

## It's Time to Go

This morning I want to take a break from Colossians and I want to take 45 or so minutes to get you to consider spending the rest of your lives as foreign missionaries. I'm not talking about supporting missionaries, I'm not talking about praying for missionaries, I'm not talking about encouraging missionaries or even going on short term mission trips. Those are all good things. But what I want is - whether you are 4 or 44 or 74 to consider spending the rest of your days on the mission field.

And let me say, that's not because somehow missionaries are super Christians. I was saved when I was a teenager and I always looked at missionaries as these super Christians. These guys who ate weird food in weird places with no air conditioning and seemed to be somewhat crazy and socially a little out of place. But in my mind they were somehow greater Christians than the average.

Let me tell you, missionaries are not super Christians. Missionaries are just like your family. They struggle, they fight, they have hardships, they doubt, they get discouraged, they make mistakes, they sin. The only difference between you and a missionary is that at some point in their lives God so impressed on their heart the need to go that they went. They couldn't not go. They were compelled to go.

They were compelled to go despite needing - in some cases - years of education, despite years of frustration and discouragement raising financial support. I had one missionary tell me several years ago that a lot of churches that invite missionaries to speak don't even let them talk about financial needs. I don't know if you've shopped for airline tickets, they don't barter for preaching. I tried. But they go despite leaving their friends and family and comfort of life in America. They went knowing that where they were going would often take years to learn a language, years to just fit in, years to make friends, years to even talk to one person about Jesus. Years to establish what we might call a church.

That's what I want to call you to this morning. That's what I want all of you to consider. I don't care how old you are or young you are, there are opportunities for missions for you. I want you to lay awake at night wondering if God is calling you. And I want you to actually pray - however crazy it might seem - that God might compel you to go.

If next week half of you showed up and said, "Jason, we're selling everything we have and moving across the world to preach Jesus and I'm not really sure how we are going to survive and I'm not sure how you're going to survive" we would do all that we could to equip you, to ensure that you were truly qualified, that you were already doing everything you could right now to spread the gospel, and if so we would send you. Unless you have something compelling you to stay, I am compelling you to go.

You might ask: Jason, why this message and why now? Where is all of this coming from? Several reasons all coming together at once. First, is books. Two books actually - books written by faithful men and women have a way of shaping us and changing us. I just finished a book called *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer where he discusses the age old difficulty of reconciling God's sovereignty over all things and his command that we go preach. Those two teachings are not at odds, and Packer does a great job presenting them and the necessity of going.

The other book is called *Radical* by David Platt. And Platt is radical. I first read *Radical* 7 years ago and it forever changed the way I view my life in American society. It forever changed the way I see my mission in the world. We have just a short time here on this earth to make a profound eternal difference for the Kingdom of Christ. At the same time we have access to such rich teaching and training here in America that I think we are blessed with the ability to send the most trained people to the very ends of the earth.

The second reason is that I was listening to the testimony of some missionaries a couple weeks ago and it occurred to me that at some point they were challenged to go. She wanted to go, he didn't; but eventually God changed his heart. But at some point both of them were challenged to go. And as I listened to them I realized that I don't often encourage you to go - and I need to. As much as I want to raise up leaders and teachers here at Redeemer Bible Church, as much as I want all of us to mature in Christ to bless our community, I want to

raise up men and women who are trained at RBC and then use what they know to go and preach the glory of God in Jesus Christ where he is not known.

Third, is that we are commanded to go. There is a sense in which we are out in the middle of the nations. We're about as far from Jerusalem as you can get so someone could make a case that this is the uttermost ends of the earth and we can preach here - and of course we do. But we also know that there are people groups all over the world who don't know the gospel. Don't even have a word for grace or forgiveness. And the Lord commands us to go. He commands us to go to nations where Jesus is not named and disciple them. They are our brothers and sisters; they just haven't believed yet.

Think about this: Every night we go to bed and we wake up and in that stretch of time 50,000 people have died around the world. Most of those have never believed the gospel. Most who have never even heard the gospel. Most who don't live anywhere near a group of genuine believers who might call themselves a church. Or if they do, most of what passes as the church around the world is the false teaching of the prosperity gospel.

In America we have a wealth of Bible translations. Often to the point we argue about which one is the best - that argument is a luxury we can be thankful for. Because of the 7,000 active languages on the planet right now only 9% of them have a complete Bible in their language. Ninety one percent of all languages don't even have one complete translation.

The hope of Jesus Christ that we so often take for granted, the Bible we have that so often lays unopened, billions of people don't have. We have a church and the Bible and the financial means to send people where Jesus is not known and we need to go.

What I want to do this morning is to give you my case for missions. To give you my case for why you should go. Not why **people** should go. But why **you** should go. I have 3 points and they're all from here in Romans.

1) You should go because without the gospel people are going to hell. **Read 16-23**

What I want us to see here from Romans is that without the gospel people are going to face the wrath of God in hell.

**Side:** I think we need to use the word hell or the phrase lake of fire or the wrath of God because the Bible uses those terms. A lot of times we say unbelievers are separated from God or they go into eternity without Jesus or those kinds of things. But I have to tell you, I think all that does is try to ease our conscience a little bit. We're trying to console ourselves that where they go isn't so bad. Every time I make a fire in my fire pit in my backyard I am reminded that while I'm being warmed by the fire, many are burned by fire.

The place where unbelievers go Jesus calls torment and flame and anguish (**Luke 16:19-31**). Jesus calls this place Gehenna. Gehenna was a garbage dump outside of Jerusalem where trash was continually burned. The flame never went out. That's what hell is like. We can't soften that up and be faithful to the Bible. And without believing the gospel that's where people go.

And Paul makes that clear here. This is the hard reality we have to embrace, this is the very reason we do missions: because those who do not hear the gospel cannot be saved. There is no salvation apart from knowledge of and belief in Jesus. And a person cannot know about Jesus just by looking at creation around them. You could be at the top of Mt. Everest looking down on all of God's creation, look up and see the billions of stars and acknowledge someone had to have made them. But that knowledge alone is not enough to save. Unless someone tells you about Jesus you'll never know him. **Read 18**

I once had a friend who said that this verse actually proved that people who never hear the gospel can be saved. "See, God is revealed from heaven" they said. What's it say? The wrath of God. The anger of God. That's what's revealed to all creation. The wrath of God toward the ungodly who suppress the truth about God.

See, we often have in our mind that maybe somewhere on the planet there is a person who hasn't heard the gospel. Maybe a whole tribe who hasn't heard the gospel. And what we think - or hope - is that in the innocence of their heart they want to know God, they want to worship him in purity and joy. They're doing the best they can to worship God with what they know and why would God ever be angry at that person? Why would God ever send them to hell?

I'll be the first to say that *if* that person existed God might have some mercy. But Paul's point here is that that person doesn't exist. There is no innocent guy in South America who looks around at creation and loves God with all of his heart and soul and mind and strength, he just doesn't know about Jesus. Paul says that guy doesn't exist.

And because that guy doesn't exist, it's not God's mercy and grace and salvation and kindness that is revealed. It's God's wrath that he reveals to all creation. Why is that? Why is God angry with creation? It's because even what little bit about God they do know, they reject. **Read 18-20**

Did you get that? God is angry at them because they suppress the truth about God. What little bit they know about God they reject.

**Vs. 19** says that what can be known about God is plain to them. What can we know about God just by looking around at creation? Paul says we can know he exists / he's powerful / he's creative / he loves beauty / he loves patterns / he loves order. God has shown all these things to them. **Read 19-20**

God has not hidden himself from people. He did reveal himself and his attributes to them. But what did they do? They rejected what they did know. **Read 20-23**

See, they know God is out there. Not "know" in the sense that they are saved but they know God exists and is powerful.

But instead of praising him and thanking him with what little they know, they dishonor God. Tribal people don't honor God. Hindus don't honor God. They don't look around at the universe and think to praise him. In fact, they don't even thank him. No one, in the futility of their mind, thanks the Triune God of the universe. They might thank some idol they've made, but not God.

There's this weird thing that happens for secularist every Thanksgiving - and that's: who do they thank? Who are they thankful to? Most secularists say they are thankful to family, friends, so on. But it's an odd holiday for them because Thanksgiving revolves around thanks to God. But they don't believe in God so they can't be thankful to him. Which makes them no better off than the tribal people because not only do they not honor God, they don't even thank God.

This is true with those who don't have the gospel. They don't honor God, they don't thank God, and their hearts are darkened. **Read 22-23**

Those without the gospel claim that they know the true way. Almost every culture in the world has their religious expert. They have their witch doctor, their priest, their imam, their spiritist. Even atheists often say they believe in karma or ghosts or superstition.

In every culture there are those who claim to be wise and knowledgeable about spiritual things. But they're not. They've exchanged God for trinkets. They worship animals and the creation.

We shouldn't be surprised that this happens all around the world, it happens right here in our country! People refuse to thank God or even acknowledge his existence. And they drive by churches all the time. People worship trees and wolves and barn owls and frogs and wildlife reserves. They'd lay down their life for a frog, but they don't even acknowledge the one who made the frog. They are under the wrath of God.

Moms, imagine you spent all day making a special meal for your family. You bought all the best ingredients, slaved away all day to bless your family. And when you tell them dinner is ready they look at you and say:

you're not my mom. I don't have a mom. You didn't make this food. You don't provide anything for me. I made this food. It's almost comical, isn't it? It's dishonoring.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness because this is exactly what people do to God. They don't love him, they reject him. Let that sink in. Let that weigh on you.

When I first heard this it was hard for me to swallow. God would punish those who don't even know about Jesus? Why does God send people to hell? He sends them to hell because they sin and the Bible is clear that we are all what? Sinners.

Here's the sobering reality: there is nowhere in the Bible where there is even a hint of the idea that someone can be saved without hearing about Jesus and believing in Jesus. There's nowhere that says people can go to heaven, be saved, have their sins forgiven just by looking around at creation.

Just the opposite is true. **Look at Rom. 3:9-20.** This is the spiritual state of all creation. **Read**

This is all creation. All creation, whether they hear the gospel or not is under this judgment. **Read 23**

There are no exceptions. All humanity is born into sin. And they have to hear the message of the gospel to be saved.

**Acts 4:12:** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which **we must** be saved.

To be saved a person must know about and believe in Jesus. It's not optional.

**1 Tim 2:5:** For there is one God, and there is one - only one - mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Beloved, if people could get to heaven without hearing the gospel message, why should we go preach it? If there's some other way, some other route to heaven - even if it's ignorance - why spend all the time and money and effort and hardship to get missionaries on the field to preach the gospel to the heathen? Because there is no other way.

Let that weigh on your heart. You need to feel that. Do you feel a sense of desperation? A sense of hopelessness? A sense of urgency? I hope that you do. To quote Charles Spurgeon: "If you have no desire that the lost should be saved, you're not saved yourself, be sure of that!"

The moment our eyes are opened to the gospel, the moment we are saved, we should realize those around us who need it. If you're on a boat that's been shipwrecked and you're passed out at sea, the moment you wake up and realize you have a life jacket on you desire to see others saved from drowning. The world is drowning.

2) You should go because you have the life preserver of the gospel. **Turn to Rom. 5:6-11.**

If you are a Christian this morning, you have the truth that all of humanity needs to hear to be saved. It's not a lot of information, it's not a complex message. But it's the message you believed. And if you're a believer you can explain it to people. You can call people to believe in Jesus. **Read 6-8**

This is the most basic message of the gospel. When humanity was weak - when humanity was sinful and powerless to save ourselves - Jesus died for sinners. That's what Paul means in **Vs. 6**. This is called substitution. Jesus is God, he is perfect, he is righteous. We are sinful and depraved and we deserve God's wrath. And so when Jesus died on the cross what he was doing was dying to pay the penalty of sin for those who would believe in him. And Paul makes an interesting point about how radical this is in **Vs. 7**. **Read**

So there's not a lot of people who would even die for a righteous person. We like righteous people, we like do-gooders, but not a lot of people would lay down their life for them.

Now there might be a few more people who would die for a good person. That sounds odd to us because righteous seems better than good. But in the Bible good is actually better than righteous. Jesus says: who is good but? God alone. So it goes sinners, then righteous, then good. No one dies for sinners, maybe someone somewhere would die for the righteous, and maybe a few people would die for good people because they're almost like God in their character. But what does God do? **Read 8**

This is how amazing God's love is. Where we might just maybe die for a really, really godly person, Jesus died in the place of billions of wretched, rebellious sinners.

We are all sinners. We are all deserving of God's wrath in the flames of hell forever. But in God's love he sent his Son to die for us. But listen, Jesus's blood doesn't just magically cover everyone. Not everyone's sins are forgiven. Not everyone will escape hell. Not everyone will go to heaven.

How do you receive forgiveness? You have to go to Jesus. You go to the only one who died for sins. The only one who was raised to life. The only one who will judge your life by every single thing you've ever said and done. And go and you beg. You beg for forgiveness. You beg Jesus to cover your sins by his blood. Like the tax collector who was so burdened by his sin he couldn't even look to heaven, he couldn't even look up - you cry out for mercy. "Jesus, please cover my sin by your blood. Jesus please forgive me for my iniquity. Jesus please, when I am dead and body is dust, raise my body to glorious life just like you were raised from the dead. I have nothing to earn your favor, I have only sin to offer. Please save me from the wrath my sins deserve"

And you know what Jesus will do? He will forgive you.

**Matt. 11:28:** Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

If you come to Jesus in humble faith and repentance he will never ever throw you out. **Read 9-10**

When you come to Jesus asking for forgiveness, he says "My blood covers your sin. My blood saves you from the atomic bomb of the wrath of God." And you have reconciliation with God. The God of the universe who 10 minutes ago would have exploded wrath on you for all eternity now loves you as much as he loves his own Son, Jesus Christ. Beloved this is why we call the gospel "Good news!" Look at what our response should be.

**Read 11**

We rejoice in this message! Through Jesus, God is no longer our enemy, he is our friend / Father / Savior. God is for us and will bless us forever.

Listen, I'm not done with my message, I have one more point to go. But if you've never done this, if you've never gone to Jesus to plead with him to forgive you, you need to go to him. Salvation is not just a theological math problem where we know all the right answers to Bible questions. No, you have to go to Jesus or there is no eternal life for you. Even if you know more theology and Bible information than every other person in this room, you still have to humble yourself and go to Jesus and ask for his forgiveness.

Your sins aren't too big for Jesus. Your baggage isn't too offensive for Jesus. Your situation isn't too complex for Jesus. The ocean of God's grace in Jesus will easily cover the worst of all your sins.

This message saves us and it saves anyone who believes. This is the message we have that the nations do not. It's the only message that matters.

3) We need to go because God saves people only through the preaching of this message. **Turn to Rom. 10:9-17.** So people need the gospel, we have the gospel, and here we need to go preach the gospel. Paul here talks about the gospel message again. **Read 9-13**

Believing in the death and resurrection and lordship of Jesus is the foundation of our salvation. My little guy Brian is learning to pray and he asked me a week ago why we call Jesus our Savior. What does it mean that he

saves us? And the best I can, I tell him that to save someone is to deliver them, to rescue them from harm. When we believe in Jesus we are saved from God's own wrath for us.

And Paul makes it clear: everyone who calls on Jesus will be saved. None will be refused who cry out to him. Jew, Greek, rich, poor, broken home, nuclear family, American, Chinese - all who call on Jesus for salvation will be saved.

But there's one catch. And it's a big one. **Read 14-15**

The catch is that people have to hear the message. They have to hear the gospel. You can't call on Jesus if you don't believe in him. You can't believe in him if you've never heard of him. You can't hear about him if someone doesn't tell you. People can't tell others if they don't go. They won't go unless we send them.

There's no other option. We need those who will tell others about Jesus. We need those whose feet are beautiful because they take the Bible and tell people about Jesus to those who have never heard him. And here's the result. **Read 16-17**

Not all will believe. Many go to the mission field and are there for decades and no one believes. Or only a few believe. When Adoniram Judson went to Burma in the 1800s it was 4 years before his first convert. When he died 40 years later there were millions of believers. Millions who had faith because they heard the Word of Christ, which is the gospel.

That's what I'm calling every single person here to this morning. As radical and unlikely as it might seem for you. As entrenched in your life as you might be. To go where Christ hasn't been named and preach the Word to those who will be our brothers and sisters once they hear and believe.

**Pray**