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Going With Good News

Lesson Aim: To set forth missionary evangelism at home and abroad as the primary ministry of the New Testament church.

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Topic: Gospel; Great Commission; Missions.

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work,” John 9:4.

Those solemn words of Jesus bear careful study. They suggest several very important truths. (1) He was sent forth by the Father. (2) He was sent to do a work—to accomplish a mission. (3) There was a set time when the work could be done. (4) The time for work would soon pass. (5) He felt a divine imperative to complete the assigned task.

Equally solemn are the words of Jesus when He said to His disciples, **“Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you,”** John 20:21. Those words apply to you! As He was sent by the Father, you are sent by Him. You are sent with a work to do, a set time in which to do it, and should feel a divine imperative upon your life to get your assigned mission completed.

Each church member lives under the commission: **“. . . Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,”** Mark 16:15. **“Go ye”**—what a challenge! **“Into all the world”**—what a field! **“To every creature”**—what a number of prospective converts! **“Preach”**—what a ministry! **“The gospel”**—what a message! Do you feel a divine imperative upon your life?

Churches must be “missionary” in spirit, prayer, and practice. For a church to be truly missionary, each member of the church must be of a missionary spirit. Are you helping or hurting the missionary spirit of your

church? Today's lesson aims "to set forth missionary evangelism at home and abroad as a primary ministry of the New Testament church."

I. NEED FOR MISSIONS

A. Religious heresy creates a great need for Christian missions. It arises from the depravity of the human heart. Man does not want to admit himself a sinner nor God as his sovereign. He rejects, therefore, the Holy Bible as the Word of God and becomes an authority unto himself. That, in turn, opens the door to all sorts of error. Each false doctrine calls for affirmation of true doctrine. Religious error demands Christian missions.

Will people hear the truth when it is presented? Many will! The success of many cults which hang on the border of Christian religion indicates men have seeking hearts. They are trying to find peace and satisfaction. Only in Christ will the heart be satisfied. Christians, therefore, should be heralds of God to a desperately needy generation.

Jesus warned, "**Many shall come in my name . . . and shall deceive many . . . And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many,**" Matthew 24:5, 11. How can those evil influences be counteracted? Preach the gospel in conduct and testimony, in private and public life, in supporting world missions. Profligate error must be met by proclaimed truth.

B. International troubles call for increased efforts in world missions. Jesus warned, "**Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars . . . For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places,**" Matthew 24:6-7. Man's knowledge has surpassed his moral capacity to govern what he knows. International turmoil results.

Crisis on the international scene may close mission doors in many areas. Traditional mission work may well come to an end. Today many nations are closed to the fulltime religious worker. Christians who are trained as medical specialists, technicians, teachers, farmers, and other professionals must go to work in those areas to give the witness for Jesus. It is not the traditional way to do mission work, but it was the method used by a tent-maker named Paul. He was tremendously successful.

C. Religious intolerance will demand an increase in missionary outreach. If that statement seems contradictory, remember that the more men oppose the truth the more they need to know the truth. Jesus warned His disciples, "**Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake,**" Matthew 24:9.

Religious persecution is quite common. It is difficult to realize that because you are accustomed to the freedom of assembly and worship in the United States of America. It is reported that more people have died because of their witness for Christ in the twentieth century than in any equal number of years since Jesus' personal ministry upon earth!

Persecution may prohibit freedom of assembly, stop the printing of religious literature, take religious programs from the airwaves, and even take the life of a witness. It will never stamp out Christian truth. The Word of God is not bound. Times of persecution have always been times of greatest religious outreach. There is no time to stop. Keep reaching out!

D. Religious apostasy issues a challenge for missionary-evangelism. **“The love of many will wax cold,”** Matthew 24:12. Jesus said it would happen. Do not get excited when it does. Neither permit it to turn you from truth or lessen your zeal in proclamation of the truth. Find in the apostasy of “professional religionists” a motivation to renewed effort.

If every person who professes to be a Christian should be unfaithful, you would still be obligated under God to remain steadfast in the truth. It is easy to be swayed by the crowd, but remember that you are serving Christ. So long as He abides faithful, you remain faithful also.

E. Religious opportunity will accompany missionary needs. Jesus said some would endure to the end. **“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,”** Matthew 24:14.

Face the facts. False religions will arise. International distress will continue. Religious persecution will break out in certain areas. Many will turn from the truth. Those problems are no reason for the Christian to cease to witness for Christ. In such crisis days the world needs more than before a sure testimony of the certainty which God has revealed in Jesus Christ. Let need be your motivation, not your handicap, in world missionary outreach.

There is no day like today to direct men to Jesus. Be a missionary to your family, friends, and acquaintances.

II. MESSAGE OF MISSIONS

“ . . . Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures . . . he was buried . . . he rose again the third day according to the scriptures,” I Corinthians 15:3-4. That is the message of missions!

A. Concerning its source, the missionary message is from God. The Apostle Paul spoke of having “received” the message which he preached. From whence did he receive it? He replied, **“I neither received it of man,**

neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ,” Galatians 1:12. That is to say, the message he preached was not of human reflection but of divine revelation.

Think of the implications of that truth. If you have a message from God, you are greatly honored. If you are responsible to share that message with others, you are greatly obligated. If you fail in that mission, you are greatly blamed. Christian missions is serious business.

B. Concerning its nature, the missionary message is a gospel. The Christian message is good news to those who hear it. It is the message of salvation in Christ.

The term, “gospel,” was first used to refer to the reward a ruler gave a messenger who brought good news to him. Its usage changed until it came to mean the message which the messenger bought.

The Christian has a gospel to share. To deceived and deluded men, he declares a true religion. To men and nations in turmoil, he tells of the peace which Jesus gives. To those under religious persecution, he testifies of the One who can feel and sympathize with their pains and who bears their burdens. To the loyal remnant, he speaks of the Lord who will enable them to overcome. To the guilty and defiled he preaches the message of cleansing and new life in Christ.

The Christian has a gospel. It is good news. Do not keep it to yourself. Share it. Be a missionary.

C. Concerning its content, the missionary message is redemptive. It is a message of forgiveness of sin.

It speaks of substitutionary atonement. **“Christ died for OUR sins . . .”** Remember the words of the prophet Isaiah, **“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of your peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed . . . he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors,”** Isaiah 53:5,12.

It speaks of fulfilled prophecy. The atoning deed of Jesus Christ, which included His death and burial and resurrection, happened according to the foreordained plan of God. Observe the repetition of the statement, “according to the scriptures,” in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. The death of Jesus was no accident; neither was it a last resort with God. From the beginning God loved sinners and planned to redeem them by the sacrifice of Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. The world needs a message like that. It gives assurance of certain and eternal forgiveness in Jesus.

It speaks of a complete salvation. Christ died and was buried. That would be enough to effect redemption, but could not bring salvation to men

(Romans 5:10). Christ arose from death that He might be the living Savior of all who trust Him. His work is complete. There need be nothing added to it. Complete salvation is offered.

What are you doing to get the good news of salvation to every person in your community, your state, your nation and your generation? That is your missionary obligation.

III. IMPERATIVE OF MISSIONS

Christians should engage in missionary-evangelism at home and abroad because Jesus commanded it. Are you familiar with the “Great Commission” which was given by Jesus? **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen,”** Matthew 28:19-20.

The church is under orders to exercise herself in missionary-evangelism. Jesus solemn words obligates each believer to witness, but puts special emphasis that witnessing is to be the normal ministry of a true church. Jesus has commanded. We should obey. Obligation rests heavy upon us.

Jesus further set out the systematic method by which the Word is to be gotten out to the world. Acts 1:8 suggests that you begin where you are; share Christ in your own hometown. Then reach out into neighboring communities, adjoining states, and other nations. Continue until people in the remotest region of the world have heard the gospel.

Christians should engage in missionary-evangelism because sinners need it. What is the condition of the man who has not trusted Jesus as personal Savior? The Bible says he is “dead in trespasses and sins . . . without Christ . . . having no hope, and without God in the world,” Ephesians 2:1, 12. It further declares, **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,”** Acts 4:12. Furthermore, Jesus himself said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,”** John 14:6. No sinner can be saved apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ; no one can go to heaven without being saved. Therein is the need!

Christians should engage in missionary-evangelism because they need it. Service in the name of Christ is the essence of the believer's new life in Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote, **“. . . he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for**

them, and rose again,” II Corinthians 5:15. No Christian will be pleasing to his Lord unless he helps get the gospel out.

On the other hand, no Christian can grow to full spiritual maturity apart from service. God's desire is that we may grow up in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16). He has put offices in the church to aid us in that growth. He has given the Bible “that we may grow thereby,” I Peter 2:2. He has ordained ministry in His name that we might grow through exercise. Apart from service, the church, and the Word, the Christian cannot and will not grow. One of the great opportunities of Christian service is to go with the good news about Jesus. What are you doing to help get out the gospel?

Examine the truths expressed in Romans 10:13-15. Anyone who calls upon the Lord will be saved. In order to call upon Him, men must believe in Him. To believe in Him, men must first hear of Him. To hear of Him, messengers must be sent. For messengers to be sent, Christians must bear the cost and volunteer to go. That, in essence, is Christian missions.

The responsibility for world missions rests with the local congregation of Christians. (1) Study your church budget. What percent of your offerings is helping to get the gospel out? (2) Study your teaching program. How much instruction is being given on the “why” and “how” and “who” of world missions? (3) Study the communications media. How much do your people know about the work presently being done, and the needs of mission fields around the world?

Then ask yourself a final question, “Am I really doing my best to help my congregation to share in world missionary outreach; am I willing to be used of God in His world mission program?”

Questions

1. How does John 9:4 challenge you to mission support?
2. What does John 20:21 mean to you?
3. What proves that a Baptist church is truly Missionary Baptist?
4. What world conditions call for missionary outreach?
5. How does world crisis prepare men for the gospel?
6. How is world missions related to your hometown?
7. What is the message of Christian missions?
8. Why are you obligated for world missions?
9. How does II Corinthians 5:15 apply to you?
10. What can you do to enlarge world mission outreach?

