

I. Week 11, Evangelism and Discipleship

A. Missionary Profile – Jim and Elizabeth Elliot

- i. Jim Elliot was born in Portland, OR in 1927, while Elizabeth Howard was born in Belgium in 1926 where her parents served as missionaries. They met at Wheaton college in Illinois, where Jim studied Bible and Elizabeth studied Classical Greek to prepare for working as a linguist on the mission field.
- ii. After Graduating from Wheaton, both Jim and Elizabeth served as missionaries in Ecuador, although in different parts of the country, since they were not together at this point. Eventually, Elizabeth accepted Jim's proposal of marriage on the condition that they both learn the Ecuadorian Quichua language first. They did and were married in Quito, Ecuador in 1953 where they continued to serve as missionaries together.
- iii. A few years prior to their marriage, a former missionary to Ecuador told Jim Elliot about an indigenous tribe called the Auca's who lived in the jungles of Ecuador whom no one had been able to reach without being killed. Jim decided that he wanted to try and reach this remote and fierce tribe with the gospel.
- iv. So two years after his marriage to Elizabeth, He and four fellow missionaries and began making contact with the tribe from a distance. Eventually, in 1957 they attempted a personal meeting. Initially, it went well, but 5 days after they arrived, a group of Auca's suddenly attacked and speared them to death in the river next to their airplane.
- v. Elizabeth was left a widow with their 10 month old daughter, Valerie. Incredibly, a little over year after her husband was murdered by the Aucas, a door was opened for Elizabeth to go and live with the Auca's herself, which she did along with her now 3 year old daughter. So God in His providence used the death of Jim Elliot at the hands of the Auca's to open a door for the his widow, Elizabeth, to eventually reach that very tribe with the gospel.
- vi. Eventually Elizabeth returned to the United States where she wrote several books about the sacrifice of her husband and his fellow missionaries and how the Lord used it to enable her to reach the Aucas for Christ. Through Gates of Splendor was the story of the death of her husband and the other four men in attempting to reach the Aucas. Shadow Of The Almighty was a memoir about the life and work of her husband Jim. And The Savage, My Kinsman was about her life serving the Aucas.
- vii. The martyrdom of the five missionaries, including Jim Elliot, while attempting to reach to the Aucas for Christ, along with the stirring account of it in Elizabeth's books had a profound effect upon a generation of evangelical Christians. The hearts of many were enflamed with a greater desire to bring the gospel to the unreached people groups of the world at whatever cost was necessary.
- viii. Perhaps no single line of text, outside of Scripture, has stirred more souls for the cause of missions in the last 100 years, than that which Jim Elliot wrote in his private diary on October 28th, 1949: "He is not fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." That quote was followed by a quote from the end of Luke 16:9, "...that when it shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

- ix. I pray that the story of Jim and Elizabeth Elliot, in which one died so that the other might bring the life-giving gospel to the Auca Indians, might stir our souls to weigh our life in the balance of eternity and consider that even our very life is worth sacrificing in order that others might gain the surpassing value of knowing Christ.

B. Introduction

- i. For the next number of Sundays we will be dealing with issues of very practical methodology in missions (how do we actually go about doing the task of missions)
- ii. ***On the one hand***, we will see that, fundamentally, the practical methodology of missions is not different than the practical methodology of local church ministry here in the US.
- iii. ***On the other hand***, we will see that the practical methodology of missions is different because it involves crossing, cultural, linguistic, or ethnic barriers.
- iv. This morning I am going to focus, specifically, on what evangelism and discipleship involves on the mission field
- v. The next two weeks Ben will focus on what church planting involves on the mission field.

C. The mission of the Church in General

- i. The mission of the church is summed up in the Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-19
- ii. Q: What is involved with fulfilling the great commission
 - a. An existing local church
 - b. The members of that local church going out
 - c. Evangelism
 - i. Proclaiming the gospel
 - ii. Calling people to respond to the gospel in repentance and faith in Christ
 - iii. Calling people to be willing to follow Jesus as His disciple
 - d. Baptizing
 - e. Either helping them identify as a new local church or receive them into membership in an existing local church
 - f. Teaching them to observe everything that Christ has commanded in the context of that local church
 - g. Teaching Christian faith and practice from the Scripture (preaching, teaching, Christian books, personal bible reading and study)

- i. What is a **Christian** and how should they live (men and women, husband and wife, parents and children, boss and worker, unbelieving society and government, spiritual disciplines)
 - ii. What is a **church** and how should they live (expository preaching, membership, discipline, baptism, Lord's Supper, worship, spiritual gifts, ministry)
 - iii. Basic Christian **doctrine**
 - iv. Basic **Bible Study**
 - h. Helping them to learn **to obey** (life on life, modeling, exhortation, encouragement, help, correction).
 - i. Identify, train, and appoint **officers** (elders and deacons)
 - j. Teach them and help them to **replicate** the process (evangelism, discipleship, church planting)
- D. The task of Missions in Particular
 - i. This process is the same whether locally or on the mission field – IMB - *Definition of the Missions Task* – Great Commission broken down into 6 stages which reflect what we have just discussed:
 - a. We must **engage the unreached** with the gospel, finding ways to get to them, live among them and get to know them
 - b. We must **share the gospel** in language they can understand and challenge them to repent and believe
 - c. We must **disciple new believers** so that they grow to reflect and represent Christ
 - d. We must **plant healthy churches** that continue the work of evangelizing their area and that reproduce and multiply.
 - e. We must **train leaders** for those churches, and we must train people who can keep training leaders whether we are there or not.
 - f. We must **work ourselves out of a job** and partner with these new churches to move on to other places and people groups that need the gospel
 - ii. Similar but different - working out the great commission on the mission field comes with challenges that arise from crossing cultural, linguistic, and ethnic boundaries – an appropriate contextualization is necessary in every step
 - iii. I'm going to unpack what this might look like in the first 3 stages (engaging, evangelism, and discipleship)
- E. **Engaging the unreached** with the gospel, finding ways to get to them, live among them and get to know them
 - i. Selecting a mission field
 - a. Already reached?

- b. Still unreached?
- ii. Joining or developing a qualified team?
 - a. Already reached – join an existing team – make sure it sufficiently shares your doctrine and philosophy of ministry
 - b. Still unreached – develop a qualified team to go to the mission field – already demonstrating the character and practice that will be necessary on the field
- iii. Doing the training which is necessary before going to the field
 - a. Learning a language (before going if it is a pioneer work to an unreached people group)
 - b. Learning something about the culture of the people (same)
 - c. Determining what specific issues need to be sorted through (visas, travel, insurance, school for children, legal – this is where a missions agency is vital)
- iv. Taking trips to the field
 - a. Get firsthand experience of the places and people
 - b. Determine a specific location to go (i.e. Zwemer surveyed Arabia and ended up in Basra)
 - c. Find housing and employment if necessary (creative access countries – i.e. Gills)
- v. Entering the field
 - a. Learning daily routines (i.e. where to shop)
 - b. Getting to know your neighbors (i.e. hospitality)
 - c. Figuring out how to connect with people in public (i.e. local hangouts – Paul on Philippi– Acts 16:13, ‘And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together’)
 - d. Learning more about how to relate with people in ways that are culturally appropriate (i.e. how to greet, cultural sayings, verbal and body language cues).
- F. ***Sharing the gospel*** in language they can understand and challenge them to repent and believe
 - i. Learn cultural cues that could derail conversations – gestures not to make, topics not to address, how close to sit when talking, what questions are rude, etc.

- ii. Start sharing the gospel quickly despite your clumsiness – the gospel is the power of God for salvation and God can use frail and faulty gospel presentations – i.e. in broken language, through a translator, through literature you hand out.
- iii. Develop more effective strategies for sharing the gospel in that context over time.
 - a. *Zane Pratt* – Bangladesh – Muslim context - asking if they can give a copy of the NT – then follow up with them about what they have read – Muslims have a high regard for the NT but have never read it.
 - b. *Jesse Gill* – Tuva, Siberia – translated lessons on the Bible stories beginning with Genesis – oral culture – develops categories to understand the gospel.
 - c. *Sikh's here in Redding* – understand worldview (what they mean by God, what Scripture contains and how they view it, what their worship gatherings involve, what their rule of life is and why, levels of devotion, connection to homeland, cultural dynamics such as marriage, family, community, expectations in hospitality such as food and gifts) – helps understand how to engage (invite into home) and explain the gospel in a way they will understand

G. ***Discipling new believers*** so that they grow to reflect and represent Christ

- i. Need to think through with them which cultural practices need to be abandoned and which can be carried over into their life as a Christian
 - a. ***In the NT*** – did Gentile Christians in Roman Empire have to stop eating meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8)? Could they continue attending meals in the idol temples (1 Cor 10)?
 - b. Do certain clothing or hairstyles or public celebrations have religious connotations that are incompatible with their new faith? - I.e. Can a former Sikh who has become a Christian still wear a turban? Can a former Muslim who has become a Christian still pray 5 times a day and speak of God as 'Allah'?
- ii. Need to be careful not to impose your own cultural traditions on new churches but allow them to obey the commands of Scripture in culturally appropriate ways.
 - a. ***In the NT*** – did Gentile Christians have to keep Jewish traditions such as Sabbath, circumcision, food laws etc. (i.e. Acts 15; Galatians).
 - b. The preacher doesn't need to stand behind a podium, and preach loudly, to people sitting in chairs. He could sit with them in a circle and speak softly.

- c. Do church services need to start on time? Do you have to stop a service on time?
- iii. Need to learn cultural factors that might affect a person's ability to learn from you?
 - a. In some contexts, an indigenous person may perceive a white missionary as wealthy, powerful, and dominant making him prone to simply give you the answers you want to hear in a discipleship context even though aren't really believing or obeying them themselves.
 - b. In Africa people might naturally impose some of their expectations of the tribal shaman upon the pastor (blessing their business, blessing their child, healing the sick).
- iv. Don't have unrealistic expectations
 - a. ***In the NT*** - The apostle Paul saw converts almost immediately, planted churches soon after, and appointed elders from among these new believers
 - b. Not always the case – i.e. Brad Buser – Iteri people of Papua New Guinea – took seven years to get the gospel proclaimed in their language and see first converts – first elders weren't appointed until years after that.
 - c. Gills in Tuva – 2005 - New Tribes training – Russian language and culture training – Tuvan language and culture – business, bible translation, story translation – finally starting to get the gospel out and seeing first converts in 2017