



Every Christian is a Missionary

By

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The Meaning of Missions

The word “missionary” is not in the Bible – at least not from the Hebrew and Greek languages. The idea for the word comes from the Hebrew *mismeret* (duty, requirement, service, duty, obligation) and *derek* (way, road, journey, path) and the Greek word *diakonia* (ministry, service). The Hebrew words were used for the Israelites completing the work God gave them to do, including missions of warfare. The Greek word was used for Christians completing the work God gave them to do.

Here’s an example of how different versions of the Book of Acts handle the word *diakonia*.

*“When Barnabas and Saul had finished their **mission**, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.” (NIV)*

*“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their **mission**, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark.” (NASB)*

“And Barnabas and Saul came back from Jerusalem when they had completed their mission, bringing with them John whose surname was Mark.” (Amplified Bible)

*“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their **ministry**, and they also took with them John*

whose surname was Mark.” (NKJV)

*“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their **ministry**, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.” (KJV) Acts 12:25*

Since the primary Greek word, *diakonia*, is translated **ministry** and **missions** in different versions of the Bible, what’s the difference between **ministry** and **missions**? None. There is no difference in the Greek language. **Ministry** and **missions** are the same thing. They are the work God calls us to do for Him and others.

The difference in the meaning of the words comes to us from the Latin, not the Greek. The Latin word for **ministry** is *ministerium* and means “the function of the priest.” The Latin word for **mission** is *missionem* and means “the act of sending.” The word was used by the Jesuit priests in the late 16th century for sending members of their order abroad. It was used in the early 17th century for sending a group of people to a foreign land on commercial or political business. The English word **mission** is a transliteration of the Latin *missionem* from the early 17th century and carries over the same definition of “sending people abroad for religious service.” It has also been used for a permanent embassy in a foreign country, the work of spies, and military tasks.

The various English translations may use the word “mission” or “ministry”, but the original word means **service**. Missions and ministry are about serving God. They describe the work of a **disciple**.

The Disciples' Work

A disciple of Christ does four basic things:

1. Follow Christ
2. Learn from Christ
3. Obey Christ
4. Go where Christ sends

Another way to say it is: Follow – Learn – Do – Go. Four simple words that add up to the disciple fulfilling his or her mission for God. God says go and we go. It's that simple. We are at His service – always.

The work of going on a mission is not just for professional missionaries; it's for disciples. Every Christian should be a disciple, therefore, every Christian should be a missionary. Makes sense!

Where should you go on your mission from God? What is God saying to you? Where does He tell you He wants you to go? When you know where God wants you to go, you will be convinced of what to do and where to go. Discipleship is simple. God saves you, grows you and sends you to tell other people about Him. Discipleship is simple – but it's not easy or quick. It is a marvelous process.

So, where should we go? A good way to answer that is to see where God sent other believers in the Bible. Remember that God is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He hasn't

changed in thousands of years of human history. He's still sending His children on missions similar to long ago. God had a purpose, called individuals to be part of carrying out His purpose, prepared them for their work, and sent them out.

Here are some examples of God sending people on special missions. What do you find similar in all of them?

“And God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch ... Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.’” Genesis 6:13-14, 22

“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him.” Genesis 12:1-4

“Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the

children of Israel, out of Egypt ... So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, 'Please let me go and return to my brethren who *are* in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive.' Exodus 3:9-10; 4:18

"After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 'Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel ... Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 'Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'" Joshua 1:1-2, 10-11

"Now the LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons ... Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.'" 1 Samuel 16:1, 13

What did you see that was common in these stories? 1) God chose the mission, 2) God chose who He would send on the mission, 3) God spoke to the one He chose about the mission, 4) the one chosen for the mission heard what God said, 5) the one chosen for the

mission obeyed God and went where He sent them.

You'll find this same pattern throughout the Bible. God selected, spoke and sent. People heard, obeyed and went. The same was true of Christ's disciples in the New Testament. Jesus sent His disciples out on short, specific missions. They heard, obeyed and went where Jesus sent them. They returned to Christ with news about their specific mission. Jesus used every part of the mission process to teach His disciples how to do their work with excellence. It might have been something as seemingly small as getting something and taking it back to the Master — or as big as preaching the Gospel and casting demons out of people. But no matter how big or small the mission, the pattern was the same. Jesus chose the mission, chose who He would send on the mission, spoke to the people He was going to send on the mission, and sent them on their mission. The disciples heard what Jesus said, obeyed and went where He told them to go and did what He told them to do. That's what it means to be a missionary.

Many Christians have told me through the years that they were afraid of God's will for their lives because He might send them somewhere they didn't want to go. That fear kept them from listening to what God said to them and they missed many opportunities to serve Him along the way. A lot of Christians have told me they are afraid of missions because they're afraid God will send them to some terrible place in the world where they will be miserable, starve and die. Where did we ever get that image of serving God? Where did we get that image of missions? Why would we think God's will for our lives would be for

terrible things to happen to us?

I think some of the problems we have with God's will for our lives is that we don't **trust** God. We gladly trusted Him to save us from sin, secure our souls for the trip to Heaven and give us all kinds of great gifts here on earth, but when it comes time to serve God we suddenly have trust issues. Faith in God is not a buffet line. We don't pick and choose what we want to do, then go off into a corner somewhere and do only those things we want to do. Faith in God is sitting down at our Heavenly Father's feast table and partaking of all the sumptuous things He serves us. Some of what God gives us at His table is to go on specific missions He gives us to accomplish.

Going on a mission for God doesn't necessarily mean you sell everything you own, go to missionary school to learn new languages and cultures, and travel half way around the world to small villages in the desert or jungle. That might be where God sends you, but He also needs people to go next door, down the street, or across town. Every Christian is a missionary, so that means every place we go is part of the mission field. You are a missionary to your unsaved family members, neighbors and friends. You are a missionary to your co-workers and fellow students. You are a missionary to store clerks, postal workers, UPS and FedEx delivery people, bank tellers – anybody you meet during the day. That's your first mission field. One of the neat things about that is you are already trained in the language and culture. You are a native of your country. God may broaden your mission to include other cities, other states or even

other countries, but He will give you everything you need to accomplish those missions to His Glory and you will love doing it because you know it's what God has chosen for you to do. He will give you great joy and peace in your service for Him.

The God of Heaven loved you so much that He sent His Son to die for your sins and secure your soul for Eternity. Then, if that wasn't enough, the God of Heaven gifted you with spiritual gifts and chose you for missions important to Him. That's amazing! The God of Heaven thinks enough of us to choose us, speak to us and send us. Our response should be to **follow, hear, do and go!**

The Greatest Missionary of All Time

Who is the greatest missionary of all time? Is it one of the apostles? Peter? Paul? John? How about one of the great missionaries from the explosion of evangelical world missions of the 18th and 19th centuries? Hudson Taylor? William Carey? Robert Moffat? David Livingston? Lottie Moon? How about some of the great missionaries from the 20th century? Jim Elliot? Adoniram and Ann Judson? C.T. Studd? These are all wonderful missionaries who gave their lives to bring the Gospel to unsaved people around the world. However, none of them are the greatest Missionary of all time. That accolade belongs to Jesus Christ! The Son of God is the Greatest Missionary of all time. A missionary is “one who is sent on a mission.” What was Jesus’ mission and who sent Him? Look at how Jesus answered that question:

“My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” John 4:34

Think about that for a minute. Jesus said that doing God’s will was “food” to Him. That’s the same thing He told Satan – *“And the devil said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’ But Jesus answered him, saying, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’”* (Luke 4:3-4) Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1) and told Satan that people needed God’s Word to live. How true! Jesus told His disciples that His “food” is to do the will of God Who sent Him.

He also told them that His “food” was to finish the Work God had sent Him to do. What was that Work? He answered it on the Cross: “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” (John 19:30) God sent His Son to die for sin and that’s what Jesus did.

Here are some other verses that give us important insights into Christ’s Mission. Notice where He came from and to whom He was sent.

“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.” John 6:38

“He answered, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.’
Matthew 15:24

Jesus is the Messiah of Israel! He is the Promised One, the Anointed One of God the Father. God sent His Son to save Israel from their sins and that’s what Jesus did. He came down from Heaven not to do His Will, but to do the Will of His Father Who sent Him.

This next group of verses is very important. Jesus made it clear that God would receive anyone who received His Son, but would reject anyone who rejected His Son. This is still true today.

“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.” Matthew 10:40

“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome

me but the one who sent me.” Mark 9:37

“He then began to speak to them in parables: ‘A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. ‘He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. Haven’t you read this scripture: ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” Mark 12:1-11

“He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” Luke 10:16

“The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.” John 3:31-36

“I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.”
John 13:20

Jesus came to preach the Gospel, the Good News to all who would hear and obey.

“The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’” Luke 4:17-19

“But he said, ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.’”

Luke 4:43

“Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.’” John 7:16

Jesus came with Good News for those who will hear and obey. They will receive the gift of eternal life. But what about those who do not obey? The same Jesus Who came to seek and save the lost will one day judge the world. The Son and the Father are in One Accord.

“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” John 5:22-24

“By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.” John 5:30

“You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me ... I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and

what I have heard from him I tell the world.” John 8:15-16, 26

So, it does come down to one thing: **faith**. We must **believe** that God sent His Son and that in Christ we have our redemption. When we believe in Christ, we believe in God.

“I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.” John 5:36-38

“Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’” John 6:29

“Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.”
John 6:57

“Then Jesus cried out, ‘When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.’” John 12:44-45

“He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.” John 14:24

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3

“For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.” John 17:8

Does Jesus really have the power to keep His promises? Can He save us from our sins? Can He raise us from the dead? Yes! That is why God sent Him, to save us from the horror of sin and raise us up from the grave in the last day.

“So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.’ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’” John 11:41-43

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.” John 6:39

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:44

So, what do we learn from the Greatest Missionary of all time? We learn there is a lot of work to do and not a lot of time to do it.

“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.” John 9:4

We know there is an end to God's offer of salvation to the world. We don't when that time will come, but we are told in the Scriptures that it will come. So, what is it that God wants us to do now? Work. We must do God's Work as long as it is day, as long as He is making that offer to the world. When night comes, when His offer ends, our work here will be done.

Right now, in Heaven, Jesus is interceding for you, by name; praying for you, by name. He Loves you with an Everlasting Love. He knows everything you face. He knows your heart's desire. He knows your joy and your sorrow. He cares deeply about you. He is always with you. Just hours before Jesus died on the Cross for our sins, He prayed this Prayer to His Heavenly Father. I pray this will be a blessing to you and give you strength on your mission for God this week.

"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 'Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.'" John 17:20-

Where He Sends I Will Go

The Words of Jesus Christ are **Keys from Heaven** that unlock the Storehouse of God's Eternal Wisdom. Some of the greatest Keys are in the Words Jesus shared with His disciples the night before He died for their sins.

The first Key is found in John 13:1: *“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”* Jesus knew that the great Hour of His Sacrifice had come. He knew that He was going to depart from this world and go to God the Father in Heaven. Jesus loved His disciples very much and gave them Keys that would help them unlock the many gates they would walk through in their service to God. Those Keys are found in John Chapters 13 – 16.

In John Chapter 17, we see Jesus talking privately, intimately with His Father. He prays for Himself, then His disciples. That prayer for His disciples includes remarkable insight into our topic this week that every Christian is a missionary:

“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” John 17:18

Do you see it? God the Son said He sent His disciples into the world just as the Father had sent Him into the world. We learn a lot about

being a missionary (on a mission from God) from the context of that Prayer:

“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” John 17:9-19

Well, you say, that was just for Christ’s disciples at that time. He certainly couldn’t mean us – now. Oh, really? Look at the next verses:

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

John 17:20-23

Jesus prayed for you and me on the night before He redeemed us with His Blood on the Cross. We have all believed in Christ through the Words of the Apostles. That’s what Jesus said. His prayer goes on to show He wants us to *“be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You.”* Jesus prays that we will be unified in Him. Why? *“... that the world may believe that You sent Me.”* There you have it. **That’s the mission.** That’s what God wants us to do with our lives. Jesus sends us out into the world that people will believe that God the Father sent God the Son into the world to accomplish His Mission for them.

The Bible is filled with “defining moments;” amazing moments in time when God cements His Truth in the hearts and minds of His chosen people. Jesus prayed for His disciples the night before He died on the Cross asking God the Father to send them into the world just as He had sent Jesus into the world. Our Lord shared that prayer with His disciples three days later, on the evening of His Resurrection.

“When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

John 20:20-22

What a day for the disciples! They had gone to sleep (if they were able to sleep) the night before filled with great sadness because the body of their dear Lord lay dead in a grave after a brutal beating and crucifixion the day before. What they didn’t remember that night were the words Jesus had spoken to them many times before that He would be killed and then raised from the dead on the third day. It was several hours later, in the early hours of Resurrection Sunday, that Jesus rose from the grave. Later that same day, Jesus showed Himself to His disciples. He showed them the nail scars in His Hands and His Side. Then they were glad. Jesus then gave them their great mission and all the Power they would need to succeed in that mission – *“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.”*

Jesus spent a little more than a month with His disciples after His Resurrection teaching them great spiritual insights that they would be able to understand in greater depth because of the Holy Spirit, the Promised Comforter, living in them. Here are some of those insights. Notice how many of them pertain to the mission Christ had given them.

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Matthew 28:16-20

“Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.” Mark 16:14-20

“Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’ And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.” Luke 24:46-53

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of

their sight.” Acts 1:4-9

Jesus sent His disciples into the world “just as” God the Father sent God the Son into the world. It was the answer to Christ’s pre-crucifixion prayer. And what did those disciples do when Jesus said “Go”? They obeyed and went, carrying Christ’s Message for Israel and eventually the world. The 12 Apostles spent most of their “mission” time in Israel, while the Apostle Paul spent most of his “mission” time taking the Gospel to the cities and nations of the Gentile people.

Paul is probably the most prolific human missionary who ever lived. God prophesied to Ananias about Paul’s mission - *“Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.”* (Acts 9:15) And that’s exactly what Paul (Saul) did. Where and how did Paul begin his missionary journeys?

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the

word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.” Acts 13:1-5

Paul conducted at least three major missions taking the Gospel of Christ to the world. He started churches all over the Gentile world and kept in touch with them through his letters and personal visits. In so doing, he wrote almost half of the New Testament. That’s a remarkable feat for one man to accomplish in less than 30 years. No other human being since Paul has come close to matching what God did through him. What did Paul do when Jesus told Him to “go”? He went. What should our response be when God asks us to “go”? We should say, “where You send I will go.”

You may be asking, “where do I get the courage and strength to go wherever God sends me?” It begins with loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, then loving your neighbor as yourself. The next step is to give yourself to God for His service.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:1-2

So then, in light of all we’ve seen this week about missions, how should we pray? Jesus gave His disciples the clear answer: *“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the*

laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38) Look around you. What do you see? People – people by the thousands, by the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, billions – people whose greatest need in life is Jesus Christ. We need more laborers, more people on a mission from God, to speak the Words of Eternal Life to the hearts and souls of men and women, boys and girls.

That is our prayer – send us Lord, and we will go.

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