

Title: Remembering the Mission (desired response)
Theme: Missionary heart of God

Text: Acts 1:8
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Followers of Christ Jesus have a mandate to tell the world about the Gospel, “Great is our salvation.” Romans 1:16-17 says it all...For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’”

Dr. Luke, companion of the Apostle Paul, will remind us in the book of Acts that we have a Great Commission. In fact, we find each Gospel and the book of Acts giving Christians the Great Commission.

The Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Mark 16:15 And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.

Luke 24:46-48 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things.

John 20:21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

If you have a Bible turn to Acts chapter 1 starting at verse 6. This is the English Standard Version

So, when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" **7** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." **9** And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, **11** and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

This scene opens the book of Acts that develops in the narratives of the mission that follows. Chapters 1 to 7 are Jerusalem, Chapters 8-12 are Judea and Samaria, and Chapters 13 to 28 are to the ends of the earth.

Today I want to speak to you about those three (3) areas of witness

#1 Jerusalem... “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem...”

A witness is an individual who, being present, personally sees or perceives a thing; a beholder, spectator, or eyewitness. The scene is important. These men had witnessed the death, 40 days ago! Now they see the resurrection, and ascension of their Messiah. Most of them were untrained men from working class vocations. They spent three (3) years with their Rabbi Jesus. Although they came from other small towns in Galilee now they were in Jerusalem. The center of the world, the center of the world for them. Jerusalem, the city of peace that King David conquered. Jerusalem the home of God’s Chosen People. Jerusalem the most important city in the world for them.

The original word for witness is μάρτυρας mártyras, where we get Martyr. These witnesses were given power (that is Dunimas) to tell the world this wonderful and amazing truth.

The one and only God has fulfilled His word to send a savior that would redeem (buy back from sin's condemnation) all who believe. God had given a promise, in fact, many promises, that started in Genesis chapter three. God's oath against Satan in His **Prologue**

Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

God gave the **provision** to all through the Patriarchs starting in Genesis 12. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

He called a **people** out of slavery to himself in Exodus 19. Obey my voice and keep my covenant

He set a **place** of rest in Deuteronomy 12. He gives you rest from all your enemies

He gave the **throne** of David forever in 2 Samuel 7. I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever

He gives **Life** that was promised in Ecclesiastics 3. He has made everything beautiful in its time, putting eternity into man's heart

And of course, the Messiah was **prophetically** announced from the 9th to the 5th century B.C. prophets, Day of the Lord, Servant of the Lord, Renewal of the Lord, Kingdom of the Lord, and Triumph of the Lord...fulfilled in Jesus.

We come here today with the inheritance of this great message. With a power to transform all who believe.

#2 Judea... "You will be my witnesses in Judea and Samaria..." Samaria was north and Judea was south

In Acts 15:26 it says in the original, "Men who have given up their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." They risked their lives for the name. Judea is to the south of Jerusalem and it has a wilderness...a desert. A place where you may wander, a place where scrolls could be hidden in the hills near the Dead Sea.

Many years ago, I was a wanderer. I was born in 1953 when the armistice ended the major conflict in Korea and people were singing "How much is that Doggie in the Window." As a young man I was tossed about by the youth culture of my day. Barry McGuire had been singing "Eve of Destruction." Simon and Garfunkel sang "Bridge over Troubled Water," and Three Dog Night sang "Joy to the World." But I was restless and decided to travel. From one end of this great country to the other. I started in Illinois, went to California, back through Illinois and therapeutics because of drug problems, then down to Florida where I saw Led Zeppelin singing "Stairway to Heaven." I tell you I lived for my self and cared not for anyone or anything. When I was 18 I missed the draft and Buffalo Springfield was singing "For What it's Worth" somethings happening here, and what it is ain't exactly clear. By the time I was 20 I had wandered to south Florida where I took a job in a concrete plant. I would batch concrete into trucks in the morning and the afternoon. I had free time to read or do whatever as I waited for the early trucks to return. One day I was swearing at one of the drivers and the night watchman was near-by. He said I should watch my mouth as I would give account of all things I said about God while using his name in vain. It made me think after he challenged me to rethink my foolish ways about drugs, socialism, atheism, and my very life. I began to search in the New Testament after I wrote home asking my folks to pray for me. I read the whole New Testament in a few weeks and realized I needed to do something. There in my Judean Wilderness I came to understand how and why anyone must receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Like Keith Green Love broke through but not like Blind Faith I came into the presence of the True Lord. I needed to believe what the Bible

said as in John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

FOR GOD—our salvation is all of God. Eph 2:4-5

SO, LOVED THE WORLD—Active and pursuing, not angry

THAT HE GAVE—He initiates

HIS ONLY SON—nothing else will save us

THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES—you can’t believe if you are dead

IN HIM-- so he makes us alive in Christ, giving us the trust in the beloved

SHOULD NOT PERISH—the saved walk in the light, the dead remain in darkness forever

BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE—beyond our greatest expectation of joy forever

I needed to understand that believing was more than head knowledge, that it meant to be persuaded of, to place confidence in, to trust, to completely rely upon, and to have faith in someone or something. Like B.J. Thomas I was “Hooked on a Feeling.”

I had to repent which means to change my mind and attitude regarding God, Sin, and Self.

God must be recognized as not only a God of love, mercy, and grace, but also of holiness, righteousness, and justice, who hates sin and has justly passed the sentence of death upon all people as a result of sin. Look for yourself to Genesis 2:17 or Romans 5:12-14

Sin must be acknowledged for what it is—any independent attitude or act that violates God’s holy and moral law. As Q? 14 of the Shorter Catechism asks...What is sin? A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God. Unlike Norman Greenbaum’s Spirit in the Sky, I did sin.

You can understand God’s law from Exodus 20 as well as 1 John 5:17. Sadly, I always knew I was a sinner. I had done many things that I was truly ashamed of and to this day cannot believe I was so willfully against God.

Self must be understood as sinful and guilty before God’s righteous and holy demands. I could never do enough good works to save myself from the fate that awaited me. And of course, every religion says “Do more, but it is never enough.”

So, what I did was one night I knelt down in front of my waterbed in the house I was renting with some other guys and prayed believing Acts 16:31 Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.

This was an act of faith that was given to me by God himself to believe that Jesus Christ could save me from the punishment of my sin and transform my life into a life that was eternal.

Starting a new way that would be ever so pleasing to God and to my family. Hallelujah I was saved. When I got up I was a new man as 2 Cor 5:17 says. I cut my hair, went to school, found a wonderful woman, got married, finished school, started ministry, had children and after 68 years of life and 43 years of marriage and 41 years doing ministry I continually find that God is faithful and full of grace.

Finally witness three

#3 The end of the earth... “You will be my witnesses to the end of the earth...”

That is why we preach the name. Acts 15:26 it says in the original, “Men who have given up their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” They risked their lives for the name.

God knew that the early Christians could not stay close to home, they had to go to the regions beyond. They needed to be witnesses all over the world. God chose the disciples and anointed them as Apostles. An emissary, an ambassador, a sent out one. They traveled throughout their world to teach the whole counsel of God

Never forget the plight of Humankind

1. Rejection—Romans 1:21-22 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools.
2. Alienation—Romans 1:24-25 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.
3. Domination—Romans 1:29-32 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.
4. Condemnation—Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

And 2 Thess 1:9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

Hell is not the choice of God, it is the choice of humankind that wants to reject God.

Our message is not for bad people to become good, but for dead people to come to life!

Do not fall to the pragmatic view, do not say "I'll do whatever works." Find the truth in the Gospel and Live it, teach it, preach it, and Die for it.

Remember, what you win them with is what you win them to.

Here we are today in the great afterwards of God's redeeming work from the story of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension that has gone out to all the world.

Let us pray

Father, we thank You for the testimony of a faithful saints who in the midst of circumstances found their strength in You. We thank You, Lord, that it is Your will to purge and purify, and cleanse us from sin through difficulty, and particularly through persecution as we are bold for Christ. May we know that same faith and life as you took your church through in the book of ACTS and help us to be bold for Christ, So, test us, Lord, as we are faithful. Begin that judgment with us, that Your church might be clean, useful to You, and we'll thank You for such a privilege; and that though we are judged here and now, we will be forever free from any judgment, only to share in your eternal glory. May this be the day that we remain repentant of and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and God, our Redeemer. We pray in the great name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Yeshua HaMashiach, Amen.