

- What pictures does the word “missionary” bring up in your mind?
  - Visions of huts? Witch doctors?
  - Muslim clad women and men?
  - Eating a tarantula?
  - Countries we really don’t want to visit?
  - People who have decided to live full time somewhere else to talk about Jesus?
  - Boldly standing on the corner of a city and preaching to strangers?
  - Going to a place where you didn’t know the language and faced deprivation, hunger and problems for Jesus?
  - That person who visits church service once a year to talk about “over there.”
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- Growing up, I would hear the stories, see their tables of stuff, and hope to high heaven I would never have to be a missionary.
  - Then they would say something like “you can be a missionary where you are.”
  - I would feel guilty about not telling people about Jesus. I might try to have an awkward conversation with a casual friend, or invite them to a “friend day” or “crusade” at my church.
  - It rarely worked and when it was over, I would think, “Whew, I’m glad that’s done.”
  - We feel so awkward, we simply ignore this and leave it to those who are called.
  - We might retreat into a Christian bubble, Christian music, Christian friends, Christian life. Anything else is too dangerous, could harm our kids, cause me to become drug addicted, etc.
  - Occasionally we make a friend, or have an acquaintance or co-worker, and we want to invite them to church, to something where they can hear the message and come to Jesus.
  - They don’t show. They politely listen. We never talk of it again.
  - Or maybe it started out great and we can remember when we talked about Jesus to everyone, but now it really is the exception, not the rule.
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- I wonder if the guilt and pressure we feel about “sharing our faith” is how it was supposed to be.
  - I wonder if this is supposed to be intimidating (either to us or the other person).
  - I wonder if we are supposed to be tongue tied
  - I wonder if maybe somewhere we missed what this is all about. I wonder if there is a better way.
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- Did you ever wonder how got from Jesus death to here? To meeting with 100’s of others to learn and practice following Jesus?
  - Picture – Jesus had just died. There were a little over 100 people from all the thousands that followed Jesus that were still following. And they were hiding. They met in secret. They locked their doors.
  - 300 million people on the earth at the time (estimated). You would have to knock on 20,000 doors before finding one Christ-follower.
  - They had no church buildings. They were unknown. The known world from Africa, to Europe, to Asia and even in North America, did not know about this new movement of Christ-followers.
  - There was no mass media. There were no newspapers. They were not public ceremonies to introduce them to the public. They had no great financial resources, no buildings, no social status, no government approval, no respect from the educators. And after they became separated from their first-century association with the Jewish synagogues, they lacked institutional backing and an ancient tradition to appeal to.

- Nero was emperor for 14 years, burned Rome, blamed the Christ-followers for it and killed many by burning them alive, and killed Peter and Paul.
- More followed. Emperors who saw Christ-followers as immoral, divisive, treasonous. They were informally killed, expelled from cities and regions.
- Some tried formally to completely extinguish this small sect that existed in places across the Roman empire.
- If you had done to one of these families, huddling in the dark, afraid of a knock on the door, not knowing where the next meal was coming from, and told them that someday, in the very cities where Christ-followers are being burned as human torches or fed to lions, there are going to be entire buildings dedicated to worshipping him.
- Yet it was only 200 years later that there were between 3-6 million Christ-followers. The percentage had gone from barely even measurable to around 2%.
- 300 years later, by 500AD, there were 10's of millions who followed Jesus. You would have to knock on 9 doors until you found a Christ follower.
- Today there are 2.4 billion people who claim to be Christian. That means more than 1 in 3 people have heard of Jesus and have some level of belief about him.
- What happened?
- It certainly wasn't a small group of people going out into the world that told everyone about Jesus. It wasn't because of the apostles – they were all dead a long time ago.
- It wasn't a lot of Billy Graham crusades over the centuries with mass amounts of people coming to Jesus. There was no TV or stadiums to meet in.
- It wasn't governments mandating that this is what they had to believe (it was often the opposite).
- It wasn't because following Jesus was the only game in town.
- It was because of people just like you and me. People whose lives were changed by Jesus and who took his last words seriously.
- Many of you remember these words. The marching orders of Jesus. His last imperative and instructions.

*Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

- Here's your job. Here is what I want you to do. All that teaching, all that you saw, all that you experienced including my death and resurrection. Take all that. Tell people about me and show them how to believe in and follow me.
- What about orthodoxy? What about building churches? What about making sure people live correctly? What about us learning to live right? What about us learning to believe all the right things?
- Uh-huh. I want you to make disciples. Everywhere. All the time. Every one of you.
- We can't do that. We're not like you. We aren't good speakers. Some of us don't even like people. We're introverts. We can't do it. You got some other jobs for me? Maybe I'll just hang back and cheer for everyone else. Maybe I'll just be the one who gives moral support.
- Jesus said, "Trust me. You are going because of my authority. And as you go, I will always be with you. So relax. I got you."
- There are three things that Jesus shared in his instructions. Three things that if we do not believe, will stop us from living as missionaries in our lives.

## I. WE ARE ALL SENT.

- The last command that Jesus gave has one primary imperative command. It is to “make disciples.” There are three other commands along with it. Go. Baptize. Teach.
- The tense of the verse could more accurately go like this. “Make disciples as you are going, baptizing and teaching.”
- Jesus assumed that all those who follow him would go.
- Every definition of missionary has one word in common – “sent”.
- Followers of Jesus are “sent-ones”.
- We have to get past seeing this as someone else’s job.
- As long as this is a job for someone else who is more suited, we will never do this.

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.*

- When we choose to turn our lives over to Jesus, our identity changes. We are a new creation. We become part of a family – his family. It is not a closed family. We are a family of sent-ones.
- We are his ambassadors. It is not a task for some. It is not reserved for those who are “gifted” for it. If you follow Jesus, you are a missionary.
- Going requires action.
- Jesus never commanded us to build something impressive so they will come. He did not tell us to wait until people come to us. He did not say to have such good programs that people might want to check us out. We are not to wait for others to come to us.
- God is a missionary God – after Adam and Eve sinned, he went looking for them. He found them. He loved them. He called out, “Where are you . . .?”
- God sent his son, Jesus, to this Earth as a missionary as well to take on human form and live within the culture. He worked, ate and interacted among the people; living in such a way that those around him could see and experience exactly what his Father is truly like. Jesus is a missionary.
- We go because Jesus is not content with “some.”
- *“If love for God and for others is not our driving passion and all-consuming motive, it will be impossible for us to produce Christ-followers the way Jesus did.” (Growing a Healthy Church: The Strategy of Jesus, p17)*
- We cannot leave this job for someone else. We dare not.
- We must come to believe that we are sent. Along with that, we need to believe that:

## II. GOD PUT US WHERE HE WANTS US WITH PURPOSE.

- Going, baptizing and teaching means sharing about Jesus and living like Jesus in front of them. It means this cannot happen outside of relationships.
- What does it mean to “go”? We have a more complete picture from the book of Acts, in which Luke shares a little more of Jesus last words.

*Acts 1:6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.*

- There were to go. To be witnesses of Jesus. Where?
- Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Going does not necessarily mean leaving all you know behind. But it does mean deliberately involving yourself in the lives of the people around you that don't yet know Jesus.
- If I were to brainstorm with a bunch of people what they would do if you went to be a missionary in another country, the answers end up being remarkably similar.
- Get to know the language of the local people.
- Eat what and where they eat.
- Go be where they are.
- Get to know them and their customs. Shop where they shop. Look for ways to bless the people you see.
- Hang out with those around you.
- Make friends in your neighborhood.
- Get a job and be looking around at ways to have an influence.
- Simply build relationships over time.
- Friends, that is exactly what it means to be a missionary where you are. Look around. See ways to bless others. Make friends at work. Seek to be an influence. Hang out with others. Make a friend in your neighborhood or where you practice your hobbies.
- We can do this with no pressure. With confidence. Because we have two promises from Jesus. First, we are doing this in his power, not mine. His authority. He is the one who changes hearts. He is working in people. We get to come along side.
- Second, we never do this along. We have the promise of him being with us, guiding us, directing our actions, showing us the next steps. He will be with us.
- There is one more thing that unless we believe, we will never effectively live as those who are on Christ's mission. We must believe that:

### **III. WE HAVE SOMETHING WORTH SHARING.**

- When Jesus told us to make disciples, he meant disciples of him. To let people know about Jesus. What he is like. What difference he makes. About his life, his character, his promises.
- If our passion for others is not based on the amazingness of Jesus, we will see living as a missionary as a program that will fade away when life gets busy.
- Jesus is good news. If all we have to offer someone whose children are going crazy and are off the reservation is that they can accept Jesus and go to heaven someday, we might not get a lot of interest.
- If our message is simply that if you follow a lot of rules with some nice people, you will feel better and more supported, a lot of people will just nod and move on.
- We have the best news anyone can get. Too often we don't know how to tell people this or we have stopped short of the fullness of the good news.
- Justin Martyr, a noted early Christian theologian, wrote to Emperor Antoninus Pius and described the believers: *"We formerly rejoiced in uncleanness of life, but now love only chastity; before we used the magic arts, but now dedicate ourselves to the true and unbegotten God; before we loved money and possessions more than anything, but now we share what we have and to everyone who is in need; before we hated one another and killed one another and would not eat with those of another race, but now since the manifestation of Christ, we have come to a common life and pray for our enemies and try to win over those who hate us without just cause."*
- It was such good news, it made a huge difference.

- We are God's only plan for reaching the world around us.
  - God has a love for the people at your job, in your neighborhood, within your extended family.
  - Do you want to find the missionary at your job, in your neighborhood, within your family?
  - Look in the mirror.
  - Every single one of us is a full time paid missionary.
  - It's who we are. Jesus simply told us to live like it.
  - We must truly believe we are sent.
  - We must have confidence that God put us where he wants us – on purpose (next week).
  - We must believe that we have something worth sharing (in two weeks).
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- This is not casual. This is not an if-you-feel-like-it kind of thing. There is way too much at stake. Amy Carmichael, a woman who was a missionary in India in the late 1800's, once had a dream that drove this point home. She wrote about it like this:
  - I could not go to sleep, so I lay awake and looked; and I saw that I stood on a grassy meadow, and at my feet a precipice broke sheer down into infinite space. I looked, but saw no bottom; only cloud shapes, black and furiously coiled, and great shadow-shrouded hollows, and unfathomable depths. Back I drew, dizzy at the depth.
  - Then I saw forms of people moving single file along the grass. They were making for the edge. There was a woman with a baby in her arms and another little child holding on to her dress. She was on the very verge. Then I saw that she was blind. She lifted her foot for the next step . . . it trod air. She was over, and the children over with her. Oh, the cry as they went over!
  - Then I saw more streams of people flowing from all quarters. All were blind, stone blind; all made straight for the precipice edge. There were shrieks, as they suddenly knew themselves falling, and a tossing up of helpless arms, catching, clutching at empty air. But some went over quietly, and fell without a sound.
  - Then I wondered, with a wonder that was simply agony, why no one stopped them at the edge. I could not. I was glued to the ground, and I could only call; though I strained and tried, only whisper would come.
  - Then I saw that along the edge there were sentries set at intervals. But the intervals were too great; there were wide, unguarded gaps between. And over these gaps the people fell in their blindness, quite unwarned; and the green grass seemed blood-red to me, and the gulf yawned like the mouth of hell.
  - Then I saw, like a little picture of peace, a group of people under some trees with their backs turned toward the gulf. They were making daisy chains. Sometimes when a piercing shriek cut the quiet air and reached them, it disturbed them and they thought it a rather vulgar noise. And if one of their number started up and wanted to go and do something to help, then all the others would pull that one down. "Why should you get so excited about it? You must wait for a definite call to go! You haven't finished your daisy chain yet. It would be really selfish," they said, "to leave us to finish the work alone."
  - There was another group. It was made up of people whose great desire was to get more sentries out; but they found that very few wanted to go, and sometimes there were no sentries set for miles and miles of the edge.
  - Once a girl stood alone in her place, waving the people back; but her mother and other relations called and reminded her that her furlough was due; she must not break the rules. And being tired and needing a change, she had to go and rest for awhile; but no one was sent to guard her gap, and over and over the people fell, like a waterfall of souls.
  - Once a child caught at a tuft of grass that grew at the very brink of the gulf; it clung convulsively, and it called-but nobody seemed to hear. Then the roots of the grass gave

way, and with a cry the child went over, its two little hands still holding tight to the torn-off bunch of grass. And the girl who longed to be back in her gap thought she heard the little one cry, and she sprang up and wanted to go; at which they reproved her, reminding her that no one is necessary anywhere; the gap would be well taken care of, they knew. And then they sang a hymn.

- Then through the hymn came another sound like the pain of a million broken hearts wrung out in one full drop, one sob.
- Then thundered a voice, the voice of the Lord. "And He said, "What have you done."
- God forgive us! God arouse us! Shame us out of our callousness! Shame us out of our sin!