

“Shake the Dust From Your Feet”

A challenge to forsake all for missions

Pastor Derek Melton www.pryorcreekcommunitychurch.org

Matthew 10:5-16

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. "KJV

I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light. John Keith Falconer

"Jacob, what are you doing with your life?" Timothy Laklem talking to his four year old son.

In this hour, as we sit comfortably in this climate controlled facility, there are billions that have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. As one man said: "no one deserves to hear the gospel twice while multitudes have not heard it once". This message is purposed to arouse us to self-examination regarding the value of that which we are extinguishing our lives upon.

The nations of the world have been opened for the gospel of Jesus Christ but it seems that the vast majority of Christians in America have chosen to burn out their candles in a land that is flooded with light rather than to take it to lands filled with darkness.

In our opening passage we hear our Lord instructing His disciples as they have received their commission to go to the house of Israel to preach the gospel. Within this challenge we find an interesting statement from our Lord: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

What I have to say today might be strongly controversial, even amongst those of you sitting here this morning. Yet, I feel it has a scriptural authority and cultural necessity. The United States of America has over the last 50 years has cultivated an intense love of unrighteousness, as well as a hatred for righteousness. In 1962 our nation made a decision to file for a divorce from the Lord Jesus Christ and our courts handed down the indictment.

From this year until this date, our schools, as well as our government has bid farewell to any covenant ratified in the past regarding the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His rightful place in

parliament or any of its intrinsic subsidiaries. Directly stemming from this national writ has spawned a national mood of atheistic detachment. By this I mean that the effect of this broken covenant between the United States and the Lord Jesus Christ has infiltrated to the root of our nation's subjects.

Families have adopted the philosophical creed that was etched by our nation's gavel which gave orders to purge God from all of our national affairs and educational institutions. With the adoption godless philosophies, families have become intolerant of biblical truths or any practices that might identify with righteousness.

What I am inferring is that Christianity in America is being rejected and despised abroad. We are continuing to try to sow seeds into barren soil and our labors are stirring up much dust but no fruit is coming from our arduous labors; nor can it. Moreover, here we stand with sweat soaked brow and dust covered feet, bearing no fruit, and our Lord's message is ringing in my ears: "and whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

The fields of the nations are white and ripe unto harvest but the laborers are few. American Christianity is too busy roaming over millions of acres of field to find one cotton blossom that has whitened for harvest. Yet, nations such as Burma and others are ripe, where the blossoms are blooming in every field but there is none to harvest. Oh beloved, can you not see? As the eternal clock ticks and the hours of our lives are ebbing into the portals of history never to dawn again, is the fruit we are presently bearing going to shrink into shame of what we could have borne?

As we passionately sway to the rhythms of lives synchronized with selfishness, ascending to the pinnacles of normative cultural bliss, while the lesser nations around us are sinking into an abyss from which they will never again resurface. While we delightfully enjoy the palatable cuisines delectably exquisite, untold multitudes are either dying of starvation or existing upon rations with sustenance rarely sufficient to support daily life.

We are accruing either the dust of a gospel that has been rejected or neglected. By this I mean that we are in one category or the other; we are either laboring in the fields that are rejecting our gospel message, or we are gravely neglecting the gospel altogether by doing nothing in its regard. I posted a quote in the not too recent past that said: "The hour has struck, God has opened the doors to the nations for the Gospel, but the American church is asleep, dreaming the American dream."

Look how we Christian parents are training our children; are we not to be training them up instead of down? Training them to give up their lives for the gospel of Jesus Christ, going to the ends of the earth to make disciples? Should we not be introducing them to their divine calling and purpose and the glory of them? But what we have done is believed the lie of Americana cultural settle down and make a "good" life for yourselves.

When was the last time we told our children that the greatest experience in life is to give them away in a foreign land? When was the last time that we systematically walked them through the scriptures and revealed to them God's grand design for their lives; which includes suffering, hardship, rejection, and loss, all for His glory?

We may have been too busy prepping them for the American dream which is an assault against our heavenly call. We're too busy playing sports with them, games with them, to the mall with them, fulfilling everything in them we couldn't experience when we were as them. All the while vast millions of ethno-linguistic groups have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. Their children are digging through the rubbish of toxic city dumps just to have an unwholesome meal to survive

another day in a miserable existence, many of which will die awaiting Christ's message which never arrived because His church was asleep, dreaming the American dream.

- **We are called to go to them!**

Matthew 28:19-20

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. " KJV

Mark 16:15

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. " KJV

I remember one who spoke on the missionary question one day saying, "The great question is not, 'Will not the heathen be saved if we do not send them the gospel?' but 'Are we saved ourselves if we do not send them the gospel?' " **C.H.Spurgeon**

We truly are victims of an anti-Christ culture. The chief command of our Commander-in-Chief goes unheeded in the vast majority of Christian circles. The question before us as believers is: to whom is the commission given? I must agree with John Piper in his statement regarding this subject: *"There are only three kinds of Christians when it comes to world missions: zealous goers, zealous senders, and disobedient."*

I am not naive enough to believe that every Christian is supposed to pack his or her suitcases tonight after booking their flight unto dark lands. Yet, amongst us are the called to go who are not going because the spirit of this age has convinced them that their lot in life is to cover up with the blankets of American security and comfort. Moreover, those who are not called to go to the distant lands personally are called to connect, and to live sacrificially that those who do indeed go may be effective for Christ.

Many of you younger families in this church are wasting your lives; absolutely throwing them away into the abyss of a culture that has rejected your Savior's gospel. What value can you find in this land of few opportunities for the gospel? Are not your labors producing little to no fruit for His Majesty? Shake the dust from your feet and abandon the luxuries of this wicked nation that has rejected Christ; pray for God's guidance regarding where you should go for His Son.

God has greater things for your life than these temporal years of self-absorbed interests. Why not abandon your collegiate aspirations and enter missionary training centers whereby your life can become the essence of Christ in which it has been created? Are your dreams so low that you would settle to enter into the common work place, drawing a paycheck every month that you can buy a house and a car, as so to mimic the futile frolic of the former generation?

Have you prayed and asked God what He desires for you to expend your life upon? Are you certain He from eternity past predestined you unto such low and futile ends? Beloved youth, at best you might labor with your hands, providing a mundane living, and every Sunday go to the same church that has two inches of dust covering their feet! Examine your heart; examine God's calling: examine your future in light of the 28* chapter of Matthew.

Jeremiah 8:20

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." KJV

Will this be the cry of the nations? Will this be their end? Will the church of Jesus Christ shut up

the bowels of her compassion and bury her talent into the ground, giving it no heed as she pursues her own dreams? While we educate ourselves to make our mark on the material world, the nations around us languish and lament. Missionaries around the globe are faint because of their labors. The American church has forgotten them, even withholding their rightful support to increase the pleasure and entertainment of their own religious lust. You may ask: "What's in it for me?" and the rightful answer is: "absolutely nothing"! Yet, there is something in it; yes, most assuredly, your life laid down is the hope of God being glorified amongst the nations!

Malachi 1:11

"For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. " KJV

My chief concern is that we are either too entangled with this present world, loving the spirit that enslaves it, and thereby unwilling to become a missionary, or, we're wasting our breath trying to reach a nation that has already rejected the gospel, and we're accruing dust upon our feet and its robbing the nations of their hope.

Can you not hear the cries of the millions world-wide that have never known Christ? Maybe it is because our ears are deafened to all but that which brings us pleasure. I pray that our Sovereign opens our ears to the shrilling cries of others in languish. I pray that His fire consume our selfishness insomuch we abandon our pleasure centered life to fulfill the gospel commission to go ye into the nations to preach His gospel and loose our lives.

Next week I will continue this mini-series on missions and I will begin to speak upon missionary sacrifice, suffering, as related to God's glory; the cost of missions.

The nations call! From sea to sea
Extends the thrilling cry,
"Come over, Christians, if there be,
And help us, ere we die"

Our hearts, O Lord, the summons feel;
Let hand with heart combine,
And answer to the world' s appeal
By giving "that is thine" .

Say to thy gifted servants, "Speed!
Behold the world your field;"
Say to the gold, "The Lord hath need,

Till hoarded treasures yield.

Say to the slumb' ring soul, "Awake!
Ere wanes thy noon away;
Lo! Soon I come th' account to take,
Ye stewards of a day."

Savior, forgive; ashamed we lie;
Thy gracious will we know:
Behold, while we delay, they die!
Bid, bid us send, or go.
Anne Gilbert

Shake the Dust from Your Feet Part II

The cost of missions 05.02.10

More and more I am persuaded from Scripture and from the history of missions that God's design for the evangelization of the world and the consummation of His purposes includes the suffering of His ministers and missionaries. To put it more plainly and specifically, God designs that the suffering of His ministers and missionaries is one essential means in the joyful triumphant spread of the gospel among all the peoples of the world. John Piper

2 Corinthians 1:1-6

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. " KJV

It is important that we do not distance ourselves from the truths we were given last week in the first part of this message. Nor should we allow our Americanized mindsets rationalize the content so as to find a way of escape from biblical mandates and thereby fall into the abyss of justification by excuses.

It is my earnest prayer that we give heed to these truths, and that in due season, we may respond by stepping out in faith unto the nations of the earth with the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, and therein loose our lives for His glory.

This morning we are going to give a short overview of the missionary sacrifice and its benefit. I remember a quote that I read recently regarding a young missionary's commitment to go to a dangerous tribal land with the gospel. When this young missionary's family began to plea with him to stay in the comforts of his homeland saying there are dangerous people in that land, they will surely take your life. The young missionary retorted, "My life has already been taken."

It is a great calling to go to the ends of the earth and to preach the gospel to every living creature. Yet we are not to flippantly go without much prayer, much preparation of the soul, much understanding of the missionary life, and much commitment to dissolve our lives into those for whom Jesus Christ died.

The missionary calling is not for the adventure seeking thrillist, who for the love of the unknown, and the romance of new cultures in faraway lands, bids his departure. Nor is the mission field for the uncommitted renegades that follow every breeze of excitement, pursuing fun endeavors, regardless of the basis. Most generally, the missionary that is called of God is a devoted soldier of Jesus Christ deeply committed in the local church, producing fruit for His Lord's Kingdom, in arduous labors, in willful submission to the authorities of the local assembly, and sacrificially living for the glory of God.

Moreover, the missionary is a serious minded Christian, not easily given to foolish endeavors nor cheap religious artificial affairs. The persons best suited for missionary work are most generally backward to the flow of religious affairs within his homeland due to the tremendous effectual

calling of God to other lands and peoples. Those whom are unproductive, or lazy, or flippant pursuers of adventure are not fit for the rigors of the missionary life.

You will never make a missionary of the person who does no good at home. He that will not serve the Lord in the Sunday school at home will not win children to Christ in China. C.H. Spurgeon

- **The missionary life is a life committed to Jesus Christ and His sufferings.**

In our opening text we see some significant statements made by the Apostle Paul regarding his suffering and tribulation. The Apostle was purposely dealing with the issue of tribulation and suffering as a grace to bring comfort and even salvation to others. This is a startling concept that western Christianity cannot endure.

The Apostle is addressing the sufferings and hardships that he faced daily and how it was affecting the outcome of his labors. Amidst these sufferings are consolations from our Lord and we see that there is a sharing of these consolations that we have received with others who are in need. Moreover, we see a statement where the Apostle says: *"And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation."*

Do not misunderstand these passages to think our suffering procures the salvation of others. That would be a great heresy; as only the sufferings of Jesus Christ procure the salvation of lost men.

Yet, this is showing us that in the midst of afflictions, sorrow, suffering, and opposition, our Lord comforts and consoles us and this is a great display of His supremacy as His sufficiency is most glorified when His saints are enduring these seasons of anguish. Yet, in these seasons of suffering and affliction, our Lord promises to comfort us; we actually receive comfort and consolation from Christ in these seasons of suffering in Christ.

It is in these seasons that many witness the steadfast perseverance of Christians undergoing suffering whom are partaking of the consolations of Christ. Beloved, this is a great witness to the nations, and it also is a common denominator for every fruit bearing missionary. The sufficiency of Jesus Christ is proven to the world that is languishing in their sins, through the steadfastness and perseverance of suffering Saints. Hallelujah!

- **The missionary life is a lifestyle of hardship; not romance!**

2 Corinthians 11:23-28

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." KJV

American idealisms regarding success have greatly infiltrated our minds and consequently our own ideas regarding success. We look to multi-million dollar ministries and the ease that surrounds both its leadership and followership. We begin to associate this as the norm of the Kingdom of God, and the callings and responsibilities of its leadership. This is enforced as many pastors drive up to their elaborate American church facilities in their newest sports car, having

donned clothing that would make the Prince of England blush - and after an hour or two of performance they whisk away back into their lavish lives of religious fantasy.

Yet, there is no resemblance of these ludicrous practices in the Bible, or in two-thirds of the world's Christianity. There is no comparison between the experiences of the early church leaders and those of western Christianity today. Modernism is planting the thought that the missionary role is to be a romantic experience, and not that of strenuous suffering. Today, there are those flooding the nations of the earth with this romantic Christianity - deceiving and being deceived.

They are infiltrating the innocent millions with westernized theology that promises immediate comforts, provisions, and perfect bliss in this life. These fraudulent imposters are lying to the poor; feeding upon their suffering for their own gain. Many are promising these poor people great riches if they will but give their money away in faith. Consequently, this rhetoric has become increasingly popular in the poorest nations of the earth but the poverty is yet holding these nations in chains. Only the impostors are becoming rich - the poor are only their hosts upon which they feed.

Let me introduce you to a true missionary; Brother P. Brother P. is a missionary in Nepal, where until recently it was illegal to change one's religion or to influence others to change their religion. In Nepal, Christians often faced prison for their faith. Brother P. served time in 14 different prisons between 1960 and 1975. He spent 10 of those 15 years suffering torture and ridicule for preaching the gospel to his people.

His ordeal began when he baptized nine new believers and was arrested for doing so. The new converts, five men and four women, also were arrested, and each was sentenced to a year in prison. He was sentenced to serve six years for influencing them. The prison where they were sent was literally a dungeon of death. About 25 to 30 people were jammed into one small room with no ventilation or sanitation. The smell was so bad that newcomers often passed out in less than half an hour. The place where Brother P. and his fellow believers were sent was crawling with lice and cockroaches. Prisoners slept on dirt floors. Rats and mice gnawed on fingers and toes during the night. In the winter there was no heat; in summer no ventilation.

For food, the prisoners were allowed one cup of rice each day, but they had to build a fire on the ground to cook it. The room was constantly filled with smoke because there was no chimney. On that inadequate diet, most prisoners became seriously ill, and the stench of vomit was added to the other putrefying odors. Yet miraculously, none of the Christians was sick for even one day during the entire year.

After serving their one-year sentences, the nine new believers were released. Then the authorities decided to break Brother P. They took his Bible away from him, chained him hand and foot, then forced him through a low doorway into a tiny cubicle previously used to store bodies of dead prisoners until relatives came to claim them. In the damp darkness, the jailer predicted his sanity would not last more than a few days.

The room was so small that Brother P. could not stand up or even stretch out on the floor. He could not build a fire to cook, so other prisoners slipped food under the door to keep him alive. Lice ate away his underwear, but he could not scratch because of the chains, which soon cut his wrists and ankles to the bone. It was winter, and he nearly froze to death several times. He could not tell day from night, but as he closed his eyes, God let him see the pages of the New Testament. Although his Bible had been taken away, he was still able to read it in total darkness.

It sustained him as he endured the terrible torture. For three months he was not allowed to

speaking to another human being. Brother P. was transferred to many other prisons. In each, he continually shared his faith with both guards and prisoners. Although Brother P. continued to move in and out of prisons, he refused to form secret churches. "How can a Christian keep silent?" he asked. "How can a church go underground? Jesus died openly for us. He did not try to hide on the way to the cross. We also must speak out boldly for Him regardless of the consequences." (Revolution in World Missions K.P. Yohannan)

I am aware of the uniqueness of this brother's sufferings and that all suffering is not as acute as brother P's suffering, but I am also aware that there are those who have suffered much worse. The point is that the call to world missions is also a call to hardship and suffering for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is not the romantic adventure Hollywood and American cultural religion has tried to portray it as.

Beloved, simply because the fields are white and ripe unto harvest does not implicate ease of harvest, just plenteousness of harvest. The laborers are few because the labor is rigorous, intense, costly, and at times deadly. The perils mentioned in the previous text were experienced as the Apostle was laboring in these fields. On every front there are hardships when you are committed to these fields of souls. Numerous demonic powers and spirits are assigned to harass, trouble, and to vex your soul and thereby complicate your labors.

Often times, there are weakness of the body, sicknesses, lacks of funding, lacks of understanding, lacks of human support and even companionship. Loneliness is an often visited emotion by true Saints with the heroic pioneer spirit; pressed but not crushed. The Apostle Paul mentioned the departure of every support personnel, leaving him alone in the work:

2 Timothy 4:16-18

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." KJV

American Christianity has a very difficult time facing up to the glorious sufferings being endured joyfully upon the fields of foreign missions. We have been wrongfully taught that the pinnacle purpose and experience in life is our comfort and our security. Yet, neither of these vices are mentioned in the Bible regarding true Christianity.

The chief reason we as Americans are deeply challenged with the great commission is because often times our allegiance is more deeply consecrated to the American idealism than to the Gospel, its Author, and its call to go. American Christianity has built its premise upon its independent ideology rather than upon biblical truth. This means our culture has satiated our religious views. Consequently, our biblical views are often times filtered through our Americanization of them.

It is difficult to make a decision to walk away from a safe and secure place to the unsecure and dangerous places Christ has bid us to go. The difficulty is in the deeply rooted misinterpretations of our purpose according to the Bible. Americanized rationalization of passages such as those declaring to whom saves his life will lose it, and to whom loses his life for Christ shall save it is at the root level of our unsound orthodoxy. It simply cannot be as suggested due to the horrific conflict with my core belief system of American security, comfort, and success.

Yet, they await us; the innumerable multitudes that are perishing in their sins with no voice to warn them. I do not apologize for this short treatise to: "shake the dust from your feet" and to yield your life to the emphatic command of Jesus Christ to go to the ends of the earth to make disciples. Your years are wasting away in the homeland beloved, while the nations groan to know this Deliverer coming

forth out of Zion!

Romans 11:26-27

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. " KJV

Young people I implore you, count the value of your life in light of the scriptures. Measure your dreams against the dreams God has for your life as revealed in the Bible. Lay down these cheap Americanized plans that are vastly purposed to give you more comfort and security and the dreams that have lulled a multiplicity of American generations into insatiable sleep.

What about the high calling of God? Can you challenge His call to go with your desire to stay? It is my humble opinion, do with it as you may, that our premise to continue to try to cultivate American soil alone, while neglecting the command to go to the nations, is wholly rebellious, wrapped up in religious tapestry, while implicitly disobedient to our Lord's direct command. Do with it as you may, explain it away to your heart as most do, but we will see very soon if it was accurate.

How troubling it will be on that great day of the Lord when we are called to give an account for our lives, when we see what we could have borne, but did not because we stood with dusty feet upon barren land. The nations are calling, can you hear them? Can you hear the voices of the vast multitudes of anguishing souls? Incline your ears beloved, and you too will hear their cries. The fields await Zion's Deliverer will we cry: "Here am I Lord, send me!" Our purpose in redemption is not to stay in the safety of our homeland; but to go to the ends of the earth to preach the gospel to every living creature. Will we go?

So send I you to labor unrewarded,
To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown,
To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing-
So send I you to toil for me alone.

So send I you to bind the bruised and broken,
O'er wand'ring souls to work, to weep, to wake,
To bear the burdens of a world weary-
So send I you to suffer for My sake.

So send I you to loneliness and longing,
With heart aching for the loved and known,
Forsaking home and kindred, friend and dear one-
So send I you to know My love alone.

So send I you to leave your life's ambition,
To die to dear desire, self-will resign,
To labor long, and love where men revile you-
So send I you to love your life in Mine.

So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred,
To eyes made blind because they will not see,
To spend, tho' it be blood, to spend and spare not-
So send I you to taste of Calvary.

Margaret Clarkson