

Missions: Good to Go? (various scriptures)

Bibles – Genesis (first of 3 passages)

Appreciated opp to learn w/ you these past few weeks; But miss preaching to you guys
If nothing else, my love for you grows so much when I don't – you're a great joy

Final week of our Missions Conference – trust you've been both challenged/encouraged

Why all the fuss? – we covered the biblical basis for missions

Are you a chicken/pig? – challenged to commit to God's work, as opposed to contribute

What on earth are you doing? – encouraged to choose the best and forget the rest when it comes to our life here on earth

The only question that remains is – Are you good to go?

When it comes to missions, are you good to go?

IOW – Is God calling you to be a cross-cultural M?

We've prayed for years now as elders, that *many* of you would eventually answer *yes* to

that question – that you would say, “Yes, God, I'm good to go; Send me”

But if the answer is *no*, that's okay; There's no shame in that

This is not about “guilting” you into missions – not everyone is called to be a goer

We're all called to spread the word, for sure

How can we do otherwise when the salvation/life we enjoy is so good?

But not everyone is called to do so *cross-culturally*

Some are called to go, and some are called to send

But I think far *more* are called to go & far *less* are called to send than we'd like to think

It starts with being . . .

YOU ARE IF YOU'RE . . .

Ready like Abraham – to face the unknown (Gen 12:1-7)

Gen 12:1-7

Pretty straight forward – God spoke, and Abraham went

Even though he didn't know where he was going to end up, until he got there

Know what that is? *Trust*

Abraham was good to go when God spoke, and ready to face the unknown . . .

Because he trusted God with his future

When the unknown loomed on the horizon, literally, trusted God to show him the way

When it comes to cross-cultural missions, u too are good to go when u trust God to face –

Unknown process – like what am I going to have to do in order to prepare?

And how long will it take?

Unknown journey – will there be temporary stops along the way for language/training?

Unknown destination – Where am I going to end up?

Cross-cultural missions often involves an unknown process, journey, destination

• If that's not enough, there's always the *cultural* unknowns when you get there

Abram faced it w/ the Canaanites, and cross-cultural missionaries face same thing today

People with different customs, different traditions, and different ways of doing life

The only way to be ready to face them like Abraham, is to trust God, and *expect* the unexpected

Love the story about board member of a missions agency who was asked to interview a missionary candidate to see if he was good to go, ready to face the unknown . . .

Waited a week; 3 a.m.; 5 a.m.; Questions; Fuming; Wondering when it would start

“That will be all; I'll be sending my recommendation to the board. You should know it will be positive.”

Here's what he wrote:

“I tested the candidate's *expectations* as to the use of time by surprising him and asking him to come at an absurd hour. I then tried his *patience* by leaving him sitting there for two hours. I tested his *humility* by asking him questions that a third grader could answer; and he passed all my tests with flying colors. I have a patient, humble, adaptable person that I am fully able to recommend to the board as a missions candidate

You're good to go if you're ready like Abraham to face an unknown process, journey, destination, culture – and trust God for all of it, even when it doesn't make sense

Broken like Jonah – to warn those you'd rather not (Jonah 1-4)

You remember the story of Jonah

God told him to – *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.* (1:2)

But Jonah didn't want to go presumably because they were the enemy, and he didn't like them, and he didn't want God to spare them

He didn't like their life, their sin, their culture; what they stood for; what they did

It took a storm that threatened to break the ship, to break his will

To break his rebellion against God

A storm so bad that those around him finally agreed to throw him to his death for fear of their own

Of course, you know the rest of the story – great fish, 3 days/nights, vomited on land

Jonah, broken of his willful rebellion against God's call on his life, went on to warn the Ninevites, who repented and were saved from God's judgment

• If you know you're supposed to go, or at least check it out, and you're fighting it – you're flirtin' with disaster

Doubly so if you're thinking – “Anywhere but *there* God”

Anywhere but Asia, Cities of Europe, Middle East, Africa

Your prayer might sound a lot like this song (**Please Don't Send Me to Africa**)

Being good to go requires a brokenness before God to go anywhere

A selfless surrender to do *what* he wants, *where* he wants, *when* he wants, and with *whom* he wants

If you're called to go, even to a people you don't like

You can either bend the knee yourself, or suffer the storm that breaks your legs

Either way, God will not be thwarted in his purposes to sanctify you, and reach the nations through you

If God is calling, surrender

Trust him to put a love in your heart for where ever he might send you

You're good to go if you're ready like Abraham, broken like Jonah, and . . .

Willing like Isaiah – to tell those who won't listen (Is 6:8-13)

Is 6:8-13 – *the holy seed is it's stump*

The future of God's people (the holy seed) is the remnant of the faithful, the tenth
Just like the future of a tree after it burns, is the stump, if there's any remaining life

This passage, though somewhat cryptic in its language, is God's way of saying . . .

“Hey Isaiah, you want to go? Great”

“But just so you know, I'm sending you to a people who *will not listen* to you, until I
punish them and nearly destroy them”

I don't know about you and Isaiah, but if that were me, I would have been doing some
serious soul-searching

“So let me get this straight, God; I'm going to preach my heart out, and labor in prayer,
and lead the way you show, but they're not going to listen?”

“That's called failure in my book, God; I'm not going”

But that's not how it works when you say yes to God's call

It's an *unqualified* yes – no caveats, fine print, contractual outs, if-then clauses

Just – *Here am I! Send me.* Period

That's success – measured by your obedience, not your results

Even if it means spending the next 30 years of your life among people who hear, but
won't listen . . .

Who know the truth, but won't accept it; Who see your life, but won't imitate it

- Do you realize that we have Global Partners right now for whom that is the expectation?

They plan on spending their entire lives among people who are so difficult to influence,
that their hope is to reach just 5 families before they die

Why would they do such a thing? Because God called and they're willing like Isaiah

Willing to go even to those, who for all intents and purposes, won't listen

When you're willing like that, you're good to go

Compelled like Paul – to reach those who haven't heard (Rom 15:18-24)

Rom 15:18-24

V17-19 – Paul says, “I've preached the gospel to the Gentiles where I've been working,
and have *fulfilled* my ministry in the Eastern Med . . .”

Paul was compelled to preach the word and reach those who had never heard

So much so, that he considered his ministry *finished*, not when every *person* had heard,
but when the gospel had been sufficiently proclaimed/embraced among a *people* . . .

Resulting in the establishment of a self-perpetuating church and faithful witness

That's not necessarily the calling of every single one of us, but it needs to be the calling of
many more

Only 3% of the global missionary force is working among the un-reached

For every 10k spent on missions, only 9 cents goes to spread the word among those who
have never heard

That's one of the reasons that low-reached and un-reached people groups are a focus of
our Global Outreach here at Harvest . . .

We are compelled like Paul, to reach those who haven't heard

And we need more goers who are willing like Paul, to endure the hardship to make it
happen

- People like Adoniram Judson

First overseas missionary from America

Sailing at age 23 on Feb 17, 1812 for Burma, after being married for 12 days

He and his wife Ann spent their entire lives there, able to return only once after 33 years

“Suffering yet always rejoicing”

Want you to hear the letter he wrote to her father a few months before they left, while still
engaged, asking for his blessing to take her to Burma

Listen to what he wrote . . .

“I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next
spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure, and
her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of missionary life; whether you can
consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean, to the fatal influence of the
southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult,
persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent to all this, for the sake of him
who left his heavenly home, and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing,
immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this,
in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with the crown or
righteousness, brightened with the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her
Savior from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?”

(Piper, 158; from *To the Golden Shore*)

Her father let her decide, and she said yes; And the point is this . . .

When you're compelled to reach those who haven't heard, few things will deter you . . .

Even if it means enduring hardship, or giving up your sons/daughters for the cause

Because where God compels, the HS empowers

If you're compelled like Paul to reach those who haven't heard – you're not only in
good company, chances are you're good to go . . .

Committed like the Buser's – to love those hard to reach

Brooks and Nina Buser are Global Partners with us in PNG

You could substitute any one of our GP's on this point

But I've highlighted the Buser's (**photo w/ map**) because they've just finished teaching

God's plan of redemption from Creation to the Cross, among the Yembi-Yembi . . .

Those hard to reach due to the remoteness of their life

Take a look at their very first teaching, 3 months ago – **Video**

Know where that started? It didn't start 3 months ago

It started 6 *years* ago, with a commitment to love those hard to reach

A commitment to *prepare* themselves to go

To *move* to a vastly different land; To *live* among the people

To *learn* a language that had never been learned by an outsider, let alone written down

To *translate* the Scriptures into that language, and teach them every day for 3 months

To *persevere* in the midst of rain, flooding, mosquitoes, distractions, sickness, and death

They made a commitment to *love* those whom God loves, despite the fact that they're hard to reach, both physically *and* spiritually

The result is best expressed by the Y-Y themselves

Listen to what some of them said after the final teaching last Monday . . .

(**Excerpts** from 4/28/08 email)

- Jesus was my sipsip (sheep). He is my bridge-man. Because He carried my book I am able to cross to the other side and be in His family-group.
- Jesus is the last sacrifice. He is my offer sacrifice, and because of Him I am on God's side. That curtain broke, and there was a way for me to come on the short way to God (a direct path); on my own I can come to God, I have no need of a standing-in-the-middle-man (priest). Jesus made the road open for me.
- My eye water comes when I think of how many downed Satan's trick talk (believing lies) and how many are in the lake of fire because they did not know this talk. But now is my time, and I am across. I know I am on God's side.
- I am done, done with things that have no stump (are meaningless). Why would I ask pieces of plastic or wood to help me, how can they help me? The bridge-man alone helped me, and I know he was my sheep. I will only give my thoughts to one being, only to the one who is able to take me across will I put my thoughts.

Brooks said those are snippets of long conversations that went on all night

- Do you know that there's a waiting list in PNG, of tribes who have asked for a New Tribes missionary to come and live in their village, and tell them God's story? People are dying for the truth; Too many are dying without it

If you're committed to love those hard to reach – because of the hardness of their heart, or the remoteness of their life

Chances are, you're good to go

The only question that remains is – What are you waiting for?

I want to close with this short **video (Waiting)** – watch carefully

- Bow our heads

Are you good to go? Ready to face the unknown and broken of your pride?

Willing to do the work and compelled by the task ahead?

Committed to love those who are hard to reach?

If so, God's waiting for your commitment

Give you an opp to make that commitment in a few minutes

To come forward, kneel down before the Lord, and say –

“God, I'm good to go; Here's my life; It's no sacrifice”

You might be in high school, college; YA or a young family

You might be an empty nester or considering a second career

It doesn't matter who you are – what matters is that you respond if God's calling

Your response this morning doesn't mean you've put all your doubts and questions to rest

Doesn't mean you'll be on your way in 3 months – preparing to go is a long process, measured in years for most people

What it does mean is that you've been stunned by the glory of God, stopped in your tracks

And you're committing before God and his people to take the first step, and pursue his call on your life

I'm going to pray – as I do, you prepare your heart to come

As we sing the closing song, “No Sacrifice,” if you're called to go . . .

Slip out of your row, come down front, and kneel in prayer before the Lord

Eventually one of our Staff or Elders will kneel/pray with you

And if you're called to send, you stay right where you are with no shame (it's not about guilt), and sing these words w/ a renewed fervency for the life to which he has called u

Pray (music) – stand; if you're good to go, you come