

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 18- Luke 18:28-30** 293- I Never Made a Sacrifice

October 11, 2015

Luke 18:28-30

28 Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own *homes* and followed You."

29 And He said to them, "**Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,**

30 who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

To the Glory of God

Africa's greatest missionary, David Livingstone, was the seventh of nine children. He was born on March 19, 1813, in Scotland to a very poor family. At the age of ten- David was put to work at the local cotton mill with his brother to help sustain his poverty stricken family where he put in fourteen hour days of hard labor before going to school in the evenings to get his education.

In 1836 at the age of 23- Livingstone had received his medical license and had joined the London Missionary Society (LMS) to learn how to be a missionary. Two years later at the age of 25- Livingstone came across a small pamphlet by the German Pastor, Karl Gutzlaff, entitled, "*An Appeal to the Churches of Britain and America on behalf of China*", and began to seek God's Will about going to China to preach the Gospel.

However the Opium Wars had broken out and travel to China was prohibited, and so in 1840, Livingstone met Robert Moffat, who was a missionary from South Africa. Excited by Moffat's vision of expanding missionary work in Africa, and influenced by abolitionist T.F. Buxton's

arguments that the African slave trade might be completely destroyed through the influence of "legitimate trade" and the spread of Christianity, Livingstone began to focus his entire ambitions on Southern Africa.¹

From that time until his death in 1873- Livingstone labored in Africa- preaching and teaching God's Word, and by giving an example of both suffering and joy that transformed the Continent. He was severely handicapped early in his ministry because his arm had been viciously torn by a lion; he suffered repeated bouts of malaria and dysentery and repeated snake bites and for over six years- he had no contact with the outside world.

There was such concern that Livingstone might be dead that in 1869- the *New York Herald* sent Henry Morton Stanley to find him. That expedition took over two years, and on November 10, 1871- Stanley found Livingstone in Western Tanzania and upon meeting him, Stanley uttered those famous words, "*Dr. Livingstone, I presume?*"

However, despite Stanley's urgings, Livingstone was determined not to leave Africa until his mission was complete. Livingstone died on May 1, 1873, from complications of malaria and internal bleeding caused by dysentery. According to those around him- Livingstone died on his knees praying.

Now what is amazing is that even though David Livingstone is considered to be Africa's greatest missionary- he is recorded as having only a single convert- a tribal leader named Sechele, who was the chief of the Kwena people of Botswana. Sechele remained faithful to Christianity and led missionaries to surrounding tribes as well as nearly converting his entire Kwena people. In the estimation of Neil Parsons, of the University of Botswana,

"Sechele did more to propagate Christianity in 19th-century southern Africa than virtually any single European missionary"

Now, I said all that to say this- on December 4, 1857, Livingstone spoke the sentence that has made the greatest impact on me. It is one of the clearest applications I have seen of Jesus' Words here in the Passage that Brother Andy just read to you where Jesus said,

¹ A.D. Roberts, "Livingstone, David (1813–1873)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Luke 18:29b&30

29 ..."Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

Here is what Dr. Livingstone said to the Cambridge students that night about his "leaving" all the benefits of England to endure great hardship, suffering, and eventually death to preach the Gospel in Africa:

"For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. . . . Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. *I never made a sacrifice.*" (Cited in Samuel Zwemer, "The Glory of the Impossible" in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, Ralph Winter and Stephen Hawthorne, eds. [Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981], p. 259. Emphasis added.)

That statement is what has so deeply impacted my life. Livingstone gave up *everything* he had as a medical professional- *everything* that he had worked very hard to earn due to his poor upbringing- and he walked away from all of it, and then suffered greatly for the Cause of Jesus Christ in a hard and barbaric land where- after half a century of laboring- he had but a single convert to show for all his efforts. And yet he summed up what many would have considered to be a wasted life- and a life made unnecessarily hard and brutal- *not* as a burden, *not* as a hardship- but he described it as an *honor*- a *privilege*! And he said,

"I never made a sacrifice."

So how do you get there? How do you get a heart like that? What has to happen to a human being to make them feel like that? What kind of Work does God the Holy Spirit have to do in a person's life to cause him to say something like this? Whatever it is- I want it. In fact- I must have a heart like that or I will die.

And yet in the Passage that Brother Andy just read to you in **Luke 18**- Jesus acts as though this is really nothing unusual. The way Jesus talks here makes you think that *everybody* who is saved should have this same level of willingness to give themselves to the Work of the Lord. In fact- as you read through the rest of the New Testament- you find out that, far from this being some greatly odd kind of dedication to the Gospel, that this level of devotion to Jesus Christ is really nothing more than "Normal Christianity".

Now compare the testimony of David Livingstone with that of Walbert Buhlmann- a Catholic missions secretary at the Vatican in Rome, who thirty-three years ago introduced to the world a completely new way to comprehend the Great Commission when he said,

"In the past we had the so-called motive of saving souls. We were convinced that unsaved people among the masses would go to hell. Now, thanks be to God, we believe that all people and all religions are already living in the Grace and Love of God and will [eventually] be saved by God's Mercy." (*Time*, Dec. 27, 1982, p. 52).

And about that same time- Sister Emmanuelle- the "mother superior" of Cairo, Egypt, said,

"Today we don't talk about conversion any more. We talk about being friends. My job is to prove that God is Love and to bring courage- not Salvation- to the lost." (*Time*, p. 56).

Now the temptation here is to say, *"Well, that's 'par for the course' because Roman Catholics have been wayward about Evangelism and Missions for a long time."* And that is true. But what is staggering about statements like this is that you can hear the very same sentiment coming from some of the most popular and most influential leaders of

the modern Church of our day- who lay claim to being Protestant and who lay claim to be Evangelical.

Now we just took up a special offering to finance the spreading of the Gospel into the world through the people we support. And the Elders and myself looked long and hard to find people who share the very same belief that- left to themselves- all Mankind is lost and heading straight to hell.

The people that we send money to every month believe as we do- that every other religion and human philosophy that dominates the peoples of the world are all wrong and evil counterfeits of the Truth of Biblical Christianity. All of these other "religions" are man-made doctrines of demons, and there is not a single sin that can be forgiven, nor a single soul that can be saved by anyone believing and trusting in what these false religions teach.

And they believe that since that is true- the Biblical Gospel must be preached and taught to as many people as possible or hell will have to be *enlarged* to contain all of those who will go into it. I want you to turn with me to read what the prophet Isaiah said about this in **Isaiah 5:11-26:**

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink, Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them!

12 Their banquets are *accompanied* by lyre and harp, by tambourine and flute, and by wine; But they do not pay attention to the deeds of the Lord, Nor do they consider the work of His hands.

13 Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge; And their honorable men are famished, And their multitude is parched with thirst.

14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth without measure; And Jerusalem's splendor, her multitude, her din *of revelry* and the jubilant within her, descend *into it*.

15 So the *common* man will be humbled and the man of *importance* abased, The eyes of the proud also will be abased.

16 But the Lord of hosts will be exalted in judgment, And the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness.

17 Then the lambs will graze as in their pasture, And strangers will eat in the waste places of the wealthy.

18 Woe to those who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood, And sin as if with cart ropes;
19 Who say, "Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see it; And let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near And come to pass, that we may know it!"
20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight!
22 Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine And valiant men in mixing strong drink,
23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!
24 Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble And dry grass collapses into the flame, So their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; For they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.
25 On this account the anger of the Lord has burned against His people, And He has stretched out His hand against them and struck them down. And the mountains quaked, and their corpses lay like refuse in the middle of the streets. For all this His anger is not spent, But His hand is still stretched out.
26 He will also lift up a standard to the distant nation, And will whistle for it from the ends of the earth; And behold, it will come with speed swiftly.

And so those who believe and teach that conversion is *not* the goal of Missions do not submit themselves to the Authority of God in the Bible. These people create their *own* "god" according to what they would *like* him to say. And since they would like him to say that all men are saved whether they hear the Gospel of Christ or not- therefore, that is the kind of God they create.

But essential teachings of Scripture have to be rejected in order to believe in such a "god". Listen to the words of the Son of God Himself- Jesus Christ- which He spoke when He called the Apostle Paul into his missionary service from **The Acts 26:16-18:**

16 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;

17 rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,

18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Now keep in mind that the nations of the world at that time all had civilizations. They all had financial systems in place and they all had governments and they all had commerce and trade, and people were working in businesses and trying to raise children, and they all had opinions about what was going on the world and everybody had ideas about right and wrong and they all had established religions where they all worshipped particular gods. And yet Jesus tells Paul that these nations needed four things:

1. They needed to have their eyes opened.
2. They needed to turn away from spiritual darkness to Light.
3. They needed the forgiveness of their sins.
4. They needed an inheritance among the saints.

Now, the very fact that the Incarnate God said that the nations of the world needed these four things means, by default, that they didn't already have them. And yet they had all the outward trappings of an advanced culture. And so as you study these ancient civilizations- and you comprehend all that they *did* have- you then have to realize that nothing that they currently possessed allowed them to have the four things that Jesus told Paul that they needed.

But what is even more important than that- is that all that Jesus tells Paul here is a completely meaningless and empty Commission if, in fact, the eyes of the nations don't need to be opened, and if they don't need to turn from darkness to light, and if they don't need to escape the power of Satan to come to God, and if they don't need the forgiveness of sins that comes only by faith in Christ- Who is preached by the Lord's ambassadors.

So since there are leaders in the Church today who hold positions of prominence and who teach that Jesus died in agony so that we could increase our own possession of goods that are passing away, while half the world is on fire- we are forced to remind everyone that Paul did not give his life as a missionary to Asia and Macedonia and Greece and Rome and Spain in order to inform people that they were already saved. He did not go to them to impart courage or to help them live their lives as productive as possible so they could fulfill all their dreams. No, Paul went to them to preach the Gospel so that they could be saved and rescued from the Wrath of God that was against their sins so they could then know and love and enjoy God forever.

The people of these nations with all their pagan philosophies and man-made religions and sincerely held beliefs did *not* already possess eternal life or the forgiveness of sins- which is precisely *why* Jesus told Paul to proclaim that Salvation had been accomplished in Jesus Christ for all who repent and render to Him the obedience of faith- which was in direct *opposition* to everything that these people's false religions was teaching them.

And so when his message about Christ was rejected (for example, at Antioch by the Jews), Paul said,

The Acts 13:46b

... It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

So what is at stake in missionary outreach to unreached peoples is eternal life. Conversion to Christ from all other allegiances and beliefs and religions and philosophies is precisely the aim.

The Acts 4:12

And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

God is not unjust. So it is true that no one will be condemned for not believing a Message they have never heard. But it is also true that those who have never heard the Gospel will be condemned for their failure to own up to the Light of God's Grace and Power that is being

continually and indisputably displayed throughout all Creation, and that is burned into their own conscience. For as **Romans 1:20& 21** says:

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

So apart from the special "Saving Grace of God" whereby God the Holy Spirit sovereignly and effectually *imposes* Himself onto the elected sinner to stop him and to violate his will to open his blind eyes and unstop his deaf ears and to bring conviction and the miracle of the New birth- that person- left to himself- is dead in sin, he is darkened in his understanding, he is alienated from the life of God, and is hardened in heart (**Ephesians 2:1; 4:18**).

And so the means that God has ordained to administer that special "Saving Grace" is the foolishness of the Word preached- which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:14-16

14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

The notion that people can be saved *without* hearing the Gospel has wreaked havoc in the mission effort of liberally oriented denominations. Between 1953 and 1980 the overseas missionary force of mainline Protestant churches decreased from 9,844 to 2,813, while the missionary force of evangelical Protestants who take the Bible more seriously increased by over 200%. For example- the Christian Missionary Alliance, that only has 200,000 members, supports 40% more missionaries than the United Methodist Church that has 9.5

million members. So there is amazing missionary power in believing the Word of God.

Now this morning I want to push you over the brink so that the cause of Missions throughout the world becomes so attractive to you that you will no longer be able to resist its magnetism. And there are at least two irresistible incentives here in the Word of God for that to become true in your life.

1. All Things Are Possible with God

First, notice again what Jesus just finished saying last week in **Luke 18:24-27:**

24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 They who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?"

27 But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

Now this is one of the most encouraging missionary conversations in the entire Bible. What missionary has looked on the Work that lies before him and not said, "*This is utterly impossible*"? To which Jesus agrees, "*Yes, with men it is impossible.*" No human being can liberate another man from the enslaving power of the love of money. The rich young ruler went away sorrowful because the bondage to things that are passing away cannot be broken by will power or by intellect or by making up your mind or by putting forth more human effort.

Nobody can forgive their *own* sins; *nobody* can save their *own* souls. *Nobody* can bring a love for God to their *own* heart. *Nobody* can open their *own* blind eyes or unstop their *own* deaf ears. *Nobody* can remove their *own* internal disposition to rebel against God. And *nobody* can cause *themselves* to hunger and thirst after Righteousness. These are all sovereign Acts of God's Grace and Mercy to underserving sinners- because *with Man* all this is impossible.

We must understand that the Bible doesn't say that Salvation is hard or that it is difficult or that it really takes a lot of hard work or

that it requires a whole lot of effort. Those sentiments cannot be found anywhere in the Scriptures. No, the Bible says that true, Spirit empowered Conversion is totally *impossible*. Jesus said that Salvation was impossible with men. And, therefore, missionary work- which is simply liberating the human heart from bondage to allegiances *other* than Christ- is *also* impossible- with men! But then Jesus goes on to say:

The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.

And therein lies an incomparable incentive for missionary service.

Now earlier this year at the FIRE Conference- I was speaking with a missionary to Peru and he told me that when he was young he thought, "*If predestination is true, I would never become a missionary.*" But then he added, "*But now, after years in the field, I say, 'If predestination is not true, I could never be a missionary.'*"

You see, if God was not totally in charge in Missions to do the humanly impossible- the task of world evangelism would be hopeless. Who but God can raise the spiritually dead and give them an ear for the Gospel (**The Acts 16:14**)? So the great Biblical Doctrines of Unconditional Election, and Predestination unto sonship, and Irresistible Grace in the preaching of Christ are mighty incentives to venture forth into a Muslim or Hindu or Buddhist or tribal culture where people seem hard as nails against the preaching of the Gospel. In **John 10:16**, Jesus said,

I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd.

Therefore, when Paul enters city after city on his missionary journeys, his aim is clear- to gather in Jesus' sheep. The Lord said to Paul in a vision when he entered Corinth:

The Acts 18:9b&10

9 ... Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent;
10 for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

Listen again to what the Lord told him:

Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent... for I have many people in this city.

And when Paul was finished preaching in the city of Antioch, Dr. Luke described the results like this,

The Acts 13:48

When the Gentiles heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

The Missionary or the Evangelists or the Pastor who goes and preaches and teaches God's Word armed with the great Truths of Predestination and Irresistible Grace goes with the confidence that God will do for others today what he did for Lydia in **The Acts 16:14b**:

... the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

And that is why I am on the radio. And that is why I am going to Poplarville every other Tuesday and to Mandeville every other Wednesday. That is why you are going to the jails and to the nursing homes and why you go out into the streets- so that the Lord will open their hearts to respond to the things you speak and so that as many as have been appointed to eternal life may believe.

So when it comes to entering the Kingdom, there are two Truths:

1. With men it is impossible
2. With God all things are possible

... therefore, those who are ordained to eternal life will give heed to the Gospel and believe and be saved.

Now David Brainerd, whose missionary journal and diary have probably done as much to fire the cause of missions as any book beside the Bible, said that he lived for two things:

"My own sanctification and the ingathering of God's elect."

So the first incentive to Evangelistic or missionary service is the great encouragement that when we put forth effort to go to people and

preach the Gospel- the conversions we seek will be the sovereign Work of God in accord with His Own eternal Plan. One person plants, another one waters that which is planted- but *God alone* brings forth new life and gives the growth (**1Corinthians 3:6&7**). So what is impossible for us is *not* impossible with God- and He has already said He will do it.

What a thrill it is to walk with God into an unreached town dominated by sin and Satan and to hear God say,

"Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent . . . for I have many people in this city! My sheep will give heed to My Voice."

2. Christ Himself Makes Up for Every Loss

The second incentive for devoting yourself to evangelistic and missionary work is seen in **Luke 18:28-30**:

28 Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own *homes* and followed You."

29 And He said to them, "*Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,*

30 *who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.*"

Now contrary to what some on the Hay, Wood, and Stubble Television Network say- this text does *not* mean that you get materially rich by devoting yourself to Christ or by becoming a missionary- at least not in the sense that your own private possessions increase. It means mainly that when you have voluntarily deprived yourself of your earthly possessions in the Service of taking the Gospel to others- that loss will be made up a hundredfold in your spiritual family, the Church.

But even that comprehension may be too broad. Because what about the lonely pastor or the missionary who labors for years- seemingly without much to show for it and without being surrounded by hundreds of sisters and brothers and mothers and children in the faith? Is the Promise of Jesus right here not true for them? Yes, it is.

Surely what Christ means is that He Himself makes up for every loss. If you give up a mother's nearby affection and concern, you get back one hundred times the affection and concern from the ever-present

Christ. If you give up the warm comradeship of a brother, you get back one hundred times the warmth and camaraderie from Christ. If you give up the sense of at-homeness you had in your house, you get back one hundred times the comfort and security of knowing that your Lord owns every house and land and stream and tree on earth.

What Jesus is saying to everyone who devotes himself entirely to the Lord is this:

I promise to work for you and be so much for you- that you will not be able to speak of having sacrificed anything.

That's the way Hudson Taylor understood his devotion to the Lord, because at the end of his 50 years of missionary labor in China he said,

"I never made a single sacrifice."

So this seems to be a pattern. People who lose the most in this life for the Cause of this radical Love in Jesus Christ to see other people saved- seem to not think of it as losing at all. People who suffer the most so that others may be made rich in Salvation- don't see their suffering as something to take notice of. Which is why they can say,

I never made a sacrifice.

So it seems to me that the key to being like this- the key to having this kind of heart that lives for no other reason other than to see Christ magnified and to see others made rich in the Gospel, the key to have the kind of heart that considers whatever hardship you have to endure to not be a sacrifice at all- is directly proportional to how glorious Jesus is to you.

So I say to you this morning that King Jesus aims to be glorified in the great enterprise of taking the Gospel to people who have not heard it. And in that happening- Jesus intends to *always* remain the Benefactor and for us to *always* remain the beneficiaries. So even when we are called to preach the Gospel- we remain invalids in Christ's Sanitarium. We are always and in all ways in need of a Great

Physician. We are always and in all ways poor in need of His Wealth and Welfare.

So when Jesus sends you to Liberia or Cameroon or Brazil or Japan or India or China or Bay St. Louis or Poplarville or Mandeville, or to the local prisons or nursing homes or the corner store- He sends us there as part of our own ongoing therapy. He says,

"Now I know that there are some negative side-effects to this prescribed therapy, for example, persecutions, but I promise as your Doctor that if you follow this health regime, your condition will improve one hundred times more than if you reject it."

So Missionaries or Evangelists or Pastors or Teachers are not heroes who can boast about some great sacrifice for God. They are the best examples of what being a beneficiary of the Lord Christ looks like. They are the ones who understand that the battle cry of finding true contentment and joy in Jesus is in pouring out to others. And they have discovered that there is one hundred times more joy and satisfaction in a life devoted to Christ and the Gospel than a life devoted to frivolous comforts and pleasures and worldly advancements.

As Ralph Winter says at the end of his booklet, "Say Yes to Missions":

"Jesus, 'for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame . . . ' To follow *Him* is your choice. You're warned! But don't forget the Joy."

Or as I. Cambell White said in 1909 when the Layman's Missionary Movement was at its peak:

"Fame, pleasure, riches are but husks and ashes in contrast with the boundless and abiding Joy of working with God for the fulfillment of His eternal Plans."

So I do not appeal to you this morning to work up your courage so you can sacrifice for Jesus Christ. I appeal to you to renounce all that you have- all that you hold dear- in order to obtain the Pearl of Great Price. I appeal to you to count all things as rubbish for the surpassing

value of standing in the Service of the King of Kings. And I appeal to you to take off your store-bought rags and to put on the priestly garments of God's ambassadors.

And here is the kicker- Jesus Himself promises you great persecutions and privations- but, "remember the joy": **"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10).**

So there are two incentives for us this morning to be faithful in proclaiming God's Word- straight from the Mouth of Jesus Christ:

1) Every impossibility with Man is a snap for God; the conversions of hardened sinners will be the sovereign Work of God and will accord with His sovereign Plan. So we need not fear or fret over our own weaknesses. The battle is the Lord's and He will give us the victory!

2) Christ promises to work for us and to be for us so much that when our Ministry life is over- we will not be able to say we've sacrificed anything.

Listen, the extraordinary need of the world to hear the Gospel is becoming increasingly obvious, and we are not the kind of people who can ignore that. Satan's great lie in the past generation has been that the Great Commission is almost completed, and so the Church can forget her wartime mentality and begin to accumulate wealth for ourselves. People confused the "nations" of **Matthew 28:19** ("**Make disciples of all *nations***") with political nations of our day and concluded that disciples have been made in every nation, so the end can come.

But they forget the song of heaven in **The Revelation 5:9** where Christ is praised:

Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

When Jesus commissioned His Church to disciple the peoples of the world- He did *not* have in mind merely *political* boundaries. He had in mind the distant, distinct groups including tribes and tongues and peoples. And today there are over 16,000 such groups in the earth that remain undisciplined.

That number is so great that if every Christian in the world won all his neighbors to Christ, half the world would still be unevangelized, because almost three billion people make up culturally distant people groups who do not have an indigenous witness. They are the "hidden peoples," the "frontier missions" of our day. And the only way they can be reached is by cross-cultural missionaries.

So the day of foreign missions is *not* over. On the contrary, we stand on the brink of a new movement in the western and third-world Churches to penetrate this last frontier. Let me give you some numbers.

Only two-hundred-fifty Protestant missionaries from North America serve among 833 million Muslims in 4,000 Muslim people groups; 100 missionaries among 737 million Hindus in 3,000 Hindu people groups; 200 missionaries among 705 million Han Chinese, and 200 missionaries among 355 million Buddhists, for a total of 750 Protestant North American missionaries among a little less than half the world's population who are basically unreached (2,630,000,000).

And then we look here in America. There are more churches on the Mississippi Gulf Coast between Mobile and Slidell north to Hattiesburg than there are missionaries to almost three billion Muslim, Hindu, Chinese, and Buddhist people. So could we really call that obedience to the Great Commission? And while it is true that Americans gave \$700 million dollars last year to mission agencies- more than all the other nations on earth combined- it is *also* true that this happens to be the very same amount they spent on chewing gum. Every 52 days- Americans spend as much on pet food as they do annually on foreign missions. And the reason for these things is *not* simply because we are living for our own pleasure- but that we do not believe what Jesus says right here-

29 ... "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

We have a great Church here. And God is beginning to move in glorious ways. So not only do I wish to see branches open up in Poplarville and Mandeville- I want to see this Church be a Church that reaches the world. I want to travel to some of our fields and minister to

our missionaries and bring back the joyous reports of what God is doing. And I want to preach and write in such a way that young and old and men and women simply will not be able to go on with business as usual while there are more Churches on the Coast than there are missionaries in half the world.

Now the challenges ahead of us are great- but God is greater. And Jesus says that the eternal rewards are a hundred times better than anything this world can offer. So we should pour ourselves out to the lost of this world as a drink offering before the Lord- and Christ has promised that our joy will double.

What Jesus means here is that He Himself more than makes up for every sacrifice we give in reaching the world for Christ. So if you give up a mother's or a daughter's nearby affection and concern- you get back one hundred times the affection and concern from the ever-present Christ. If you give up the warm comradeship of a brother or a son or a father- you get back one hundred times the warmth and comradeship of the Lord Christ.

If you give up the sense of "at-homeness" you had in your house, you get back one hundred times the comfort and security of knowing that your Lord owns every house in every city.

And to those who consider giving all- Jesus says, *"I promise to work for and be for you so much that you will not be able to speak of having sacrificed anything."*

So when you are thrown back upon your own soul, all alone, in the midnight, in the bush, in the very embrace of death itself, have you a Friend that will not fail you then? What was Jesus's attitude to Peter's so-called "sacrificial" spirit? Peter said,

"Behold, we have left our own *homes* and followed You."

... so is this the spirit of "self-denial" commended by Jesus? No, it is rebuked. Because Jesus said,

**29 ... "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,
30 who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."**

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.