

What Is a Missionary - Part 2

by Brother Andrew

A missionary's purpose is to seek and save those who are lost, and they must be obedient to the Holy Spirit's leading in order to achieve this goal.

Duration: 31:22

Scripture: Acts 13:2, Ephesians 4:20

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal encounter with a man who traveled a long distance to attend a service. The man explains that he obeyed God's command to go to Moscow and get a Bible, leaving his family behind. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having a purpose in life and not being lured away by worldly distractions. He highlights the example of Jesus, who gave his life for the salvation of the whole world. The preacher encourages the audience to love and serve others as a way of expressing their love for God.

Transcript

It may be very different from the churches that we have in our country. One absolute essential, I would say, in our time is to study anthropology, if you are to be a church planter. To understand the culture of other people.

There are some very good books and there is a magazine on anthropology. To know the culture, the way of thinking of other people, that will help us not to make wrong decisions, because in their particular culture there will be a church of Christ. And if that is in an African country, I tell you, if you see there a picture of Christ, Christ is black.

And Mary is black. I was in China, and to my joy I saw that the picture of Christ, Christ was in Chinese. I said, praise the Lord, that's right.

Jesus is not white. We are not exporting white man's religion to underdeveloped nations. In every nation there will be a church that is acceptable in their culture, and that might be totally different from our church.

One of the worst things that we have done in Christian history is to export our western churches. Wherever you go in the world you even see exactly the same buildings. If you know England, you know, for instance, the shape of the Methodist churches.

They have a big building and then a tower and no spire, because they were always building under early Methodism and then they ran out of money, they couldn't finish the tower, you see. So that just became the pattern. You see exactly the same buildings in India.

And when you see it, you know this is a Methodist church. You still export it from Britain. But, of course, you see the same in other places.

You go to the only church building in Afghanistan, it's a typically American church building. Some of you know it, have been there. When we go back to the apostolic evangelism, we will not be exporting our western churches anymore.

But we will just find in the nations where God sends us, those that believe on Jesus Christ and in their own culture will build the Church of Christ. And that will be the Church of Christ in that nation. But that will need some revolution in our own thinking.

Church planting should not be confused with hospital buildings, school buildings, orphanages and so on. Now those things are good. I'm not saying a word against it.

We do it ourselves, actually. We have an orphanage in Vietnam. And I've even been to the slave market to buy boys for our orphanage.

We used to pay \$40 a boy, which is not too much. For a nice boy, girls were cheaper. And we support them for \$10 a month, which is not too much.

It's even cheaper now because we get terrific help from the Americans. And we are grateful for that. The Bible school in Da Nang, the most northern Bible school in Saigon, has just been reopened a few months ago with 17 students, 13 boys and 4 girls.

And I just wrote a letter last week that we want to support one of those boys. They are good, if they are a means and not the end. An orphanage is not a church.

A hospital is not a church. But I find it a practical impossibility to be in the midst of need and not to help. How can we ever share the love of Christ amidst all this suffering? Now, we talked about identification.

I cannot identify with lepers unless I become a leper myself. And I cannot. I'm not planning to either.

Some have done it. Some courageous priests, you may sometimes run across their biography, who've just gone to a huge leper colony and just shut themselves up there to help and preach and found a church. And they knew they would never get out of that colony.

They've done it. They're still doing it today. It has to be done.

That's why in the refugee camps where I worked for years, I just have never been able to make color slides or any pictures of the poverty of those people. I just cannot. If I have an expensive camera and I make a picture of the need, whatever my motivation is, I just feel that I cannot, after that, preach the love of God to them.

I cannot. You may be able, and I don't condemn you, but I cannot. I find it too hard.

For that reason, I have hardly any slides on the needs of others. If I have any, I got them from other missionaries or from doctors or welfare workers. If you see the need, you've got to do something.

You see the danger there of just getting so involved in this work, this social work, medical work, that you won't have any more time for preaching the gospel. You see the dilemma here, the problem that I'm presenting? It's a real one. Therefore, it would be very good if, alongside the church planters, would be those that help in social work or medical work.

I'm not at all against medical missions. I think they do a terrific work. If they do not always preach the gospel, like Dr. Schweitzer, he was a very liberal theologian, and yet I feel that he has really opened up a large part of Africa for those that do preach the gospel.

One supplements the other. And that's the way we should look at it. You see, preaching of the gospel is not the only commission that we have in the scriptures.

If you have a quick look at Romans 12, 4, for as we have many members in one body and all members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ and every one member is one of another. Having then gifts, here it speaks about gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, so we talk about grace gifts. It's different from charismatic gifts, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, and it's different again from the domata, the gifts that are mentioned in, I think, Ephesians 4, like apostle and prophet and evangelist and so on.

Here, grace gifts that is given to us by the prophecy that is prophesied according to the proportion of faith or ministry, let's wait on our ministry, ministry is not meant preaching here, what translations have? Service, yes, like deacons, that was a ministry in the Acts 2. Or he that teaches on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation, he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity, he that ruleth with diligence, he that showeth mercy, his welfare work with cheerfulness. Here are other gifts that the Spirit gives, the grace gifts, to do the other work alongside those of church planting, teaching, and so on. We see that the orphanages, specifically in countries like Vietnam, are real nutrients for the church in Vietnam.

So, here then we have the church which consists of people, people that are being built up in faith, and grace, and power, and love, and unity, and walk with Christ as Lord. I think three times in his letter, Paul says that this is his sole purpose of life, and he says, if I fail in that, then I have failed my Lord. Number six, he is a servant, a servant who has been taught and is being led by the Holy Spirit.

Now, I'm always so challenged when I think of Jesus, what a time he has spent on just twelve men. You sometimes wonder whether or not that was economical, to spend three full years. Why not start a big Bible school with 78 students, or something like that, or like some schools in America with a thousand students, but only twelve.

But he gave so much time and effort to make sure that those twelve were not like the others. If you read the Sermon on the Mount, you so often find that expression of Jesus, you have read in Moses that, so and so, but I tell you not to resist. I tell you to be different.

Now, this is what Jesus is telling us, to be different. Ephesians 4.20, it's a very interesting chapter, but you have not so learned Christ. You didn't get to know Christ that way.

You are totally different, it says in the Dutch translation, because you have got to know Christ. The biggest lesson that Jesus was teaching his disciples is that if you want to rule, you've got to learn to serve. If you

want to be great, you've got to be small.

That's the revolutionary thought of Jesus. And once they've learned that, it took three years to learn, but then, you see, he could send them out as servants, because only the person, now listen carefully, only the person who has accepted authority will be able to be authoritative. That's what the centurion said to Jesus.

He said, I'm also a man under authority, and if I say to my servant, go, he goes, and if I say, come, he comes. Therefore, if you just speak a word, my son will be healed. Now, the basis of service is, I am also under authority.

I obey others, therefore, others will obey me. Now, that's another reason why you're in this Bible school, connected with discipline, obedience. And we can only use authority if we accept authority.

You see, then they can go out. Acts 13, now they were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers. Barnabas and Simeon, it was called Neger, and Lucius of Cyrene and Menaean, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul.

And they ministered to the Lord and fasted, and the Holy Spirit said, separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the task, the work went to, I have called them. And when they had fasted, they were already fasting, and prayed, they were already praying, they laid their hands on them, and here the King James says, and send them away. Better translation says, and let them go.

The church never sends anybody away. The church has no authority to send out a missionary. The church can only let you go if the Holy Spirit sends you out.

And if the church rejoices in your going, there's something wrong. They're glad to get rid of you. The Holy Spirit will only call the best ones, the ones that cannot be missed, to go to the mission field.

Now this is a principle. If you want to secure a place in the mission field, make sure they cannot do without you at home. Then you're pretty sure that you'll get the way.

Become indispensable at home in your church, and God will call you. I tell you, they could not do without Paul and Barnabas in this church in Antioch. But the Spirit said, now is the time.

This is not a call in Acts 13. It was only a timing of God. The call had come the moment when Paul met Jesus for the first time.

Then Jesus showed him what he had to suffer for him. In verse 4, so they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed. You see? Jesus had said that the Holy Spirit would show them the way, John 16, 13.

To the full truth, not to the right doctrine, but the relaxed way of living in the realm of the Spirit, where you know that God has everything in control, and if he sends me, I just go. Now it may not agree at all with my intellect, but I just go because God said go. I go to Moscow when he says go to Moscow.

Like that man I met on Thursday night. I just arrived in Moscow on Thursday night. I hurried to the church.

I knew there was a meeting, and I got there just in time. I sat there with my friend Hans, and we had Bibles in our pocket, Russian and German, and we were praying that the Lord would lead us to a person that evening in that meeting. And I know, I knew, and probably still is so, that we as foreigners are not allowed to speak to Russians privately, not even in the church and not on the street.

It's just forbidden. So the Lord led us after the service to move through the crowd to a man who was sitting on the right, the back sitting on a wooden box, very simple, plain-looking, unshaven man, but with warm eyes. We approached him, shook hands, and at once we had that fellowship in the Spirit that you just know it's there.

I discovered that he had arrived at the same hour, Thursday night, just in time for the service, and he had made exactly the same trip as I, 2,000 miles, but from the other direction. And I said, why did you make that long trip and leave your wife and three children behind? And he was a little embarrassed. He said, well, it's a bit strange, he said, but you know, God said go to Moscow and get the Bible.

And he said, well, I know it's ridiculous and nobody can help me, but I just did what he said. I said, well, praise the Lord, brother, because God said exactly the same thing, go to Moscow and get the Bible. And I just took out of my pocket the very things that he wanted, German New Testament and a Russian Bible.

And it was far more than he expected. He made a 2,000-mile trip to get one Bible. He got more that same evening.

And then I said, let's meet again on Sunday morning in the church and I'll give you more of mine, that you can give to your church. There were 600 baptized members in his church in Siberia, almost half of them Germans, and I had more literature for that. And the next Sunday morning I saw him in the church on the other side and I tried to get his attention, but he did not react.

And I knew that I had already put pressure on him because I had seen him talk to a foreigner. And I very carefully moved through the crowd to get very close to him, without opening a conversation. And he just turned his back to me.

He did not want or dare to talk. It was a real heartbreak to me, I tell you. But I knew his whole heart was yearning for contact with us.

So was mine, but he could not do it. And so I went to the vestry and to a friend, a pastor of mine, and said, here's a parcel. Will you please give that to the brother from Siberia? And he said, I'll do that.

And I've never seen him anymore. I don't know his name. I have his testimony on tape because I interviewed him with my tape recorder.

It was a terrific experience. A man who obeyed the prompting of the Spirit and who had success because someone else, too, did something that may have looked foolish, not so much to us, but certainly for him, to make that terrible journey to get one life. But God was in it.

If you are a servant, he can say, go and you go. You may have to hurry. I tell you, I was working in a chocolate factory years ago before I went to Bible school, and I had a terrific prayer burn that night, Friday night.

And I just couldn't sleep, and I had to get up and on my knees and I wept for a woman that was in hospital, dying with cancer. I didn't even know her. I only knew of her.

She was the mother of one of my colleagues in the factory. I knew nothing about her. I just knew she was dying, and I had a burn on my heart.

I prayed and I prayed. The next morning at nine in the office, I suddenly said to my boss, I said, Sir, I've got to go to hospital. You know, it's very strange to say that when you work in a big office.

He didn't ask anything. He didn't say, Andrew, why? He didn't say, are you sick? He said, just go quickly, Andrew. He knew nothing.

And I just got on my bicycle and I raced toward the hospital. It was half past nine in the morning, and I asked for that lady. I'd never seen her.

And they admitted me there. And I came and I saw how sick she was. And I read the scriptures and I testified and I prayed.

And she could hardly speak. She didn't need to either. And I ministered to her and I went back.

A few days later, she died. And then the family told me that that moment when I was there was her conversion. She had never known the Lord.

She was under terrific accusation of the devil. And she was so down and depressed with certain hell before her eyes. And I led her to Christ.

I didn't know her. I just obeyed. But a few things.

Never ask questions because in that time when you debate with the Lord or with someone else or with your own mind, you lose your opportunity and the soul to whom God wanted to send you. Point seven. A missionary is a man with purpose.

What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? What can a man give in exchange for his life? Acts 8, 36 and 37. There's one only who gave his life for the world of Jesus Christ. He exchanged it for a lost world.

And he won. Concentrate on Jesus. Because then you will see him, how he offered his life in exchange for the lives of others, yours and mine, and that of the whole wide world.

John says so explicitly later, he died not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world. If you've seen that Jesus, then you become a purpose that cannot lure you away, not with anything. I tell you the world will try all it can offer you big business, big money, great position.

The devil will show you he's in the kingdom of the world. Only you kneel before him. The attacks may come in your own home, in your own family, may come in your own church.

One of the fine co-workers I used to have in the beginning when I was so much in the refugee camps, very, very fine young theologian from Holland, had some marvelous experiences with him. And God called him to the mission field because I was praying. And he went to his professor in the university in Utrecht.

He said, professor, I'm going to the mission field. And the professor said, don't do that, you're far too gifted for that. You're too talented for the mission field.

So he stayed at home. And he became a pastor of a tiny, way out, obscure, liberal, Dutch Reformed church. He's nowhere.

Everybody, anything will try to get you off that purpose. But my, once you have seen Jesus in all his fullness, in his purpose, I have set my face like a flint, it says of Jesus in Isaiah, and later it's quoted in the Gospels, when Jesus goes on his last journey to Jerusalem. I have set my face like a flint.

You know what flint is? It's that particular type of rock that you find in the, I think mainly in England, actually, maybe in France also. It's not the rock here, that soft rock, but it's a very sharp stuff. If you drop it, it's like glass, it goes to pieces.

If you drive your car over it, you have a punctured tire. It's sharp, hard, crisp. I have set my face like a flint.

I can just see Jesus go there to Jerusalem. He didn't see anything or anyone else. Just he had his purpose there.

Via Gethsemane to the cross of Calvary. Some time ago I traveled with Corey Ten Boom on the plane to Vietnam, one of our trips, and I was reading an American newspaper. I was reading a long article on Vietnam, on the war.

I came across an expression I didn't know until then, and it was the word, search and destroy. And I took the paper. I showed it to Corey.

I said, Corey, read this. And he read it, search and destroy. I said, Corey, what are you thinking of? And he said exactly the same words that I was thinking.

Seek and save. Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, the only one-syllable verse in the whole of Scripture. Seek and save.

Seek. When the Count of Tinsendorf, in approximately 1720, when he was already gripped with a terrific vision for a church of the Bohemians and Moravians, there in Hernot, his big estate. I spent there many days.

It's right on the corner of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany. And his father, very wealthy man, he took him out on a trip through Germany, surrounded with extreme luxury to try to get him away from that silly vision of spending his life and fortune and talents with a group of despised Christians. And so they drove him horse-cart through the most beautiful parts of Germany, taking him from palace to palace.

He was always looking ahead of him. And he had set his faith like a flame. And then his companion said, but sir, don't you see the beauty here? Look at the mountains, look at the rivers, look at the waterfalls, look at the colors, look at the beautiful architecture.

He said, no. He said, but, then his companion said, but even Jesus saw that beautiful beauty. God created this.

He said, yes, Jesus did look at it, but always to see if he could find somebody whom he could save. And that's why it's said of Tinsendorf, I have only one passion, that's him. Ich habe nur eine Passion, das ist er, nur er.

I have only one passion. Jesus. He was a man with purpose, weak in body, a genius, but only one burning desire, the church of Christ and the world, the world.

One of the early Moravian missionaries, it has been said, not in heart or hand they took, but love of God and holy book. They went to places where no missionary would ever go, including our Dutch West Indies, Suriname. And the only congregation they could preach to were the slaves that they had to buy on the market to set them free and get them together in a hall.

No one else would listen to the Moravian missionaries. And it was the first Protestant missionary movement since the apostles. It started in 1722-25.

And they went over without any money to Greenland, to Iceland, to West Indies, to Holland and many other countries in the world. Terrific missionaries. This is what God wants us to be, people with a purpose.

And then you cannot be drawn away, then you will concentrate, you will really plod with your studies, no matter how you've got to get yourself in the scruff of your neck to get down to study. Nothing as hard as to discipline yourself. Discipline your mind.

In order to be everything to people, comfort, salvation, healing, deliverance, fellowship. The world is longing for all that. Jesus went around doing well and healing all those that were oppressed by the devil, Acts 10-38.

The love of God shed abroad in our hearts can only be proved in our attitude toward people. No one can say, I love God, if he doesn't love his neighbor. Peter, I think, says it later that we cannot love God if we don't love those that we have seen, because God we have not seen.

The only way to express your love of God is to prove it to the people around you. Therefore we are ambassadors. That's the word that goes out of it.

Be reconciled with God. Because God is already reconciled with the world through Jesus Christ. In our hearts, the constantly heated voice, as the Father has sent me, so I send you.

That is to be a missionary. Let's pray. Lord, I want to be a missionary.

Lord, I want you to help me so that I can express that love of God to people around me. To the ones and twos and to the millions. In this world, with the population explosion and revolution and bloodshed and war and threats of war, famine, disasters of nature, in this world where there is so much apostasy, churches being emptied through liberal preaching, by not presenting the living Christ and the passionate love of God.

Lord, in this world you've placed us as your ambassadors to go out and to let the word go out of our hearts and mouths. Lord, thank you for the exhortation that you gave me tonight. I think I still have a long way to go, Lord, but my longing is that you can further prepare me for the task that you have for me and that you can prepare everyone here, young and old, student and teacher and the guests that have come.

That you can prepare us for that task that only we can do. That's a great task because no one else can do it. No one else.

Oh God, make us faithful. God, make us full of the Holy Spirit that we are people with a purpose that can set our faith like a flint that nothing can draw us away or distract our attention. God, we thank you for such a great love for this world and that you have expressed that people have laid down their lives in order to get that word to us.

Now help us to lay down our lives so that others will hear. In China, in Russia, in Siberia, in Mongolia, in Manchuria, in Chile, in Brazil and in Cuba, in Romania, in Bulgaria, in United States of America and in dark, dark Netherlands, in Switzerland, in Austria, in Germany and wherever there are those that are waiting, still waiting in the twentieth century to hear for the first time about the God who loves, who saves, redeems, delivers, God uses. As we fully prepare this week, this season here, this term in this school, help us to pray those that are not in this school so that we will see in our time, in our generation, God move over the whole world so that Jesus Christ can come back and establish his kingdom in which there is only righteousness and peace because you are the Prince of Peace.

Blessed be your name forever and ever. Hallelujah. Amen.

Amen.

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