

5 Things You Need To Know About Missions (11am)

Those are great words, that reinforce so much of what we experienced this week with the funeral of Bob Techau, our Facilities Manager; It was a special time
They're also appropriate for the start of our Go conference this month
And our goal, is that you'll be encouraged, spurred on, and even stretched
And that God will use the activities and preaching of his Word *mightily* in your life, and in the life of our church as a whole (**Intro**)

- So I'd like to start by turning to John 4, and look at *5 Things You Need To Know About Missions*; John 4:23; It's one of *several* Scriptures I'll refer to . . .
B/c this is going to be an overview; A big picture fly-by of *God's* perspective on missions; Which is crucial
B/c without it, you'll never engage in it; You'll never live it; Whether it's on the other side of the *world*, or the other side of your street

And it starts with this . . .

1. Missions exists because worship doesn't

I first read that in John Piper's book, *Let The Nations Be Glad*, some 15 years ago; And it's true; Not b/c he wrote it, but b/c worship is the be-all-end-all of the universe
The unstoppable end toward which all things are headed; It's a certainty

God says in **Mal 1:11** – *From the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations* [he's going to be exalted and revered], *and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering* [OT symbolisms for worship]. *For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.*

World-wide worship is a certainty; Seems hard to believe now, but when Christ returns, and the new heavens and new earth are ushered in, it will be a reality; A certainty
And *missions* exists, to bring it about*****

- And no wonder; God *deserves* our worship, and is *looking* for worshippers; John 4:23
The hour is coming [Jesus said], *and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.*
God's looking for worshippers; And *missions* exists, to identify them

That's the *first* thing you need to know; That a lack of worship is the compulsion of missions; The driving force; Missions exists b/c worship doesn't

2. The mission of missions is the church, and the mission of the church is missions

Let's focus on the first part of that – that the mission of missions is to see communities of believers formed; Churches
And if you're not quite sure of that, let me give you 7 reasons:

A. The church is the *body* of Christ (Eph 1:23)

The tangible extension of who he is and what he's doing here on earth
So of course the mission of missions is the church; What higher goal exists?

B. The church is the *fullness* of Christ (Eph 1:23)

The *complete* expression of who he is; Not the perfect expression, but by God's grace and God's Spirit, the complete expression

C. The church is the *glory* of Christ (2 Cor 8:23)

Just like a man's wife is *his* glory, the church is God's glory
And the mission of missions is to make much of it

D. The church is *precious* to Christ (Acts 20:28)

Obtained with his own blood (Acts 20:28)

E. The church is the *promise* of Christ (Mt 16:18)

Declaring that he would build it, no matter *what*

F. The church is the *bride* of Christ (Rev 19:6-8)

The thing on earth he's most *passionate* about; So why would u strive for anything less?

G. The church was the goal of *Paul* (New Testament)

The greatest missionary who ever lived

From Antioch to Rome – Paul preached the gospel; And did so, that men and women might be saved, band together, and form churches; That was *Paul's* goal
Otherwise, he would never have started them, never have visited them, never have written to them, and never have helped them
But he did; On multiple occasions; B/c the church was the mission of his mission; The goal of his outreach

Not hospitals, or orphanages, or coffee houses, or gyms, or food pantries, or anything else;
But churches

Not that those things aren't *needed* in many cases – they are
But they're not the goal, they're not the end; They're a *means* to the end
The end, the goal, the mission – is a church; A local fellowship of believers, who worship together, care for one another, grow in maturity, and witness to others
That's the mission of missions*****

- On the other hand, the mission of the *church*, is missions; Outreach; To go and make disciples – Mt 28 (v18-20)
Whether that's going across the street, over the bridge, or around the world
So the mission of the church, is missions – just like the mission of missions, is the church; It's both/and

Which is why we decided to support the ministry of **Walk in the Word** recently; And commend it to you

It's not only a solid and *fruitful* ministry, with whom we have close ties, but it's now a world-wide ministry; On both radio *and* TV
And continues to be one of the *best* ways to plant churches in our Fellowship
One of the best ways of fulfilling both sides of this mandate (**Video** – WitW Promo)

- The latest church plants in our Fellowship got off the ground last month – in Cameroon, Haiti; Annapolis, MD; Winston Salem, NC; And Indianapolis South
And WitW played a part; B/c the mission of missions is the church, and the mission of the church is missions

3. We're all called to go, it's just a matter of where

Rom 10:14; I *used* to say – that some are called to go, and some are called to send

But while that's true of *global* outreach, it's not true of *all* outreach
We are Christ's ambassadors the Bible says; His *witnesses* to the end of the earth
Which means we're *all* called to go

And the Apostle Paul gives us the reason in Rom 10

After saying that *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved* (13), Paul says in v14 . . .

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? They won't

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? (14b) They can't

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (14c) They won't

If someone doesn't *tell* them about Jesus – they'll never hear

And if they never hear, they'll never know about him; And if they never know about him, they'll never believe in him; And if they never believe in him . . .

They'll never call on him; And if they never call on him, they'll *never* be saved

The obvious solution to which, is *going* to them; We *have* to go; Every single one of us

➤ The only issue, is *where*; Some of us are called to go next *door*, and that's it
Others are called to another city; Some to a nation; And a few to the world
But *none* of us are called to stay; None; We're *all* called to go somewhere

And you don't have to be a professional to do it

You don't have to be a *pastor* to reach out to your neighbor; And get to know them;

And share your story; And hear theirs

Nor do you have to be a *missionary* to reach China; Or Brazil; Or Germany

But you *do* have to be intentional; You *do* have to treat your job and your circumstances, as a *means* to an end; Like the early believers did in Acts 8

After being scattered by persecution, it says that they *went about preaching the word* (Acts 8:4); Sharing the good news of Jesus; All of them

They weren't professionals, just intentional

Like some in our church who take a Bible on business trips, to give it away

I can preach unabologetically 'til I'm blue in the face, and you can be fired up every time you're here; But if it never leaves the building, it's all for naught . . .

And a denial of your calling; Where's your destination?

4. There's always a cost, and sometimes a sacrifice

For Riley and Brooke Groves, it's *time* – it takes *time* to reach the neighbors in their apartment complex; And money; And effort

And disappointment when nobody shows up; It costs them something

And the same is true of Grant and Laura McCaulley; There's always a cost

Including the hit on your ego when people don't think much of you

Or the drag on your career b/c your boss is leery of you

Or *the daily pressure* as Paul says it, to *sustain* your ministry (2 Cor11:28)

The point being, you can't invest in the cause of missions, and you can't live in a missional way – without it costing something; There's *always* a cost

And sometimes, that cost isn't borne by you; Sometimes, it's borne by those closest to you; Like your kids

Who in some situations, go from a lot of friends to a lack of friends; From security, to insecurity; From certainty, to uncertainty; From smooth sailing, to rough waters

Sometimes the cost, is struggle on the part of those closest to you, and the yearning of your soul is to bear it *for* them, when you can't

When it comes to missions, there's always a cost

➤ And sometimes, a sacrifice – losing something you need or greatly value

John & Betty Stam were missionaries to China back in the 1930's

And after getting married and having a baby, they moved to a new city

But their stay was quickly interrupted when a battalion of Communist soldiers entered their house and arrested them

And after being marched to another town 12 miles away, they were forced to leave their baby in an old post office, and go to the outskirts of town

And there, beside a grove of pine trees, John and Betty Stam were beheaded

Making the *ultimate* sacrifice for a life of missions (*A Martyr's Grace*, Newell)*****

It's more the exception than the rule, but missiologists estimate that some 200,000 believers are killed for their faith, every year; Most of whom never cross a border
It's a sacrifice

And that doesn't include the loss of property, opportunity, and dignity that so many others incur; There always a cost, and sometimes a sacrifice; Even here

Even for those close to you

Like **Baby Helen**; Who, though she was rescued and smuggled in a rice basket to a missions station, still had to grow up without her parents*****

There's always a cost, and sometimes a sacrifice

5. It starts at home with the people you know

Wherever you're called and whatever you do, reaching people for Christ starts *right here*
Right where you live; With the people you *already* know

And that, starts with a vibrant walk, and love for the Lord

A passion to know him better, and serve him more

A passion to learn his Word, and follow his steps

A passion to live his way, and obey his Word

IOW missions, starts in the home of your heart

➤ And then flows from there with a passion for souls

A desire to see *them* saved, just like you are; Spared from the consequences of sin, and blessed with the certainty of life

No passion for souls, no missions; No concern for their eternity, no outreach; You just won't do it; Not for any length of time

And that's where prayer comes in; Fail to *pray* for the people you know, and you'll fail to *go* to the people you know; It starts with prayer

Which is why I keep my **Tic-Tac-Toe** card on our refrigerator, from 2 years ago;

Identifying my neighbors by name

And while I don't pray for them nearly as much as I should, I do think of them fairly often when I'm filling a glass of water

And linger to talk with them when we're out walking

And try to hear their heart in the things they say; And look for an opportunity to bless them, or speak truth to them, or invite them to church (**Summary**)

B/c that's where missions starts; Right where you live and right where you work, with the people you know

What's your destination, and who's your neighbor?

Pray – Lord, will you stir within us a greater passion to see you worshipped? And a greater focus on the church? And a greater commitment to our destination? And a greater willingness to bear the cost? And a greater attention to the people we know?

And use our tithes to that end – this week, and every week