

# **Church Planting and the Spread of God's Glory Among All Peoples**

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# **MISSIONS ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLES, Part 1 – Acts 15:13-18**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In Acts 15 the controversy over grace (vv. 1, 11) is in the forefront. Yet the apostolic concept of missions is clearly involved as well (Acts 15:13-18).

### **I. THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT GOD HIMSELF WAS WORKING THROUGH THE CHURCH TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WORLD MISSIONS PURPOSE. SIMEON HAS RELATED HOW GOD FIRST CONCERNED HIMSELF ABOUT TAKING FROM AMONG THE GENTILES A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME (v. 14).**

#### **A. The Seal Of Blessing Upon Peter's Ministry Proved God Works According To A Preordained Plan.**

##### **1. He gave a thorough, detailed account of God's work after going to the Gentiles.**

The term 'relate' in v. 14 means: To carefully narrate all the important details of an important event. It means to detail, tell, narrate, or recount (Luke 24:35), or to reveal and make known thoroughly (John 1:18).

*They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:35). He summoned two servants ... and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa (Acts 10:7-8).*

##### **2. It was God's plan from the beginning days of apostolic ministry to go to the nations (v. 7).**

## **B. The Sovereign Initiative Of God Moves The Enterprise Of Missions.**

The meaning of the term, "God Concerned Himself" emphasizes His gracious, merciful initiative. It means to look at observantly, to inspect, to go to see, to visit (Acts 7:23, 15:36), for the purpose of comfort and relief (Matthew 25:36,43; James 1:27). It means to visit with gracious intent, to take note of someone's plight, misery, or need, and to visit and see firsthand in order to relieve and help. It is God who first sees, purposes, schedules, and acts. He then receives the glory (Psa1m 50:14-15; Romans 15:8-9).

## **C. They Were Sure Of The Ultimate Success Of Missions.**

- 1. He calls out a people (v. 14).**
- 2. He does these things from long ago (v. 18).**
- 3. He announces His sure purpose. Notice that He says, "I will" four times (v. 16).**

James is emphasizing that the world-wide purpose of calling out a people is assured by God's sovereignty. It is similar to Jesus' words: *I have other sheep which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd* (John 10:16).

## **D. They Saw Themselves As Joining On With God's Pre-Set Agenda For The Reaching Of All Peoples Of The Earth (vv. 18-19).**

- 1. They acknowledged that God is working in His own way.**
- 2. They aligned themselves to be in harmony with His purposes.**

## **II. THEY WERE CLEAR IN THEIR THINKING THAT MISSIONS INVOLVED GOD'S PURPOSE OF REACHING ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH AND THEY HAD NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER.**

### **A. We Must Make A Decision To Define The Mission Task In The Terms Of God's Purpose.**

- 1. The first alternative is to reach as many individuals as possible irrespective of territory.**
- 2. The second alternative is to reach as many distinguishable groups as possible. (The real issue is: What are we commanded to do?).**

**ILL:** The twin-towers rescue involved choices. Put all the resources into saving all we can in one tower, or move resources to save some from the second tower as well?

### **B. The Meaning Of The Term "Peoples" And The Phrase "All Peoples" Is Critical.**

James speaks of God "taking from among the Gentiles a people" (v. 14), and of "all the Gentiles who are called by My name" (v. 17).

- 1. The term peoples "ἔθνος" [Gentiles] has a specific meaning.**

The word never refers to individuals when used in the singular. It refers to a group of people distinguished by ethnic markers that create their own identifying characteristics (language, religion), etc.

- a. *Devout men from every nation* (Acts 2:5).
- b. *You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation* (Revelation 5:9).

- c. It is the term used in the phrase 'nation against nation' (Matthew 24:7). This shows the difference between an ethnic group (nation) and political entity (kingdom against kingdom). The plural often refers to a distinct group, though not always; for in Acts 13:48 it refers to individuals who heard the message (1 Corinthians 12:2).
- d. *When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Caanan, He distributed their land as an inheritance (Acts 13:19).*
- e. *A father of many nations have I made you (Romans 4:17a; cf Genesis 17:4).* A "people" is a group distinguished from others by religion, language, and cultural barriers.

**2. The phrase "all nations" (peoples) in Matthew 28:19 is specific.**

- The gospel is to be proclaimed to all peoples (Matthew 24:14).
- Led captive to all (Luke 21:24).
- Repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to all peoples (Luke 24:47).
- He made from one man, all nations, to live on face of the earth (Acts 17:26).
- Paul's apostleship is to all nations for His name sake (Romans 1:5).
- All nations will come and worship (Revelation 15:4).

**C. The Message Of The Old Testament Prophets And The Old Testament Hope Determined The Meaning Of "Peoples." Of This The Prophets Agree (v. 15).**

**1. The foundational prophecy is that God would save from among all peoples (Genesis 12:3).**

- a. In Genesis 12:3, in the LXX, families is translated by the word 'tribes' (φυλη). The Hebrew word is family. See 'tribe' in Joshua 7:14, where Israel was examined in decreasing order of size starting from tribes.



- b. It is translated 'εθνος' in Genesis 18:18, 22:18, 26:4.
- c. It is families of nations or 'clans' in Psalm 22:27-28.

**2. The fulfillment and meaning of the term is recognized by the Apostles in the New Testament (Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:8).**

- a. It is πατρια, a subgroup, a clan, or a tribe in Acts 3:25. It shows they saw it as people groups of relatively small size.
- b. In Galatians 3:8 it is 'εθνη,' (cp. Psalm 22:27-28).
- c. Clearly God had purposed to save a people, not merely from all political nations, but from all people groups within nations. People groups are peoples distinguished by language and culture so they have a distinct identity.

## **CONCLUSION**

We are to **refuse** to think provincially. We are to see our church (any church, no matter the size) as a small part of God's enterprise of reaching all peoples. We are to **remind** people of the danger of wasting their life on that which has no lasting significance. *So teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom. And confirm for us the work of our hands* (Psalms 90:12, 17b). Finally, we are to continually **request** of God what part we can have in His work. There are those sent and those who send. Let us pray, give, and serve!



# **MISSIONS ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLES, Part 2 – Acts 15:13-18**

## **I. REVIEW: THEY HAD A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MISSIONS WAS TO REACH ALL PEOPLES.**

### **A. The Meaning Of The Term 'Gentiles' Is "Distinct Peoples" Not Political Nations (vv. 14, 17).**

*So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and even all the Gentiles (v.17).*

- 1. The concept of Gentiles (εθνος) refers to people groups marked and set apart from others by language and culture, not political or national boundaries.**

**EXAMPLE:** Within America today we have many ethnic peoples distinguished by culture, language, etc.

- 2. It is confirmed by the Apostles' own understanding of the Old Testament use of the phrase "Gentiles" or nations as used in Genesis 12:3 and elsewhere.**

- a. Peter's reference to Genesis 12:3 in Acts 3:25 uses a word, πατρια, that refers to a small distinct group. This term refers to a subgroup, a clan, or a tribe. It is a relatively small group.
- b. In Paul's reference in Galatians 3:8, he uses the word εθνε.

**B. The Main Focus And Task Is Not To Reach As Many People As Possible, But To Reach As Many Distinct "People Groups" As Defined By Scripture.**

- 1. It is the consensus of the Prophets in verse 15.**
- 2. It is the focus of Christ's commission in Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:47.**

*Luke 24:47 says, And that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations (cp. Matthew 24:14).*

- 3. It was the commitment of the Apostles to pursue it at all cost. (Romans 1:5, 15:8-9, 22-23; note Paul's support of it in verses 10-12).**

*Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake (Romans 1:5).*

**ILL:** A great train wreck. What do you do? Go to one car and take as many as possible off one car. Or do you go to all cars, even though in some cars people are the worst of all peoples – those in the lounge – drunk and mean?

**II. THEY BELIEVED THAT GOD'S WORK OF REACHING ALL PEOPLES COMMENCED WITH CHRIST'S COMING INTO THE WORLD AND HIS EXALTATION TO GOD'S RIGHT HAND (vv. 16-17).**

*Verses 16 and 17 say, After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen ... And I will restore it, so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name.*

The question regarding these verses is this: What does James refer to when he says, "after these things ... I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which had fallen ... so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord?" The context indicates

that it refers to God's work in the present time. It is the Old Testament sanction that God is now, in James words in verse 14, "taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name." It is James' proof, from Amos, that demonstrates that what he said in verse 14 is happening now. In other words, "taking from among the Gentiles a people" is equivalent to the phrase, from Amos, "I will rebuild the house of David so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord." It doesn't refer to what God will do in the future at Christ's return in the Millennial Kingdom. The fact that it describes God's present work in the world is clear for two reasons.

**First**, as we said, it is consistent with the context and aim of James' teaching, which is to demonstrate what God is doing now, not what He will do in the future. **Second**, it is consistent with the answer to the question of what he means by the phrase "after these things," when the phrase is understood in the context in Amos 9 - from where it originates. In short, we will set forth the case that the Apostles believed that God's purpose to reach all peoples commenced with Christ's exaltation (this is when God began the rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David), and James used these Old Testament verses from Amos 9 to prove his point.

## **A. The Main Teaching Of These Verses Is To Show What God Is Doing Now Among The Nations.**

- 1. The choice of the reference from Amos 9:11-12 is specifically for the purpose of showing what God is doing now.**

"The prophets agree" with what God is doing now in taking out a people from among Gentiles as James stated in verse 14.

- 2. The content of the prophecy in Amos emphasizes that God intended to spread the gospel to all nations. This is what He means when He says, "the rest of mankind may seek the Lord" and "all the Gentiles [peoples] who are called by My name."**

**NOTE:** When James quotes Amos he says, "the rest of mankind" instead of 'remnant of Edom' as it is written in Amos. Therefore, Edom, must have represented, to the Jews, all the peoples of the earth (see Isaiah 34:5). Otherwise, there would have been a reaction in the council at Jerusalem to James' flippant method of interpretation.

- 3. It centers on Christ, as the descendant of David, who will restore David's royal line; His "tabernacle" or "house" (note Acts 2:30-34). Royal lines are referred to as a house.**
  
- 4. The consequence of Christ's installation as King on high is that He would begin the ingathering of men from all peoples (v. 17) or the "rest of mankind" which is James' understanding of "Edom" in Amos 9.**

*NOTE: There is here neither assertion nor negation of the national restoration of the Jews ... it is obvious on any deep view of prophetic interpretation, that the glorious things which shall have a fulfillment in the literal Israel, must have their complete and more worthy fulfillment in the spiritual theocracy of which the Son of David is the head.*

Henry Alford, *Acts*, p. 166

- 5. The concluding statement emphasizes that God revealed He would "do this" and it was "known from long ago" (v. 18).**

James literally says, *Says the Lord, who makes [does] these things known from long ago* (v. 18). James adds the words 'known from long ago' (which are not in Amos 9), to emphasize that what he is saying is not something new. The phrase 'long ago' is a term used of the revelation of the prophets from 'long ago' in Acts 3:21. In other words, James added "known from long ago" to show that God's purpose to take out men for His name from all people was revealed long ago in the writings of the prophets.

See Isaiah 49:6 as quoted by Paul in Acts 13:47. (See Psalms 86:8-10, 96:3-10).

**B. The Meaning Of The Phrase "After These Things" Means, After Israel Is Judged And David's Tabernacle Is Fallen.**

In other words, "after these things" refers not to the calling out of the Gentiles in verse 14, but to Israel's chastisement and fall spoken of by Amos in Amos 9:1-9 in the original prophecy. In short, although Amos prophesied of Israel's sure fall in 9:1-9, he also prophesied that after Israel's fall God would restore the line of David. This refers to Christ, Himself, who was seated on the throne of David at His exaltation (Acts 2:30-35). The first act of Christ in the restoration of the "house" of David would be to take "a people from all mankind for His name" (v. 14).

**III. THEY WERE COMPELLED BY A PASSION TO SEE THE GLORY OF GOD'S NAME SPREAD TO ALL PEOPLES. TAKING FROM AMONG THE GENTILES A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME (v. 14).**

**A. They Were Constrained By A God-Centered Focus In Missions "For His Name."**

**1. The supreme end that God pursues in missions and in all that He does is the magnifying of His name. God has made Himself the final and the ultimate end for all that He does! Moreover, the Apostles clearly recognized this!**

- a. That which is the most worthy and valuable should be given supreme regard and made the ultimate end and purpose.

**ILL:** It is foolish to make something of no significance or worthiness your main goal in life. We seek to teach children to choose a worthy purpose in life (not mere pleasure, etc. which leads to ruin).

- b. God is supremely worthy, and therefore worthy of receiving supreme regard. Therefore, God made Himself the ultimate object of all things. Does He not say that He is "the beginning and end," "alpha and omega" (Isaiah 48:12; Revelation 21:6; also Romans 11:36). Nothing else compares to Him or is to be compared in worthiness of regard or greatness of significance (Isaiah 40:21-25). His power, wisdom, and greatness (Isaiah 40:21-25). His faithfulness and covenant love (Psalm 89:5-6). His goodness, loving-kindness, graciousness, and readiness to forgive are all incomparable (Psalm 86:3-10). Therefore, the ultimate end of all He does is the glorification of Himself.

**2. He seeks the magnification of the glory of His name in all He does (Philippians 1:19-20, etc.).**

**B. They Were Conscious That God's Passion For The Exalting Of His Name And Glory Was The Force That Guaranteed The Reaching Of All Peoples. God First Concerned Himself About Taking From Among The Gentiles A People For His Name (v. 14).**

## **CONCLUSION**

God seeks and saves the most unlikely sinners in order to accomplish His purpose of reaching all peoples. He spares no end (even martyrdom) in reaching all peoples and bringing them to Himself. He saves the most wretched and debauched. He stuns us with His deeds of mercy. He sees those who are concerned for His glory and honors them.



# **CHRIST GLORIFIED AMONG ALL PEOPLES, Romans 16:25-27**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Romans 16:25-27 is a summary statement of the entire book of Romans, as a look at 1:2-5, 16-17; 3:21, 24-26 shows. It is also, in many ways, a summary statement of how Paul viewed the Church's missionary enterprise. It involves the following realities:

- I. The Power Of God Assures The Success Of The World Missionary Enterprise Among All Peoples (v. 25a).**
- II. The Person And Work Of Christ Is The Message Of Missions Among All Peoples (v. 25b).**
- III. The Prophetic Scriptures Revealed God's Plan To Center The Reaching Of All Peoples In Christ (vv. 25c-26a).**
- IV. The Purpose Of God From The Beginning Was To Call Out Men From All Peoples (v. 26b).**

<b>ROMANS 16:25-26</b>	<b>ROMANS 1:1-5, 16</b>
1. Now to Him who is able to establish you according to <b>my gospel</b> and the preaching of <b>Jesus Christ</b> . (v. 25a)	1. Set apart for the <b>gospel</b> of God ... <b>concerning His Son</b> . (vv. 1b, 3)
2. According to the <b>revelation</b> of the mystery which has been kept secret ... but now is manifested, and <b>by the Scriptures of the prophets</b> . (vv. 25c-26a)	2. Which He <b>promised</b> beforehand through <b>His prophets in the holy Scriptures</b> . (v. 2)
3. According to the <b>commandment of the eternal God</b> . (v. 26b)	3. <b>We have received</b> grace and <b>apostleship</b> . (v. 5a)
4. Has been <b>made known to all the nations</b> , leading to <b>obedience of faith</b> . (v. 26c)	4. To bring about the <b>obedience of faith among all the Gentiles</b> for His name sake. (v. 5b)
5. Now to <b>Him who is able</b> (has the power) to <b>establish you</b> . (v. 25a)	5. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, <b>for it is the power of God for salvation</b> . (v. 16a)

**I. THE POWER OF GOD ASSURES THE SUCCESS OF THE WORLD MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE AMONG ALL PEOPLES. NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE.**

**A. It Refers To The Exercise Of The Direct, Immediate Power Of God In Accomplishing The World Missionary Task.**

**1. The meaning of the term power (translated 'able')  
δυναμις.**

It refers to an internal, constitutional power residing in a person or thing by which an intended end is accomplished. The following are examples:

*It is the power of God to salvation (1:16). The surpassing greatness of His power ... which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him (Ephesians 1:19-20). We are protected by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5). By what power ... have you done this? (Acts 4:7).*

**2. The tense and voice emphasize God's initiative and purpose.**

The tense is present and the voice is middle. It emphasizes that God Himself with a regular continual action will accomplish His purpose in spreading His Son's glory among all peoples. The phrase is a parallel statement to 1:16, and could be translated "Now to Him who has the power to establish you."

**B. It Effects A Permanent Change And Transformation. Who Is Able To Establish You According To My Gospel And The Preaching Of Jesus Christ (v. 25a).**

**1. Justification, salvation, and the new birth (Romans 1 :16, 5:1; James 1:18), are assumed to be the basis of the establishing of believers.**

**2. The sanctification and the establishment of believers as those who manifest the Lordship of Christ in the obedience of faith.**

The term 'establish' means to make stable or to fix, to put in a support or a buttress. It is used for example in the following: *There is a great chasm fixed* (Luke 16:26). Believers will be established by God Himself – *For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work* (Philippians 2:13). In the context, Paul says, *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet* (16:20). Furthermore, he says of God, *Him Who is able to do far more ... beyond all that we ask or think* (Ephesians 3:20). All confirm that God Himself assures the conversion, and establishing of believers in the advance of missions.

**II. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST IS THE MESSAGE OF MISSIONS AMONG ALL PEOPLES. ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL AND THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST (v. 25).**

**A. The Substance And Subject Matter Of The Gospel Is Christ's Person And Work.**

**1. The person of Christ in His essential glory as the eternal Son who possesses all the perfections of the divine being in an infinite fulness is the core reality affirmed in the gospel.**

Paul constantly reiterates the glory of Christ's person in his preaching. He says, *For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord* (2 Corinthians 4:5). Paul also says, *Who was declared the Son of God with power* (Romans 1:4), and *For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things in earth or things in heaven* (Colossians 1:19-20). John says, *We saw His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth* (John 1:14b).

**2. The person and work of Christ as good news to sinners in His substitutionary sacrificial redemptive death as the sole basis of justification and a free and full pardon of sin is affirmed in the gospel (Romans 3:23-26).**

- a. The redemption, deliverance, and freedom He accomplished is heralded (Romans 3:24).
- b. The propitiation He accomplished as the sole basis of a free and final justification is proclaimed (Romans 3:24-25).

**3. The person and work of Christ as good news to the saints for their sanctification and establishment (Colossians 1:28).**

We are to preach Christ in the all-sufficiency of His infinite perfections for the strengthening of believers amidst all their weaknesses, trials, and troubles (John 1:14-16; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 2:9).

**B. He Is The Sole And Only Savior Of All Peoples.**

- 1. Gentiles partake of the promise only through the gospel (Ephesians 3:6).**
- 2. Pardon is proclaimed in His name to all nations (Luke 24:47).**
- 3. He is the only name whereby we must be saved, no other (Acts 4:12).**

*For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13).*

*That through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:43).*

**C. He Is Announced And Proclaimed With Urgency And Authority. The Preaching Of Jesus Christ (v. 25).**

The term preaching (κερυσσο) means to herald or proclaim after the manner of a herald, always with a suggestion of formality and authority which must be listened to and obeyed. It means to publish or proclaim openly. The emphasis is on the manner of the preaching: a preaching with authority. The following are examples:

*We are to, proclaim upon the housetops (Matthew 10:27). ... John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, repent ... the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (Matthew 3:1a, 10).*

**III. THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES REVEALED GOD'S PLAN TO CENTER THE REACHING OF ALL PEOPLES IN CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY WHICH HAS BEEN KEPT SECRET FOR LONG AGES PAST, BUT NOW IS MANIFESTED, AND BY THE SCRIPTURES OF THE PROPHETS (vv. 25b-26a).**

**A. They Revealed And Manifested God's Plan That Could Not Be Known Otherwise Regarding His Intent To Gather Men From All Peoples Through And For Christ.**

The source and content of Scripture is a revelation from God through the prophets. They are the Scriptures of the prophets (Matthew 26:56) and therefore are called the prophetic word (2 Peter 1:19).

**B. The Message Of The Old Testament Prophets Is Christ's Redemption And Its Proclamation And Reception Among All The Peoples Of The Earth.**

- 1. Christ's redemptive work is revealed in the Old Testament prophets (Romans 1:2-4, 3:21).**

Christ said of the Old Testament Scripture: *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me* (John 5:39).

- 2. Jesus asserted that the Old Testament Scriptures announced His work and mission to the nations (Luke 24:44-47).**

- 3. The Old Testament speaks of His work to the nations (Psalm 22:26-28; Isaiah 49:6; Acts 13:16-47).**

#### **IV. THE PURPOSE OF GOD FROM THE BEGINNING WAS TO CALL MEN FROM ALL PEOPLES, ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE ETERNAL GOD, HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN TO ALL THE NATIONS, LEADING TO OBEDIENCE OF FAITH (v. 26b).**

##### **A. It Is A Commandment With Unalterable, Unfailing Authority, According To The Commandment Of The Eternal God, Has Been Made Known To All The Nations (peoples) (v. 26b).**

- 1. It is commanded by God from eternity.**

The term 'commandment' emphasizes full authority. It often refers to a mandate; an order. It "denotes a fixed and abiding obligation rather than specific or occasional instructions, duties emanating from the personal will of a superior" (Thayer). It was used, for example, of Jesus commanding the winds to be still (Luke 8:25).

*This points not only to the authority which God's appointment imparts to the universal proclamation of the gospel, but also to the commission with which Paul himself was invested. It also has overtones of grace; it is by God's commandment that these overtures come to all men and they come, therefore, with the authority which God's command implies.*

Murray, *Romans Vol. II*, pp. 242-243

**2. He commands as a divine decree that the message of Christ's is to go to all peoples.**

- a. It is authoritatively commissioned by Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).
- b. It is carried out by the Apostles and consummated at the end of the age (Revelation 5:6-14).

The end of verse 25 would best be translated from the Greek, "according to the commandment of the eternal God has been made manifest for the obedience of faith for all peoples." This order, I believe, best conveys Paul's meaning since it parallels the similar phrase in Romans 1:5. What we have here is Paul's own conception of the Great Commission mandated by Christ in Matthew 28:18-20.

**B. It Calls Men To An Acknowledgment Of The Supremacy And Lordship Of Christ, Leading To Obedience Of Faith (v. 26b).**

**1. It is a response to the message about the person and work of Christ.**

It is faith in the person and work of Christ. It is a repentant faith in Christ as the Lord, who is the eternal Son, who offered Himself as a propitiation to freely justify.

**2. It encompasses the fact a person must realize and acknowledge their rebellion and exercise a repentant faith towards Christ, "Leading to obedience of faith."**

It is a humble, receptive, yielding, repentant faith in Christ. In other words, God glorifies His Son, by calling out from all peoples those who acknowledge Christ's supremacy by bowing to His Lordship and gladly offering to Him the worship which is His due (Psalm 2; Philippians 2:9-11).

**C. It Centers On The Glorification Of God Through The Supremacy Of Christ As Lord Above All. To The Only Wise God, Through Jesus Christ, Be The Glory Forever. Amen (v. 27; also 2 Corinthians 4:5).**



# **MISSIONS ACCORDING TO CHRIST, John 10:8-18**

## **INTRODUCTION**

There are three things in the passage, by way of introduction, that compel the church to be ever expanding and growing. They create a holy hunger and a confidence to advance the gospel!

- A. The Ultimate Extent Of The Fruit Of His Death Is Of An Ever Widening Scope. Christ Said He Has A People Yet To Be Saved. He Said, I Have Other Sheep (v. 16).**
  
- B. There Is The Certainty Of The Ingathering Of A People For His Name From All Nations: Christ Said He Himself Will Bring In His People From Beyond Israel. I Have Other Sheep, Which Are Not Of This Fold; I Must Bring Them Also (v. 16).**
  
- C. Missions Is Ultimately Christ's Work For He Says Of The World-Wide Scope Of Reaching All Peoples. I Must Bring Them Also (v.16).**

**Christ's Preeminence And Presence In The Success Of The Missionary Enterprise Of The Church Is Seen By The Following:**

- I. HIS PRIMARY PURPOSE FOR COMING INTO THE WORLD WAS TO CALL OUT A PEOPLE, IT WAS INTENTIONAL AND PREORDAINED (JOHN 10:9-11, 16).**

**A. He Is Aware Of Man's Condition And His Great Need: He Comes As A Shepherd To The Shepherdless (see Matthew 9:36-38).**

*36) Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. 37) Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38) Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."* (Matthew 9:36-38).

- 1. They don't have life: They are under a death sentence and judgment (John 3:36, 5:24, 10:10).**
- 2. They are in great need, being in imminent danger of receiving the just penalty for the infinite offense of their own sin (Romans 3:9-19).**

**B. He Assumes Responsibility For The Eternal Well-Being Of His Sheep: He Comes For Them (v. 10).**

- 1. The contrast is to religious leaders who are thieves and hirelings (vv. 12-13).**

a. They are thieves and robbers (v. 8): Thieves refers to those who "take away by stealth." Robbers: are those who "take by violence and plunder."

b. They are hirelings: They do it for money. If there is no pay, there is no work.

*Woe to them! ... For pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam (Jude 1:11).*

They have no personal sense of obligation (except their own) and therefore give no personal care to the sheep.

- 2. He Himself comes. This includes His incarnation and His laying down of His life for the sheep (Philippians 2:5-10; Matthew 20:20).**

**C. He Assures Them That Life Will Be The Result Of His Shepherd Work (10:10, 27-28).**

He brought life and immortality to light (2 Timothy 1:10). Throughout John, 'life' refers to eternal life (John 5:24, 10:28). He connects life in verse 10 to the reality in verse 9 that anyone who enters through Him "will be saved." This is life eternal and it is abundant. It is a fulfilled, satisfied life.

- 1. There is a certainty of life. His purpose can't fail, He will give them life(v. 10). He is lifted up, so that they will have eternal life (3:14-15).**

- 2. There is an abundance and fullness of life that He gives(Psalm 16, 21, 63).**

The people He saves come in and out and find pasture, (vv. 9-10). This is a description of the abundant life of verse 10. It is a fulfilled satisfied life.

- 3. There is also a confirmation and experience of the possession of life (Romans 8:15).**

**II. HE PROVIDES ALL THAT IS NECESSARY TO REACH AND CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE. I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD (vv. 11,14).**

**A. He Emphasizes His Own Personal Concern And Involvement.**

There is a repetition of the article: 'I am the Shepherd, the good one.' The word order stresses Shepherd!

**B. The Essence Of His Shepherding Is His Initiative In Their Care And Well-Being: He Is The Good Shepherd.**

- 1. He cares in contrast to the false shepherds.**
- 2. He condemns and exposes those who refuse to care for the sheep (vv. 8, 10).**

**C. He Is The Exclusive Source Of Spiritual Well-Being For All The Sheep.**

The abundant life of verse 10 is described in verse 9, and it is a result of His sacrifice in verse 11.

- 1. He is their security (v. 9a).**
- 2. He is their freedom (v. 9b; see John 8:32-36).**
- 3. He is their fulness and sustenance (v. 9c).**

**III. HE PAID THE PRICE OF HIS OWN SACRIFICIAL DEATH WHICH PROVES HIS INFINITE CARE FOR THE SHEEP AND HIS COMMITMENT TO GATHER THEM FROM ALL PEOPLES (vv. 11, 15).**

**A. He Has Sacrificed Himself In Their Place To Give Them Life (vv. 11, 15, 17-18).**

**B. It Was A Self-Initiated, Voluntary, Unforced, And Unsolicited Act Of Love.**

Christ makes four references to laying down His life for the sheep in this passage (vv. 11, 15, 17-18).

- 1. It was an immeasurable and infinite act of love (cp. Romans 5:6-10; Galatians 2:20; Revelation 1:5).**

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

- 2. It was a voluntary act brought forth from within Himself (v. 18).**

He was moved by mercy (Ephesians 2:4).

He was moved by joy (Hebrews 12:2; Isaiah 53:10-12).

He was moved by God's glory (John 12:27-28, 17:1-5).

### **C. It Had A Specific Design And Intent For His Sheep.**

- 1. There is a general intent of His death in Scripture in relation to the whole world in a few isolated cases (1 Timothy 4:10).**
- 2. There is a particular intent in relation to His sheep that is unique and peculiar (Ephesians 5:25-27; Romans 8:31-39).**

The purpose of God secures its intended design! No evil can thwart its efficacy! The sheep will be one flock!

*But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:10-11).*

**IV. HE HIMSELF PURSUES, FROM ALL PEOPLES, THOSE WHOM HE BRINGS INTO THE FLOCK. I HAVE OTHER SHEEP ... I MUST BRING THEM ALSO (v. 16).**

**A. They Are His Possession Prior To Their Actual Conversion, I Have Other Sheep.**

**1. His plan exceeded their limited thinking!**

The apostles thought in terms of Israel and the scattered Jews. Never would they have thought of Rome, England, etc.

*Our Shepherd-King has greater thoughts than the most large-hearted of His servants.*

*Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol. XXIX, p. 187*

**2. His pursuit of His sheep worldwide was a fulfilment of the Old Testament prophets that the gospel would reach "all peoples" (Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 49:6).**

**B. They Are A Particular People He Has In Mind. I Must Bring Them.**

**1. They are the elect – they are referred to by an emphatic demonstrative pronoun: These particular ones is the idea involved when He says "them."**

**2. They are those who the Father has already given to Him (John 6:37, 17:6).**

**3. They are those who, in particular, He lays down His life for 10:11, 15; also Ephesians 5:25-27, etc.).**

4. **They are those who are "called," who "hear" His voice (10:3, 27).**
5. **They are the people that come to Him through our compelling (Luke 14:23).**
6. **They are "all the families" and "peoples" of the earth.**

*All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before You (Psalm 22:27).*

This implies the following:

- a. The authority in going:

*Excuse our pushing further than our politeness might allow, we are in haste to find a lost sheep.*

Spurgeon, p. 188

- b. The assurance of success:

*Christ brings them hope from His power not the free will of man.*

Spurgeon, p. 189

### **C. His Power Is Directly Exerted In The Ingathering Of The Sheep. I Must Bring Them.**

1. **It assumes that those who are saved He has already bought (10:16; Matthew 11:27).**
2. **He asserts that His power is exercised to bring each one.**
  - a. The personal emphatic pronoun stresses His personal direct involvement, "I, Myself must bring them"; He calls them by name (10:3).

- b. The term must ( $\delta\epsilon\iota$ ), according to Thayer, emphasizes a *necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end*" (John 3:7). Or a *necessity lying in the nature of the case* (1 Timothy 3:2, 7). It seems to denote moral obligation denoting especially that constraint which arises from divine appointment.
- c. The term bring (*ago*), in many contexts stresses a direct activity not an indirect guidance or wooing. It means to lead by laying hold of, and in this way, to bring to a point of destination. It is used of the disciples who 'brought' the colt to Jesus in Matthew 21:7 and of the disciples who would be "brought" before governors in Matthew 10:18 (also, Luke 10:18, 18:40, etc.).

**D. His Purpose From Eternity Has Determined The Scope And Success Of The Reaching Of His Sheep.**

**E. A Positive Response To Preaching Is Assured In Conjunction With Prayer And A Holy Life.**



# **PRAYER AND THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL, Ephesians 6:18**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Jesus connects prayer to fruitfulness in ministry and accomplishing greater things in John 14:11-14, *Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.* Jesus speaks of four things regarding fruitfulness in ministry and greater works: **First, their character** – They are greater things in quantity not quality. **Next, their catalyst** – They are the result of the Son ascending to the Father's right hand, Jesus says, "because I go to the Father." This refers to the exercise of His authority from on high for the advance of the gospel. He exercises His authority personally (Matthew 28:18), providentially by opening and shutting doors and as He rules and restrains among men, and powerfully through the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:32). **Then, the consecration in prayer** that is necessary to be fruitful and that must be practiced continually. **Lastly, the concern and motivation** that is necessary to be fruitful in ministry. In other words, to be fruitful we must be gripped by a passion that the Son be glorified.

## **There Are Three Realities About Prayer That Must Undergird Ministry In Ephesians 6:18-20.**

### **I. IT IS A DUTY THAT MUST NOT BE NEGLECTED.**

#### **A. He Declares The Duty: Pray At All Times.**

*With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18a).*

#### **1. There are two imperatives in regard to prayer.**

- a. As an activity, we are to devote ourselves to it – "keeping alert" (Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

- b. As an attitude, it is to be continual and unceasing; we are to adhere in it, to be steadfast and continuous.

## **2. God invites and implores us to pray.**

- a. He enjoys it when we pray. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.* (Proverbs 15:8).
- b. He encourages it.
  - (1) We are to "draw near" (Hebrews 4:16).
  - (2) We are to "pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1).
  - (3) He illustrates it by a friend coming to your house at midnight (Luke 11:5-13).
  - (4) We are to ask, seek and knock (Matthew 7:7-11).
  - (5) He assumes we pray "when you pray" (Matthew 6:5-7).

*As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.*

Martin Luther

*It would be wholly monstrous for a man to be highest in office and lowest in soul; first in station and last in life.*

Spurgeon, Bernard quote *Lectures to My Students*, p. 42

## **B. He Describes The Duty. With All Prayer And Petition (v. 18).**

### **1. "All Prayer"**

This is the general term for prayer. It emphasizes that prayer is an act of devotional communication with God.

## **2. "Petition" (supplication).**

- a. The term "deasis" comes from a root word which means "to be in need." It emphasizes entreating because of a need, imploring for aid. Prominence is giving to personal urgency because of a great need.
- b. This concerns not the activity, but the spirit of prayer.

*She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers (Luke 2:37). As we night and day kept praying most earnestly (1 Thessalonians 3:10).*

- c. There is an acute consciousness of need and an utter dependency on God – a holy desperateness! (James 5:16-17; Philippians 4:6; Luke 5:12; Matthew 9:38; Acts 4:31, 8:24).

*In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety (Hebrews 5:7).*

## **II. THE DEMAND FOR PRAYER IS SEEN IN OUR POWERLESSNESS TO PRODUCE EFFECTS ON OUR OWN.**

### **A. The Struggle Against Unseen Evil Forces Demands It (6:10-13).**

- 1. You are made strong in the Lord by prayer (v.10).**
- 2. The description of the struggle is real.**

- a. It is combat: A wrestling, particularly a hand to hand combat. It was characterized by trickery, cunning, and strategy.

- b. It characterizes ministry.

*This command I entrust to you, Timothy ... that by them you fight the good fight (1 Timothy 1:18).*

*Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life (1 Timothy 6:12).*

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).*

The term means to fight as a soldier or to fight a military campaign or expedition.

### **3. The deployment necessary to wage warfare is emphasized.**

- a. We are to adopt a warfare mind-set.

**ILL:** The difference in the Queen Mary in peace and war. In peacetime: 3,000 people, china, silverware, ornate spacious cabins, expensive dining, ballrooms, lounge chairs, and deck hands.

In wartime: 15,000 men, tin platters, bunks stacked 5 high, plastic utensils.

- b. We advance the gospel through warfare – take the sword – pray!

## **B. Success In The Ministry Demands It.**

### **1. Empowerment in utterance is dependent on it (vv. 18-19).**

*Prayer is the walkie talkie for warfare; not a domestic intercom for increasing our conveniences.*

Piper, *Missions*, p. 41

**2. Effectiveness and fruitfulness are dependent on it (John 15:7-8, 16).**

Our mission requires that we bear fruit, that we extend the Kingdom, set captives free through prayer.

All our libraries and studies are mere emptiness compared with our closets. We grow, we wax mightily, we prevail in private prayer.

Spurgeon, *Lectures, to My Students*, p. 43

*There is no rhetoric like that of the heart, and no school for learning it but the foot of the cross.*

Spurgeon, p. 44

*In due time the weeping intercessor will become the rejoicing winner of souls.*

Spurgeon, p. 45

**3. Enablement in Spirit-empowered preaching comes by prayer "that I may speak boldly" (v. 20).**

**III. THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER IS DONE UNDER THE SPIRIT'S DIRECTION.**

**A. It Is Compelled By The Spirit: "Praying In The Spirit" Involves.**

**1. It is Christ-centered.**

**2. It is Word-centered. It is a result of a Word-saturated life.**

**3. It is Spirit conveyed and compelled.**

## **B. It Is Continual And With Perseverance.**

### **1. Persistence.**

Persistence will be demonstrated by a prioritized time for prayer. It will also be demonstrated by particular and specific requests for the Kingdom as well as petitions and intercessions for people.

### **2. Earnestness: "Be on the alert"**

Ask - Seek - Knock! There is an increasing or ascending degree of involvement in these terms.

There are three perspectives in effectual prayer.

Toward Self:	There is discipline.
Toward Others:	There is desperateness.
Toward God:	There is delight.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Samuel Chadwick said, *Satan cares nothing for our prayerless work, our prayerless study or our prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil; he mocks our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray!*

# **THE CHURCH EXISTS FOR MISSION, Part 1 – Acts 1:1-8**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Acts 1:1-8 is central to a biblical understanding of the reason for the church's existence. It demonstrates clearly that the church exists for mission. There are three things that lay the groundwork for understanding this passage in Acts.

### **A. It Shows That There Is A Connection Between The Local Church And Effective Mission.**

The believers at Jerusalem were a fully functioning church (11:22) and out of it came other churches and the spread of the gospel.

### **B. It Demonstrates That The Church Primarily Exists For Mission.**

Since the church exists for mission we must be concerned, not only for the individuals in the church, but, for the corporate mission of the church as well. In other words, a central facet and priority of leadership is not only the care and maturity of the church, but also the multiplication of leaders, the spread of the gospel, and the planting of churches.

### **C. It Emphasizes The Reality That We Have No Ability In Ourselves To Advance The Kingdom Apart From The Spirit's Power.**

**I. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH'S EXISTENCE IS TO CONTINUE CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE MISSION LOCALLY, REGIONALLY, AND GLOBALLY (vv. 1-3).**

**A. It Is A Single, Redemptive Mission In Two Stages Marked Off By The Ascension. All That Jesus Began To Do And Teach.**

**1. There is the work which He commenced in His earthly ministry.**

Notice first that Christ is both a historical and a contemporary person. Luke refers to what He began and what He continues to do. Also notice that Christ's ministry includes both, what He teaches (His words) and what He does (His works). In other words, He not only reveals and teaches truth (words), but He redeems and delivers sinners (works). His works are always connected to His words.

**First**, what Christ did: He came into the world in human form, He came to save sinners, He came to give His life a ransom for many (Hebrews 2:14, 10:5; Luke 19:10; Matthew 20:28). He also sent the Spirit into the world (John 15:26; Acts 2:33).

**Second**, what Christ taught: He taught that all must repent, believe and receive Him (John 1:12, 3:16, 6:40). He taught that we must be born again (John 3:3-7). He taught that He is equal with the Father, a complete revelation of the being of God (John 12:44-45, 14:6-10).

**2. There is that which He continues to do, first through the apostles and then the church.**

The emphasis is on the men chosen by Christ, through whom He will work by the Spirit. Christ still chooses men to preach His word and do His works in the world. Christ's work in the world is viewed as one composite unified mission.



**B. He Set Aside Men To Accomplish The Mission Work; Men Chosen For The Work Of Mission As Well As Salvation (John 15:16).**

**C. The Spread Of The Kingdom Of God Is The Core Of The Mission. Speaking Of The Things Concerning The Kingdom Of God (v. 3).**

He spoke to them concerning the kingdom of God. In this context it appears to be the kingdom of God which will spread to the ends of the earth by gospel preaching (although the apostles failed to grasp this in verse 6). It has application to us since the goal is to reach the remotest parts of the earth (v. 8) which is revealed in many other Scriptures, such as Matthew 28 and Revelation 5. The apostles went to the end of the known world, but not to the remotest parts of the earth as described by the Old Testament prophets and the fuller New Testament revelation.

- 1. It was the repeated theme of His teaching speaking (legon) is in the present tense.**
- 2. The reality of the kingdom is that Christ's kingdom is set in opposition to the world and its kingdoms under the rule of Satan (John 15:18-26; Acts 26:14- 20).**
- 3. The kingdom has to do first with the rule of Christ.**

The kingdom here, and in the book of Acts, has to do with the fact that Christ is the Lord, who is the final Judge of all (Acts 10:42; Colossians 1:13). The mission of the church is to bring sinners under His direct kingdom rule by the gospel of grace.

*And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:42-43).*

**4. The spread of the kingdom requires faith (supreme trust) in Christ and repentance (supreme allegiance) towards sin: In short, it requires gospel preaching and church planting.**

- a. You cannot separate the global and regional from the local. In other words, the local church is the base which models, prepares and launches regional and global ministry. To diminish the local church is to undercut the impact and role God has designed it to have on the regional and global. This is an emphasis of the book of Acts.
- b. The local church is the source and sending agency of regional and global churches (Jerusalem led to Antioch which led to Asia Minor, etc.). This is because the church, as Christ's body, is God's instrument for impacting its community. Men must be trained, involved in, and see how an effective, community-impacting church works. This is vital before they can be sent out to do the same.

**II. THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT IS NECESSARY IF THE KINGDOM IS TO BE SPREAD AND THE GOSPEL ADVANCED (vv. 4-8).**

**A. Christ Drives Home The Need For The Power Of The Spirit By His Command To Wait. He Commanded Them Not To Leave Jerusalem, But To Wait For What The Father Had Promised (v. 4).**

**1. Zeal and passion are not enough.**

The Greek word for command, *parangelō*, refers to an order of a commander or superior to his subordinates. It is used in the following verses:

*They commanded them not to speak ... at all (Acts 4:18).*

*Commanding the jailer to guard them securely (Acts 16:23).*

*He had commanded the unclean spirit (Luke 8:29).*

**2. Methods and strategies are never enough, whether it be demographics, missional contextualization, or whatever.**

a. The emphases of the missional contextualization movement is biblical and helpful. For example:

(1) The emphasis is that all the church does is related directly or indirectly to mission.

(2) The approach to the meetings of the church, which insists that they are for both the believer and non-believer – a seeker-sensible approach (1 Corinthians 14:23-26).

(3) The focus on eliminating barriers such as, pious language, references to politics, and culturally incompatible generational styles of music.

b. There are extremes of the missional contextualization to be avoided.

Perhaps the greatest danger is to become just another formalistic approach. Do 'this' and the church will grow! A second danger is to forget there are other goals and purposes for the church's existence. Worship for example. Another danger is to overstate the degree to which it is applied, in any locale. Furthermore, it is possible to neglect the reality that authenticity is perhaps, the most potent element of community impact.

**3. The darkness and hostility of man towards Christ and the gospel requires the Spirit's power (cp . John 3:19-20, 6:44, 65, 15:18-26; Acts 20:18).**

**B. It Is A Dominant Theme That The Spirit Was Promised By The Father In The Prophetic Scripture.**

- 1. It is a promise which is to be fulfilled in and marks the era of the coming of the Messiah (Acts 2:17-21).**
- 2. It is a central reality of New Covenant ministry (2 Corinthians 3:1-18).**

**C. It Is Described In Terms Of The Spirit's Baptism, Which Consists Of A Soul-Gripping, Pervading Influence. You Will Be Baptized With The Holy Spirit (v. 5).**

- 1. The term "baptism" refers to an inundation or immersion, a flooding that radically alters and takes over. It is an immersion that submerges all else. It, therefore, indicates a new dominating influence. It is described elsewhere as a pouring out of the Spirit (Acts 2:33; Titus 3:6).**
- 2. It is the initial reception of the Spirit at conversion, with a continuing repeated fillings (1 Corinthians 12:13).**
- 3. It is inclusive, universal and experientially true of all believers (1 Corinthians 12:13).**

**D. It Dominates Those Who Receive It, So That They Are Driven By A Passion To Focus Their All Towards Testifying Of And Exalting Christ Before The World (John 16:14). And You Shall Be My Witnesses (v. 8).**

## **1. A witness is something we say.**

It means to tell the truth as a witness under such a strong compelling, that it must be told. It is to tell of the glory of what He has done for us and in us. It is used of preaching in a number of texts in the book of Acts. It is written in such a way to emphasize that a witness is what you are. There has been a life altering experience! Nothing can nor ever will surpass it.

## **2. A witness is something we are.**

*And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all (Acts 4:33).*

*And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).*

- a. It is compelled by the Spirit.
- b. It consists of who Christ is and what He has done for you.
- c. It comes from our experience of the truth.
- d. It is communicated in your own individual way.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **1. We are commanded to get something (individually and corporately) done "after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders" (v. 2).**

The words "given orders" in verse 2 mean to order, to command in order to get something done [a task or a goal]. It means to assign a duty, as seen by the following uses:

*He will command His angels concerning you (Matthew 4:6b) .*

*Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce? (Matthew 19:7).*

*Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you (Matthew 28:20).*

*I do exactly as the Father commanded me. Get up, let us go from here. (John 14:31).*

- 2. We are channels of gifts and resources given to us, by Christ, to accomplish His purpose in the world.**
- 3. Our chief delight is Christ Himself – His work is our food.**
- 4. Our confidence is in Christ. He ultimately can build His church by His power.**

# **THE CHURCH EXISTS FOR MISSION, Part 2 – Acts 1:1-8.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The early church clearly understood it existed for mission! The following quotes demonstrate this.

"Justin Martyr says, about the middle of the second century: *There is no people, Greek or barbarian, or of any other race, by whatsoever appellation or manners they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell in tents or wander about in covered wagons - among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered in the name of the crucified Jesus to the Father and Creator of all things.*

Half a century later, Tertullian says: *We are but of yesterday, and yet we already fill your cities, islands, camps, your palace, senate and forum; we have left to you only your temples.*

Schaff says, *these and similar passages of Irenaeus and Arinobius, are evidently rhetorical exaggerations. Origen is more cautious and moderate in his statements. But it may be fairly asserted, that about the end of the third century the name of Christ was known, revered, and persecuted in every province and every city of the empire. Maximian, in one of his edicts, says that 'almost all' had abandoned the worship of their ancestors for the new sect."*

Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume II*, p. 22

- A. The Significance Of The Passage Is That They Are Christ's Final Words.**
- B. It Shows That Christ Is Not Only A Historical Person, But A Living Contemporary One As Well.**
- C. It States In Unambiguous Terms The Mission Nature Of The Church's Existence.**
- D. It Stirs Up Our Commitment To Spread His Glory To The World.**

The church exists for mission, it does not set its own agenda. It carries on Christ's mission.

**I. THE CHURCH EXISTS IN THE WORLD TO ACCOMPLISH CHRIST'S MISSION PURPOSE AND TO EXALT CHRIST'S GLORY (vv. 1-2). ALL THAT JESUS BEGAN TO DO AND TEACH.**

**A. The Church Continues The Resurrected Christ's Work In The World.**

- 1. He accomplishes His work through men (Romans 15:18).**
- 2. He Himself brings people into the kingdom throughout the world (John 10:16).**

**B. The Church Is Commissioned By Christ With Specific Orders To Carry Out His Purpose To Spread The Gospel To All Peoples. After He Had Given Orders (v. 2).**

- 1. It is a specific order, an order to accomplish a specific task.**

The word "orders" (ἐντελλομαι) means simply to order, or to command to get something done [a specific task or goal]. It is used of a command to be delivered to one, to assign a specific duty. This can be seen in the following uses:

- *He will command His angels concerning you (Matthew 4:6b).*
- *Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce? (Matthew 19:7).*
- *Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you (Matthew 28:20).*
- *I do exactly as the Father commanded me. Get up, let us go from here. (John 14:31).*



**2. He stated one final time – on the day of His ascension – the task and commission to spread the gospel. The day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had ... given orders to the apostles.**

His very last words were His order, or commission, to pursue the task of spreading the gospel to all the peoples of the earth (v. 8).

**3. It is the same commission as the great commission of Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:44-49.**

- a. It is the commission that *repentance for forgiveness of sins ... would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations* (Luke 24:47).
- b. It is the commission to make disciples who are then baptized in a public identification of allegiance to the Lordship of Christ and are instructed in the faith. *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age* (Matthew 28:19-20).

**4. It is sustained and carried out by planting and establishing local churches.**

- a. It was the church at Jerusalem, under the apostles' leadership, that evangelized (2:38), baptized (incorporated members) and taught. It is specifically referred to as a church (see 11:22).
- b. It was the church at Antioch (11:26) that proclaimed, made disciples, instructed, (v. 26; Acts 11:19-26) and reproduced (13:1-4) itself in other churches.
- c. It was the churches of Asia Minor (14:3, 7, 21) that proclaimed Christ, made disciples, instructed, (14:21-23) and reproduced itself in other churches.

It is always by the planting and reproducing of churches that the gospel advanced. They met in homes (Acts 2, etc.) and grew by the impact of the entire body, exercising gifts (1 Corinthians 14:22-24).

**5. The standard by which you measure a completed ministry is the reproducing of a local church (Romans 15:18-23).**

- a. He had reached the target and goal of the great commission (vv. 19b, 23).
- b. The "foundation" work which He had finished was the establishing of churches (vv. 20-21).

**II. THE CHURCH IS EMPOWERED BY CHRIST HIMSELF THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT. JOHN BAPTIZED WITH WATER, BUT YOU WILL BE BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT (v.5).**

**A. Christ Pours Forth The Spirit In A Baptism Of Fulness.**

- 1. It emphasizes a pervading inundation, an influence that pervades and encompasses, so that it grips and controls someone.**
- 2. It is the initial reception of the fulness of the Spirit that occurs at conversion (Titus 3:6), which occurred on a mass scale at Pentecost.**

**B. The Presence Of The Spirit Comes Through This Baptism And It Compels And Controls A Person, So That They Are Christ-Driven And Christ-Centered.**

It is reception of the Spirit which includes regeneration and indwelling. It alters a person by a radical renewal. It so alters someone that they are reoriented with a whole new center and focus of existence. Christ is now the center of their existence (John 16:14).

ILL: A planet in a new solar system around a new sun.

**C. It Is A Power That Comes Again And Again In Repeated Fillings Which Compels To Serve And Witness Of Christ In Planting Churches And Advancing The Gospel.**

The term, as Luke uses it, emphasizes a filling in which there is, as it were, a taking possession of, or a gripping of the man in the event of preaching. The preacher is sensibly aware of this filling. This distinguishes it from plerai in Ephesians 5:18, which doesn't always necessarily involve a conspicuous and direct sense of the Spirit's work and empowering presence.

The following are just a few examples (see also Acts 13:9-10, 45; 19:29).

*And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill ... in order to throw Him down the cliff (Luke 4:28-29).*

*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Luke 1:41-42).*

*When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead – by this name this man stands here before you in good health. He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone. And there is no salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:7-12).*

*And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right on the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:18-20).*

*And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).*

### **III. THE CHURCH EXTENDS CHRIST'S KINGDOM (vv. 2-3, 8) AND GLORY TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES BOTH IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND EVEN TO THE REMOTEST PART OF THE EARTH (v 8).**

**A. The Pattern For Outreach Is Set By Christ: It Is First Local, Then Regional, And Then Global.**

**B. It Is A Parallel Statement To "Make Disciples Of All The Nations" In Matthew 28:19.**

**C. It Is A Prophetic Theme Of The Old Testament.**

*All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You (Psalm 22:27).*

*And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3).*

*Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth (Isaiah 45:22).*

*Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-47).*

*The LORD has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God (Isaiah 52:10).*

**D. The Preeminence Of Christ Demands And Guarantees The Mission Of The Church Will Succeed.**

*And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (for I am honored in the sight of the LORD, and My God is My strength), He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One, to the despised One, to the One abhorred by the nation, to the Servant of rulers, "kings will see and arise, princes will also bow down, because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You." (Isaiah 49:5-7).*

*There is no one like you ...O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours. All nations ... shall come and worship ... and glorify Your name. For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God. (Psalm 86:8-10).*

*Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him ... And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon ... I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another ... Sing to the Lord a new song, sing His praises from the end of the earth! (Isaiah 42:1, 6b-8, 10a)*

**E. It Is The Pinnacle And Goal Of Redemptive History (Revelation 5).**

**IV. THE CHURCH IS TO ENGAGE THE WORLD IN WITNESS BEARING, CONFIDENT OF SUCCESS UNDER GOD'S SOVEREIGN HAND. YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES.**

**A. The Core, Center, And Essence Of The Church's Existence Is That It Is A Witness: A Witness Of The Glory Of The Person And Work Of Christ.**

To be Christ's witness is a life-altering, unavoidable, life-changing reality. We are His witnesses. It is what we now, in the core of our being, are constituted by Christ's Spirit, through the renewing transforming power of the gospel. It is our essential identity.

**B. The Content Of The Witness Involves All Christ Is And All That He Has Done (2 Corinthians 4:4-6).**

- 1. Who He is.**
- 2. What He has done for sinners.**

**C. The Communication Of The Witness Is First By The Authoritative Proclamation Of The Word By The Leaders Of The Local Church.**

# **THE MODEL CHURCH AND CHRIST'S MISSION, Acts 2:37-47**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- A. This Is A Picture Of The Church (Acts 2:37-47), That Christ Uses In Fulfilling His Mandate Of Acts 1:8 To Spread His Glory And Kingdom To All Peoples.**

They evangelize (testify of Me), disciple, baptize, teach and multiply.

- B. The People Then Were The Same As People Today – A Pleasure Loving, Christ-Rejecting People.**

*This idea that the problem of humanity is different today from what it has been in the past is, of all teachings, the most ludicrous. Different? Men and Women are no different at all ... The citizens of Rome went about in chariots then; we fly in airplanes now. But the question is: What do they go about doing? And when you come to analyze that, you find exactly the same thing: They had their feasts; they were interested in eating, drinking dancing, and sex. It is all there, even the perversions. The world today is exactly what it was in the first century ... We see the same decadence, the same immorality, the same vice, the same hopelessness, the same fear ... The Greeks had great philosophers, who, remember, had all lived, flourished, and died before the Lord Jesus Christ was ever born; the best teaching had already been given. The Romans were experts in the art of government, and particularly local government. Even today the legal system of many countries is based upon Roman law. The Romans were famous for law, for order, for government, and they did everything they could to organize society ... But they failed completely.*

Jones, *Authentic Christianity*, p. 134

- C. The Power Of Christ And The Spirit Through The Gospel Changed People Radically, Penetrated The City, And Finally Spread And Turned The World Upside Down.**
- D. The Penetration Of The City Began With Prayer And Waiting Upon Christ To Send The Spirit – Not Human Strategizing (see John 14:11-15).**

### **WHAT IS THE MODEL CHURCH THAT IS EFFECTIVE IN THE WORLD FOR CHRIST'S MISSION?**

- I. IT CONSISTS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE SURRENDERED TO CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR AND HAVE BEEN RADICALLY CHANGED IN TRUE CONVERSION (Acts 2:37-41).**

The people of 2:41-47 were the people of 2:23, 36, where Peter says of them, *you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death* (v. 23). They were among those who *cried out, "away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!"* in John 19:15.

- A. They Were Confronted With The Reality Of Their Sin, As Sin-Loving, Christ-Rejecters.**
- B. They Came Face To Face With The Glory And Grace Of Christ In The Gospel (2:22-24) And Were Convicted By The Spirit (2:37-38).**
- C. They Came To Christ In Repentant Faith And Were Changed Into Christ-Worshipping, Gospel-Loving Believers.**



- 1. They repented and believed (vv. 38, 44; Matthew 16:24-27; Acts 16:31).**
  - 2. They received pardon and were justified (v. 38).**
  - 3. They were renewed by the Holy Spirit (v. 38).**
- D. They Were Called By God's Sovereign Grace (v. 39).**
- E. They Were Centered Around Christ And His Kingdom.**

**II. IT IS A COMMITTED PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE AND RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD AS DELIVERED BY THE APOSTLES (Acts 2:42-43). THEY WERE CONTINUALLY DEVOTING THEMSELVES TO THE APOSTLES TEACHING (v. 42).**

- A. The Authority Of The Apostles' Ministry As Revelators Of God's Truth Was Recognized.**
- B. The Authentication Of The Apostles Gave A Sense Of The Significance Of Christ And The Gospel (v. 43).**
- C. They Accepted And Applied The Word Of God Without Qualification (vv. 44-47).**

**III. IT IS A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WITH A COMMON LIFE AND A UNITY AND ONENESS THAT CAUSES THEM TO COME TOGETHER (Acts 2:44). AND ALL THOSE WHO HAD BELIEVED WERE TOGETHER AND HAD ALL THINGS IN COMMON.**

**A. "Common" Means A Deep Association, A Sharing In Common, And Partnership, Which Has A Controlling, Central, And Unifying Bond Above Everything Else (it is the main thing in life), That Is Unbreakable.**

**B. The Mark Of It Is Continual Association With Other Believers, "All" That Believe Chose To Spend Time With Each Other Above All Else.**

**C. The Main Components That Are Shared In A Fellowship Are:**

**1. A common life and nature:**

Culture, language and food are held in common. We have the same life and nature in Christ (2 Peter 1:4).

**2. A common history:**

We share a common salvation, therefore, we have a common history, with a common knowledge (think of bikers, hip-hop, geeks, gangsters, jocks, former presidents), and a unity of experience with a common Savior (Jude 1:3).

**3. A common interest and main pursuit (Philippians 1:27, 3:19; 1 Peter 2:9, 11-12):**

We share a common interest and a common seeking of Christ's glory and kingdom. We serve the same king and the same kingdom.

**4. A common identity and an outlook:**

There is a common kingdom (Colossians 1:13), and a common citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20-21).

All of the above transcends our differences and forms the basis of our unity in Christ.

**IV. IT IS A CONTENTED, SATISFIED PEOPLE WHO SHARED FREELY OF ALL THAT GOD HAS ENTRUSTED THEM (Acts 2:45).**

**A. They Recognized They Were Stewards Who Owned Nothing, But Were Entrusted With Another's.**

- 1. There was the periodic selling of possessions (it is an imperfect tense) - but it was not communism.**
- 2. They had control over their possessions to do what they wanted (5:4).**
- 3. They still owned homes (v. 46).**
- 4. They were entrusted with things, so they can give some of it away (2 Corinthians 9:10-12) .**

**B. They Released What They Had, Sacrificially and Joyfully, To Strengthen God's People And Spread The Kingdom.**

It demonstrates and affirms Christ's lordship.

**C. It Is A Response Of Worship For God's Grace To Us.**

*Your prayers and alms (gifts to the poor) have ascended as a memorial before God (Acts 10:4).*

*And this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God (2 Corinthians 8:5).*

**V. IT IS A CHEERFUL, GLAD-HEARTED HAPPY CHURCH (Acts 2:46-47). TAKING THEIR MEALS TOGETHER WITH GLADNESS AND SINCERITY OF HEART (v. 46).**

They were flooded with a soul-pervading and "unaffected joy".

**A. They Had Experienced The Joy Of The Remission Of All Sin.**

**B. They Experienced The Joy Of Liberation From Sin And The Healing Of The Soul.**

# **A CHRIST-DRIVEN, CHURCH-PLANTING LOCAL CHURCH, Acts 13:1-4**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. The Marks Of The Men That God Uses To Spread The Gospel And Plant Other Churches (Acts 11:19-30).**

- 1. They have a passion for discipling through evangelism (vv. 19-21, 26).**
- 2. They are men of ordinary ability used in an extraordinary way (v. 20).**
- 3. They proclaim Christ (v. 20b).**
- 4. They depend on the power of God and it is evident in conspicuous ways (v. 21b).**
- 5. They prepare and train others in order to multiply the ministry. They encourage and instruct (vv. 23, 26).**
- 6. They partner with other ministries (vv. 27-30).**
- 7. They are men of faith, trusting Christ to provide for their basic needs, undiverted from their primary call of preaching, teaching and multiplying (vv. 19- 20).**

**B. The Movement To Spread The Gospel And Multiply Churches Which Originated In Christ And Began In Jerusalem Is Rooted In A Passion To Reach All Peoples (Acts 1:8).**

Antioch was another church, like Jerusalem, that reached its community, trained men and multiplied itself in other churches.

To be successful in reaching the world, a church must see that:

**I. THE DYNAMIC AND DRIVING FORCE THAT PLANTS CHURCHES ORIGINATES IN THE HOLY SPIRIT HIMSELF (Acts 13:1-2).**

**A. He Communicates The Divine Purpose And Priority To The Hearts Of Men. The Holy Spirit Said (v. 2).**

**1. Objectively and propositionally the divine purpose is revealed in biblical truth. This is the center and catalyst of the church's call.**

- a. The Great Commission drives everything (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:8).*

*As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world (John 17:18).*

- b. The grand objective is the gathering of worshipers (Revelation 5).

The Antioch church is a church that exemplifies and carries out the mandate of Acts 1:8. It is a church that trains and reproduces, then sends and supports men who plant other local churches.

*And they sang a new song saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." (Revelation 5:9, 7:9).*

## **2. Subjectively and personally the divine purpose is revealed to individuals and the local church.**

- a. There is a settled conviction of the church as a whole. The central thrust and purpose of God for all the peoples of the earth becomes the central purpose of the church. It is not an addendum.
- b. They see the need and are gripped by it.

*Do you not say, "There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor.'" (John 4:35-38).*

"Look" is the Greek word *τηραομαι*. It means to gaze, to view attentively, to contemplate.

- c. The supreme passion is that Christ is exalted and glorified among all peoples (Isaiah 49:6).

## **B. He Calls And Sets Apart Men To A Specific Mission And Ministry (Acts 13:2).**

- 1. He endows men with gifts (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:4).**

- 2. He employs men in a specific ministry. He equips/ prepares, and then places them in ministry (1 Corinthians 12:5; 1 Timothy 1 :12).**

**C. He Creates A Holy Discontent And A Sanctified Fixation On Planting A Church And Extending Christ's Kingdom. For The Work To Which I Have Called Them (Acts 13:2b).**

*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service (1 Timothy 1:12).*

*The Gentiles, to whom I am sending you (Acts 26:17).*

**How He Calls Missionaries Or Church Planters:**

- 1. They develop competence in ministry experience and become fruitful men who reproduce themselves in others.**
- 2. They mature in character (1 Timothy 3:1-7).**
- 3. He recruits them by giving a personal consciousness of need while creating in them an unceasing burden and desire (Nehemiah – his burden was not about a wall, Nehemiah 1:1-4), (Romans 15:20, 23).**
- 4. They are evaluated and recognized by a general consensus as gifted, called men.**
- 5. They are commissioned and sent with support, including finances, and a reporting accountability relationship is established.**



6. **They are trained and educated in theology and missions in general.**

**D. He Compels The Church To Fulfill Its Obligation By Setting Aside Men And Committing Its Resources To The Work (Acts 13:3-4).**

1. **A consensus and a singleness of purpose works through the entire body (Philippians 1:26-27).**
2. **A cooperative mind-set unifies the church: Separate means to make the necessary commitment to bring it about.**
3. **A conviction of success under Christ's headship undergirds everything.**

**II. THERE IS A DEVOTION TO CHRIST WHICH FUELS THE MINISTRY AND THE SENDING OF CHURCH PLANTERS (Acts 13:1). NOW THERE WERE AT ANTIOCH, IN THE CHURCH THAT WAS THERE, PROPHETS AND TEACHERS: BARNABAS, AND SIMEON WHO WAS CALLED NIGER, AND LUCIUS OF CYRENE, AND MANAEN WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP WITH HEROD THE TETRARCH, AND SAUL.**

There is an awareness of corporate involvement in divine work. It is God's work in the world. It is "The Church at Antioch."

**A. There Is The Agency Of God.**

1. **There is a definite location which in this case was at Antioch.**
2. **The church is His instrument in the world to advance the gospel by multiplying churches.**

**B. There Is The Activity Of God Himself Through The Church In The World. It Is "A Church"**

- 1. There was not an official action; There was no apostolic decree, there was a divine authority beyond man's own sanction (Acts 11:19-21). This was unusual because they went out because of persecution.**
- 2. There was not an emphasis on buildings, but a living entity that was an extension and expression of Christ, who builds His church.**
- 3. There was a pursuit of Christ and His glory - "while they were ministering to the Lord."**

**C. There Is The Agenda Of God Which Undergirds The Church's Commitment To The Propagation of The Truth And Planting Churches.**

- 1. There were prophets who acted as revelators of God's truth.**
  - a. Jesus sent the Spirit Who is the Spirit of truth (John 14:16-17).
  - b. The church is the pillar of truth (1 Timothy 3:15).
- 2. There were teachers who continually instructed in the Word of God and trained and multiplied leaders.**

**III. THERE IS A DETERMINATION TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH PEOPLE AND RESOURCES TO MULTIPLY CHURCHES. THEN, WHEN THEY HAD FASTED AND PRAYED AND LAID HANDS ON THEM, THEY SENT THEM AWAY (Acts 13:3).**

# **FAITH, RISK-TAKING, AND CHRIST-EXALTING MINISTRY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

A young man, beginning his work with the Coast Guard, was called upon to take part in a dangerous assignment. A violent storm had risen and they were to rescue a boat and its crew. As they went out, the young man cried out to the Captain, "we will never come back." The captain, above the storm, cried back, "we don't have to come back, but we do have to go out."

### **I. GOD'S PART IN FAITH, RISK-TAKING AND CHRIST-EXALTING MINISTRY.**

#### **A. He Has Purposed That His Son Will Be Known And Glorified Among All Peoples.**

*He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6).*

#### **B. He Has Revealed His Plan And Purpose For The Church In The World Which Assures Its Success (Matthew 16:15-18, 28:18-20).**

*He, said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it" (Matthew 16:15-18).*

**C. He Initiates And Directs Us Into Our Part Of His Plan (2 Samuel 5:17-25; Nehemiah 1:1-11, 2:12; Psalm 25:12; Acts 16:9-10, 18:9-11; Romans 15:18-4; 1 Timothy 1:12).**

- 1. He puts us into the specific ministry that He has purposed to accomplish through us (1 Timothy 1:12; Romans 15:18; Acts 26).**
- 2. He makes us aware of needs that cause us to have a concern for His name (Nehemiah 1:1-3).**
- 3. He makes us burdened to act to do what we can for His glory (Nehemiah 1 :4-11, 2:12; Romans 15:9-12, 18-24). For the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy (Romans 15:9).**
- 4. He plants persistent desires, longings, and burdens (Psalm 37:4; Romans 15:23-24).**
- 5. He guides how, where, and when to step out in a ministry (2 Samuel 5:17-25; Acts 16:6-10).**

*They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak a word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 16:6-10).*

**D. He Supplies The Needed Workers And Resources In Response To Prayer (Nehemiah 2:1-10; Psalm 31:10; Matthew 9:36-38; Philippians 4:19).**

*Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:36-38).*

ILL: J. Hudson Taylor said there are three phases to God's work. Impossible, difficult and done.

## **II. OUR PART IN FAITH, RISK-TAKING AND CHRIST-EXALTING MINISTRY.**

### **A. We Earnestly Seek In Prayer That Christ Will Be Exalted And Glorified By Our Ministry (John 14:11-15).**

- 1. We put our trust in Him as a person who shares equally with the Father infinite power and wisdom.**
- 2. We persevere in prayer about the works that He has purposed for us.**
- 3. We pursue His glory.**

### **B. We Expect God To Reveal An "Area Of Ministry" Based On Scriptural Priorities Where We Must Step Out In Faith And Take Risks Beyond Our Resources, Etc. (Acts 16:9-10; Romans 15:18-24).**

In relationship to ministry, faith is directed toward a specific task that requires God's intervention for its accomplishment. It is trusting God to do what is beyond human ability and resources. Our faith is based on the revelation in Scripture of God's purpose and plan for the church in the world. God makes known to us a specific task or ministry that we are to pursue for His own glory.

*To initiate is an important function of the office of a leader. Some have more gift for conserving gains than for initiating new ventures; more gift for achieving order than for generating ardor. The true leader must have venturesomeness as well as vision. He must be an initiator rather than a mere conserver. Most of us prefer to play safe, but Paul did not play safe. He constantly took carefully and prayerfully calculated risks. Robert Louis Stevenson indicated the attitude of safety, security and prudence as "that dismal fungus." Hudson Taylor did not play safe. The tremendous steps of faith which he took with monotonous regularity were denounced as wildcat schemes. But thilt did not deter him, and today history is on his side. The greatest achievements in the history of the church and of missions have been outcome of some leader in touch with God taking courageous, carefully calculated risks.*

J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, pp. 116-117

## **C. We Exercise God-Pleasing Faith.**

### **1. Faith is the instrument and means by which God moves in power to work in and through us for His own purpose and glory (Matthew 13:58, 21:22; Hebrews 11 :32-34).**

*And Jesus answered them and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." (Matthew 21:21-22).*

*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).*

*And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment (Hebrews 11:32-36).*

## 2. The nature of God-pleasing faith.

- a. It is an attitude that trusts and casts itself on the reliability of God and the specific promises of His purposes for the world (Matthew 16:18; Luke 24:44-49; Romans 4:20-21).

*Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. "You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:44-49).*

*Our work especially requires faith. If we fail in faith, we had better not have undertaken it; and unless we obtain faith commensurate with the service, we shall soon grow weary of it. It is proven by all observation that success in the Lord's service is very generally in proportion to faith. It certainly is not in proportion to ability, nor does it always run parallel with a display of zeal; but it is invariably according to the measure of faith, for this is a law of the Kingdom without exception, "According to your faith be it unto you." It is essential, then, that we should have faith if we are to be useful, and that we should have great faith if we are to be greatly useful. For many other reasons besides usefulness, - namely, even for our being able to hold our own against the enemies of the truth, and for ability to stand against the temptations that surround our office, - it is imperative upon us that we should have abundant confidence in the living God. We, above all men, need the mountain-moving faith, by which, in the old time, men of God "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."*

C.H. Spurgeon, *An All-Around Ministry*, pp. 3-4

- b. It is an activity that steps out in a specific area with some element of risk. Faith is not completed as genuine faith until there is action (James 2:22). We call the biblical account of the apostles ministry, "the book of Acts." They acted in faith to the revelation of Christ that the gospel would be preached and disciples made among all peoples (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:45-47).

*Moses faced a test of the impossible when Israel reached the Red Sea. On one side lay the impassible range of Baal Zephon, on the other side an impassable waste of sand. Before them lay the impassable Red Sea, behind them the invincible army of Pharaoh. He found himself shut up with a dismayed and complaining horde in a perfect cul-de-sac. In this unexpected and shattering experience the morale of the nation dropped below zero. "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" they moaned. But Moses the man of faith stayed himself on God. His order of the day sounded like sheer fantasy to the demoralized Israelites, but in point of fact it was a demonstration of superb leadership. "Fear not!" he cried when there was every reason to fear. "Stand still" when Pharaoh was rapidly overtaking them, and to stand still meant death. "See the salvation of the Lord," which seemed a very long distance away (Exodus 14:11-13). In this sublime declaration of faith, Moses passed the test of the impossible situation with first-class honors, and he was gloriously vindicated by God. His sanguine prediction came true: "The Egyptians whom ye have seen today ye shall see no more for ever." They saw the salvation of God and the total destruction of their enemies. The bracing lesson is that God delights to shut people up to Himself and then, in response to their trust, display His power and grace in doing the impossible.*

Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, pp. 122-123

#### **D. We Earnestly Pray For Men And Resources (Matthew 9:36-38).**

*From my distress I called upon the Lord; The Lord answered me and set me in a large place. The Lord is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me? (Psalm 118:5-6).*



*Call is what you have to learn. You heard it. Don't just sit there by yourself or off to one side and hang your head, and shake it and gnaw your knuckles and worry and look for a way out, nothing on your mind except how bad you feel, how you hurt, what a poor guy you are. Get up, you lazy scamp! Down on your knees! Up with your hands and eyes toward heaven! Use a psalm or the Lord's prayer to cry out your distress to the Lord.*

Luther, *A Theology of the Reformers*, p. \_\_\_\_

Webster's defines scamp as: "An unscrupulous and often mischievous person; rascal; rogue; scalawag. A playful, mischievous, or naughty young person; upstart."



# **CHRIST-GLORIFYING, GOSPEL-DRIVEN PRAYER, John 14:8-15**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. The Circumstances And Occasion.**

He is leaving them. He is leaving the entire work to them (John 13:33). It would have appeared to outsiders as a colossal mistake, a massive tactical error!

### **B. His Concern Is That They Are Fruitful! He Is Concerned That The Church Grows, The World Is Impacted And God Is Glorified Through These Men.**

### **C. He Connects The Spread Of The Gospel And Ministry To Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven Prayer.**

## **I. THE PERSON WHO PRAYS HAS SEEN, AND IS GRIPPED BY, CHRIST'S GLORY AS CO-EQUAL IN MAJESTY TO THE FATHER (vv. 8-11).**

### **A. The Deficient View Of Christ That Hinders Ministry (vv. 8-9).**

- 1. The request that betrays ignorance (v. 8).**
- 2. The response that asserts His glory (v. 9).**

**B. The Declaration By Christ Of His Majestic Glory (vv. 10-11).**

- 1. He asserts His unity of being with the Father, a shared interpenetration of nature (John 10:30).**
- 2. He appeals to His unequalled works to prove it (John 10:27-28). He creates and He controls nature (He calmed the sea).**

**II. THERE IS A PERSUASION THAT CHRIST CAN WORK IN A GREATER WAY THROUGH THEM TO ACCOMPLISH THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL (vv. 12-13).**

**A. The Reach Of The Greater Works Is Beyond What Christ Did (v. 12).**

**1. What it can't mean.**

It can't mean we will be greater in love, humility, proclamation, or even miracles.

**2. What it does mean.**

The key is in the phrase; "I go to the Father." His going is not a mere spacial relocation. It involves His return to the Father by means of His crucifixion and exaltation.

**B. It Is The Result Of His Exaltation To The Right Hand Of God And The Pouring Out Of The Spirit That Greater Works Will Be Accomplished.**

- 1. He was exalted as the sin-bearing, death conquering, Spirit-sending Lord by whom He works in the world (Acts 2:29-33).**

*Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on His throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. (Acts 2:29-33).*

- 2. He extends His glory by power of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 2:14, 3:17-18, 4:4, 6).**
- 3. He exercises His authority to move men and remove obstacles (Matthew 28:18-20).**
- 4. He enables others and works through them to continue His work (v. 13).**

Notice Christ says, "I will do it" (v. 14). This is the one of those few places where He says He answers prayer. He answers it for He is the one who builds His church.

### **III. THERE IS A PURSUIT IN PRAYER OF THE EXALTING OF CHRIST AND THE GLORY OF GOD THROUGH THE MINISTRY GOD HAS GIVEN US (vv. 13-15).**

#### **A. It Is A Specific Focus Prayer For The Ministry Works He Would Have Us Do And The Workers To Do Them.**

He is encouraging us to plead for direction (2 Samuel 5:17-25), resources, ministry workers (Matthew 9:36-38), church leadership (Luke 6:12-13), and manifestations of His power in conversions.

**B. It Seeks God's Glory Through Christ (John 12:26-28).**

**1. His name is all He is and all He has done.**

**2. The Father is glorified in His Son.**

Glory refers to that which someone possesses or has done that makes them worthy of regard, renown, and reputation.

**C. It Sets Its Confidence In Christ, Not Ourselves Or Men. I Will Do It.**

**D. Its Supreme Compelling Is Our Love For Christ's Name And Glory (v. 15).**

A love for His glory and name compels us to prayer, and to obey His commands above all.

*Prayer is the walkie-talkie for warfare, not a domestic intercom for increasing our conveniences.* Piper, *Missions*, p. 41

*All our libraries and studies are mere emptiness compared with our closets. We grow, we wax mightily, we prevail in private prayer.* Spurgeon, p. 43

*In due time the weeping intercessor will become the rejoicing winner of souls.* Spurgeon, p. 45

*Satan cares nothing for our prayerless work, our prayerless study, or our prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, he mocks our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.* Samuel Chadwick

*As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.* Luther

*It would be wholly monstrous for a man to be highest in office and lowest in soul, first in station and last in life.* Bernard

# **THE SPIRIT OF JESUS AND THE PLANTING OF CHURCHES, Acts 16:6-10**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**A. They Were Sent Out On Their Second Missionary Journey From Their Church At Antioch (13:1-4, 15:36, 40).**

- 1. There were many other teachers at Antioch (15:35).**
- 2. They began the journey by a different route and visited churches Paul didn't plant (15:41, 16:5).**

**B. Their Strategy Was Simple: To Plant New Churches And Strengthen The Ones That Were Already Planted (15:41, 16:5).**

**C. The Spirit Of God Acting As Christ's Agent Directs Men To Preach And Plant Churches.**

Notice it is the Spirit who directs (16:6-7), but it is the Lord who calls men to preach in a particular location (16:10).

**We See Christ's Sovereign Control In The Advance Of The Gospel Through Church Planting By The Spirit's Work In Sending Church Planters.**

**I. THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP THE MINISTRY TEAM ARE SOVEREIGNLY DETERMINED (Acts 15:36-40).**

**A. There Was An Unexpected Change Of The Ministry Team.**

- 1. There was an intense disagreement between Paul and Barnabas (15:37-39).**
- 2. The term for sharp disagreement (παροξυσμος), indicates a strong anger or provocation. There was a very heated exchange and an impasse.**

The verb Παροξυσνω means to make sharp, to irrate, to provoke (Acts 17:16), or to rouse to anger (Psalm 106:29). In the LXX it is a word that translates a word that means to scorn, despise, provoke, or exasperate (Deuteronomy 9:7, 22). Isaiah 65:3 says, *A people who continually provoke Me to My face*. The noun Παροξυσμος refers to incitement. In the LXX it is also used of violent anger (Deuteronomy 29:28).

## **B. There Was the Formation Of Paul And Silas Into A New Team.**

## **II. THE PROBLEMS, OBSTACLES, AND DELAYS IN MINISTRY REFLECT CHRIST'S SOVEREIGN CONTROL. THEY PASSED THROUGH THE PHRYGIAN AND GALATIAN REGION, HAVING BEEN FORBIDDEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SPEAK THE WORD IN ASIA; AND AFTER THEY CAME TO MYSIA, THEY WERE TRYING TO GO INTO BITHYNIA, AND THE SPIRIT OF JESUS DID NOT PERMIT THEM (Acts 16:6-7).**

- A. The Spirit Who Acts As Christ's Agent Does Not Provide Opportunities To Ministry.**
- B. Our Idea Of Where We Should Minister And Among Whom Is Often Inaccurate.**

Paul tried three different directions to go, but the Spirit hindered him. Apparently there were no contacts, and therefore there was no release from the Spirit to minister in those areas.



**C. The Place Of Ministry Is Based On Where God's Elect Are, Not Our Preference (Acts 18:9-10).**

**D. Discouragement Results From Long And Strenuous Attempts To Minister That Appear To Accomplish Nothing.**

**III. THE PRIORITY OF THE SPIRIT IN CHRIST'S SOVEREIGN PLAN IS EMPHASIZED. HAVING BEEN FORBIDDEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SPEAK THE WORD IN ASIA ... AND THE SPIRIT OF JESUS DID NOT PERMIT THEM (16:6b, 7b).**

**A. The Spirit Is The Agent Of Christ Who Is The One Building The Church.**

**1. The Spirit is sent by Christ (Acts 2:33).**

**2. The Spirit's passion is to glorify Christ (John 16:14).**

**B. The Spirit Acts Upon The Heart And Through People And Circumstances To Send Out The Preacher Of The Word. The Spirit Directs Where Christ Will Be Preached.**

**IV. THERE IS A PERSONAL CALL FROM PEOPLE WHO PLEAD FOR HELP. AND PASSING BY MYSIA, THEY CAME DOWN TO TROAS. A VISION APPEARED TO PAUL IN THE NIGHT; A MAN OF MACEDONIA WAS STANDING AND APPEALING TO HIM AND SAYING, “COME OVER TO MACEDONIA AND HELP US.” WHEN HE HAD SEEN THE VISION, IMMEDIATELY WE SOUGHT TO GO INTO MACEDONIA, CONCLUDING THAT GOD HAD CALLED US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THEM (16:8-10).**

**A. There Is A Combination Of Factors Over A Period Of Time.**

There is what we can call negative guidance. There is the obvious closing of doors which seems to exhaust our idea of what to do.

**B. There Is A Call Through A Personal Specific Request From People Who Have A Sense Of The Need For The Gospel (v. 9).**

There is a request for the gospel and what the gospel provides, not anything else.

**C. There Is A Conclusion That God Has Brought Everything Together And Made Clear Where And To Whom We Are To Preach The Gospel (v. 10).**

**V. THE PRINCIPLES OF GOSPEL ADVANCE AND CHURCH PLANTING SEEN FROM PAUL'S EXAMPLE.**

**A. Christ Directs Through The Spirit First Often By Prohibiting And Restraining, Followed By Permission And A Constraint To Go Out.**

Carey didn't go to the South Seas. Judson didn't go to India, as they both had originally planned.

**B. Delays And Waiting Are Normal And Later Create A Strong Conviction Of A Divine Call.**

Often it is the uncalled or false prophets who quit the ministry – they were self-sent. Jeremiah says,

*I did not send these prophets, but they ran* (Jeremiah 23:21).

**C. Prayer Is Critical In The Whole Process.**

**D. God Has Bigger And Better Plans Than We Think, In Order To Further His Son's Glory (Isaiah 49:6).**

**E. He Works Through Preaching And Disciple Making (Acts 11:18-23).**



# **HOW CHRIST WORKS AMONG THE NATIONS BY PLANTING CHURCHES, Romans 15:15-21**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Paul's focus in this passage is on the Church's call to spread the gospel to all peoples by preaching and the planting of churches. It is based on all he has said in Romans up to this point. He states here, as well, his confidence that it is Christ who guarantees the success of the gospel among the nations. This is because it is Christ who sends and works through men to preach and plant churches. To start with I will state five broad realities about the gospel. Three from the book of Romans as a whole, and two from the passage itself.

- A. The Greatness Of Man's Sin And His Grave Situation Before God (Romans 1:18, 2:5-6, 3:9-20).**
- B. The Gospel Of The Grace of God By Christ's Atoning, Justifying Death (Romans 3:23-26).**
- C. The Glorification Of God Among All Nations For His Mercy (Romans 15:9-12).**
- D. The Guarantee Of The Success Of The Gospel Among The Nations Because Christ Himself Works (15:17-18).**
- E. The Glory And Boasting Goes To Christ Alone (15:17-18)**

**Paul States In The Passage How Christ Works Among The Nations To Send Men To Preach The Gospel And Plant Churches.**

**I. FIRST, IT IS CHRIST WHO PUTS A CHURCH AND INDIVIDUALS INTO A MINISTRY TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL. BECAUSE OF THE GRACE THAT WAS GIVEN TO ME FROM GOD (v. 15b).**

**A. The Apostolic Commission Given To Paul To Preach Christ Among All The Nations (15:11-12) Is Now Passed On To All The Church (Matthew 28:18-20).**

- 1. It is a specific mandate to bring people under Christ's lordship among all peoples (1:5; 15:11-12).**
- 2. It is stated in clear, universal terms for the whole church (Matthew 28:18-20).**

**B. It Is An Act Of Grace Not Only To Be Saved, But To Serve And Suffer For Christ - To Represent Christ In Any Capacity Is Grace! (1 Timothy 1:12).**

- 1. It is grace to serve Christ.**

*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service (1 Timothy 1:12).*

- 2. It is grace to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29).**

*For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29).*

**3. It is grace to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8).**

*To me, the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8).*

ILL: A special, elite group is given the privilege to guard visiting dignitaries such as the Queen of England. We have a far greater privilege to serve and preach Christ.

**II. SECOND, IT IS CHRIST WHO PURSUES PEOPLE AMONG THE NATIONS THROUGH THOSE HE SENDS. TO BE A MINISTER OF CHRIST JESUS TO THE GENTILES MINISTERING AS A PRIEST THE GOSPEL OF GOD (v. 16a).**

**A. He Is Sovereign Over The Church As Its Living, Acting Head.**

**1. He builds the church not us (Matthew 16:18).**

Christ builds the church in great part, by putting men into a specific preaching and church planting ministry. He says, (Matthew 9:36-38).

**2. He began His work when He was here, and He continues it today from the right hand of God (Luke 1:1-2; Acts 1:1-2).**

**B. He Is The One Who Sends Men Who Are In Reality His Ministers, Man Is Merely His Agency.**

**1. The general mandate to go out becomes clear.**

**2. The specific mission becomes clear.**

**3. The personal call to go out becomes clear.**

*Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away (Acts 13:1-3).*

*A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16:9).*

### **C. He Supplies The Needs And Resources Necessary For A Ministry.**

*For even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:16-19).*

### **D. He Sustains And Gives Strength To Fulfill A Ministry.**

*If the LORD had not been my help, my soul would soon have dwelt in the abode of silence. If I should say, "My foot has slipped," Your lovingkindness, O LORD, will hold me up. When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, your consolations delight my soul. Can a throne of destruction be allied with You, one which devises mischief by decree? They band themselves together against the life of the righteous and condemn the innocent to death. But the LORD has been my stronghold, and my God the rock of my refuge. He has brought back their wickedness upon them, and will destroy them in their evil; the LORD our God will destroy them (Psalm 94:17-23).*

*Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me – to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most*



*gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).*

**III. THIRD, IT IS CHRIST'S POWER THAT IS THE REASON FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL. SO THAT MY OFFERING OF THE GENTILES MAY BECOME ACCEPTABLE, SANCTIFIED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT ... FOR I WILL NOT PRESUME TO SPEAK OF ANYTHING EXCEPT WHAT CHRIST HAS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH ME, RESULTING IN THE OBEDIENCE OF THE GENTILES BY WORD AND DEED, ... IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT (vv. 16b, 18-19a).**

**A. Christ Releases His Power Through The Spirit Who Calls And Regenerates People, Making Them An Acceptable Offering As Worshipers. So That My Offering Of The Gentiles May Become Acceptable, Sanctified By The Holy Spirit (v. 16b).**

- 1. They are acceptable having been justified by the atoning death of Christ and clothed in His righteousness (Romans 3:24-25, 5:19).**
- 2. They are acceptable as those renewed and made alive by the Spirit (16b).**
- 3. They are acceptable as those who have surrendered to Christ's Lordship in obedience and now are worshipers who serve the Living God (Romans 1:5, 10:9).**

The aim of gospel preaching in ministry is that rebels who scorn God in their sin, will become glad-hearted worshipers (John 4:22, 24).

**B. Christ Is The Reason For The Success Of The Gospel, Not Man's Ingenuity, Skill, Or Power Of Persuasion. For I Will Not Presume To Speak Of Anything Except What Christ Has Accomplished Through Me, Resulting In The Obedience Of The Gentiles By Word And Deed, ... In the Power Of The Spirit (v. 18-19a).**

- 1. His agent by whom He works in power is the Spirit.**
- 2. His appointed means are prayer, preaching, faith, etc (Romans 10:9-17, 15:30).**
- 3. He accomplishes the results.**

The word translated "accomplished" is, *κατεργασατο*, which means to work out, effect, produce; to perform, achieve, to accomplish that from which something results; to bring about. It is in the middle voice and is in a compound intensive form which stresses that it is Christ Himself who accomplishes the work. These are examples of the word translated "accomplished."

*For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison (2 Corinthians 4:17).*

*For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death (2 Corinthians 7:10).*

*Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance (James 1:3).*

*For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God (James 1:20).*

- 4. He Himself acts to bring in the sheep.**

*I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd (John 10:16).*

**C. The Response For The Success Is To Give All The Praise And Glory To Christ!**

**IV. FOURTH, IT IS CHRIST WHO PUSHES MEN INTO UNTESTED, VULNERABLE MINISTRIES TO MAKE HIM KNOWN FOR HIS GLORY. SO THAT FROM JERUSALEM AND ROUND ABOUT AS FAR AS ILLYRICUM I HAVE FULLY PREACHED THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. AND THUS I ASPIRED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, NOT WHERE CHRIST WAS ALREADY NAMED, SO THAT I WOULD NOT BUILD ON ANOTHER MAN'S FOUNDATION; BUT AS IT IS WRITTEN, "THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND" (vv. 19b-21).**

**A. He Determined The Standard That A People Is Reached When There Is A Preaching Center And A Local Church Among A People.**

- 1. There is the pursuit of preaching and discipleship in a specific area.**
- 2. The establishment of a church is when the gospel has been "fully preached."**

The word 'fully' is the word plerao (πεπληροκενοι perf. act. ind.), which means to fill, to fill up a deficiency (Philippians 4:18-19); to perform fully, or discharge [a duty] (Matthew 3:15; Acts 12:25, 13:26), it means to realize, or accomplish (Luke 1:20, 9:31; Acts 3:28). The following are examples of its meaning:

*And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark (Acts 12:25).*

*And John was completing his course, he kept saying, "What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie" (Acts 13:25).*

*Who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31).*

Since not all people were saved in the area mentioned by Paul, he must be referring to another standard to indicate a fulfilled ministry. It would appear from Acts it is the planting of a local church where Christ is preached so that the area can continue to be impacted by the gospel.

## **B. The Declaration Of The Savior Must Go To New Groups Beyond Where Christ Is Now Preached.**

- 1. It is the characteristic feature of the gospel that it must be spread (the message demands proclamation).**
- 2. It compels preachers to go to those who haven't heard.**

Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15 which reads, *Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand.* It is part of the great passage of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 where Christ's atoning, sin-bearing, justifying death is prophesied. In Isaiah 53 it says, *Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. ... As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors (Isaiah 53:4-6, 11-12).* This message, of a sin-bearing substitute who is the only Savior, must be preached where it has not been heard. The very nature of the message demands it. This is Paul's point.

# **CHURCH PLANTING GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH PLANTERS**

## **I. DETERMINE THE MAN'S CALL AS A LEAD PASTOR BY FRUITFULNESS AND A MINIMUM LEVEL OF MINISTRY EXPERIENCE.**

**A. There Is Fruitfulness In A Home Fellowship Group,  
Or Similar Ministry, Where The Growth,  
Shepherding And Oversight Rests Upon The  
Leader Alone.**

**B. There Is Evidence Of Preaching And Teaching  
Gifts In The Public Ministry Of The Word.**

In addition there is a clear understanding and conviction of biblical doctrines, including the doctrines of grace is manifested in a preaching and teaching ministry.

**C. He Serves As An Elder Or Has An Elder Level  
Maturity. He Sits In On Elder Meetings For At  
Least One Year.**

## **II. THINGS NECESSARY PRIOR TO THE FIRST SUNDAY**

**A. A Core Group (20-30) Is Established Who Are  
Willing To Serve In A Church Plant.**

**B. Legal Matters.**

- 1. Incorporation with state – including by-laws and constitution.**
- 2. Non-profit status with IRS.**

**C. Letterhead And Logo.**

**D. Bulletin Oversight.**

**E. Newspaper Ads.**

**F. Flyer And Other Notifications, Via Email, Letters, Etc.**

**G. Website.**

**H. Doctrinal Statement.**

**I. Philosophy Of Ministry Statement That Includes:**

- 1. God-centeredness (including the doctrines of grace).**
- 2. Missions to all peoples.**
- 3. Expository Christ-centered preaching.**
- 4. Mutual ministry of gifts.**
- 5. Fellowship groups and body life.**

- 6. Eldership.**
- 7. Discipleship.**
- 8. Evangelism.**
- 9. Worship Philosophy and Style - the essence of worship and its biblical content with the particular form and style expressed in the church plant.**

**J. Salary, Budget and Benefits.**

Dependence initially on the resources of the sending church.

**K. Establish The Support And Accountability Relationship With Sending Church Including:**

- 1. Financial support.**
- 2. Relationship to Elders.**
  - a. Schedule regular periodic reports to elders meetings.
  - b. Issues to bring to Community Bible Church Elder board to discuss.
- 3. Ongoing official relationship until functioning Elder board is established.**
- 4. A resolution that the church plant is initially under the joint oversight of the Community Bible Church Elder Board. The following is an example:**

*Fifth Item of Business: Discuss church plant. XXXX is starting a new church on (month, day, year), in (place). He is to be sent through Cornerstone Ministries International of Community Bible Church as a church planter. The Elder Board will provide him with accountability and oversight during the initial startup time of at least one year. For example, the Elders will hold him accountable for the new church's*

*bookkeeping and financial records, and will help him with leadership and oversight decisions until God raises up other qualified Elders in the new church to share in the oversight. Since it is our belief that each church should be self-governing, the elders will enter into this relationship with XXXX and the new church for one year and will re-valuate the relationship each year based upon need. Motion made and seconded to assist XXXX as discussed above. Motion carried.*

- 5. A letter from the pastor to other like-minded churches asking for mutual financial support as a new local church plant.**

**L. Rent A Facility.**

**III. THINGS NECESSARY ON THE FIRST SUNDAY.**

Delegate Sunday service responsibilities for:

**A. Nursery.**

**B. Children's Ministries.**

**1. Nursery.**

**2. Preschool.**

**3. Grades 1-3.**

**4. Grades 4-6.**

**C. Set-up Team - Established.**

**D. Sound System And Operator - Established.**



- E. Worship Leader Appointed Working Relationship And Accountability To Pastor Is Specified And Clear: Clearly Defined Responsibilities.**
- F. Money - Collection And Deposit.**
- G. Treasurer To Count And Record Money - Working Relationship To Pastor Is Specified And Clear.**
- H. Music Accompaniment Team – Spiritual, Committed People With Skill.**
- I. Communion Set-Up.**
- J. Ushers/Greeters – Minimum Standards Are Established.**