

# A Mission Only the Church Can Stop

by David Platt

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*The church's resistance to God's mission is a recurring theme throughout history, but God's mission cannot be stopped, and the church must learn to trust in His sovereignty and obey His commission.*

**Duration:** 53:20

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8

**Topics:** "Missions"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of believers actively participating in global missions. He argues that God's plan is for His grace to be poured out on all His people so that they can display His glory to the world. The preacher challenges the notion that giving money alone is sufficient to solve the world's problems, asserting that believers are called to personally go and share the gospel. He encourages the congregation to commit to giving two percent of their days to the mission of making disciples of all nations, trusting God to provide and transform their lives.

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## Transcript

You ready for that? If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to Acts, the book of Acts, chapter 21. And as you're turning to Acts 21, you may pull out the notes from your worship guide and find that there's not a lot to go on there. That doesn't mean that God's not going to speak and maybe we want to write something down that He speaks, just because we don't have some blanks to fill in, doesn't mean that God's still not going to speak to us.

But periodically, we kind of come aside from the pretty exhaustive, in-depth study of a particular passage of Scripture to have, in a sense, kind of a heart-to-heart as a faith family. And that's what I want us to do through the Word today in a little bit of a different way. I want to talk this morning together about a mission that only the church can stop.

A mission that only the church can stop. And what we're going to do is a little different. We're going to spend some time in Acts 21.

Then we're going to go from Acts 21 into kind of a survey of church history. And then we're going to come to the present-day church. And I want to ask one question that I believe pervades that whole picture.

So we're going to start in Acts 21. The background, the context here, is you've got Paul, the book of Acts at this point, on his third missionary journey. He has been in Corinth.

He wrote the book of Romans, saying he wanted to get to Rome in order to get to Spain to share the Gospel with unreached peoples there. But he said, I've got to go to Jerusalem first. And so what he did is, he left Corinth and he's sailing down to Jerusalem.

What he's done is he's taken up an offering among all these Gentile churches. There were some problems in Jerusalem. There was a lot of division between the Jews and Gentiles in the church there.

A lot of the Jews were making it very difficult for the Gentiles to come to faith in Christ or the Gentiles to be a true part of the church. And so there was a lot of division there. And what Paul has done is he's gone and he's taken an offering among all these Gentile churches that are indebted to what had started in Jerusalem.

And he's taken this offering back. And he wants to take it to the church there personally. But along the way, he stops at a few different places.

In Acts 20, he's in Ephesus. And he's been warned on this journey to Jerusalem that if he goes all the way there, that there might be trouble when he gets there. You look in Acts 20, verse 22, just before this chapter we're about to read, you hear him say these words.

He's gathered together with the elders at Ephesus and he says this, verse 22, "...compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me, the task of testifying to the Gospel of God's grace." So here he's acknowledging, I know that the Holy Spirit warns me, prison and hardships might be facing me.

And he had said at the end of Romans 15, 30 and 31 I think, he had talked about how he'd been warned about going to Jerusalem. But he says, "...the Spirit is compelling me to go, and I know there's risk there, but I consider my life worth nothing to me." And what happens is you get to Acts chapter 21, and Paul stops at two more places that are highlighted. A place called Tyre, and a place called Ptolemaeus.

And I want you to see what happens as he interacts with the church, with Christians in those two places. Look in Acts chapter 21, verse 1, "...after we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes, and from there to Potara.

We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo.

First place, finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit, they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way.

All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home. So he gathers together with believers at Tyre, and they urge him, don't go to Jerusalem." Verse 7, "...we continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemaeus, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day.

Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip, the evangelist, one of the seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied." I love this picture here. You've got Philip, and this is just kind of an added note.

Remember Philip back in Acts 6 when he was called out with Stephen to help serve in the church? That was right before Stephen was stoned. And guess who was leading the stoning of Stephen? Saul was. This guy before he became Paul.

And so now, years later, we see Paul and Philip enjoying each other's company. Those who were great enemies now enjoying each other's company. What a great picture of the Gospel.

Now that's just kind of a side note. That's for free, but it's really a good picture. Verse 10.

After we had been there now in Caesarea, a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it, and said, the Holy Spirit says, in this way, the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt, and will hand him over to the Gentiles. That's not good news for Paul.

Verse 12 says, when we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, the Lord's will be done.

In both of these places, first Tyre and then Ptolemaeus and Caesarea, the church is saying, Paul, don't go. Trying to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem. And Paul is saying, the Holy Spirit's leading me there.

And I know that prison and hardships may await me, but this is where He's leading me. Here's the question I want to ask this morning. Is it possible to be completely obedient to the mission of Christ and have the church actually try to stop you on the way? Is it possible to give your life in obedience to the mission of Christ and the church actually try to stop you? I believe it is.

I believe this is the picture that's all over the book of Acts, I think. If you had to sum up one of the themes in the book of Acts, it's God active and God resisted. It is a picture that I think we see throughout Scripture from cover to cover.

God, from the very beginning, saying to His people, I want to bless you greatly. And the result is, I'm going to pour out My blessing on you and you're going to show My blessing and My goodness and My grace and My glory to the ends of the earth, to all the peoples of the earth. This is why I'm blessing you.

He says that over and over again to His people. And over and over again, His people say, well, we'd like to do things our own way instead. And they're turning from the covenant all throughout the Old Testament.

And as a result, the nations are not seeing the greatness and the glory and the grace of God through His people. It's why God comes to His people and says things like Ezekiel 36 when He says this is what the Lord says. Sovereign Lord says, it is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am doing these things, but for the sake of My holy name which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.

I will show the holiness of My great name, the name you have profaned among them, and then the nations will know that I am the Lord declares the Sovereign Lord when I show Myself holy through you before their

eyes. This is God saying to His people. When I pour out My blessings on you, it's not for your sake.

It's for the sake of the nations to know that I am good and I am great and I am holy. For them to know My glory. And all throughout the Old Testament, you've got God passionate about showing His glory through His people.

God active in blessing His people for that purpose. And the people of God resisting over and over and over again doing things their own way. Then you get to the New Testament and you have Jesus die on a cross and rise from the grave.

And Luke who wrote the book of Acts says at the end of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus died so that repentance and forgiveness of sins would be preached in all nations. He picks up right where He left off in Luke with Acts 1 verse 8. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and all Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. This is what God is doing.

But what happens when you get into the book of Acts is six chapters later, the Gospel is still stuck in Jerusalem. They're still keeping the Gospel there. They've been given this commission to go to Judea and Samaria and the ends of the earth, and it's still stuck in Jerusalem.

It's not until Stephen is stoned that in chapter 8, the Gospel finally starts to spread through the church because they're scattered by the stoning of Stephen. And it starts to go to Judea and Samaria. You get to chapter 10 in the book of Acts and the Gospel starts going to the Gentiles like Cornelius.

And it just causes a major mess in the church. What are we going to do? With all these Gentiles who are coming to faith in Christ, are they allowed to come to faith in Christ? What do they have to do to come to faith in Christ? You look at the beginning of Acts 11, and it is a picture of the church literally against the nations. We're not sure if we want the Gospel to go to the nations.

Thank God things change. But all throughout the book of Acts, what we see is God active in His mission and God resisted many times by the church. Now here's the question I want us to ask.

Do you think that resistance stopped in the book of Acts? Or do you think it continued? I believe it continued. I want to take you on a little bit of a journey with me through church history. My favorite type of book to read is biography.

And whenever I have the opportunity to go to another context, to another country, I always take a biography with me along to read. And I want to give you a little bit of a glimpse of church history through some folks who have given themselves to this mission. What is really interesting is as I was praying through our time together this morning and thinking about these men's lives, it hit me that one of the things they all had in common is in every single one of their lives, the church tried to stop them.

We'll start with Jim Elliot. Many of you know the story of Jim and Elizabeth Elliot if you were here about a year and a half ago. We had a whole service that kind of revolved around that story of how Jim Elliot went to Wheaton College, spent four or five years there studying linguistics, and decided that he wanted to give his life to serve the Aka Indians in Ecuador.

This was a savage tribe of Indians. Whenever anyone tried to approach this tribe, they would most likely lose their lives. Very savage, evil, murderous tribe.

But they had no knowledge of the Gospel. And Jim Elliot, four other men, decided we're going to change that. And so they got their families together and they decided they were going to go and live in Ecuador.

What was interesting is that when they were making that decision and when he was in college, over and over again, people kept coming to him from the church saying, you don't need to go to Ecuador. You have so many gifts in preaching and in teaching. Why would you waste those on a savage tribe where you may lose your life? When the church here needs so much help.

When people are lost here, why would you go there? Over and over again, they said this to Jim Elliot. He wrote one time in response in his journal. He said this, Surely those who know the great passionate heart of Jehovah must deny their own loves to share in the statement of His.

Listen to this imagery. Consider the call from the throne above. Go ye.

And from round about, come over and help us. And even the call from damned souls below. Send Lazarus to my brothers that they come not to this place.

Impelled then by these voices, I dare not stay home while these Indians perish. So what if the well-fed church in the homeland needs stirring? They have the Scriptures, Moses and the prophets, and a whole lot more. Their condemnation is written on their bank books and in the dust on their Bible covers.

American believers have sold their lives to the service of mammon. And God has His rightful way of dealing with those who succumb to the spirit of Laodicea. A few years later, Jim Elliot and four other men left their wives and children at camp and went to a beach to arrange a meeting with this tribe in Ecuador.

The meeting happened. The only problem was those Indians showed up with spears and they speared each of those men who died on that beach. However, as a result of Jim Elliot's life and death, that story has spurred men and women ever since then to go around the world sharing the gospel with unreached peoples.

Not only that, but these men's wives went into that tribe in the days ahead and led the very men who speared their husbands to faith in Christ. And the gospel now reigns among the Auca Indians in Ecuador. Praise be to God.

The church could not stop Jim Elliot. I read that biography on a trip to Honduras. Later, I was going on a trip to Sudan and I began to read the biography of David Livingston, missionary to Africa.

David Livingston is a guy who basically, on his own, went into the heart of inland Africa trekking through. Soon after he got there, on his first trip, he was mauled by a lion, which is not an encouraging thing when you are going into Africa to read. So anyway, when he was preparing to leave for his first time to go to Africa, he wrote a letter to the London Missionary Society that said this, So powerfully convinced am I that it is the will of the Lord that I should go to Africa, I will go no matter who opposes me.

He went into Africa. After he had been there years, he came back to England to visit. He was welcomed home with much fanfare.

All kinds of ministers and pastors, government officials, press, that wanted to talk with him and hear about all his stories. Whenever he had a chance to speak to them, he would beg them to go to Africa. He said, I beg to direct your attention to Africa.

I know that in a few years, we will be cut off in that country which is now open. Do not let it be shut again. I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity.

It is for you to carry out the work which I have begun. I leave it with you. He returned to Africa.

And on this second trip, somewhere along the way, he fell out of favor with the church back home. And so when he came back a second time to England, there were no pastors and no ministers there to welcome him. No press.

No government officials. He came back, stayed there for a while, and then went back to Africa a third time. Years went by and nobody heard anything from him.

People began to speculate whether or not David Livingston had died. And so a journalist named Henry Morton Stanley was commissioned to go into inland Africa and try to find the whereabouts of David Livingston. To try to find out, number one, if he is alive, and number two, to urge him to come back to England.

And so Henry Morton Stanley went to try to find him. It's the famous quote when they met each other. And he looked at him and said, Mr. Livingston, I presume.

They met up with each other and began to share about all that had been going on in Africa. And Henry Morton Stanley said, You need to come back to England and to share all of these things. There are riches waiting for you back there.

There are people that are waiting to honor you. The people who love you the most, family, friends, who are closest to you, they want you to come back. David Livingston looked back at Henry Morton Stanley and said, God has called me to Africa and I'm staying here.

Not long after that, David Livingston was in the middle of the African jungle one morning when those Africans who he traveled with who had been introduced to the gospel through him came into his room one morning to get him and found him kneeling by his bed in a posture of prayer, his head in his hands. He had passed away in communion with God. It would have been very easy for these natives to take his body, bury it there, divide up all of his possessions and go on.

But they had such great respect for this man who had given his life for their country that they decided they were going to take his body, truck through dangerous land, a thousand miles to get back to the coast so they could send it back to England and give him a proper burial there. But before they took his body out of inland Africa, they removed his heart and planted it in Africa because that's where he had given his life for the cause of Jesus Christ. Praise be to God.

The church could not stop David Livingston. When I was traveling to Indonesia, I read the biography of Adoniram Judson. Kind of a little frustrated about that whole trip because it's a thick biography and I make notes throughout the biography and my last leg home on the flight, I left the book on the plane and so I don't have my Judson biography.

I'm not bitter about that still but somebody else has it but it's a great biography. Adoniram Judson was greatly influenced by William Carey. I don't know if that name rings a bell.

William Carey is kind of known as the father of modern missions. He was the one who rose up in Europe and said, I'm going to go to India and make the gospel known there. Listen to what the church said to him.

He was speaking at a conference full of ministers and pastors and he was talking about the need to go to India. One minister rose up and scolded him saying, Sit down, young man. You are an enthusiast.

When God pleases to convert the heathen in India, He will do it without consulting you or me. Praise be to God, the church could not stop William Carey. He influenced Adoniram Judson, a Baptist missionary who had a desire to go to Burma, present day Myanmar.

Burma was the apex of what we would call closed countries today, embroiled in war and rebellion, no religious toleration whatsoever. Any missionaries that went to Burma either left or died there. The church tried to persuade Adoniram Judson, don't go of all places, don't go to Burma.

So what did Judson do? He got married and less than two years later he took him and his new bride into the middle of Burma. There he spent 38 years suffering through cholera, malaria, dysentery, and unknown miseries that would claim the lives of his first wife and second wife as well as seven of his 13 children. Numerous colleagues.

The result, today there are close to 4,000 Baptist congregations in the middle of Buddhist Burma. Over a half a million believers that are represented in those congregations. Praise be to God, the church could not stop Adoniram Judson.

Two more. When I was in Kazakhstan I had the opportunity to read the biography of C.T. Studd who Caleb is in part named for. The C.T. part, not the Studd part.

C.T. Studd was a wealthy Englishman who came to faith in Christ and soon thereafter sensed God's call for him to go to China. Listen to what his biographer said. Studd met the strongest opposition from his own family.

That one from their family should become a missionary was the last straw. Every persuasion was used. Even to the extent of bringing in Christian workers to dissuade him.

One such respected Christian worker said to him, C.T., I think you are making a great mistake. Studd responded, let's ask God then. I don't want to be pig-headed and go out there of my own accord.

I just want to do God's will. That night he said, I could not get to sleep. It seemed as though I had heard someone say these words over and over.

Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. I knew it was God's voice speaking to me and that I had received my marching orders to go to China. Many said he was making a huge mistake, but he went anyway.

But that's not where the story stops. He went to China, then he came back home, and then he decided India was next. And so he went to India.

Then he came back home and when he was 50 years old, when he should have been looking toward retirement, he decided, I'm going to go to Africa now. I'm going to spend the rest of my life in Sudan. The problem was he had no money.

His doctor had told him not to go and the church committee had told him not to go. He wrote a letter to them saying, God has called me to go and I will go. I will blaze the trail though my grave may only become a stepping stone that younger men may follow.

In the next 20 years, he founded the worldwide evangelization crusade through his work in Africa that has planted gospel seeds all over Africa, Asia, and South America. Before he died at the age of 70, Stud wrote these words to the church. Too long we have been waiting for one another to begin.

The time for waiting is past. Should such men as we fear before the whole world, I, before the sleepy, lukewarm, faithless, namby-pamby Christian world, we will dare to trust our God and we will do it with His joy unspeakable, singing aloud in our hearts. We will a thousand times sooner die trusting only in God than live trusting in man.

And when we come to this position, the battle is already won in the end of the glorious campaign in sight, we will have the real holiness of God, not the sickly stuff of talk and dainty words and pretty thoughts. We will have a real holiness, one of daring faith and works for Jesus Christ. Praise God.

The church could not stop. C.T. Stud. One more biography.

When I was in the Middle East a couple of months ago and I read the biography of John Patton, just out of curiosity, anybody, how many of you have heard of John Patton? Just raise your hand. Not the general. John Patton, okay.

A couple of people. Missionary to the New Hebrides. A series of islands in the Pacific.

Patton served for 10 years as the pastor of a church in Glasgow, Scotland. But God began to burden his heart for the New Hebrides, Pacific islands that were filled with cannibalistic peoples with no knowledge of the gospel. 20 years earlier, he knew that two missionaries had gone to the New Hebrides and had been killed and cannibalized there.

So Patton began to share his desire in the church to go to those people. He wrote this in his journal. I was besieged with the strongest opposition on all sides.

One of my professors of divinity told me that I was leaving certainty for uncertainty. I was leaving work in which God had made me greatly useful for work which I might fail to be useful and only throw my life away among the cannibals. He continued.

Amongst many who sought to deter me was one dear old Christian gentleman whose crowning argument always was the cannibals. You will be eaten by cannibals. John Patton replied to this man.

Mr. Dixon, you are advanced in years now and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave there to be eaten by worms. I confess to you that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms and in the great day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer. The old gentleman raising his hands in a deprecating attitude left the room saying after that I have nothing more to say.

Patton's church. The church grieved with him and begged him to stay. They offered him a house if he would stay.

They even told him that he could request any salary and they would give it if he would stay. Don't miss it. You get the salary if you stay.

You don't get the salary if you go to the nations. Patton wrote, indeed the opposition was so strong from nearly all and many of them warm Christian friends that I was sorely tempted to question whether I was carrying out the divine will or only some headstrong wish of my own. This caused me much anxiety and drove me close to God in prayer.

But again, every doubt would vanish when I clearly saw that all at home had free access to the Bible and the means of grace with gospel light shining all around them while the poor heathen were perishing without even the chance of knowing all God's love and mercy to me. At the age of 33 Patton traveled to the New Hebrides with his wife. The result of his life and work, which was not easy, one entire island called Enawa, entire island, came to faith in Christ.

The church across Australia, Scotland, all parts of the world was challenged to rise up and make the gospel known among the toughest to reach peoples on the planet and countless savages across the New Hebrides came to know for the first time the peace that only is found in Jesus Christ. Praise be to God. The church could not stop John Patton.

Think about it with me. Ladies and gentlemen, what would have happened if these men had listened to the church? What if Jim Elliott and David Livingston, William Carey, and Adoniram Judson, and C.T. Studd, and John Patton would have listened to the church? Here's what would have happened. Countless people unexposed to the gospel would have continued on a track toward a Christless eternity without knowledge of that gospel.

And not just those individuals and those tribes and those places, but the countless people that have been spurred on to go to the nations with the gospel as a result of these men's lives. The church would have missed out on the joy of waking up to the inexpressible picture of being a part of God's global plan. The book of Acts.

It's possible for the church to actually dissuade you from accomplishing the mission of Christ. Church history. It has been possible for the church to actually dissuade people from accomplishing the mission of Christ.

Present day landscape of the church. I believe it is more than possible for the church today to be working to stop the mission of Christ in her people. I am not saying that the majority of us in this room are explicitly trying to stop the mission of Christ.

But I would say with much confidence that when I look at the landscape of church in our culture today, we are implicitly working to stop the mission of Christ in the people called the church. You say, Dave, what do you mean? We are working to stop the mission of Christ. It doesn't take long to listen to phrases on pastors' lips, ministers' lips, and church members' lips.

Not just in other places, but right here in the church at Brook Hills. We still make statements like, David, I'm not called to foreign missions. I'm not called to foreign missions.

What a radically unbiblical statement. Because by it, you realize what we mean. Whenever we say that, I'm not called to foreign missions, it means we're looking at missions as a program.

An optional program at that for the faithful few who are really interested in that, who really have a heart for that. Not all of us have a heart for that. Ladies and gentlemen, I remind you that when you came to faith in Christ at that very moment, one central command began to pervade your life.

And it was a command, not a calling. A command to make disciples of all nations. We relegate that to an optional program over here.

We look at the Great Commission in Matthew 28. We say, make disciples of all nations. Well, that means other people.

But then we look at Jesus' words in Matthew 11. Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy burdened. I will give you rest.

And we say, well, that means me. We look at Jesus' words in Acts 1.8. You will have the power of my Spirit. You will go to the ends of the earth.

And we say, well, that means other people. We look in 1 Peter 5. It says, cast all your cares on me and I care for you. We say, that means me.

By what right do we draw a line of distinction between the privileges of Christianity and the obligations of Christianity? Relegating the obligations of Christianity to a few while we all sit back and enjoy the privileges of Christianity in a self-consumed, self-centered picture of religious activity. This is radically unbiblical. When we come to faith in Christ, there is a command across every single one of our lives.

Make disciples of all nations. Make disciples of all nations. Every one of us who has Christ in our lives.

And picture it this way. We're called to faith in Christ. And when we respond to that call, there's this command.

Central. Make disciples of all nations. And then, here's the beauty of it.

I'm not saying that God has given the same calling across every single person in this room. That God has given the same gifts, the same skills, the same passions, the same desires, personalities. Here's the deal.

We've got this command to make disciples of all nations. And then God takes each of our lives and what He's entrusted to us, and He calls us to put that command into action in a variety of different ways. Some of us teachers.

Some of us accountants. Some of us stay-at-home moms. Some of us doing this or that.

Some of us students. The danger is when we take this calling that is different for each of our lives and we begin to substitute it for the command and we put the command as an option over here. And what's important most to me is my calling.

Not realizing that all of the callings that are in our lives are ways by which we carry out this one command. I'm not so ignorant as to think that we don't have different callings. That when you look in the New Testament, Peter and Paul had different callings.

James and John had different callings. But they were all driven by a passion to make the glory of Jesus Christ known in all nations. And Jesus had told them how to do it.

You make disciples. Everything revolves around the command and it plays out in different ways. And so it's certainly not an optional program over here and it's certainly not something we're called to.

Paul said it in Galatians 1, 15 and 16. God was pleased to reveal His Son in me. So that, purpose clause.

Paul is saying, why? Why, Paul? Why did Christ? Why was Christ revealed to you? Why did God reveal Christ to you? So that I might preach Him among the nations. Paul says the very purpose of my salvation was for the sake of others. God saved you.

And you, and you, and me. He saved each of us for the sake of other people to know that He is good and He is gracious and He is glorious. That is the command that drives us all.

That's why I said in Romans 1, 14 and 15 I'm obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks. Spoke to the wise and the foolish. It's a great word in the New Testament.

Literally, he says, I'm in debt. I'm in debt to Greeks and non-Greeks. Spoke to the wise and the foolish.

Don't miss the picture. Paul is saying, because he owns Christ, he owes Christ to the world. He's in debt to all peoples.

You realize that because we own Christ in this room, we owe Christ to the world. To the least person and the greatest person. To the worst person and to the best person.

To the richest person and the poorest person. We owe Christ to every lost person on the face of this planet. We are in debt.

And what we do when we make statements like, I'm not called to foreign missions, is what we do is we come out from underneath the weight of a lost and dying world. We wring our hands in pious concern and we say they're not our problem. That misses the whole point of the gospel.

How can any individual in this room has the gospel of Jesus Christ inside of you? Saved from your sins. Saved from an eternity apart from God. Saved from eternal damnation.

How can anyone in that state sit back and make excuses for not sharing that gospel with the rest of the world? It's not possible biblically to say I'm not called to foreign missions. You're right, you're not called. You're commanded to a mission.

A global mission. Make disciples of all nations. And we make statements like, well, it's best for me to give.

I don't need to go. And don't miss this. Please don't get me wrong.

There's undoubtedly a grain of truth in this picture. Giving is extremely important. And all of us are wealthy compared to the rest of the world.

And we will give an account to God for how we use the resources He's given us to accomplish His mission in the world. No question. But at the same time, are we that shallow as to think that our money is the answer to the needs in the world? Do we really think that giving our money is what is going to solve the deepest problems in the world? We know.

We live in a 280 culture that is inundated with money. Don't we know that money doesn't bring us success, peace, security? Homes across this community. Huge homes.

Nice cars. All the stuff falling apart from the inside. And I remind you that this kind of statement that I'm going to give instead of going undercuts the very foundation of the gospel itself.

I remind you that when God decided to bring salvation to you and me, He did not send cash or check or credit. He did not send gold or silver. He sent what? He sent Himself.

If that's the picture of the gospel, then how are we going to make that gospel known around the world by sending money? We'd send ourselves. We'd go. But maybe the most common phrase, the one that is most prevalent, is the question that comes up, David, what about the needs here? And we hear you talking about the Bedouin people.

Five million people, 40 believers. We hear you talking about that. But what about Birmingham? Don't you care about Birmingham? Aren't we going to care about Birmingham? And I want us to see.

Well, first of all, and I want to say this with as much tenderness as possible, we've got to realize that, for the most part, that question in and of itself is simply a spiritual smokescreen. The majority of us are not that passionate about the needs in Birmingham. The majority of us haven't done anything this past week to give to the hungry in Birmingham.

And the majority of us have probably never led one person to faith in Christ in Birmingham. But even if, even if we are radically devoted to this mission in Birmingham, who told us that we had to decide between Birmingham or the Bedouin? Who told you that it has to be here or there? Why do we have to make this an either-or thing? What if there was a way to live here for the sake of those over there and to work there for the sake of those who live here? This is what disciple-making is all about. I know, I know that some of you are thinking, Dave, why don't you just go to another nation? When you talk about this all the time, if this is your deal, then you go.

We're not trying to stop you. Why don't you go? Here's why. Because from cover to cover in this book, God has designed this picture to pour out His grace on all of His people, not just select individuals in church history, select leaders in the church, on all of His people so that they might show all of His glory to all of the world.

And I believe based on the authority of God's Word that every single person in this room who has the Spirit of Christ in them has a spirit that wants the world for Christ. And I believe God has equipped every single person in this room who is a follower of Christ to take the Gospel and make it known among the nations. I believe God has done that in His church.

And I'm praying that God would wake up His church to see His great glory and to see their great need and to begin to live here for their sake over there and to work there for the sake of people here, putting disciple-making together here and there and accomplishing the greatest mission on the face of this planet. That's why you can't get rid of me. I know, I know there's a question that wonders.

You talk about the nations all the time, Dave. Are we getting a little out of balance? Talking about the nations all the time where we forget Birmingham. Are we out of balance? And here's the deal.

I'm convinced I could pastor for the next 50 years and every single Sunday preach about the need in the nations and I would not even begin to bring this thing back into balance. Do we really think we're balanced when a billion people haven't even heard His name? Let me comfort you. We're nowhere close to getting out of balance towards the nations.

But let me also encourage you. Jesus Himself spent the majority of His life and ministry in one geographic area. Did that mean that Jesus didn't care about the world then, Dave? No.

He cared about the world enough to pour His life into 12 guys in a process called disciple making. So those guys would reproduce that gospel, Acts chapter 17 says, and turn the world upside down. He cared enough about us 2,000 years later in Alabama to pour His life into those guys then.

That's how this disciple making thing works. And when you and I give ourselves to this mission here, it will affect over there. And when we join with what God is doing there, it will radically affect here.

So we don't have to ask the question, what about the needs here? If we do ask what about the needs here, then the answer is, go to the needs there. Because that will affect our outlook on the needs here. And when we give ourselves the needs here, it will affect the way we impact over there.

Let me give you an example. I wanna invite Chad to come up here and Pastor Armando and Chancey, there they are, coming up. Pastor, if you'll come up here and join me on stage and Chad and Chancey, come on up here.

This is Pastor Armando Acosta from Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras. I want you to stand right over here with me. This is Chad Glover, member of the faith family at Brook Hills, and this is Chancey.

A year ago, Chad Glover made a commitment to give 2% of his days this year in another context in hopes that that would transform the 98% of his days here. And so what happened is Chad went to Honduras and there he joined hands with this pastor and he began to influence what God is doing in Honduras and he began to be influenced by what God is doing through disciple makers in Honduras. Chad came back and he said, I don't have to go to the other side of the world to be a part of this mission.

I can do it right across the street. And so Chad began to lead a small group in Avondale and his life began to interact with Chancey, her friends, other people around her who are many of them now followers of Christ as a result of what God did in Honduras. Can you think of a better plan to be a part of what God is doing around the world than making disciples? I submit that you can't because Jesus came up with it.

He says, you go and you make disciples. You partner together with believers around the world and you partner together in accomplishing the mission of Christ right here. And the effect is I'm going to connect Honduras with Avondale and I'm going to connect Venezuela with Trustville and I'm going to connect the Middle East with Chelsea and I'm going to connect this with this.

And all of a sudden you're going to find that you're actually a part of a global family and you were actually created for a global purpose to make this gospel and His glory known to the ends of the earth. Chad made one commitment. Two percent of my days.

Seven days. Not a huge number. Very small, actually.

When you look around this room, the lights this morning are two percent dimmer than they usually are. The screens, two percent dimmer. The shades are two percent further down than they normally are.

The sound is two percent softer. Even the worship guide you have in front of you, the print is two percent smaller. Don't say you could tell a difference.

You couldn't tell a difference. Two percent. Seven days.

And last year at this time, over a thousand people made that commitment. Said we're going to give two percent of our days in the next year. We don't know how.

We don't know how we're going to pay for it. We don't know where. We don't know when.

We're going to trust God. We're going to give ourselves this mission and we're going to trust Him to transform the 98 percent of our days here. And He is doing it.

And so this morning, I want to give you this challenge. Are we going to be a church that stops this mission or surrenders to this mission? Those are our two options. We can stop it or we can surrender to it.

And I want to call you as a faith family to rise up and to say we want to be a part of what God is doing around the world, our lives, our families. We want to join together with brothers and sisters all across this globe in a way that transforms the way we lead people to Christ right here in Birmingham. And we're going to do it in a way that only you can get the glory for it.

And I want to invite you today to say in the next year, I may not know how. I may not know where or when. How in the world to provide for this? Those questions come after obedience.

Are you willing to say today, I'm going to give 2% of my life, my time next year to be a part of this mission? Not even just to be a part of this mission. We learned today that our global disciple making pastor is leaving. I'm calling you to step out and lead in this mission and to say we're going to take this thing and it's not going to be a spectator sport for us.

It is going to be a participant's activity. And I want to be a part of what God is doing around the world. Right now I want to invite you, if you would be willing to say in the next year, 2% of my days I'm going to give to another context somewhere to transform the 98% of my days here.

I want to invite you to rise where you are and come join these folks on this stage. If you would be willing to say, individuals, families, come on forward. I want to give 2% of my days the next year to be a part of what God is doing around the world in a way that transforms the 98% of my days here.

I'm not saying that you have all the answers. You've got it all figured out how this will look.

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