

CONCERNING MISSIONS

- A. Definition of missions - participation with God in His work of calling mankind to Himself through Jesus Christ.
- B. God's view of missions
 - 1. Revealed in His heart of love
 - a. Romans 5:8, *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*
 - b. 1 John 4:10, *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
 - 2. Revealed by the breadth of His love - everyone
 - a. Psalm 22:27, *All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations will worship before Thee.*
 - b. Luke 24:46-47, *and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*
 - 3. Revealed by the depth of His commitment - conformity
 - a. Romans 15:4, *For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*
 - b. Colossians 1:28, *And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.*
 - 4. Revealed by the magnitude of His resolve - every Christian
 - a. John 20:21, *Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*
 - b. Acts 1:8, *but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*
- C. The Missionary Word
 - 1. Introduction
 - a. Our vision of missions is flavored by descriptive words such as *far-away places, foreign, or sacrifice.*
 - b. The key word of missions is often associated with a particular verb, *to go*; Matthew 28:19, *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...*
 - c. Tonight, I want you to consider another word which is truly the key word of missions, Romans 10:14-15, *How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?...*
 - 2. The Missionary Word is *send*.
 - a. It is comprehensive
 - 1) *Going* is self-centered but *sending* is group-centered.
 - 2) J. Ronald Blue, *World missions, and in a sense the entire ministry of accomplishing God's purpose in this age, revolves around the simple word "send...There is no going without sending.*
 - 3) Missions is a team effort and may we each accept partnership in this most important endeavor.
 - b. It is cooperative
 - 1) The church sends missionaries.
 - a) George W. Peters, *By the laying on of hands, the church and the individual missionary become bound in a bond of common purpose and mutual responsibility...Should our young people realize that not only does "my church go with me, but my church goes in my person, stands with me, prays with me, sacrifices with me, and underwrites my support," the challenge would become inescapable.*
 - b) The church has responsibility to support its missionaries through prayer, contact, and finances.
 - c) Concerning prayer, Charles Nelson, a former missionary to Honduras with 4 children in missionary service, notes how we may effectively pray for our missionaries on the field:
 - 1] *For adjustment to the new language, culture, and climate of the country.*
 - 2] *For the development of harmonious relationships with other missionaries.*
 - 3] *For building a strong family life in spite of frequent separations.*
 - 4] *For deciding wisely how to use their time in ministry.*
 - 5] *For good health.*
 - 6] *For growth in grace and the ability to live out the Christian life under difficult circumstances.*

- 2) Missionaries are sent by the church.
 - a) Blue, on a person interested in missions, *(He) does not decide he is going, join a mission board, and then "send a bill" to his local church. The people of his church are engaged with him in his decisions regarding missionary service...He is being equipped as a "sent one."*
 - b) Every biblical missionary is sent.

- c. It is contagious
 - 1) We must catch the vision that we are part of missions whether we *send* or go.
 - 2) As a sender, be responsible for local ministry
 - a) God has called our missionaries to distant lands and He has called us to be missionaries here.
 - b) Our missionaries represent us overseas and we represent them right here in Richmond.
 - c) Are we being faithful to them and to our Lord?

 - 3) As one who goes, be accountable
 - a) To your God.
 - 1] J. Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission, *Missions are supported when people have a relationship with God and begin to share His love and concern for others.*
 - 2] According to John 17:3, eternal life is not doing, but knowing the Father and the Son.

 - b) To others
 - 1] Pursue healthy relationships, God calls us to people not tasks.
 - 2] Gordon H. Fraser, *A Survey of First-Term Missionary Casualties (1958)*
 - a] *55% were due to failure in interpersonal relationships.*
 - *16.5% - inability or unwillingness to submit graciously to the discipline or directives of supervisors or senior missionaries.*
 - *17.5% - inability or unwillingness to work in harmony with fellow missionaries.*
 - *13% - inability to suppress a feeling of superiority to natives or native workers.*
 - *8.5% - friction or lack of harmonious co-operation between husband and wife.*

 - b] *Only 2% of failures were due to inability to learn the language and culture.*

 - 3] *Leadership (1991)*, A survey that included missionaries from 55 large Protestant mission agencies revealed one interesting fact...the number one problem they mentioned was *relationships with other missionaries.*

 - c) To your church
 - 1] Peters on characteristics of a biblical missionary - one who is sent
 - a] *Recognizes the delegating authority of the church.*
 - b] *Identifies himself with the church.*
 - c] *Submits himself to the direction and discipline of the church.*
 - d] *Commits himself to be a true and responsible representative of the church.*
 - e] *Operates within the doctrinal framework and spirit of the church.*

 - 2] Never forget that you represent your Lord, your missions agency, and your church.

D. A historical perspective of Missions

1. Augustine
 - a. His most famous quotation, *...man, this small portion of creation, wants to praise you. You stimulate him to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.*
 - b. City of God was contrasted to City of men - *These two cities were made by two loves: the earthy city by the love of self unto the contempt of God, and the heavenly city by the love of God unto the contempt of self.*
 - c. He had a mind for missions: a passion for God.

2. Main Luther

a. Reformation truths

- 1) *Sola Fide* - Man is justified by faith alone. *Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness and I am thy sin. Thou hast taken on thyself what thou wast not, and hast given to me what I am not.*
- 2) *Sola Gratia* - Salvation is by grace, the free gift of God. *...we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive.*
- 3) *Sola Christo* - Christ is God's grace received by faith. *We could never come to recognize the Father's favor and grace were it not for the Lord Christ, who is a mirror of the Father's heart.*

b. Quotes by Luther

- 1) *The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.*
- 2) *Faith is the 'yes' of the heart, a conviction on which one stakes one's life*
- 3) *A simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or cardinal without it."*

c. He had a mind for missions: God's substantive message.

3. Wycliffe

a. Authority of the Word of God, *Holy Scripture is the preeminent authority for every Christian, and the rule of faith and of all human perfection.*

b. Necessity of Bible translation, *Christ and His Apostles taught the people in the language best known to them...The laity ought to understand the faith and, as doctrines of our faith are in the Scriptures, believers should have the Scriptures in a language which they fully understand.*

c. He had a mind for missions: preeminence of the Word of God

4. Anabaptists

a. Obedience - *...obedience must be genuine, that is, that heart, mouth, and deed coincide together. For there can be no true heart where neither mouth nor deed is visible.* Hans Denck

b. Persecution - It was assumed that the community of faith would be a suffering community.

1) A contemporary noted that Anabaptists "went to the stakes as to a wedding."

2) Michael Sattler, *In the case of the attorney of his Imperial Majesty versus Michael Sattler, judgment is passed that Michael Sattler shall be delivered to the executioner, who shall lead him to the place of execution and cut out his tongue, then forge him fast to a wagon and thereon with red-hot tongs twice tear pieces from his body; and after he has been brought outside the gate, he shall be plied five times more in the same manner..."* After this had been done in the manner prescribed, he was burned to ashes as a heretic. His fellow brethren were executed with the sword, and the sisters drowned. His wife, also after being subjected to many entreaties, admonitions, and threats, under which she remained steadfast, was drowned a few days afterward.

c. They had minds for missions: Obedience at all costs.

5. Baptists

a. Urgency of Missions

1) *Every Baptist a missionary...* Johannes Oncken

2) Baptist churches were formed in Germany, Scandinavia, France and southern Europe.

3) Societies were formed to send missionaries like William Carey to India and Adoniram Judson to Burma.

4) Missionary efforts included China, Japan, Africa, and Latin America, as well.

b. Priority of the Gospel: *The work of the Christian ministry, it has been said, is to preach the gospel, or to hold up the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, as the only way of a sinner's salvation...if this be not the leading theme of our ministrations, we had better be anything than preachers. Woe unto us, if we preach not the Gospel!*

c. They had minds for missions: personal responsibility.

6. Jonathan Edwards
 - a. Spiritual vitality: *The Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in and wonderfully work among us...This Work of God, as...the Number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious Alteration in the Town; so that in the spring and summer following, Anno 1735, the Town seemed to be full of the Presence of God; it was never so full of Love, nor of Joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then.*
 - b. Responsible applications
 - 1) *...I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory...*
 - 2) *to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general.*
 - 3) *Never to lose one moment of time, but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.*
 - 4) *To be endeavoring to find out fit objects of charity and liberality.*
 - 5) *To maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.*
 - 6) *To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.*
 - 7) *After afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them, what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.*
 - c. He had a mind for missions: personal purity.

CONCLUSION

- A. Missions is the heartbeat of God.
 1. It is revealed by His heart of love.
 2. It is revealed by the breadth of His love - everyone.
 3. It is revealed by the depth of His commitment - conformity.
 4. It is revealed by the magnitude of His resolve - every Christian.
- B. We need to cultivate a mind for missions.
 1. Augustine was consumed by spiritual passion for God and His Word, Matthew 22:37, *He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*
 2. Martin Luther was devoted to the truth of Scripture, 1 Corinthians 1:18, *For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*
 3. Wycliffe was driven by the priority of Scripture, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.*
 4. Anabaptists were dedicated to obedience to Scripture despite the cost, Acts 9:15-16, *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."*
 5. Baptists were personally responsible to share their faith, Matthew 28:18-20, *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*
 6. Jonathan Edwards was committed to live his faith, 1 Timothy 1:5, *But the aim of such instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.*
- C. What do I need to allow God to cultivate in my life that I will have His heart for mission?