief from stress. So much of the Christian life is hard to explain to someone who is not serving God. I don't pray to relax. There are things that I might do to relax, but I am very likely to drift into sleep. You don't go to prayer in order to go to sleep. It's not that prayer is stressful, but it *is* work. When it is time to go to church, go to church. When it is time to pray, go to prayer. However, in *all* our time spent with God, it is always for the purpose of our main mission, to tell people about how to get saved. Everything else is an

add on, but the Gospel mission is job one. Perhaps you've thought of evangelism as something you would do as an add on or second job. Would you commit today to making it job number one in your life?

There is one word of caution to add on here. There might be those here who need to *receive* the Gospel. Believers are challenged to preach it so that with all those people looking out for your eternal destiny, it would be a shame if you missed getting to go to heaven because you resisted the Gospel. It is sadly common to regularly encounter those who have gone to church and even enjoyed the preaching without receiving the message that is preached. If being saved or born again sounds like something you have never really heard of, or if you assume that "trying your best" has got to help you get to heaven, then you have not heard the Gospel. The Gospel, which means *good news* is that if you ask Jesus forgive you for being a sinner forever and accept that His life-blood is the sacrificial payment for you then He will forgive you, change you into a child of God, and guarantee that you will be with Him in glory when you die.

1. Job number one Eph 2:10, 2Thess 3:6-12, 1Cor 9:13-14
2. Woe unto us Ezek 3:4-11,17-21, Jer 1:8, 20:7-9, 1Cor 9:16, Isa 6:9-12, 2Cor 5:13-15
3. Jesus first Luke 14:27,33, Luke 14:27,33, Luke 14:27,33