

*Key Questions: Why do we send missionaries? Why does missions exist, and why is it important in the life of the church and the individual Christian?*

## The Great Commission in Context

- **What is the Great Commission?**
  - **Matthew 28:18–20** <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and *make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
  - **Mark 16:15–16** <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “Go into all the world and *proclaim the gospel* to the whole creation. <sup>16</sup>Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
  - **Luke 24:46–49** <sup>46</sup>and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be *proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem*. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”
  - **John 20:21–22** <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. *As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.*” <sup>22</sup>And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.
  - **Acts 1:8** <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will *be my witnesses* in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and *to the end of the earth.*”
- **The Grand Redemptive Narrative: The Story of God's Glory**
  - God is the Creator of all, and is thus sovereign over all.
    - **Revelation 4:11** <sup>11</sup>“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”
  - God is Holy, and thus honored as completely set apart.
    - **Revelation 4:8** <sup>8</sup>And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease

to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

- God is judge and lawgiver, and is perfectly just.
  - **Isaiah 33:22** <sup>22</sup>*For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us.*
  - **James 4:12** <sup>12</sup>*There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy.*
- God is glorious, God is zealous for his own glory.
  - **Ezekiel 36:22–23** <sup>22</sup>*Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. <sup>23</sup>And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.*
- Man sinned, and has fallen short of God's glory.
  - **Romans 3:23** <sup>23</sup>*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
  - **Romans 1:22–23** <sup>22</sup>*Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*
- Mankind is dead in sin, and thus under God's wrath.
  - **Ephesians 2:1–2** <sup>1</sup>*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...*
  - **Romans 2:5** <sup>5</sup>*But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*
  - **Romans 6:23** <sup>23</sup>*For the wages of sin is death...*
- God has chosen to glorify himself by saving a people for himself.
  - **Genesis 3:15** <sup>15</sup>*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*
  - **John 12:27–28** <sup>27</sup>*"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."*

- God desires His glory to spread throughout all the world.
  - **Habakkuk 2:14** <sup>14</sup>*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*
  - **Isaiah 49:6** <sup>6</sup>*he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*
  - **Revelation 7:9** <sup>9</sup>*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands...*
- The Great Commission is God's plan to accomplish the spread of His global glory.

## Motivations for Missions

- **Positive Motivations for Missions:**
  - God deserves worship, and there are people around the world who do not rightly worship Him.
  - God is supplying His power for the accomplishment of his mission.
    - **Acts 1:8** <sup>8</sup>*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*
  - Making disciples is a command given to every believer, and it's good for us to obey this command.
    - **John 14:15** <sup>15</sup>*"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*
  - Rewards await those who are faithful to sacrifice for the advance of the gospel.
    - **Luke 6:38** <sup>38</sup>*give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."*
    - **1 Corinthians 3:14–15** <sup>14</sup>*If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*
- **Negative Motivations for Missions:**
  - Eternal conscious torment awaits those who remain in their sin.
    - **John 3:18** <sup>18</sup>*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

- **Mark 9:47–48** <sup>47</sup>And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, <sup>48</sup>‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’
- Each of us will give an account to God.
  - **Romans 14:11–12** <sup>11</sup>for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” <sup>12</sup>So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.
  - **2 Corinthians 5:10** <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

## The Great Commission Personally Applied

- Each believer is called to **participate** in the spread the gospel.
  - **2 Corinthians 5:16–21** <sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and *gave us the ministry of reconciliation*; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- Each believer is called to **sacrifice** to for the spread of the gospel.
  - **Luke 9:23** <sup>23</sup>And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.
- Each believer has gifts to use to **support** the spread of the gospel.
  - **Romans 12:1–6** <sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to *present your bodies as a living sacrifice*, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ... <sup>3</sup>For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup>For as in one body we have many members, *and the members do not all have the same function*, <sup>5</sup>so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup>*Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...*
- Each believer will differ in the specific way they support the spread of the gospel.

- **All believers should:**
  - Pray for missions.
  - Give toward missions.
  - Go on mission. *Two options for faithfulness:*
    - Evangelism: Sharing the gospel in our context and culture.
    - Missions: Taking the gospel to another context and culture.
- **Believers will differ in:**
  - **Station** – Christ calls disciples to specific stations in and through which they exalt Him on mission. For example, the family: Christians are called to be faithful sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, and mothers and fathers for the spread of God’s gospel and the display of God’s glory.<sup>1</sup>
  - **Vocation** – Christ gifts people with different skills and abilities that they can use to work, providing funds and platform for the display of God’s glory.
  - **Location** – Christ calls people to live in a particular place in which the gospel can spread.
  - **Nation** – Christ calls people to different cultural and ethnic contexts in which they can spread the Gospel. *In this case, “nation” does not mean a geo-political entity, but a people group made up of those who share the same language and culture.*

## The Great Commission Specifically Applied

- **A Missionary Defined**
  - **Definition:** A disciple of Jesus set apart by the Holy Spirit, and sent out by the church to cross geographic, cultural, and/or linguistic barriers to make disciples and multiply churches among unreached peoples and places.<sup>2</sup>
  - While all Christians are called to be “on mission”, we used the word “missionary” to refer to those who’s station, vocation, nation, and location are tailored by God to reach those who have never heard the gospel.
- **A Missionary’s Calling**
  - Missionaries are “set apart” by the Holy Spirit for the work.
  - Missionaries are internally drawn to the work.
  - Missionaries are externally confirmed for the work.
  - Missionaries are sent by churches to accomplish the work.
  - Missionaries are supported by churches in the work.

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<sup>1</sup> *IMB Foundations Magazine*, pg. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from *IMB Foundations*, pg. 67

- **A Dynamic Calling**
  - Calls to mission can be fluid, based on many factors (*More on this in a future lesson*).
  - Durations:
    - Short Term – 1 week to 2 months.
    - Mid Term – 2 months to 2 years.
    - Long Term – 2 years and beyond.
  - Vocations:
    - Business as mission – Paul the tentmaker (Acts 18)
    - Job in-country – Doctor, teacher, etc.
    - Vocational missionary – Vocational minister (1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Corinthians 9:7-11)
    - Hybrid models

## Lesson Summary

- God has chosen to glorify himself by redeeming a people for himself.
- God has chosen to redeem a people for himself through disciples of Jesus Christ spreading the gospel.
- Because there are those who've not yet heard the gospel, there are lost people who are not glorifying God and are thus destined for an eternal hell.
- While all are called to participate on mission through prayer, financial support, using gifts, and sharing the gospel, some are called to cross cultural and linguistic barriers to take the gospel those who've never heard it.
- We broadly use the word "missionary" and the term "missions" to describe this specific calling and endeavor.
- Individuals and churches should care about missions because the accomplishment of the great commission is the purpose for all the redeemed in Christ before Christ's second coming.

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

**Matthew 24:14**