

The World in Our Hearts

The day came when Sir Henry Morton Stanley finally discovered Dr. David Livingstone in the secluded forests of Central Africa. After all this time, Stanley reported, “The doctor asked me to tell him the news. ‘No, doctor,’ said I, ‘read your home letters first; you must be impatient for them!’ ‘Ah,’ said Livingstone, ‘I have waited for years for letters. I can wait a few hours longer. No, tell me general news: how’s the world getting on?’ And then buried in that jungle, the two men sat for hours whilst the one told the other of the completion of the great Pacific railroad, of Grant’s election to the Presidency, of the realization of electric cables, of the Cretan rebellion, of the sensational developments in Egypt, of the Spanish revolution which had driven Isabella from the throne, of the assassination of General Prim, and of a hundred other historic transformations. Even as Stanley told the story, Livingstone became a changed man. Fresh tides of vitality rushed into his frame; his appetite strangely returned to him; his haggard face simply shone with the glow of human enthusiasm. ‘You have brought me new life! You have brought me new life! You have brought me new life!’ he repeated again, and again, and again.” These words come from the book, *Mountains in the Midst* by F.W. Boreham. He was reminded of the story of Livingstone and Stanley when he was on a train journey from Melbourne to Sydney. While traveling through the Australian bush, landlocked from most of civilization as we knew it then, a common occurrence to regular travelers of this route arose that sparked an uncommon thought in the minister’s mind. Allow me to take you back to Boreham’s own words, “The train was gliding slowly past an up-country siding. Not a house was in sight. Far as the eye could see was nothing but dense virgin bush, with just a rough track threading its way among the giant trees. Suddenly I heard a tremendous shouting. Looking quickly out, I saw a little boy – a typical child of the bush – standing by the siding, with hands to his mouth, yelling at the pitch of his voice: ‘Paper! Paper! Paper!’ Some of the passengers, more accustomed than I was, instantly flung up the windows, and threw out copies of the *Age* and *Argus* (Australian newspapers). And as I looked out the carriage window I saw a little fellow – his face wreathed in satisfied smiles – gather up the papers, tuck them under his arm, and set off along the tortuous and dusty track among the trees toward a tiny settlement of which I could just see the smoke over the distant hills.”

I have never known the exception. When talking to people who lived before the age of computers, we all had one thing in common. We had a set of encyclopedias in our house. And those who did not have a set in their homes, at least had access to these compilations of world history at their public libraries. When I ask, “When looking up a subject, did you ever find it hard to stop reading beyond your original topic of interest?” I always receive a similar answer, “I couldn’t put the encyclopedia down. I kept being interested in new facts with a turn of every page.” For those in this computer world in which we live, have you noticed a similar pattern: when you “Google” a certain subject, you have a difficult time not searching the internet for fact after fact. What is this insatiable desire that we have for the world? I would suggest we are created in God’s image and we have an inborn interest in the world that God loves.

Jesus said in John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:11, “*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart....*” The word for “world” is the Hebrew word “olam” which bears the connotation of taking to the vanishing point, time past and future and world without end. It is sometimes correctly translated eternity. In Ecclesiastes we have a grasp of a world that encompasses time and eternity. It brings to mind everyone is going to live somewhere forever. Why is it we cannot get enough news with what is going on in the world? Why are news channels so popular? God has set the world in our hearts. In I John 2:15, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*” Here we see the Greek word is “kosmos” meaning the morally

bankrupt world system. God hates the sin of the world, but He loves the sinners. These are those for whom Christ died. These are the objects of God's love as expressed in John 3:16 . With the world in our hearts we should therefore:

1. See this world as God sees it.

There is a song that says, "Let me see this world, oh Lord, as though I am looking through your eyes." Jesus said, "*Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest*" (John 4:35). He also said, "*But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd*" (Matthew 9:36). When we see the harvest fields and the people that are bound for an eternity in Hell without Christ, we too shall be moved with compassion. Compassion is a word that means "to suffer with." We must never forget the Great Commission of our Lord who said, "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). Again our Lord is putting the world in our hearts. The kaleidoscope definition of the word for "world" tells us that we, by virtue of sharing God's nature, would want the world that is inhabited in time to know Christ who in turn gives the inhabitants of the world an eternity with Him forever. Paul became so full of compassion for his people, he said, "*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh*" (Romans 9:3). As a matter of fact, accursed is exactly what Christ became to save us: "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*" (Galatians 3:13). Let us have eyes of compassionate vision!

2. Step circumspectly in this world.

Recently I was taking a hike up a rocky precipice with my friend, Jim Schettler on the California coast. While climbing an especially tricky terrain, Jim mentioned the time he hiked down the Grand Canyon and back. He asked me, "Do you know what I saw most often while hiking down the Grand Canyon?" One would think the most often seen thing would be the beautiful colors of the canyon or the majestic walls. He answered surprisingly, "The most often seen thing were my feet." Because if we don't watch our step we could fall and be seriously injured. This reminded me immediately of the verse in Ephesians 5:15,

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." We must watch and guard our own testimony, lest we fall and lose our influence over the world God has set in our hearts.

3. Witness effectively while in this world.

When we see this world as God sees it and we walk circumspectly, we then become the effective witness God wants us to be. The world in our hearts becomes the world that we are winning to Christ, who gave His life for the world.

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

- Pastor Pope -

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