

(life update for the church...)

Why missions? The task before me this morning is awesome. Imagine getting asked to preach on the one thing you are most excited about from God's Word, and then having a solid congregation that actually wants to hear what you have to say? How amazing is that? Well the joy retreated into burden as I realized, if I get this wrong, there are damning implications. And then God said, "Remember the battle belongs to me, and it is my word that does the shaping." So it is my honor to trust the Holy Spirit to lead us into a greater understanding of, submission to, and love for God's Word.

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 28:18-20. This is on page 835 if you are using a pew Bible. Jesus at this point has been crucified, risen from the dead, been witnessed alive by hundreds, and is passing off His role of proclaiming the gospel and making disciples of Himself to these 11 normal guys.

(read Matthew 28:18-20)

Give me humility that honors Christ, allow me to rightly depend on the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, stir mightily in the hearts of those gathered today. Thwart any plans the evil one may have to distract us and bind our fleshly attempts to filter that which is inconvenient.

If what is being proclaimed does not line up with Your word, let it fall on deaf ears, however if what is said is found to be in line with the Scriptures You've given then let it rest on us as a burning coal that spurns us to say "Here am I! Send me."

I. What is Missions? – Matthew 28:18-20

Missions is Christ-followers taking the gospel to those who live in a culture where there is little to no access to the gospel; it is a temporary necessity resulting in the eternal worship of God which will happen among all the peoples.

My wife and I have two kids, and a third one on the way. One of the more enjoyable implications of living with a 1 and 3 year old, are the many trips to the zoo. I have been to the zoo more in the past two years than I have previous to that. My favorite attraction is the reptile house. So many strange and wonderful creatures, many that you can get very close to and take your little toddler right up against a boa or a gator, but there is no reason to worry, thick glass guards the onlooker from potential hazard a loose reptile can bring. The Detroit Zoo has another attraction that provides a slightly different experience. This is the Australian Outback Adventure. You do not look at the kangaroo and wallaby exhibit from a safe distance, no, you walk on a path that is part of the exhibit. No fence or guard rails except the ones keeping you and the kangaroos enclosed in the same place.

2 facets of the often examined treasure of these Great Commission verses are them and all nations.

A. them (18a)

If you claim Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then do you believe this command here in Matthew 28 applies to you? Do you see missions as something that is allowed to be attractive because there is safeguard that hinders you from ever really engaging with it? Or do you see your life as an opportunity to help fulfill this command? Whoa, hold up, it clearly says them, this command was given to this disciples and I think they did a good job of fulfilling it in their day. OK, fine, let's look at a couple other things these Christ followers were told.

Did Jesus tell them to come if they are heavy laden, that His yoke is easy and His burden is light? Did he tell them that their joy would be full, that He would go and prepare a place for them and come back one day to get them? Did Jesus promise them forgiveness? Did Jesus promise them that he would acknowledge them before the angels of God?

Which of these Christ-follower does not apply to you? Jesus is not a lego set where you get to pick and choose which pieces to put on and which ones to leave in the box. You get His promises and you get His commands. And if you still think this command was just for the eleven, then why the last phrase "I am with you always to the end of the age?" An age is a lot longer than a lifetime. This command was meant to be fulfilled long after the first disciples died. So are you one of the them that Jesus is talking to here? If you are a Christ-follower like they were then yes, you are one of them.

B. All Nations (19)

When I was 20 years old and got the privilege to hear the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. We sat up in the balcony and I was able to hear and see the flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombones, tubas, timpani, other percussion toys, harps, piano, violins, more violins, violas, and basses all come together to produce one royal majestic sound known to us as the Star Wars theme song being directed by John Williams himself. It was marvelous.

Something very similar is described in the Great Commission with these words "all nations." We are going to do a little bit of Biblical theology here. This word nations is the Greek word Ethne. It often refers to the ungodly Gentiles as a whole, but here in its plural form we are aware of the many parts making up the whole. Ethnos does not refer to geography or political structures, but rather a group of people.

So let's see how consistent this line of thinking is throughout God's Word.

i. Genesis 12:3 - I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

(assign to first section) – all families, the Hebrew word for family here is like a clan or a tribe

ii. Isaiah 52:10 - The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God

(assign to second section) – just before the fourth and climactic Servant song in Isaiah, there will not be an end of the earth that does not witness the Salvation God offers.

iii. Matthew 24:14 - And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

(assign to third section) – what does this do to your eschatology? I remember as a kid being told multiple times that my generation would see the return of Jesus Christ. And I was just hoping the next Star Wars movie would come out before Jesus came back, but look, if this verse is true, and it is, then we are thousands of people groups away from the end coming.

iv. Revelation 7:9-10 - After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

(assign to fourth section) – Notice that word “every.” It does not leave any of these groups out.

(summarize these 4 then move on) – The smallest unit we have here is the tribe. So, at least someone from every tribe will be around the throne because Jesus is not coming back until the gospel has reached every tribe, and it will reach the ends of the earth because God promised Abraham that in him all the families, clans, tribes, would be blessed.

Other Old Testament verses supporting the claim that God’s plan is to claim peoples from all groups around the world are on the screen.

Psalm 9:11, 18:49, 22:27-28, 45:17, 47:1, 47:9, 57:9, 66:8, 67, 72:11, 72:17, 86:9, 96:3, 96:7, 96:10, 97:1, 102:15, 102:22, 105:1, 108:3, 111:6, 117:1

Isaiah 11:10, 12:4, 25:6-7, 34:1, 49:6, 51:5, 52:15, 55:5, 56:7, 60:3, 66:18-19.

This list will be available in the next couple days when the sermon notes get posted to the church website.

Think of Beethoven's 5th, William Tell's Overture, the soundtracks to Pirates of the Caribbean or Lord of the Rings being done with only flutes. What a letdown when there are so many other instruments out there. You know what Americans are in the orchestra God is building? They are loud, obnoxious, and everyone knows when one is around just like the crash cymbal. Now imagine the Hallelujah Chorus being done with just a bunch of crash cymbals (demonstrate).

God is not building a flute or cymbal ensemble where one country is His main concern above the rest, no God is building an orchestra that will have representation from every tribe, from every people; no part of His orchestra will be found lacking. So, when people with kind intention ask Taylor and I why we cannot just stay here and serve God, we appreciate the love, but Jesus is being represented here, we need to go where people don't know His name, or the hope He alone brings, and if some stay here, then Jesus has ambassadors here as well.

Think about it this way, if parents love their kid so much, they that want her to be around the house all the time, and they never want her to leave just because they love her so much, then she is never able to get out, able to get married, and those parents never know the love of having grandkids. Some of us need to go because the family is not done growing yet. God's orchestra is missing a string section and some of us need to go tell them.

Some of you may be asking at this point, "if the Great Commission applies to me, but God's plan is to redeem all these different peoples, shouldn't I just step back and not get in God's way, let Him do His thing?" That makes as much sense as waking up on Thanksgiving and saying, "If I'm going to be stuffed full, why would I even eat?"

Here's where Romans 10 comes in; because God is going to use you, Christ-follower, to implement His plan.

II. How does Missions work? – Rom 10:13-17

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. If you are visiting Cornerstone today or you are not sure where you stand with God and you are trying to sort out everything you are hearing today, then give me 2 minutes of your best attention. You can call on the name of the Lord and you will be saved. Not maybe, might, possibly, hopefully one day, but will be saved. How can you be so sure and what am I even being saved from? You are being saved from God's wrath against sin. Sin is when we do not measure up to God's standard of perfection. We have all sinned and fallen short. And God is going to punish sin. That means you and I left alone are to stand against God's wrath which puts us in hell. Jesus is God's Son who lived a perfect life in place of the perfect life you and I are supposed to live, and his death

on the cross was the payment that you owe God for your sins, and his resurrection from the dead proves His power over sin and death. So you can call on Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. And when God's wrath comes against sin, Jesus stands as your defender and says I already paid that penalty in full and God will look at you and not see your sin, but see Jesus in you and recognize you then as His own, allowing you to be part of the multitude that will stand around the throne worshipping Him in eternity.

All that needs to happen then is for people to call on the name of Jesus Christ. (slide)

How then will they **call** on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to **believe** in him of whom they have never **heard**? And how are they to **hear** without someone **preaching**? And how are they to **preach** unless they are **sent**? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So **faith** comes from **hearing**, and **hearing** through the **word of Christ**.

Calling does not just happen though. Here is how it works, to call, you must believe, to believe you must hear, to hear, someone needs to preach, and to preach to those who have not heard, someone must be sent, then saving faith can result from hearing the word of Christ. This is God's game plan, if the gospel is going to get out, (and it is) this is how it will happen. Could God communicate in perfect dialect from heaven or from a bush the gospel to every individual on the planet today? He could, but that's not His plan, because then He does not receive glory from using unworthy vessels.

What's the point of beautiful feet? This is a strange concept seen previously in Isaiah 52. But feet are ugly, my feet look like Frodo Baggins feet. The beauty however is in the content of what is held within or brought. A cardboard box is not beautiful, but when it is that thing you have been anticipating from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), then it is beautiful! Feet are ugly, especially in a day where your roads are made up of dust, cow, and camel feces. But feet that bring the gospel, those are so beautiful.

v. 16, what disobedience is going on here? Before the O.T. quote, what's the last verb? Sent, they are disobeying by not believing the good news of Jesus Christ, and to make matters worse, they are not engaged in getting this good news out. But why would they even send if they don't believe the gospel? The absence of care for the nations and the absence of personal belief in the gospel go hand in hand.

When you believe the gospel you are engaged in getting the gospel out to the nations! The Jews here must not believe the gospel because they are not sending or being sent.

V. 17, summary of Paul's argument. The end goal is biblical faith, comes from hearing, comes from the Bible.

So here is where we are at, The Bible/Gospel must be spoken to be heard for Biblical faith to be spawned in dead hearts. For this to happen, people must go, sent, they must preach, people must hear, they must believe, and then call on Jesus as Savior and Lord. V 16, when you believe the gospel you are engaged in the gospel getting out. That's why Paul calls them disobedient because they do not believe nor are they engaged in the sending.

III. I am sending, sent, or sinning.

We've touched on what missions is and how it works, so now let's learn some terms, let's learn some missions lingo to get your head wrapped around what we are up against.
(definitions of terms to understand pictures)

People group: For evangelization purposes, a people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance" (Source: 1982 Lowsan Lausanne Committee Chicago meeting.)

Unreached: — a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize the group without outside assistance.

Unengaged —a people group with no known active church planting underway. A people group is engaged when a church planting strategy, consistent with evangelical faith and practice, is being implemented.

Start slides of people groups

11,750 total people groups in the world making up 7.3 billion people
4,700 people groups 3.1 billion are reached, which means at least 2% of them are evangelical Christians and the churches there are strong enough to evangelize their own.

7,050 are unreached making up 4.2 billion. This means less than 2% of the people groups are Christian and they do not have enough resources or people to sustain a church on their own. Of these,

3,800 people groups making up 4 billion people, and a small percent of each group here is being engaged with the gospel by some missionary work, organization, or local church,

3,250 people groups making up 220 million people are unengaged and unreached which means we do not know of believers among them and we do not know of anyone trying to take the gospel to them. Most of these groups do not have access to Scripture in their heart language.

Show world status slide

Other good sites for education and prayer are,
Operationworld.org

Joshuaproject.net – great ways to teach geography and learn a little about world culture.

<https://www.imb.org/research-maps/> - we looked at the progress towards engaging unreached peoples map.

On a scale of plenty of access to the gospel to no access to the gospel where would you place America on the world's nations? Right, we are something like 4.5% of the world with so much access to the gospel, and you have 4 billion people who are in unreached people groups. Many of whom will go from cradle to grave headed to hell, never having access to Jesus Christ. So why would you plan on forsaking the majority of the world where you are needed most and insist on staying in the 4.5% of America where you are needed least? If this is true, why would you insist on staying where you are needed least?

There is one reason for you to be stay here, and it's not so you can drink the cool aid of the culture and worship the American trinity of comfort, abundance, and security, the one reason for you to stay here is so that you can send. God's given you a mind for business or some great job skill, great! Go do well, make a lot of money, but don't plan on a large bank account, make money so you can pump it into missions. So you can fuel the sending.

Senders in a missionary context are addressed and commended in **3 John 8, Acts 15:3, Rom 15:24, 1 Cor 16:6, 11, 2 Cor 1:16, Titus 3:13, 15**

A lot less people need to be senders and a lot more need to be sent. It takes both, those being sent are no better than the senders, but the current ratio of senders and sent allow for

the billions of unreached to continue to grow. Read Romans 10 outside of the American culture, and if I'm a believer I will take the gospel somewhere, and if by some act of God he makes it clear that I am to remain and be a sender, then I will do that with joy! But if God has not clearly called or convicted you to be a sender, then you need to plan on going to those who do not have access to the body of Christ.

Did you know that unless you are related to a 1st century Palestinian, a missionary is the reason you are a believer. Somewhere down the line someone crossed linguistic and cultural barriers so that you could end up with Gospel.

The musicians can come to the stage now

Romans 10 here is one of the most missional chapters in the Bible, what does it sit on? Romans 9, the scary predestination chapter.

Because God has foreordained to bring people into his family from every people group, I can have hope that my sharing the gospel and my taking part will be used to yield fruit for eternity. If God did not predestine people to follow him, then my efforts at sharing the gospel becoming increasingly horrifying. It becomes solely up to me to convince you not to spend eternity in hell, I as a sinner have to convince other sinners to give themselves up and submit to someone else, you are all condemned to hell then, in fact, no other sinner would convince me to follow God and even care about this myself! You see, evangelism in missions is worth it, because God is the driving force that secures people unto Himself, and he does it through broken vessels to receive more glory as He builds his orchestra made up of all peoples to worship Him around His throne in eternity.

How passionate are you about sending?

(is it a joy or an obligation for you to be a part of the sending process? What missionary are you praying for? Who are you investing in now that has potential to be sent? Does the chance to be a part of the sending motivate your view of your job throughout the week?)

Is God moving in you to be sent?

Is the Holy Spirit working on your heart pulling you to become a missionary? Do you see short-term missions trips as the highlight week of your year? Why not just keep that highlighter going across your whole calendar then? Look if God is speaking to you, you better listen or He may send a whale to swallow you to get your attention.

How are you right now preparing to be a part of this sending/sent process?

How are you forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead? Do you count everything as loss compared to the surpassing worth of know Jesus Christ? Do you see

what this world has to offer as rubbish in order that you may gain Christ? Do you see your life as part of the fulfillment of Christ getting to the nations and if you die in that process then it is gain?

Please think on what you have heard, and if what has been said is found to be in line with the Scriptures, then let it rest on you as a burning coal that spurns you to say "Here am I! Send me."

The list of O.T. verses were from Let The Nations Be Glad, chapter 5.

The list of "senders" verses were from Let The Nations Be Glad, pg 262.