

Get Ready! To Go . . . Ps 96 and 3 John 5-8

Series Get Ready! – last week, Get Ready to Reach Out; To the least of these; CO’s

This week – Get Ready! To Go! . . . as in Missions

I remember sitting where you are during messages like this, and either feeling guilty that I didn’t want to pack my bags and go . . .

Or wondering if there was a place for me in God’s plan if I stayed

I thought that missions was its own little thing, kind of an add-on to real church, largely fueled by the fact that I heard about it only once a year, if that

I remember thinking that missionaries had an aura about them

That I could never do what they do, and wasn’t entirely sure why they did it

I wasn’t clear on the biblical basis for missions, and how it all fit

That was one of the reasons I left church those mornings feeling so lousy and confused and guilty

So this morning, I want to look at what missions is, how it involves us, and why it exists
I want to start there

There’s a quote from John Piper that sums it up better than any I’ve ever found . . .

Missions exists because worship doesn’t

Starts with the fact that . . .

• **God is looking for worshippers – John 4:23**

John 4:23 – *The hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.*

God is looking for worshippers, and missions exists to find them

Truth part here – apart from personal relationship with Christ, there will be no worship

There’s simply no desire to worship someone you don’t know, love; think is unworthy

So missions exists because God is looking for worshippers who will worship him by means of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord

Does that mean he’s some megalomaniac whose ego has to be fed by his followers?

Not at all . . .

• **God deserves to be worshipped – Ps 96:4-6,10**

Turn to **Ps 96** – read vs 1-6; God deserves to be worshipped because –

He’s great – *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised* (4a)

He is to be feared above all gods (4b)

He even made the place where you imagine other gods dwell (5)

He’s awesome – *Splendor and majesty are before him* (6a)

Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary [the place of his presence] (6b)

He rules – *The Lord reigns* (10a)

God deserves to be worshipped and missions exists to encourage it

• **God requires our worship – Rom 12:1**

Worship the Lord . . . tremble before him, all the nations! (9)

Rom 12:1 – Paul appeals to us *to present* [our] *bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is* [our] *spiritual worship*

God requires the worship of our lives, and missions exists to urge it

Missions exists because God is looking for worshippers, he deserves to be worshipped, he requires our worship, and because . . .

• **God will be worshipped – Rev 7:9-10**

Worship is the end toward which all history moves; History ends in worship

Rev 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!”*

All of history is moving toward the white-hot worship of Jesus Christ at the end of time, by people from every tribe, culture, language

But we’re not there yet; Every people group is not yet represented, and some of those that are, are just barely so

Just received an example of that fr couple in Asia, who we support as a church

They live among a Muslim people group, and wrote recently about one of their friends they call Aaron

Aaron was a student in the largest Muslim seminary in our city. After being invited to a church [SG], he became very interested in Jesus and the Bible. The more he studied, the more he desired to follow Jesus, and eventually made a commitment to Christ. As a result, his family has totally disassociated themselves from him, cut off all support, and forced him into hiding. Further complicating matters, there are only 20 known believers from his people group in the entire world, and most of those are very new believers. Only two are mature in their faith, and of those two, only one lives in the same country! Pray that we can help Aaron find the fellowship he needs with others from his own culture and language.

Worship barely exists in that people group

There are over 4000 people groups where there’s no worship at all

When the goal of worshippers from every tribe, tongue and nation is reached, missions will cease

Until then, missions exists because worship doesn’t

And lest you think that missions is for an elite few; Only the super-spiritual; Think again

Missions is for everyone

All of us are responsible for, and should be a part of missions in one way or another

It’s an obedience thing

• **God commands it – Ps 96:2,3,10**

3 – *Declare his glory* [his greatness, supremacy] *among the nations*

Closely associated – we’re to *tell of his salvation from day to day* (2b)

[Declare] his marvelous works among all the peoples! (3)

Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns!” (10a)

These are all commands; There are no exemptions or caveats; Missions is for everyone

What this Psalm assumes is that we have a passion for God and his glory in the first place

And therefore missions is an overflow of it; No passion, no missions

In fact, experience and church history tells us that missions happens most when our passion for God is strongest

That’s why early British missionaries in the 1700’s could proceed in their plans to go to Africa, despite the fact that they needed to bring a coffin with them as part of their belongings, because they would likely die within a few years

Their resolve in missions was strong, because their passion for God was strong

Hundred years ago, Andrew Murray (**quote**) identified the source for our lack of passion –
As we seek to find out why, with such millions of Christians, the real army of God that is fighting the hosts of darkness is so small, the only answer is – lack of heart. The enthusiasm of the kingdom is missing. And that is because there is so little enthusiasm for the King.
Missions is for everyone – God commands it; And it flows from a passion for him

• **Jesus confirmed it – Mt 28:19 and Acts 1:8**

Mt 28:19 – *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations*

As you are going, make disciples; Reiterating the command from the OT (Ps 96)
Confirming that missions isn't just an old covenant thing
Not just for those people then, but for us, *now*, as well

Acts 1:8 – *You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Confirming his command once again; Obviously speaking to us since the scope includes the whole world

Missions is for everyone – God commands it; Jesus confirmed it; And . . .

• **The early church lived it – Act 8:1b, 4**

Acts 8:1b, 4 – *There arose on that day [the day Stephen was martyred] a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles . . . Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.*

Though they were forced to flee Jerusalem, but they didn't flee in *silence*

They spread the word everywhere they went

Notice it's not the apostles spreading the word, but the *people*

Ordinary people like you and I who spread the word everywhere they went

Missions is for *everyone*

Vividly remember the first deacon board I served on, because the majority of it was comprise of retired missionaries

I remember going home after that first meeting and saying to Becky that I thought I was in the land of giants

These were men of God whose knowledge, maturity, and experience in life so far exceeded mine that I didn't even deserve to be in the same room as them

I was in awe of them – as far as I was concerned, Ray Buker, Walt Fricke, Glen Kendall, Grey Jeffries, Warren Webster, and Gary Bowman were supermen

That image was never tarnished over the years

But as I came to know them, I realized that as amazing as they were, they were humble, *ordinary* men who 20-40 years ago had given lives to God's work in other cultures

Because they knew and believed that missions is for everyone – even ordinary people like themselves

Put all together – Missions is the work of the church, carried out by ordinary people, to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to all nations, purpose of worship

The crux of the matter is that . . .

Some are called to go . . . the rest are called to send

That's why it's for everyone – every single one of us is either a goer or a sender

God's been calling people to go since the time of Abraham 4000 yrs ago, and he's still calling people to go today

• **Some are called to go – Rom 10:13-15**

Rom 10:13-15 – *For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” But how are they to 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?*

How are people to call on the name of the Lord unless someone *goes* to them and tells them the good news? They can't

That's why God continues to call people to go, especially to cultures who have never heard the gospel

It was and still is his primary means of spreading the word among the nations

The problem is, there's often no response

Whom shall I send, and who will go? is ringing in our ears like a loud speaker from heaven or a constant whisper in our ear

But there's often no response because . . .

Top 10 reasons we don't respond to God's call to go

1. We don't care

We lack passion for the things of God; Don't care what he wants; Have our priorities

2. We can't hear

Noise of our life drowns God out

Don't stop long enough to be still/quiet because we're afraid of what we'll hear

3. We love our life

Comfort, familiarity, and ease has a death grip on us; And we don't want to give it up

4. We just don't want to

Flat out rebellious

5. We think it's futile

“Like I'm going to make a difference among Hindus or Muslims or Buddhists”

6. We don't want to risk failure

What if it doesn't work out? What if nobody is saved? What will people think?

7. We're afraid of suffering

Of struggle, hardship; Failing to realize that suffering is sometimes a God-ordained part of the Christian life

1 Pet 2:20-21 says that we've been *called* to do good and suffer

Ph 1:29 – *It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake*

8. We love our money

The personal financial cost is way too high; The opportunity cost is unacceptable

9. We're too proud

“I'm not asking churches for support and people to pray for me”

10. We lack faith

Faith that God will provide; That God will protect; That his plan is best

God's calling some of you – he has been for some time

He may be calling you to . . .

Live as a tentmaker among those difficult to reach

Translate Scriptures into a language that's never been written

Live and spread the word for the first time among an un-reached people group

Minister in an existing church or ministry of different culture

Serve in an orphanage or missionary school or hospital

And don't expect an earth-shattering, ear-splitting, eye-popping vision from the Lord
telling you to go
More than likely it will come in a still, small voice like it did for Elijah
But it will be no less compelling
And if it's genuine, that compulsion will increase and be confirmed by the people of
God around you (SG), and the people of God over you (Missions Pastor and M's Team)

Some are called to go, if that's you – say yes
But if it's not you, you don't have to feel guilty, because not all are

- **The rest are called to send – 3 John 5-8**

Rom 10:15 – *How are they to preach unless they are sent?*

Sent by whom? Those who are *called* to send; Those in the *church*

If you're a believer, a follower of Christ, then you're a part of the church

As a part of the church, if you're not called to go, you're called to send

And you're called to be a *good* sender – that's the point of **3 John 5-8** (read)

Here were some missionaries that came through Gaius' church, and the Apostle John
was telling him to *send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God*

In other words – be good senders

Send them in the best way possible, with the best you have

Because they go out for the sake of the name – to further the fame of Christ's name

Too often we have this mindset that they're missionaries and they can get by with less; No

Having forsaken all other pursuits and entanglements by accepting nothing from the

Gentiles (those who don't know Christ), *we ought to support* them (8)

And see that they lack nothing (Titus 3:13)

Supporting them as a church financially, materially, and spiritually through prayer

Shoddiness has no place in sending missionaries because they represent Christ on our
behalf as *fellow workers of the truth* (8)

I want to be a church that *goes*, and a church that *sends*