

Let the Nations Be Glad - Part 1

by John Piper

Missions is the language learning, culture crossing, unreached people pursuing extension of the Abrahamic covenant to all the peoples and people of the world.

Duration: 1:21:40

Scripture: Acts 17:30, Romans 10:13

Topics: "Missions", "Salvation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the necessity of hearing and believing in the gospel for salvation, highlighting the unique role of Christ's work in providing salvation for all people. It stresses the importance of missions in reaching the unreached peoples of the world, focusing on the significant shift in God's plan with the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The message calls for a passionate commitment to missions and a deep understanding of the gospel's power to open eyes, bring forgiveness, and sanctify through faith in Christ.

Transcript

Before I pray and ask for the Lord's help, just to empathize with you, I found Mark's message to be devastating and don't have too much left. So, that's not a joke. Let's pray.

In one sense, Lord, it feels good to be here, that is, low, unsure of myself, not knowing my own heart. That's my main, I feel off balance, I feel wobbly after that message. I think that's good.

I feel vulnerable, like somebody could come at me from almost any angle right now and take me. And so, I call upon your spirit for us, us open and laid bare elders. Come, there's work to be done.

There's work for us nobodies, work for us broken people, work for us wounded, indicted, discouraged, guilty, forgiven, justified, heaven bound, invincible people. So come, I pray, and help me with this message. I pray in Jesus' name, amen.

My aim in these messages that I'm going to give, Lord willing, is to lodge in your mind and in your heart a biblical conviction that I hope will not go away while you live concerning missions, frontier missions, missions the way Paul did missions in the New Testament. And my conviction that I want you to share is that if you think being missional is a good thing for you to be or for your church to be, then you should care about, strategize about, invest in, plan for missions, frontier missions, pioneer missions, Pauline missions, or the short version of the conviction, you are not biblically missional unless you pursue missions. That

would be one way of describing the thesis.

So let me try to undo for just a minute defensiveness in you that might rise up. It did in me, so I thought it might in you. I would like to free you from that so you could dream with me, hopefully and positively, instead of sitting there thinking of all the reasons why what I'm saying shouldn't keep you from doing what you're doing.

I rejoice in every Bible-shaped, Christ-exalting, gospel-driven effort to save sinners and shape the world in your city. I don't want you to stop doing anything of that nature. My aim is not for you to do less for your city, less contextualization where you are.

I want you to do more for the unreached peoples of the world. Some of them have come to you in your city, and you know that, like the Somalis have come to Minneapolis. In fact, I hope that you will believe with me that adding to your missional investment in your city a passion for the unreached peoples of the world will be one of the healthiest things that you can do for your church at home.

Along the way, I hope that you will be convinced with me that you and I are in wartime and not peacetime, that the stakes are very high, they are eternal, and that our enemy is a liar and a murderer and a blinder and will use everything within his power to keep you and your people blind to the fact that without hearing and believing the gospel of Christ crucified and risen, people are perishing all over the world in peoples where they have no church that is being missionally invested in their salvation. I pray along the way that you will have a spirit of prayer ignited in you, and that you will pray day and night for the vindication of God's people and the ingathering of his elect from all the peoples of the world and for the hallowing of his name and for the coming of the bridegroom with lightning and power and great glory. I hope that you will find ignited in yourself a spirit of day and night intercession for the nations.

I pray that along the way you will be set free from and kept free from the suicidal snare of riches. One of those idols we have heard so much about. Ease, comfort, games, entertainment and embrace the suffering and the sacrifice and the sorrows that the finishing of the great commission is going to cost us.

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

The Calvary road is a hard road. The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life. And it's the happiest road on the planet.

The path of the righteous is like the dawn that gets brighter and brighter until the noon day. And I pray along the way that underneath all of this, a new song would be awakened in your heart and in your mouth. Because how will we bid the nations to sing with us if we're not singing over our Savior? Sing to the Lord a new song.

Sing to the Lord all the earth. Now how are you going to say that? Missions is bidding the nations sing with us if you're not singing. And so I'm praying that in all of our time together here, there would be awakened in our hearts a new song, a song of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. And I'm praying that underneath that song, God will awaken in your heart the greatest sense of significance you could ever have for the great thing that you were made to be involved in. Every one of you who confesses Jesus as Lord of the universe signs up for a significance beyond anything you ever dreamed.

And I mean businessmen and women here, homemakers, students. To belong to Jesus is to embrace the nations with Him that He will one day rule entirely. Your heart was made for this.

Your heart was made to embrace the global dimension of missional living. If you don't have a global heart, if you're not getting your arms around the nations, the unreached nations, peoples of the world, there will be a mild or serious sickness in your soul. Because your soul was made to do this, like a leg was made to walk, and if it doesn't walk, it will get sick.

Something will go wrong with it. Many people don't know what's wrong with their souls. And what's wrong with their souls is that their souls have shrunk to the level of their concerns.

They're not concerned about the nations. We were made to get our arms around the nations with God. When you pray, Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, that's meant to take your heart and make it as big as history and as large as the globe.

And that's a healthy heart. It's a strong, large, healthy heart. And the heart that's going down and just terminates on your city is a heart getting sick.

You were made for this. Layman, pastor, elder, it doesn't matter. Listen to J. Campbell White.

I go back to this quote again and again from the early 1900s. He was the leader of the layman's missionary Christian movement, which was created to support what God was doing among students in the early part of the 20th century. And he wrote this, Most men are not satisfied with the permanent output of their lives.

Nothing can wholly satisfy the life of Christ within, within his followers except the adoption of Christ's purpose toward the world that he came to redeem. Fame, pleasure, riches are but husks and ashes in contrast with the boundless and abiding joy of working with God for the fulfillment of his eternal plans. The men who are putting everything into Christ's global undertaking are getting out of life its sweetest and most priceless rewards.

There are a lot of things that are important that are not this. But you were made for this. This is the largest.

This is the largest concern on the heart of God. Every follower of the Lord Jesus is a follower of the king of kings and they are their healthiest and their strongest and their noblest and their most authentic when they are embracing his global purpose and not just his local purpose. Now those are my goals in these couple of talks.

Underneath them, of course, we are not unaware, are we, of how much the world has changed in the last hundred years. The disposition, dispersion of Christianity in the last hundred years has undergone more change than in any century since the first three centuries as people are increasingly documenting. Active Christian adherence has become stronger in Africa than in Europe.

All these statistics I'm going to give you here are from Martin Knowles' new book *The New Shape of World Christianity*, I think it's called. It just came out a few weeks ago. Active Christian adherence has become stronger in Africa than in Europe.

The number of practicing Christians in China is approaching the number in the United States. Live bodies in church are far more numerous in Kenya than in Canada. More believers worship together in church

Sunday by Sunday in Nagaland than in Norway.

More Christian workers from Brazil are active in cross-cultural ministry outside their homeland than from Britain and Canada combined. This past Sunday, more Anglicans attended church in each of Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda than did Anglicans in Britain, Canada, and all Episcopalians in the United States combined. Last Sunday, more Christian believers attended church in China than in all of so-called Christian Europe.

More Presbyterians were in church in Ghana than in Scotland last Sunday. This past week, in Great Britain, at least 15,000 Christian foreign missionaries were hard at work evangelizing the locals, most of those missionaries from Africa and Asia. In a word, Noel says, the Christian church has experienced a larger geographical redistribution in the last 50 years than in any comparable period in history with the exception of the very earliest church history.

Mark Noel, page 21, the new shape of world Christianity. One of the tragedies of American responses to this new situation is the conclusion that we don't need to send missionaries anymore. The day of Western missions is over.

Just send your money. Let another shed his blood. You send your money and watch movies.

And another tragedy is the embrace of the uninformed notion that a third world evangelist 100 miles away in India, say, from an unreached people group is obviously more cheaply and culturally suited to reach that group than you are having to raise \$100,000 to take your family over there, learn a language, cross a culture, and enter into a 30-year effort to plant a church among that unreached people group. That's not obvious. The distance culturally over that 100 miles may be far greater than the distance over 15,000 miles.

There may be centuries-old feuds. And the thought, you hear it said all the time, the locals are much more suited to do the evangelism since they're already there. They've already got the language.

They're already culturally suited. There aren't any Christians in the group. That's what unreached means.

There isn't any church. There aren't any evangelists. There is no missional activity going on.

And if you get familiar with, and I hope you do, with joshuaproject.net, you will learn, as of yesterday anyway, that there were 6,552 unreached people groups among the 16,309 people groups on the planet. And of those 6,652, 1,540 are unengaged. This notion that the third world now has these culturally appropriate evangelists in all the unreached peoples is nonsense.

It's self-contradictory. They don't exist. There is work for all of us to do.

And oh how we should praise God that there are thousands and thousands, yes, tens of thousands of missionaries going out from the lands that were once mission fields. Oh yes, that is a glorious day. But the thought that we rich, fat, hungry, lazy, security loving Americans should just send our money is tragic.

So I'm here to persuade you that if you care about being missional biblically, you should care about being involved in global, frontier, pioneer, people penetrating missions. That's my goal to do in these several talks that I have with you. Now here's my outline.

Number one, what is the biblical task of missions? Number two, is missions necessary, which breaks down into three pieces. Are people perishing forever? Two, is Christ's work necessary to save them? Three, must they hear of that work in order to be saved? So that's all under number two, is missions necessary. Number three, what is our motive in pursuing this task of missions? What's it got to do with the ultimate aim of history, that God be worshipped with white hot affection from all the peoples? And number four, finally, how are we to pursue missions? Comments on preaching, praying, and suffering.

That's the outline of this and the one to follow. First, what's the mission task? What's the biblical task of missions, with an S on the end? I'm going to restrict my argument here to the main aim of missions, which is the distinct aim, which is not to maximize the number of individuals saved. As much as anybody with any heart of Christ wants to see a great movement of persons to Christ, only people get saved.

Nations, peoples don't get saved. People get saved. But the task of missions is not defined uniquely as maximizing the number of people who get saved.

If that were true, you'd just find the most fruitful mission field and you'd stay there forever until they ran out. And then you'd go to the next one that was really fruitful. And all these hundreds that are so hard, you can't even break in without getting your head chopped off, we just let them go to hell.

That's not the way missions thinks. Missions thinks you keep on crossing language barriers and you keep on crossing cultural divides until all the peoples have a strong church to witness to the glory of Christ and experience the fullness of local missional living. You can think of it this way, that missions crosses cultures and language barriers into places where there's zero missional activity in order to plant missional living.

That's the way to think about missions as opposed to missional living here in your city. There are cities with zero possibility that there could be any missional living because there's no church. And missions thinks that, it eats that, it drinks that, it prays that.

As long as there's one people group on the planet that doesn't have an abiding missional living witness to King Jesus, somebody's going and dying to make it happen. That's the way missions thinks. And my assumption, of course, is that nations are not the same as people states when we talk about make disciples of all the nations.

I've been assuming this all the way along. I don't know where you are on this. When I use peoples with an S on the end, I'm translating ethne or laoi, peoples, ethnic groups.

Matthew 28, 19 and 20. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Pontata ethne is not a political regime.

It's not a location with a boundary. It's a group of people defined by ethnos, ethnic, linguistic dimensions that God is very concerned be represented at His throne. Here's one of the ways to see that.

In Romans 15, 8 and following, Paul says, Christ became a servant to the circumcised, so He became a Jew, to show God's truthfulness and in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs and in order that the Gentiles, the nations, the ethne, might glorify God for His mercy. Now, if you wonder now, what does he mean by that? Does he mean individual non-Jews? Paul launches in verse 9 into a sustained litany of quotes from Isaiah, Psalms and Deuteronomy, all of them to make clear what he means by ethne. I'll read them to you.

As it is written, verse 9 of Romans 15, as it is written from Psalm 18, 49, there I will praise you among the nations, the ethne, and sing to your name, verse 10, and again it is said, Deuteronomy 32, 32, 43, rejoice, O ethne, O nations with His people, verse 11, and again Psalm 117, 1, praise the Lord, all you ethne, and let the peoples extol Him. Now, that's the most important one, verse 11, because of the parallel. Extol Him, all you ethne, nations, all the peoples.

S on the end. Those are parallel. An ethnos is a loos, with an ethnic dimension labeled on it.

Go make disciples of all nations. When Jesus said that, He didn't mean make sure you penetrate all 221 or whatever there are, political regimes, and He didn't mean go inside every geographic field. He meant find the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvidites, the Horites, the Cherokee, the Ojibwe, the Somali, the Fulani, the Baluch, the Sea Tribes, the Warani, and 16,000 others.

Find them, and die to take the gospel in there, just like I did by coming. As the Father has sent me, so send I you. I learned your language.

I took your culture, and I died your death, and I'm sending you, because there are 16,000 of them out there, and I mean to have a people there. That's missions. Revelation chapter 5 verse 9 has become as important as Matthew 28, 19, and 20 for us at Bethlehem.

Worthy are you to take the scroll, for you were slain, and by your blood you have ransomed from every people, tribe, tongue, nation, and have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth. People, tribe, tongue, nation. That's what God is going to have at the throne.

Missions cares about those, not just the people inside. If one of these has an unbelievably fruitful people movement, missions doesn't say, we'll camp out here for a century. It goes, it moves, and moves, and moves, until all the people groups are penetrated.

That's what missions does. Missions is the task of moving across more and more language and culture lines to see that all the peoples have a witness, have a church. Now, put this in the larger biblical framework.

This is the extension and completion of the Abrahamic covenant. Right to Abraham, God says, I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you, I will curse, and him, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. In you Abraham, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

These family clan units. I'm after all of them. If there's one that doesn't have a blessing in it, go put it in it.

Or, chapter 17 of Genesis, behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. Amazing. He said to Abraham, you will be the father of a multitude of nations.

Well, if you take all of his kids, even the ones that aren't included in the 12, not a multitude, there are peoples, multitudes of peoples, that you, Abraham, you will be the father of. Now, how did Paul work that out? You know how he worked that out in Romans 4 and Galatians 3. He worked it out by saying, those who are of faith are the children of Abraham. The seed is the Christ, and all who believe on the seed are united to the seed, and are in the Abrahamic line, so that all of our missionary labors, as we lift up the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, and call people to him, are extending the Abrahamic covenant to all the peoples of the world, so that he will be the father of a multitude of nations.

The Old Testament is so full of hope about this. There are promises, and prayers, and predictions, and, listen, clap your hands all peoples, shout to God with loud songs of joy. Psalm 47.

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. When does that happen? It didn't happen in the Old Testament. Psalm 2. I will make the nations your inheritance.

Psalm 86. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. Psalm 72.

May all the kings and all the nations fall down and serve him. Psalm 72. 17.

May God be blessed in him. All nations shall call him blessed. So, missions is the language learning, culture crossing, unreached people pursuing extension of the Abrahamic covenant to all the peoples and people of the world.

That's what missions is. And my point so far is, if you believe in being missional biblically, in your local church, you must so preach, and so pray, and so lead, and so strategize, and so converse, and so mobilize, that you unleash that core of people. It won't be everybody.

That core of people in your church who burn for this, if you would put a match to their kindling. Every church has a group of people. If it's a small church, it may be three.

If it's a big church, it may be 300 people who burn for this. If the pastor would set them free. If the pastor would believe in them.

If the pastor would say, we're not all going. We're either going to be senders or goers, but I'm here to blow the trumpet for those of you who eat, and sleep, and drink, unreached peoples. I'm for you.

And then they go to work. There's got to be that, I'm saying, as part of all the other things you do, and I'm arguing, it will be really healthy for your church. Really healthy.

You think, oh, can I add another thing? Yes, you can. Add the world on your back, and the God who gives you strength will say, now I'm ready to be his shoulder. One more pointer to this that moved me profoundly years ago when I saw it for the first time, probably with the help of Ralph Winter, who just went to be with the Lord.

Paul's way of thinking about his own mission is really quite remarkable. Somebody pointed out, you may have seen it, I'm sure you have, but I'm going to read it anyway. This is Romans 15, 17 following.

Listen to the way Paul thinks about his calling. And my argument is, not everybody is called to be this way, but some are, and in every church, somebody should carry this torch big time. Paul said, from Jerusalem, this is 15, 17 of Romans, from Jerusalem, get the geography, all the way around to Illyricum, that's Albania, northern Greece, from Jerusalem to Illyricum, I have fulfilled the gospel.

Literal translation. I have fulfilled the gospel, and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel not where Christ is already named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand, this is the reason why I have so often been hindered in coming to you. In other words, I kept trying to do that from Jerusalem to Illyricum, but, verse 23, but now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, what regions? From Jerusalem to Albania.

There's no room. What? I mean, when you read that, you've got to come to terms with the difference between local ministry and frontier missions. There is no way to make sense of this.

So, verse 23, now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you in Rome, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain. There's room in Spain. And to be helped on my journey there by you once I have enjoyed your company for a little while.

Now, two things are astonishing in that text. One, he says, I have fulfilled the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum. And number two, he says, there's no room for me to do any work here.

Now, why not? Answer, he's a missionary. He's not a pastor. There's plenty.

Listen, we've read the pastoral epistles. We've read Colossians. We've read Ephesians.

We know there are tens of thousands of unbelievers in this region. What do you mean there's no room for you to work here? There's thousands and thousands of people in Minneapolis who don't know Jesus. And Raleigh-Durham, and Seattle, and Dallas, and wherever all these other folks come from.

Philadelphia. There's thousands of unbelievers there and no room for missionaries. They're going to Spain.

Well, no, they're not going to Spain. They're going to Afghanistan. They're going to Northern India.

They're going to the outer backs of China. They're going to Indonesia and out onto the coasts. They're going to places which today nobody wants them to come.

Believe me, to finish the Great Commission is to mainly go among Hindus and Muslims today. Almost all the unreached groups that are left are Hindu and Muslim and they don't want you to come. That's why Paul got stoned and whipped five times and beaten with rods three times and imprisoned times without number and was in danger on the streets and in the cities and in the country.

Nobody wanted him to come. The first place he went was the place that wanted him least, the synagogue. Missions is not being invited.

If there's somebody to invite you, it's not a mission field. Mission says, we will learn about these peoples. We will learn about missions' movements.

We will study and preach and pray and advocate until there rises up a growing band in our church of radical, global, Paul-type, frontier, pioneer, culture-crossing, language-learning, lifetime missionaries. The Roman church, the church in Rome, was not a mission field for Paul. Why? There was a good church there.

He was going to Spain. There was nothing in Spain. So, my answer to my first question, what is the task of missions? My answer is, the task is continually crossing cultures, learning languages, penetrating into people groups that have no missional presence, no church, no witness strong enough to do the kind of evangelizing that we say must be done here and indeed must be done here.

Second question, is missions necessary? First question was, what's the task of missions? Second question, is missions necessary? Which breaks down into three questions. Are people perishing? Number two, is Christ's work necessary to save them? Necessary, meaning there isn't any other. And three, do you

have to hear about that in order to benefit from it forever? Or could it save you without your hearing about it? So, let's deal with those three.

Number one, are people perishing? This is the question of hell. An eternal conscious state of torment that God has cast people into as part of His just judgment. Is there such a thing? And my answer is yes.

And where this is denied, the urgency of missions, sooner or later, and usually sooner, dies, no matter what they say. It dies. Urgency.

You may stay committed to some form of it. You know, goodwill, cross the culture, do some social work for a century or two. But as far as missions goes, that urgency will die.

Mark chapter 9, verse 43. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out.

It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. I think the point of saying that the fire of hell is not quenched and the worm of hell does not die is that the horror of hell does not end. That's the point of talking that way.

Fire, unquenchable, worm that does not die. The point is the horror goes on and on and on. Matthew 18, verse 8. If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.

It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. Why would it be called eternal fire? If the eternality of it was irrelevant and as soon as you hit it you were incinerated and became nothing. You might as well go out.

Matthew 25, verse 46. And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life. What's significant about Matthew 25, verse 46 is the paralleling of eternal punishment and eternal life.

Both are eternal and one is called life and we know that's forever because that's what we hope for. And the other is called punishment and being parallel with life also must then go on forever and it's called punishment, not consequence. This is a judicial act by God Almighty that He will give to some.

Jesus said of Judas, it would have been better for that man if he had not been born. Really. If he were destined for glory eventually.

Say the way George MacDonald, C.S. Lewis' old hero, thinks about hell. He thinks hell will burn the hell out of everybody and they'll all be saved. It's a long purgatory.

It'll just take as long as it needs and eventually everybody will be saved. Well, really, what do we say of Judas? If you're destined for glory, it would have been better for you not to have been born. I don't think so.

Not if you're going to get to spend eternity with God eventually. Or if Judas were to be annihilated and there would just be no more Judas at all. How could non-existence at one end be worse than non-existence at the other end? It would be better if he had not been born because what? That he's not

going to exist on this side of life? Non-existence can't be worse than non-existence.

Non-existence is just non-existence. They're not degrees of non-existence. Which means that when Jesus said that, he said something horrific.

It would have been better if he had not been born. Non-existence is better than hell, though non-existence is inconceivable. Revelation chapter 14, it gets more specific as we go along.

And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night, these worshippers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name. The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. That is the strongest Greek expression for eternity imaginable.

You can't imagine, given Greek grammatical constructions, a stronger statement of eternality than the one used here. And this scene in chapter 14 verse 11 is described again in chapter 20 verse 10 like this. The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

So as horrific, breathtakingly horrible as it is to contemplate, the answer is yes, people perish. There is such a thing as hell. It will last forever.

It will be torment, and it will be conscious, and you will be confronted over the next decades with increasingly strong evangelical so-called opposition to this doctrine. Major players that you admire will abandon this. I hope that you stand.

I hope that you read your Bible. I hope that the fear of man and the love of praise by key people will not hinder you from embracing the truth and weeping over it. Second question under this is it necessary question.

Is Christ's work on the cross and in the resurrection, is Christ's work necessary to save people who would otherwise go to hell? Is it necessary? Here I'm asking the question are there other ways? So Christ's way is one way, like the Christian way, but there's a Jewish way. There's a double covenant. Here's a way to heaven.

Here's a way to heaven. Then there's a Muslim covenant. Then there's a Hindu covenant.

And then there's a good conscience covenant and a noble pagan covenant and these ways are all going and fine for you Christians. Just glory in the cross. Glory in the cross.

That's the way God did it for you. But don't carry that all over the world as though everybody has to believe that in order to be saved as though there's no other way that God Almighty could save sinners. That's the question.

And my answer is yes, it is necessary and it is the only way that anybody will be saved is if Christ does the work for them that needs to be done. This is a separate question from when they need to hear about it. I'm getting there in a minute.

Right now we're just dealing with the necessity that the work be done as an essential part of everybody's salvation who is saved. That the only way to be saved is that the death and resurrection of Jesus count for you. Is that the case? And I'm saying it is the case.

It's essential to atone for sin, provide righteousness, remove the wrath of God, conquer death, defeat the evil one, open the door of eternal life. Without Him, none of those things anywhere in the world for anybody would happen. Christ is the way.

1 Timothy 2:5 There is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus. There aren't other mediators. A Muslim mediator, a Hindu mediator, a Jewish mediator, just Christ, Jesus.

And Paul explains why that is in Romans 5. Because he unpacks for us the way God sees the world. Adam, first man, fallen, and everybody by attachment and union with Adam, fallen. Everybody who is a child of Adam, that's everybody, is fallen in Adam.

And then he sets up salvation as a second Adam has come. And that second Adam starts a new humanity so that anyone united to the second Adam now is part of life and righteousness just like the first Adam was death and sin and destruction. So let me read the key verses.

This is Romans 5:17. For if because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man. Reigned where? Afghanistan, India, China, Indonesia, South America, North America. Death reigns everywhere.

This is amazing to me. You talk about relevance. In any tribe or people group on the planet you can preach Romans 5:12-21. There was a first man.

The first man sinned. All of his children share in his corruption, fall and die and sin because of it. A second man has come into the world.

Anybody who goes to the second man who did not sin but died in the place of sinners and lived out the obedience required of them may have his death as their death and his righteousness as their righteousness. That preaches everywhere. Everywhere.

Because it is so global. It is so deeply rooted in humanity. It is not a little cultural thing like Messiah.

For if because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign through the one man, Jesus Christ. Verse 18 Therefore as one trespass led to condemnation for all men You feel how global this is. You feel how absolutely relevant and universal this is.

Therefore as one trespass led to condemnation for all men so one act of righteousness leads to justification in life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners so by one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. So the reason there is one mediator between God and man is because just as one man undid humanity God has a remedy for humanity in the second man, Jesus Christ.

Who establishes a new covenant with us and by union with him we get not sin but righteousness and not death but life. Luke therefore in his form of the Great Commission lets Jesus say Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem. So my answer to the second question is the death and resurrection of Jesus is the incarnation of the Son of God as the second Adam his life of perfect obedience his death in the place of sinners his resurrection triumphant over Satan and sin and death and hell is that necessary for all salvation that happens? The answer is yes.

There is no other way so that when Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life nobody comes to the Father but by me he meant it absolutely. There is no other way. There is no other Muslim way Hindu way Jewish way besides the second Adam revealing the fall of the first Adam which brought all of us into condemnation and there is only one way out of condemnation and that is justification through believing in Christ.

Last question must they hear and believe in order to be saved? Must they hear and believe in order to be saved? This is the question of is it possible that Christ could die for sins and that death for sins count for sinners who don't know about him but who get connected another way so that he really is the ground and basis of their salvation though they don't know he is must a person hear the gospel and believe it in order to be saved and my answer to that question is yes. I wrote in the book Let the Nations Be Glad 30 pages to answer that question a detailed argument from all over the New Testament and I have just a few minutes to try to point in that direction let me make a few clarifying statements before I tackle a few exegesis issues I do not mean that people will be judged at the last day for not believing the gospel if they haven't heard the gospel is this clear?

I will say that sentence again I do not mean that people will be judged and condemned at the last judgment for not believing the gospel if they have never heard the gospel seems to me fairly clear especially in Paul that we are accountable to live according to the revelation that we know and I will read you the key text on that and I am sure you know what it is it is Romans 1.19 listen to the logic of this passage what can be known this is verse 19 of Romans 1 what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them for his invisible attributes namely his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made and then it says therefore they are without excuse that therefore is all important

what is it based on? what can be known about God is plain to them God has shown it to them therefore they are without excuse then he grounds that excuselessness of all people with this word 21 for although they knew God imagine that just stop there and let that sink in every human being knows God the radical atheist that you talk to at work knows God every tribal person you will ever meet in Papua New Guinea or the mountains of Mexico know God for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him therefore they are without excuse so here's the clarification when I say a person must hear the gospel in order to be saved at all I do not mean that if he doesn't hear the gospel he will be condemned for not hearing the gospel he will be condemned that he has not owned

the revelation that he has but has suppressed it and they all have suppressed it if you think that there's an exception like maybe Cornelius well there are and God always does a Peter thing for them we have zero reason to believe that if there's a Cornelius anywhere in the world God would not give a vision to Peter to get him there if you say yeah but if he doesn't get there Cornelius would still be saved I say dream on you build a theology around that you will gut missions and you will stand in the air the only warrant we have for getting excited about Cornelius is God let a sheet down in front of Peter's face to get him moving towards Cornelius and maybe tonight in your sleep he will get you going for the Cornelius in Bhutan don't you resist him if he does all have sinned and fall short

of the glory of God and Romans 2.12 all who have sinned without the law will perish without the law period they'll perish there are people who perish who have the law and there are people who don't have the law and perish Christ has come into the world and here's what I'm arguing I'm arguing that when Christ came into the world something in God's plan for the ages dramatically and fundamentally altered in the way God

acts toward the world because until Christ came what were those times called they were called times of ignorance in Acts 14 the times of ignorance God overlooked Acts 17 God overlooked but now this is Paul finishing the message on Mars Hill the Areopagus he's finishing it just before they mock him silent but now he calls all men everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day

on which he will judge all men by a man whom he has validated by raising him from the dead when God sent his son brought him to the cross bore sins raised him from the dead seated him at the right hand when God did that God related to the world differently now go he says now go why didn't he say go to Isaiah why didn't he say go to Abraham why did he pass over the nations for 2,000 plus years and focus on Israel my answer to that question is Christ hadn't come because when he comes now he'll be lifted up crucified risen manifestly covering sins manifestly being the second Adam manifestly bearing sins manifestly providing righteousness so that all over the world the message would be look, look, look and Christ would get the glory for all the nations gathered until he comes you can't have

the great commission but once he comes you cannot not have the great commission something changed dramatically when Christ entered into the world so don't hear me this is another clarifying parenthesis don't hear me saying oh, so if you have to hear and believe the gospel in order to be saved then the saints in the Old Testament couldn't be saved well, they could they obviously were they were saved by believing in the promises of God that in some way, somehow with progressive and increasing clarity their sins would be dealt with appropriately because the blood of bulls and goats can't take away sin and they knew it but the saints knew it something's got to be done here something Isaiah 53 like has got to be done and we're not sure how and when and where and we're searching in and

wondering all about that but we believe it will be done and on that faith they were saved but now no more incognito Christians because he's here and the message is go show him to the world tell him to the world everything changes when it comes to the incarnation and the work of Jesus let me read you that passage that I stumbingly quoted Acts 17 30 the times of ignorance God overlooked but now it's such an important now but now he commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead let me draw out one other biblical theme that makes this clear you know the theme of the mystery of Christ the mystery of Christ that's a

Pauline phrase what is it? what's the mystery of Christ? what text would you go to? well you'd go to Ephesians 3 wouldn't you? let me read Ephesians 3 6 the mystery is that the Gentiles the nations are fellow heirs members of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel that's the key phrase what's the mystery? the mystery is that for long ages something wasn't revealed namely all those nations out there the Perizzites the Hittites the Jebusites the Amorites the Ammonites the Edomites all those pagan uncircumcised catfish eating unclean nations are coming in they're coming in when and how? they're coming in through the gospel and so the command of a global great commission did not happen until the Messiah was there to be lifted up among the nations we

don't go with a vague message about getting right with God we go with news news news he's come he's died he's risen he's triumphant all who believe will not perish but have eternal life this is news we should take it to our cities missional we should take it to the unreached peoples missions it's news and the reason that news now must be heard and believed is because Christ has come Christ has come and God has oriented all saving faith on Him so that Acts chapter 4 verse 12 there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved now very often we quote that

verse and we don't highlight a word in it that helps overcome an objection namely that oh sure I don't have a problem with saying that Christ is the only means by which people

are saved they just don't have to know about it I could name names of people that are alive and teaching with the label evangelical who believe that today I'll highlight the word that I'm talking about there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name why do you say that? there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved it isn't merely the work of Christ that saves people it's hearing and knowing a name whoever believes and calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved Paul defines his apostleship to the nations this way in Romans 1-5 an apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations you feel the passion here you feel what God is up to here he didn't send his son into the world to do incognito salvation I got

saved but I don't know who the basis of it was he did not send him to save people incognito he sent him so that his name would be lifted up that he'd be given a name which is above every other name so that as we walk to the nations we wave a huge flag Jesus!

Jesus!

Lord of all King of kings believe he died he rose this is news that's why he sent him that's why the great commission awaited for his coming and that's why Peter in Acts 4 says there's no other name and that's why Paul says my whole apostleship is to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of the name and then you get to this amazing passage and we're almost done another few minutes this is Romans 10 13 everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved but how will they call upon one of whom they haven't heard and how shall they I left one out how shall they call upon one whom they haven't believed and how shall they believe in him whom they haven't heard and how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach unless they be sent how beautiful are the feet

the bloody feet the mountain climbing feet the blistered feet the diseased feet of those who preach goodness for the glory of Christ God has ordained that all saving faith have him as its conscious object say it again for the glory of Christ God has ordained that since the incarnation all saving faith will have Christ crucified and risen as its conscious object how are people born again according to 1 Peter 1 23 to 25 you were born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible through the living and abiding word of God that word is the gospel which we preach that's verse 23 and 25 I left out 24 how are men born again through the living and abiding word of God the gospel which we preached there is zero warrant in the bible for believing anyone is born again who has not heard and

believed the gospel the gospel is the holy spirit spear for penetrating a dead heart and bringing the life of the spirit and where that gospel is missing there is no biblical warrant for believing there is life new birth comes through the word which means and here's the wonder you know I didn't mention in my initial list of goals one that's always there namely in a room with this many folks in it unashamedly I am praying at this moment Lord do it that there be several hundred who will lay your life down on the mission field I know there are a lot of pastors here and some of you are going to get restless and the reason you're going to get restless is because the sheets coming down and the animals are there and they speak all kinds of weird languages and you say I can't learn language and

the Lord says don't you say that I'm your God all things are possible with me and so I'm praying that you will as I read this I think it's my last verse second to the last verse really second to the last I hope God will touch you right now I've just said that nobody can be born again apart from the word of God the Holy Spirit

who is sovereign in awakening the dead and giving life to the soul does it through the agency of the gospel nevertheless Jesus said to Paul on the Damascus road these words in chapter 26 verse 17 and 18 I am sending you to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God that they may have forgiveness of sins and a place among all those who are sanctified by faith in me now that is awesome Paul can't open anybody's eyes

they're dead they're blind the God of this world has blinded them their own hardness has blinded them only the Holy Spirit can open the eyes of the blind and raise the dead and he says to Paul I'm sending you to Spain I don't care what their religion is I'm going with you and when we land there their eyes will open when you speak the gospel of my death and resurrection I am sending you to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and have a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me what a calling what a calling those who go and I haven't gone so don't feel in any way indicted if you're a local pastor those who go have a remarkable assurance lo I am with you always and this is what I do

through frail imperfect Paul type people I do miracles I open eyes I raise the dead so that they can have forgiveness so all true biblical missional people are passionate about missions period if you're not what would Mark Driscoll say at this point Idolater I'm walking over here well I'm not going to do that don't you love diversity you're just not authentically missional if you don't love labor for and awaken that group of people in your church to be radically devoted to the unreached peoples of the world so let's just close with a summary what's the task of missions continually crossing cultures and learning languages in order to plant the church with its full missional life in people groups where there is no church is it necessary that is are people perishing yes there is a real

eternal conscious hell of torment yes Christ died in order to rescue people from it for the glory of God and eternal joy and there is no other way and yes you must hear about it and believe it in order to be saved because Jesus said and I close with this text again it cannot be said too often all who call upon the name of the Lord name name all who call upon the heralded name of Jesus will be saved but how shall they call upon the one they haven't believed and how shall they believe in the one that they haven't heard about and how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach unless they be sent and how shall no it stops there how beautiful are the feet of those the feet of those who preach goodness father in heaven forgive our idolatries that have gotten in the way of our

being both missional and devoted to missions and grant that this band of people here would tell stories in the decades to come of how you showed up at this conference in every speaker you showed up and decisive life changing things were done come do the missionary ones right now call out missionaries to go to the unreached peoples of the world and call out pastors to establish in their churches a band of people the frontier fellowship or whatever it would be called who would give themselves to educating the rest of the church and keeping on the front burner of prayer the unreached peoples of the world do that and a thousand more things I pray in Jesus name amen

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/-a4Uru0argY.mp4>

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