

Deeper in Missions

Jeremiah 29:13-14a

¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you," declares the LORD...

Report on the Next Generation Offering.

\$36,063.96

- Maintaining the strength of this church is not just about the saints here, or the impact that we have on Birmingham area.
- It's about all of the Global Partners who have gone down in the mines on ropes held by this church.

History of the Assemblies of God

- LifeChurch Birmingham is an Assembly of God church.
- That is the tribe we belong to.
- That is our historical roots and that is our association.
- The reason the Assemblies of God was formed was to provide relational accountability, doctrinal stability, establish a ministerial training school and coordinate and cooperate to establish a missions mechanism.
- In other words, the revival of the early 1900's ignited churches and as they began to experience this Revival accompanied with supernatural signs and wonders they wanted to come together to help make sure they did everything in their power to share it with the world.
- Right now we have over 2,600 missionaries in over 150 countries. (195 countries)
- We are a missional church.
- We are missions minded.
- We are missions practicing
- We are a church that loves missionaries.
- We are a church that supports missionaries.
- One of the reasons we exist is to make it possible for the Gospel to be shared with the World.

Announcement

This Saturday we have our Missions Banquet at 5:00 PM

Because we celebrate missions and missionaries.

And it's fun to come together and eat.

Outreach

- In 2023 we shared the Gospel with over 800 people during the year through our outreach ministries.
- Most all do no call LifeChurch Birmingham Home.
- So these are not our people and many of them are not “church people” but they are God’s people – who he created in his image and likeness.
- We distributed over
 - 31.3 tons of food
 - Over 52,000 meals.

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Unpack

- We use the word “lost” in different ways.
- It can mean you have misplaced something, and it may be in perfect working order if you can just find it.
- Or we say he lost his life savings in the stock market crash.
- That doesn’t mean he misplaced it, and it is in good working order, and he will find it someday. No he won’t. It’s gone. Forever.
- Or we hear the dread words from the surgeon who is desperately trying to save the life of your sister after an automobile accident, and he comes into the waiting room and says quietly, “We lost her.”
- Or you go read a list of names in an old whaling town in Massachusetts under the title “lost at sea.” That doesn’t mean they are misplaced, and you will find them. It means they are at the bottom of the ocean.

Lost in the New Testament

- In Luke 15:24, the father in the parable of the prodigal son says, “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was *lost*, and is found.”
- The parallel of the lost son is dead.
- And Jesus knew what he was saying with the word *dead*, because he had said earlier, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead” Luke 9:60.
- There are living dead just like Paul says in Ephesians 2:5 — “even while we were dead in our trespasses and sins, God made us alive.”
- The lost are dead. Spiritually dead. Unresponsive to God.

In Luke 19:10 Jesus said, “The Son of Man came to seek and to *save* the lost.”

- The lost don't just need finding; they need saving.
- This is why Jesus came into the world — not only to find people, but to save people.
- “You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
- The lost are dead in their sins and need saving in a way that only Jesus can do.

Mine and Rope Illustration

- Missions is like the miner who is willing to penetrate deep into a mine which has never been explored, with no one to guide.
- It comes from William Carey, who blazed the trail to India in 1792, and saw his mission as a miner penetrating into a deep mine — which had never been explored, with no one to guide.
- He said to Andrew Fuller and John Ryland and his other pastor friends
 - “I will go down, if you will hold the rope.”
- And John Ryland reports: “He took an oath from each of us, at the mouth of the pit, to this effect—that ‘while we lived, we should never let go of the rope.’”
 - (Morden, *Offering Christ to the World*, 167).

Ten reasons why we are a missions church

- **Ten reasons to either go down into the mine or hold onto the rope so someone else can go and rescue.**

And as I give you these, I pray that that they will burn in your soul — for some of you as a God-given compulsion to go. And for others, as a God-given compulsion to send. And when I am done, I will ask those with a compelling sense of God's cross-cultural leading to come and let me pray for you. This one last time.

I. To Make God's Name Famous.

- A. God is passionately committed to the fame of his name and that he be worshipped by all the peoples of the world.
- B. This is not egotistical, it is love.

Psalm 96:3

Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all people

Isaiah 12:4

Make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.

Romans 15:9

As it is written:

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;
I will sing the praises of your name.”

Romans 9:17

For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

II. Worship Is the Goal

- A. Worship is the goal and the fuel of missions.
- B. Missions exists because worship doesn’t.
- C. Missions is our way of saying: the joy of knowing Christ is not a private, or tribal, or national or ethnic privilege.
 - 1. It is for all. And that’s why we go.
 - 2. Because we have tasted the joy of worshiping Jesus, and we want all the families of the earth included.

Psalm 22:27

All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,

- D. The joy of our worship is the fuel for seeking the worship of the nations.
 - 1. You can’t commend what you don’t cherish.
 - 2. You can’t proclaim what you don’t prize.
- E. Worship is the fuel and the goal of missions.

III. There Is Salvation in No One Else

- A. People must be told about Jesus.
 - 1. Because there is no salvation, and no worship where the gospel of the crucified and risen Son of God is not heard and believed.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

Romans 10:17

So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ.

1 John 5:12

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Matthew 28:19

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations...

- B. There will be no salvation and no true worship among people who have not heard the gospel.
- C. Missions is essential for salvation.

IV. God Is Committed to the Nations

- A. God is committed to gathering worshipers from all the peoples of the world, not just all the countries of the world.
- B. This is what “all nations” means in the Great Commission.
- C. Nations like Ojibwe, and Fulani, and Kachin, not like the United States, and Japan, and Argentina.
- D. This is what Jesus bought with blood:

Revelation 5:9-10

And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll

and to open its seals,

for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God

from every tribe and language and people and nation,

¹⁰and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,

and they shall reign on the earth.”

- E. The gospel has already reached all the countries.
 - 1. Joshua Project
 - a. 17,281 people groups
 - b. 7,246 are unreached people groups.
 - c. Represents 3.4 Billion people with no Gospel witness within their people group

F. That is why it is critical that we go.

V. The Need Is Great

- A. There is a critical need for Paul-type missionaries, whose calling and passion is to take the gospel to peoples where there is no access to the gospel at all.

“I will go, if you will hold the rope.”

- B. I am distinguishing Paul-type missionaries from Timothy-type missionaries.
1. Timothy left his home and served cross-culturally in a city (Ephesus) different from his own (Lystra).
 2. But Paul said in Romans 15:20, “I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named.”
 3. There is still much to do where Christ has been named.
 4. But Oh, how we need to pray for an army of hundreds of thousands with Paul’s passion to reach the utterly unreached and unengaged peoples of the world.

VI. Missionaries Must Be Sent Well

- A. We must send the global partners in a manner worthy of God.
1. This is why we focus on missions, have a missions budget, go on missions trips.

3 John 1:6

They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God.

2. This is why senders are crucial along with goers.
3. We don’t believe everyone is a frontier missionary.
4. Frontier missionaries cross cultures and plant the church where it’s not.
5. But if we are not a goer, there is a great calling to be a Sender.
6. And John says, “Do it in a manner worthy of God.”

This is why we give so much.

Vanessa I want to build these one at a time but keep stacking them on top of one another for a total of 5 separate screens. Each screen adding another point of giving until the 5th screen has all five titles and numbers.

Last year you gave

2023 Giving

- Missions Trip to Spain - \$40,000
- Projects - \$28,970
- Missionary Support - \$20,221
- Community Compassion - \$12,647

Total Missional Giving \$101,838

VII. We Live in Wartime

- A. It is fitting for us to have a wartime mindset in the use of our resources as long as peoples are without the gospel, and we have resources to send it.

Illustration

- In peace time, the Queen Mary was a luxury liner, but in the Second World War she became a troop carrier.
 - Instead of bunks three high, they were stacked seven high.
 - Instead of eighteen-piece place settings, there were rations with fork and knife.
 - You allocate your resources differently if its wartime.
 - And it is wartime.
- B. The battles are more constant than any in our world wars, and the losses are eternal.
- C. The Macedonians are a model for us.

2 Corinthians 8:2-4

²In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.

Application

- Oh, that we would deepen in our grasp of the urgency of the hour, and remember that ultimately we don't own anything.
- God owns us and all we have.
- And he cares about how it goes in the war effort to reach the nations with the gospel Jesus died to send.

VIII. Prayer Is for Mission

- A. Prayer is a war-time walkie-talkie, not a domestic intercom.

John 15:16

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

- B. I give you a mission so that your prayers will be fruitful.
- C. Prayer is for mission.

- D. It is mainly for those on the front lines of the war effort to call in to headquarters to send help.

Illustration

- One of the reasons our prayer malfunctions is that we try to treat it like a domestic intercom for calling the butler for another pillow in the den — rather than treating it like a wartime walkie-talkie for calling down the power of the Holy Spirit in the battle for souls.

IX. Suffering Is in the Plan

- A. Suffering is not only the price for being in missions, it is God's plan for getting the job done.

Matthew 10:25

It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

Matthew 24:9

Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

Matthew 10:16,17,19

¹⁶ "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves...

¹⁷ Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues.

¹⁹ But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say,

B. This is not just the price many must pay. This is God's strategy for victory.

C. His Son won the victory this way. So will we.

Revelation 12:11

They triumphed over him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;
they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death.

They conquered -- not were conquered --- by testimony and death.

X. The Mission Cannot Fail

- A. The global cause of Christ cannot fail.
- B. And nothing you do in this cause is in vain.

Matthew 28:18-19

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations

- C. Not some authority. All Authority.
He cannot be defeated.

Matthew 16:18

I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- D. He has ransomed a people for all the nations. And he will have them.

John 10:16

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Conclusion

What about you.

- There are more, but those are ten that drive our commitment to outreach and missions.
- And for some of you, as you have been listening, they have become again, a confirmation that God is leading into long-term, cross-cultural missions.

I'm not asking that you be absolutely sure.

- I'm asking that as far as you can discern, this is God's leading for you, and you will follow it, unless he makes it plain otherwise.
- You might be 12 years old. Or you might be 55, or 75.
- If you have this compelling sense that God is leading you into longer-term, cross-cultural missions, I invite you to come and stand at the front to testify to this wonderful work of God in your life.