

The Great Commission

Missions Conference 2009

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Let's open up our Bibles to Matthew chapter 28. Before we read our text immediately after the service tonight I am going to be leaving. I have been here every night until about 10:30 or 11. I am going to be leaving for two reasons. One is I am a bit under the weather tonight. I am not feeling very well. The other is this. This is a missions conference. I plead with you that you will walk out of this building tonight and you will go to every one of those booths to every one of those missionaries, that you will take their literature, that you will talk to them, that you will study what they are doing, that you will pray.

You know, I appreciate what the pastors said. You know, they don't take up an offering here in their own services. They have a box. Really, I like that. At heart cry one of policies is we never make our needs known. But when it comes to talk about other missionaries and other missionary organizations, it does not defile my conscience to plead with you that you would prayerfully go out there and seek God's will with regard to these beautiful, beautiful missionaries that are gathered here. I have seen some of the best presentations I think I have ever seen in my life and I am not judging that by the eye. I am judging that by just the Spirit bearing witness. Just beautiful.

I mean, some of the things that we have seen. I know missions, folks. Some phenomenal things going on with some of these missionaries that it just doesn't happen everywhere. And also just realize this. Most people they do not get that involved in giving to missions because they think in order to give to missions they have to give 100 dollars a month or this or that. But, do you know what it would be like if 200 people gave their candy bar money each month? It could put one of these families on the field every month. Isn't that

amazing, 20 dollars out of just a few hundred people to put an entire family on the field planting churches and preaching the gospel.

You know, I have discovered there are no big things. There is just not. There is just a whole lot of little things. Faithfulness, faithfulness.

In Peru there is a saying [?]. The only reason you are alive is because air is free. And they say that to people who seem to have no purpose.

You know, sometimes I think I could say that about a lot of Christians. You know when a secular man goes out and he has no purpose, he is consistent. It is logical. He really doesn't have a purpose and if he thought he has a purpose he is just making one up. But you have a purpose, to glorify God by the redemption of a people through the blood of Jesus Christ, proclamation of the gospel.

Swamp those missionaries tonight. Swamp them. Pray. Go home. Get on your knees God.

Let me... off the thing, but I am known for running rabbits anyways. Let me share with you something I learned a long time ago. I called it the Jacob and Laban principle or the David and Saul principle. It is like this.

You know, a lot of ministers are very jealous people. They are. They are very envious. They see one man succeed and they get all bothered about it. That is the most foolish thing you can possibly do. And that is not happening here. I have heard these ministers get up here on this platform and just plead with you not to bless their church, but to bless these missionaries.

But let me just give you a principle I learned a long time ago.

Jacob, he went to the country of Laban. Laban saw him coming and the only thing Laban can think of is Laban. And because of God's hand upon Jacob, Jacob prospered. In the end Jacob walked away prospering fully and Laban was broke. He was basically destroyed.

What would it have been like if Laban had said to himself the moment he saw Jacob, "Here comes God's anointed. Now he is a young man. There is a lot of wicked people. He needs a lot of help in this area and I know this country. Here is what I am going to do. I am going to take that boy under my arm. I am going to bless him. I am going to protect him. I am going to pray for him. I am going to set him up. I am going to help him any way I can. I am going to serve him"?

What would Laban's life have been like when Jacob went back to the Promised Land? Laban would have been so blessed. And yet he was destroyed.

I want you to think of Saul and David. Saul tried to kill David. He didn't try to bless

David. He didn't try to help David. What would it have been like? And Saul died, didn't he, under the judgment of God. What would it have been like if Saul had when he saw David he had said to himself, "You know, I have blown it. The kingdom has been wrenched away from me. It is God's judgment on my sin. But I do still have breath. And here is this young man David and God has set his seal upon him. So I am going to do whatever I can do to bless him. I am going to help him. I am going to pray for him. I am going to turn over the kingdom to him. I am going to make sure that everybody recognizes it. I will carry his bags if necessary"?

How would his life have ended differently?

And that is the same way when you see people going out to the mission field.

You say to yourself, maybe, "Well, that's good."

No, no, no. It is an opportunity for you to be a part of what God is doing, to be a part.

I hate to use this analogy, but, you know, there are so many schemes out there, pyramid schemes and, you know, things. And then there is reputable businesses like, well, Amway or whatever where you get someone in the business and whatever they sell you get part of it and all that kind of stuff.

But you know what? Every person I pray for, every minister I care for, every missionary I support their fruit is mine. Can't you see that?

You ought to be thinking, ok. All right, this is a pretty good deal. I need to pray for these missionaries going out to all these countries. They are here in this conference. Now I need to pray. I will give. I will help. I will do...

And do you know what? Guess what? You now have ministries in all those countries. You are now bearing fruit in all of those countries.

You see, what I want you to see is just can't you just see the possibility? Can't you see the meaning that it brings to your life? Can't you see the productivity and the fruit that every soul they win you have won?

There is an amazing thing in Peru during the war. A lot of missionaries left. A lot of Peruvians left. And some of us were told we should leave or we are going to be killed.

But, you know, I stayed. I am glad I did and I will tell you why, because when the war and everything was finally over, it was only those who stayed who could really rejoice. All those who left had nothing to rejoice about. You have got a chance with every missionary you see, with every minister you see to pray and ask God, "God, not do I have to, but can I? Can I be a part of this?"

It is so wonderful. So much of what you work for is spent on that which will not last. And yet you can make an investment that lasts throughout all of eternity and not only lasts, but multiplies. I plead with you tonight. Go out there. Get everything you can and pray for them. Give, whatever. Do that.

Let's open up our Bibles as I said to Matthew 28 verse 16.

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up 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 the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."¹

I have heard people weekly argue that this passage only pertains to the apostles, but isn't it amazing that the same people who argue that claim that all the promises of the New Testament still belong to them.

Well, I can assure you. All the promises of the New Testament, they are yours, but so is this great responsibility laid before you. As I have said, not all are called to be missionaries, but all are called to have a direct and complete involvement in the great commission. You either go down into the well or you hold the rope for those going down. Either way there is going to be scars on your hands.

Now, I want to look at this text. I have got several notes from several things and actually 47 pages of notes on this text and I don't think we are going to get through them tonight. So I am going to jump around quite a bit and forgive me if it is not that eloquent, but I hope it is real.

First of all, I want to define commission. Webster defines it this way. "A formal warrant or authority granting certain powers or privileges and authorizing or commanding the performance of certain acts or duties, a warrant conferring authority to raise and command a body of troops."

This is a majestic statement. This is not some tiny lamb leading a band of misfits into a war that they will most certainly lose. This is the mighty Christ, the Messiah of God who has now suffered once and for all for his people. And now he stands there resurrected, soon to be glorified and he gives them a command. And he will empower them to obey it and no force in heaven or in hell or on earth can stand against him.

There is more power in this passage than all the nations and armies of the earth combined.

¹ Matthew 28:16-20.

Now, the Church, you have received this commission. It is both authority and it is duty. It is your responsibility. It is your task and there is no excuse for you to lay it aside or say it is too great to be done. And why is that? Because not only did he give you the command, he gave you the authority.

You say, "But, oh, brother Paul, I am so weak."

Your problem is not weakness. Your problem is you are not weak enough. It is in his weakness, our weakness that we are made strong.

You have no excuse, none of you, to not be involved in the Great Commission. You cannot claim impotence. You cannot claim that you lack the power. It is true that if I demand that a blind man read and punish him because he cannot, that is unjust because he cannot read. But it is not that way with you. You have been given a command, but you can obey by the power of God.

Now, I want to say four important truths just quickly as an introduction. First of all, the Church has been placed under a solemn and irrevocable obligation to make disciples of all the nations. It isn't a marvelous thing when a Church gets involved in missions. It is a pathetic blasphemous thing when they are not.

We have done no great thing as a body because we have got excited about missions. We are supposed to be not only excited about missions, but we are to be giving our life to missions until every hill bears the banner of Christ.

It is our solemn and irrevocable obligation.

Do you know the foolish thing, horrible thing that some teenagers will say when they are in rebellion?

"I didn't ask you to bring me into this world."

And the parent says, "It doesn't matter. You are here."

You can say to yourself, "I didn't ask to be made part of this Great Commission." It doesn't matter. If you take part in his blood, you take part in his task. So if you renounce the one, go all the way and renounce the other.

As the people of God it is commanded of you that you give yourself no rest until all the world has an opportunity to have the light you have.

Secondly, the Church has the warrant or authority to raise whatever size army of gospel preachers that might be necessary for the completion of her obligation.

Pastors, elders, they have the right to preach, to implore, to even demand that people join the ranks of the Great Commission and get involved. The Church is called upon to raise

an army, not to raise people who get their pathetic little best life now, but to raise an army.

It shouldn't be unusual when missionaries come out of a church. It should be a dreadful crime when they don't.

One of the things that I love about Dr. Piper is when someone comes to the church and they are interviewed by the elders, one of the first thing they are asked is, "Now, you don't plan on staying here very long, do you? You do plan on getting trained and then go, right?"

You young people, why are you alive? What are you doing? Fixing your hair? Making muscles on your arms? What are you doing? Kicking a stupid ball around a field? What are you doing? You are called to the commission, to the commission, to the commission. And the Church should be about her work of training soldiers and supplying their needs so that they can go out and do work.

When our little children come into Sunday school class the teacher's prayer should be, "God, out of these two year olds, out of these three year olds that there might be champions for Christ even though it cost them their life."

Fathers should be looking at their sons and their daughters and praying over them in the night watch, "Oh God, take my child. Take him. Use him. Kill them if necessary on the field for the cause of Christ."

I remember when my mother was dying of cancer and God had called me to go to another place and someone said to my mother, "I cannot believe your son is going to leave you at this moment."

And my mother said, "I would renounce my son if he did not leave me at this moment to follow Jesus Christ into battle."

Loyalty to him. Be strong. Act like men. Quit playing video games, young men. Prepare yourself for battle. Wear your thumbs out while the world goes to hell. Stand up. Serve Christ.

Third, the Church has the authority to send her preachers to every and any nation upon the earth without limitation of jurisdiction or restriction of number.

Spurgeon was speaking about the King of France had got it in his head that he would not allow preachers to come over the border and preach in his country. This was his word to the King of France. "The daughter of Zion mocks you. She cares nothing for your decrees, for she has been authorized by the King of Heaven to trespass every border to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ."

Well, they won't let me do it.

Who are they and who is he?

This is not romantic. It is not poetry. It is not a lie. One day to have a son that at 17 or 18 come up to his father and say, “Dad, I am not going to college.”

“What are you doing, son?”

“I am going unto so and so country.”

“Son, you walk across that border and preach the gospel they will kill you.”

“I know, dad.”

“Will you take me to the border?”

“Son, not only will I take you to the border I will dress you with your backpack. I will kiss you on the cheek and I will bow and worship God as they take your life for the sake of the Son of God.”

You want your children to be stars? You want them to be comfortable? You want them to have houses and shiny things? You want them to be popular? It is all rot. We must want them to belong to Christ. And we must wag our head in disgust at anyone who tells us we cannot preach in a certain place.

“Well, they’ll throw you in jail.”

Well, then open wide the door, because here I come.

Fourth, the Church will always be the Church militant on earth until she is crowned the Church victorious in heaven. Understand that.

Do you know why God doesn’t answer many of your prayers? Because prayers don’t work on a pleasure boat. Prayer is a war time walkie talkie for soldiers who need reserves sent up to the front lines. Prayer is for those who are about the business of their master who in order to fulfill the will of their master need more supplies. Prayer is for the man who has settled in his heart, “Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.”²

Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven. Seek ye first the righteousness of God and all these things will be added unto you.

Now, I want us to look for a moment. This is very, very important. I want us to look at the men of the Great Commission as we see them here.

² Matthew 6:9-10; Luke 11:2.

It says in verse 16:

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful.³

Let's look at the men for just a moment of the Great Commission. And let me say this. Not only the men, but the women.

Right now, this very moment, I know two women working in a place in Asia all alone planting churches because as one pastor who works in a nearby province told us, no men are brave enough to go in there.

You say, "It is not right, two women working alone like that, planting churches, doctrinally and theologically it is not right."

You are right, sir. So why don't you join them and make it right.

In Peru this story of two women who got in a canoe and took out after a tribe that no one even knew for sure even existed. They just knew the stories about them were abominable and dangerous and deadly.

If men won't answer the call then let children, let women, let anyone regardless of their weakness or their malady. Let them answer the call.

First of all, as I said, I am trying to filter through all this that needs to be said. I just want to look for a moment at three different views of those who fulfill the Great Commission. I want to look at the apostles before the resurrection. I want to look at them, for a moment, after the resurrection and then I want to look at them for a moment after the day of Pentecost.

First of all, let me just read a few things about these followers of Jesus who turned the world upside down prior to the resurrection.

First of all, Jesus referred to them as men of little faith, Matthew 16. They argued about who among them was the greatest, Mark nine. In their self righteousness and their prejudice they wanted to call down fire from heaven in order to destroy their enemies, people from another culture, Luke nine. Once Jesus said this about them, that they were a stumbling block to him because they had not set their mind on God's interest, but man's, Matthew 16. At the crucifixion they abandoned him and Peter even denied him before a little servant girl. All in all they were not great men of valor, virtue or insight. But in the very words of Jesus they were foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets had spoken.

³ Matthew 28:16.

Isn't that amazing?

I think I could even identify myself with that group. The point that I am going to be driving at is this. There are no great men. There never has been a golden age of Christianity. There has always been weak and tiny and pitiful and frightened people of a great and a merciful God.

If you are saying, "I don't qualify as a missionary, brother Paul," then you qualify as a missionary if you truly believe those words.

Now after the resurrection, first of all, I want you to look at their obedience.

It says this, "But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated [for them]."⁴

First of all I want you to see something. These 11 were obedient. It was a doubtful, fearful, weak obedience, but they were willing to proceed to the mountain.

In the mission field we do not need, do not have bold lions who fear nothing, who are so courageous that we exalt them to be almost at the right hand of God. That type of missionary doesn't exist, but what we have and what we need are men and women who will simply follow, trembling, falling down, broken, scared, doesn't matter. They just keep following. And they do not follow like a fine race horse. They follow sometimes like nothing more than a plow horse, but they follow. That is what we need.

Like the race between the tortoise and the hare I have seen so many men of great prospect take off like a wild rabbit out of the chute, but they do not endure. But what we need are faithful men and women who will continue, continue, continue to follow him. They see themselves as prisoners. They look at themselves in the mirror. They see their failures. They see their weaknesses. They see all sorts of things about themselves that they do not like and they even sometimes are ashamed to write their newsletters because of all the failure they are experiencing at that moment on the field.

But even though they know all these things about themselves, they cannot leave the field. They are trapped. They are prisoners. To what? To the love of God, to their desire to see Christ glorified.

Weak men.

You know what? One small, tiny, weak vessel that is willing to go out into the great sea is worth 100 powerful schooners that won't leave the harbor.

One time a one legged school teacher applied in Scotland to a missionary organization to be sent out abroad. And a lady asked him why would a one legged school teacher think

⁴ Matthew 28:16.

of going to the mission field?

And he said, because the two legged ones won't go.

Another thing that I want you to see is the solemn nature of Christianity. Eleven men followed him. There were 12.

Now listen to me. This is a little bit evangelistic. If I did not believe Christianity to be this way I would not preach. Twelve of them proceeded on following Jesus Christ. One of them went to hell.

Do you see that? In America we have become far too nonchalant about Christianity and salvation. Do you realize that Christianity, it is a scandal because it is about this life, death, eternal bliss, eternal destruction. Heaven, hell. It is about gaining everything or losing everything. It is not something that you just add to your little quaint life. It must be your life. It is not something that you do on Wednesday or Sunday or youth group. It is your life. You realize that absolutely everything is staked upon this one thing. God in Christ and your response to that.

Tonight, right now, do you realize something? And I know that there are many, many Christians here. And, no, I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, nor I can't look into the heart of anyone, but if statistics hold true in this very room here right now there are those who in several years from now will be so glorious in heaven that if you could see them right now as they will be one day you would have a tendency to fall down and want to worship them. And there are other people sitting out in this audience right now who would be grotesque graceless monsters in hell.

Now a lot of people don't want me to talk that way. But that is the way you must talk. You must see this. Christianity is not an addition to a moral life. It is not something you do because it helps you. It is everything. Your eternity is riding upon it. It is.

It goes on. I want you to look at something here that is very, very important, especially the missionaries.

It says, "When they saw Him, they worshipped Him."⁵ προσκυνεω (pros-koo-neh'-o) is the word. It is very important.

In the New Testament, προσκυνεω (pros-koo-neh'-o), worship is used exclusively with regard to God and Jesus Christ. And what does it teach us? That we follow more than a man.

When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, the New Testament tells us that Cornelius wanted to προσκυνεω (pros-koo-neh'-o) Peter, wanted to worship him. And Peter said, "Stand up. I am just a man like you."

⁵ Matthew 18:17.

In the book of Revelation the apostle John in the presence of an angel twice desired to προσκυνεω (pros-koo-neh'-o). He desired to worship him. And the angel said, "Stand up. Worship God," meaning God alone.

So when the Bible says that these men, privy to the counsels of Christ, when they see him there after the resurrection and they worship him, what is that? It is a declaration of deity. And why is that important to a missionary? I will tell you why it is important. Scholars and skeptics can sit around all day and ponder whether or not they think Jesus is God, but a missionary doesn't have that luxury because a missionary knows if he is not God there is no hope for me. There is no salvation for me.

Isn't it amazing? We do not follow a man. We do not follow a demagogue. We do not follow some angel in between divinity and humanity. We follow God in the flesh.

To be a part of a cult, to follow a man is absolutely absurd. It is not only absurd it is a crime against a person's humanity. To follow a man, a pathetic man who the Bible says, "What is man?" He is just a nose full of air, one nostril full of air at a time. That is all is. And if we are following a man then we are to be pitied above everyone.

But we are not following a man. We are following God in the flesh.

We are told in Romans chapter 12 to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. Everything that we are, I mean Satan was right in this. You can take a lot away from a man, but touch his flesh, touch his body and you will see who he really is.

He was right. Romans 12 and every passage and call of discipleship is not asking just things from us. God is asking for our bodies, our life, all that we are.

My dear friend, I want to tell you something. I have not attained to that, but this one thing I desire to do, lay aside everything and keep following, keep following, to die more to self, to hold back less from him, to give more and more, to waste the life upon Christ.

All of us are called to that, all of us. And you will not regret what you give. You will regret what you hold back from him on that final day when he judges all men.

Now, I want us to look at something that is very, very important. Missionaries, listen to me. It is appropriate that worship would precede the Great Commission.

Let me read something and I need to read it because it is even confusing when I read it, so pray that God will give you understanding.

Worship and the Great Commission, they are both part of an unending, ever repeating, ever expanding cycle of God's providence. I will explain that.

The revelation of the glory of God leads to worship. That is why theology is so important. The more you know of who he is the more you are led to worship. Proper theology will always lead to an appropriate doxology. The more you know of truth about him, the deeper will be your worship. That is why it is so absurd to say that theology kills zeal. Bad theology kills zeal, but real doctrine, real truth promotes it.

So the revelation of the glory of God leads to worship. Worship leads to missions. Missions results in the revelation of the glory of God to a nation or people group that has yet to hear which leads to their worship of the one true God which leads to their participation in the great commission which results in the revelation of the glory of God being given to other nations and people groups which have never heard which leads to their worship of the one true God which leads to missions.

Now, here is something that I want you to see. Missionary and Christian, your greatest need is a revelation of who God is.

I find it amazing that most Christians have never heard nor participated themselves in a study of the doctrine of God, of the attributes of God. I will question seminary students. How many years did you study the attributes of God?

Well, I remember the last answer I got. I think it was six days in class because you have got to rush through that systematic theology, you know. There is other classes to take like how to grow a big church.

How much time?

Let me share something with you about Christian growth. It is very important. I could tell you tonight, all of you need to love God more. And your natural response ought to be, duh.

Everyone is always telling me and you, "You ought to love God more." And that is true. But how do you do that? Have you ever thought about that? How do you do that? Is it like pulling yourself up by your own boot straps? Is it like falling on the ground, grabbing your belt and lifting yourself up in the air? How do you make yourself love God more?

Or do you simply wait around for some experience? How do you grow in love toward God?

Well, let me give you the answer tonight. I have been married 16 years. I love my wife more now. It is different. I really don't know how to... it is like a solidity. I don't know. A rock, more solid. I love her more.

Now why do I love her more? I know more about her and I not only know more about her, I have experienced more about her.

Now, my wife, although it may be hard to believe, she has some flaws. But she is a virtuous woman. The more I know about her, the more I see her virtue, the more I see her virtue, the more love is drawn out of me.

Now we can get... there is a philosophical thing going on here. If you really want to deal with it, read the first volume of the works of John Flavel on the essential glory of Christ. He is really good at this. The whole idea is that when you see beauty and if your heart is right and you see beauty, you see virtue. Then that virtue, that beauty draws love from your heart. It draws it up.

Now a lost man looks at God and the more he knows about God the more he hates him. The more he knows about God's will the more he kicks against it. But the man who has... or woman or child who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and given a new heart of flesh that loves God and can respond to the divine stimuli of God, there is something different that happens. The more they see who God is, the more they are drawn to him. They can't but help it. It is irresistible.

Now, how can you love God more? Know him more. Go deep into studying his attributes. Go deep into crying out, "Lord, you say this in Scripture. What does it mean? Apply it to my... teach me about you?"

There is such an ignorance of God. I go up to missionaries sometimes. What are you going to teach on the mission field? Are you going to teach them the attributes of God? Because rich men shouldn't boast in their wealth, strong men in their strength or even wise men in their wisdom. The one who boasts ought to boast in this, that he knows God. Are you going to teach them about God?

"Well, that's a novel idea, brother Paul."

Don't laugh. How many of you have studied the attributes of God? Do you see?

The only way we can grow in love for him, since our hearts have been changed is to know more of his virtue, to know more of his beauty, to know more of his excellency. And then you will say with John Flavel, "Oh, fair Christ, oh fair moon, but fairer Christ, oh fair sun, but fairer Christ, oh fair lilies, but fairer Christ. No, I am speaking as one who writes by moonlight and I have wronged him in saying it this way, but rather I should say, oh black, dark and twisted sun, but oh fair Christ. Oh, fair black and twisted and dark moon, but oh fair Christ. Oh dark lilies and black flowers, all black, all twisted, all ugly in comparison to Christ."

The more you know him, the more you will love him if your heart has been truly regenerated by the Holy Spirit. And the more you love him and the more you are enamored by him, the more you will want to make him known.

And then you go out on that mission field and you are not pedaling a morality. You are not pedaling. You don't need gimmicks anymore. It is just him. You are versed in him, you are trained in him. You are full of him and so you open up your mouth and you speak about him. Just him.

And I guarantee you this. The Holy Spirit will bless a message like that.

Let me tell you about my Jesus.

And they keep scoffing and you keep talking and they keep scoffing and you keep talking and the Spirit of God comes down and will regenerate some and break them into the kingdom.

I think that is amazing.

Missionaries, study deeply who God is.

Have you ever studied the beauty of God? Now that is a good one. You want to fire up your soul, study the beauty of God, that God is so beautiful that if you caught a glimpse of him without being strengthened it would drive you mad. Your mind and heart could not contain such beauty.

Have you ever looked at a sunset, just caught you out of the corner of the eye and you turn around and you look at the sunset and you go... You just... imagine a glimpse of the beauty of God. Imagine this, that he is so glorious. He is so beautiful that it is an act of condescension on the part of God to turn his eyes away from himself to look at any other creature or any creature or thing. He is so beautiful that he has to humble himself, almost give an explanation of why he would turn himself away from gazing upon his own glory to look at even the most spectacular thing he ever made.

It is not all about you. It is all about him. And you need to be besought with him. Live with him. And where sometimes you can't stand it any longer and you just got to get up and you just got to hope in the darkness that somehow you are going to see just a little bit more of what you have tasted for you have tasted and seen that the Lord is good.

Now what do I want to say here, but simply this. The strength of the Great Commission does rest upon the soldiers, on the shoulders of men, but it rests upon the power and the decree of God. There will be certain victory. There will be certain victory. The only question that remains is: Will you participate in that victory?

Now before we go on I want to speak one other thing about motivation. When you saw those media presentations here tonight and the night before and the night before, and you see the hurting, lost, hell bound people, that... if that does not move you, I would question the integrity or the validity of your salvation.

We must love. We must care about the mass of humanity that is dying without Christ. But I want to share with you something. That is not strong enough medicine to put you on the field or keep you there.

You know, when you were a brand new missionary this is kind of what you think. I am going to go out there to a people so hungry for the gospel and I am going to get out there with my tracts and my portable pulpit and my megaphone and I am going to go out there and preach and then countless thousands are going to fall down and worship God and then they are going to pick me up on their shoulders and run around the plaza with me. This is the man who brought me the gospel.

It doesn't work that way.

How many times going into a plaza the tracts and the Bible and like I always say, if you are going to street preach bring your chair because the police can't make you get off your own chair. And start preaching and a crowd comes. It seems encouraging. And then I don't know where this person comes from and I am sorry to say it is usually a woman, starts screaming at you and calling you a demon or a heretic. And then all of the people in a moment turn on you and they grab you and your tracts and your little portable megaphone and all your hopes and chase you out into the street.

It is going to take a lot more than a love for those people to make you pick up all those tracts again and pick up your Bible again and pick up your megaphone and your chair and march right back into that plaza and preach again. It is going to have to take a zeal for the glory of God.

Yes, we do this because we love people, but principally above all things we do this for him that his name may be great among the nations. And as those Moravian boys said, "Shall not the lamb receive the full reward for his sufferings?"

You have heard that story. Do you want to hear the greatest story ever on missions? Ten shekels and a shirt by Paris Reidhead. Ten shekels and a shirt. And there he tells the story of this man owned an island and he carried slaves out to the island, African slaves constantly. And this man said that no preacher, no missionary will ever set foot on my island and if one happens to shipwreck near the island, we will bring him in and we will lock him in a jail or a room. We will not allow him to speak with one person until a boat can come and take him away.

Now hearing the news of these 3000 African slaves who would never have a chance to hear the gospel two Moravian boys, Europeans contacted the slave owner and they sold themselves into slavery, not for four years and then a furlough, for the rest of their lives they sold their bodies into slavery.

And as that boat was pulling away from the dock in Hamburg, the last thing the parents heard one of the boys cry out was this, "Shall not the lamb receive the full reward for his sufferings?"

That is the kind of children we want to raise.

They could not bear to see 3000 Africans die without Christ, but also they could not bear that there was an island, even the tiniest island where Christ was not preached and his banner was not hung.

Those are men. Those are men. And there are countless women whose stories are unknown who have done the same.

Now the weakness, the weakness. I preached years and years ago at a Christian university and a revival broke out. I don't say that lightly, a genuine revival broke out. People were being converted by the droves. People's lives were changed. The university was in an uproar. Walking across campus in the winter. The football team threw water balloons at me and my wife because they hated it so much. I mean it was just... it was a genuine revival.

And because of it, some of the young men they came up to me, about five of them. They said, "Brother Paul, we would just love to spend one summer with you in Peru."

I said, "Well, come on."

When they got off that plane they thought I was the apostle Paul. When they got back on that plane a month and a half later they were praying for my salvation. Now what is the point? They were very disappointed. It wasn't that they saw, I hope, a hypocrite. It wasn't that they saw an insincere man. It was that they saw a man. That's it. And it was one of the best lessons they ever learned. That is all missionaries are. That is all God requires them to be. Men and women.

I take great comfort now. Proud missionaries hear that and they get angry.

"Don't say those kind of things about me."

But the humble hear it and they are glad.

"Do you mean he can use me?"

Yes.

But how can he use you? In your weakness, real weakness.

I used to tell young preachers, "You cannot preach apart from the power of God." Now I tell them, "You can't tie your shoes apart from the power of God."

You can't breath apart from his power. You can't bear fruit apart from being united to him. He is the vine. The branches, that's why I spent so much time this week dealing

with your closet time. And I may spend more. You must dwell with him. You must dwell with him.

Many people tell me today, “Well, brother Paul, I don’t pray a whole lot. I just kind of pray as I go and practice his presence as I go.”

No, you don’t. No, you don’t. Because to learn to practice his presence, to learn to pray without ceasing that is developed through separating time with him in the closet, in the Word and not just in the Word. So many men will study the Bible eight hours a day and they are great scholars, but there is not a drop of power in them because it is not just study. It is fellowship, it is communion.

Now, I want to talk about something that is not talked about much. That is the Holy Spirit. Why?

You know, I am amazed at the reformers, Puritans, the early Baptists, how much they spoke of the Holy Spirit and how differently they spoke of the Holy Spirit than we do today. And I am convinced it is for this reason. They did not have to deal with all the heretical teaching on the Holy Spirit that we have to deal with today. There as no TV and, thus, there were no TV preachers.

Now, again, I want to say that there are some TV preachers that are worth their salt. But there is so much heresy on the airwaves and particularly with regard to the Holy Spirit. Many who claim the Holy Spirit, teach the Holy Spirit, are blaspheming the Holy Spirit as they speak.

But because of them we have allowed our heritage to be stolen from us.

I always tell some of the students. I will say, “Jehovah Witness knocks on my door. I open the door and they go, ‘Hello. We are Jehovah Witnesses.’”

I say, “Well, that’s wonderful. Come on in. So am I.”

Why? Because I am not going to allow them to steal a title that belongs to me. And I let them talk for about five minutes and I say, “You are not a witness of Jehovah. First of all Jehovah has only had one real witness and it was his Son. Secondly, what you are saying about him is a lie. But we are the witnesses.”

In the same way, with regard to the Holy Spirit, I will not, cannot give up this vital person nor his ministry in my life or ministry.

Now, I want to read to you a text. Just listen. It is from Luke 24. “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”⁶

⁶ Luke 24:49.

Acts 1:8. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”⁷

Now the moment I read these things in the minds of many they are thinking, well, what is he going to do now? Is he going to teach that someone can be saved and not have the Holy Spirit? Is he going to teach that someone must speak in tongues as evidence of having the Holy Spirit?

You see how much you have been contaminated? You are scared to death. Where am I going next? That is so sad.

Here is what we know. A man cannot repent to believe apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Men are regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit and made alive so like Lazarus they can hear his voice and respond. And that Spirit that regenerates them indwells them and he is a person. He cannot be cut in half.

But let me ask you a question. And think about it before you respond. Are you clothed in power? No, don't explain it away. I don't want to hear your argument. Answer my question.

This word “clothed.” The root of it is also used in another place where it talks about false prophets, that they would be clothed, sheep's clothing. They would have the external appearance of a sheep even though inwardly they were a wolf.

Do you know you can't be a witness unless you have the external appearance, visible appearance of Christian virtue? You know that, don't you? Men are going to look at your life. They are not just going to hear your voice. They are going to look at your life. When they look at you they must see Christian virtue. They must see that you are clothed in that, but there is another thing. Do they seek power? The power of a godly life?

But I just do not want to limit it to an ethic. Do they see power in ministry?

Now, I want you to listen, just listen. I am going to quote some men. This is for the missionaries, the pastors, for me, for all of us. I am going to quote some men.

The first one is George Smeaton. Now, listen, well respected among those who love the Puritans and the reformers. Listen. “No more mischievous and misleading theory could be propounded nor any more dishonoring to the Holy Spirit than the principle that because the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost the Church has no need and now warrant to pray for effusions of the Spirit of God. On the contrary, the more the Church asks for the Spirit and waits for his communications, the more she receives.”

Jonathan Edwards. “The Scriptures do not only direct and encourage us in general to pray for the Holy Spirit, above all things else, but it is the express revealed will of God that his

⁷ Acts 1:8.

Church should be very much in prayer for that glorious outpouring of the Spirit which is to be in the latter days and for what shall be accomplished by it," Jonathan Edwards' works volume II page 290.

Thomas Boston writes, "Wherefore breathe, pant and long for the Spirit of Christ."

Now my favorite of all preachers, Charles Spurgeon. "Did we not hear some time ago from certain wise brethren that we were never to pray for the Spirit? I think I have heard it said often, 'We have the Holy Spirit and therefore we are not to pray for him.' Like that other declaration from certain men of the same brotherhood that have... that say we have pardon of sin and we are not to pray for it, just as if we were never to pray for what we have. If we have life we are to pray that we may have it more abundantly. If we have pardon in one respect, we are to ask for a fuller sense of it. And if we have the Holy Spirit so that we are quickened and saved, we do not ask for him in that capacity, but we ask for his power in other directions and for his grace in other forms. I do not go before God now and say, 'Lord, I am a dead sinner. Quicken me by thy Spirit,' for I trust I am quickened of his Spirit. But being quickened I know cry, 'Lord, let not the light thou hast given me ebb down until it become very feeble, but give me of thy Spirit that the life within me may become strong and mighty and may subdue all the power of death within my members that I may put forth the vigor and energy which come from thyself through the Spirit.'"

And then he pleads, "Oh, you that have the Spirit, you are the very men to pray that you may experience more of his matchless operations and gracious influences and in all the benign sanctity of his indwelling may seek that yet more and more you may know him. You have this as your encouragement that God will give to those who ask him."

How many times am I asked, "Brother Paul, we just... you know, we try to organize evangelism. No one comes."

Right. I know. I know why. Or a street preacher. God has done something in his life and he tries to get other people involved and no one comes.

You shall receive power and you will be my witnesses and you shall receive power.

Do you think you can organize this stuff? Do you think you can plan it? No. Church was never meant to organize life or psych itself up to make itself believe it has power.

But tarry before the Lord that he might endue you with power, not to do all these silly circus type things on television or among most people who claim to have something of the power of God, but the power of a godly life, the power to preach, the power to stand, the power to believe, the power to love.

Leonard Ravenhill used to say the Church began agonizing in the upper room and it will end eating around the fellowship table. He was part right and part wrong.

I want you to notice something. The apostles and the disciples were not agonizing in the upper room. There is no evidence of that whatsoever. They were confidently and joyously waiting in the upper room. They were not trying to wrench some promise out of the hands of God through their constant suffering and prayer and fasting. They were believing their God that if they tarried there he would answer.

This is not a beating one's self on the back. This is not groveling before the almighty. This is believing him and waiting on a promise.

I would highly recommend to you the book *Pentecost Today* by Iain Murray, one of the most respected historian theologians alive today from the Reformed tradition. Dealing with this subject, your need, Church, your need, missionary, your need, to tarry, to tarry.

All your life you have felt no power in many respects. You have tried to get psyched up. You have tried to got to conferences. You have tried to do right. You have tried to do so many things. You try to organize for missions. You try to organize, promote this and that. And there is a proper respect to that. It is proper, but tarry and wait until you are clothed with power. That's different.

Go back to that statement that old preacher made to me years ago, "Boy, can you be alone?"

While everyone else is running around in all their Christian activity, can you go into the closet and be alone?

I share a testimony with you that may get me in a great deal of trouble, not with the ministers here, but with all those arm chair theologians on the internet. When I was converted I almost immediately started preaching. I just knew. That was part of my struggle. I was trying to make deals with God. I will get saved if you promise me I don't have to preach. But as I would go out on the street I was afraid of little girls laughing at me. I would kind of just go down to where the bars were in Austin, Sixth Street and kind of hide around in the shadows hoping to bump into somebody. I would try with all my might, preach and just...

I came home one night. I just put my Bible on the bed and said, "What is in there is not in me."

An old brother, brother Pittman in Austin, Texas, he has now gone on to be with the Lord. He had given me several books by Leonard Ravenhill, George Mueller's autobiography, praying high. Sometimes I think about Moody. And I knew because those men respected, testified that God had done work in them. And so I just sat down. I said, "I make a..." Just this is what I am going to do. I am going to wait upon the Lord. I am going to wait upon the Lord.

And it says seek him and I'll find him. And so I went in the closet because in the book they mentioned the prayer closet. As a new Christian, I had been a Christian for about a

year and I started to pray, “Oh, God, I am not leaving this closet until you come down and visit me or I die.”

About 10 minutes later I fell asleep. My friends came home from the library and found me in the closet sleeping. And so I took an alarm clock and I set it for every 10, 15 minutes. That is about how long I would last. And this was my prayer. “I have been here for an hour and you haven’t come.”

And then later, “I have been doing this now for three weeks and you haven’t come.”

I would go about my activities during the day going to school, but after the library closed at 11 until two in the morning, “I have been here now for three months and you have not come. You have done nothing.”

And then I will never forget. There was a ski retreat, a Christian ski retreat to Colorado and I thought, “Well, I’ll go to that,” and just the Holy Spirit was so grieved and I... “No, I will just go out to west Texas.” I got permission from a rancher out there and went up on a hill and for four days I grabbed rocks and threw them at the sky. I screamed with all my might. “It has been months and you have not come. I am going to die on this hill.”

And then go home, nothing.

More weeks, a few more months. And then one night the Lord visited me. There was such a fear came over me that I remember curling up in a fetal position and thinking God had come to kill me. I don’t know how long I lay there, but then fear was removed and replaced with joy unspeakable as Martyn Lloyd-Jones used to say.

And now I didn’t speak in some other tongue. I had my wits about me. But I met God that day. You can laugh about it. You can write against me regarding what I have said, but I met God that day.

And did it sweep me away to sinless perfection? Absolutely not. But he became a reality so that he is more real to me than any of you sitting here this evening. Are you to have a similar experience? Are you to go through the same thing? Absolutely not. Are you to seek him? Are you to refuse being satisfied? Yes, you are, to call upon him, to cry out for greater and greater and greater manifestations of the Holy Spirit and his power in your life. Whether it is loving one woman with all your heart or preaching the gospel to 5000 men who want to stone you, you cannot do this in the flesh. You cannot do this as a team effort. One man, one woman filled with the Holy Spirit. That is what you lack. That is what you must seek and not once but over and over and over and over and over to the point where when you are walking down the hallway and you see some young person coming towards you with a multitude of problems you are crying out, “Oh, fill me with the Holy Spirit.”

Possibly said too much. But please understand me. I am not talking about a super spirituality. I am not talking about some other level. I am just talking about what we

must, what we must do. Recognize that we are empty and cry out for greater and greater empowerments, outpourings of the Spirit of God.

But listen to me. It is not you putting yourself alone in some room and agonizing. It is you joyfully calling on his name, joyfully waiting. Oh, and in that time that you wait, he can be so precious.

What I said tonight is going to get me banned from several...