

Missions

by George Kulp

The sermon calls for self-sacrifice and active participation in missions, highlighting historical examples and the importance of faith and support.

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23, John 15:13, Romans 12:1, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:2, Philippians 2:3, 1 John 3:16

Topics: "Self Sacrifice", "Missions Work"

Description

George Kulp preaches on the theme of self-sacrifice, illustrating through stories of missionaries, a heroic pilot, and individuals who sacrificed for their loved ones. The sermon emphasizes the willingness to give up personal comfort, ambitions, and even life itself for a greater cause, echoing the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. It challenges listeners to acknowledge the debt of sacrifice owed to God and to be willing to pay it, whether through missions, service to others, or prayer for the Church.

Transcript

SELF-SACRIFICE

A brilliant Oxford student was giving himself to the Wesleyan Missionary Society for African service. His tutor remonstrated. "You are going out to die in a year or two. It is madness." The young man -- who died after being on the field only a year -- answered: "I think it is with African missions as with the building of a great bridge. You know how many stones have to be buried in the earth, all unseen, to be a foundation. If Christ wants me to be one of the unseen stones, lying in an African grave, I am content, certain as I am that the final result will be a Christian Africa."

A CHANGE OF MIND

Christian England laughed when Sydney Smith sneered at William Carey as a "consecrated cobbler," going out on a fool's errand to convert the heathen. Carey died, aged seventy-three. He was visited on his deathbed by the Bishop of India, the head of the Church of England in that land, who bowed his head and invoked the blessing of the dying missionary. The British authorities had denied to Carey a landing place on his first arrival in Bengal; but when he died, the government dropped all its flags to half-mast, in honor of a man who had done more for India than all of their generals. The universities of England, Germany and America paid tribute to his learning, and today Protestant Christianity honors him as one of its noblest pioneers.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE DEBT

A venerable clergyman of Virginia said lately: "Men of my profession see much of the tragic side of life. Beside a death-bed the secret passions, the hidden evil as well as the good in human nature, are very often dragged to light. I have seen men die in battle, children, and young wives in their husbands' arms, but no death ever seemed so pathetic to me as that of an old woman, a member of my church.

"I knew her first as a young girl, beautiful, gay, full of spirit and vigor. She married and had four children; her husband died and left her penniless. She taught school, she painted, she sewed; she gave herself scarcely any time to eat or sleep. Every thought was for her children, to educate them, to give them the same chance which their father would have done.

"She succeeded; sent the boys to college, and the girls to school. When they came home, pretty, refined girls and strong young men, abreast with all the new ideas and tastes of their time, she was a worn-out, commonplace old woman. They had their own pursuits and companions. She lingered among them for two or three years and died of some sudden failure in the brain. The shock awoke them to a consciousness of the truth. They hung over her as she lay unconscious, in an agony of grief. The oldest son, as he held her in his arms, cried:

"'Yea have been a good mother to us!'

"Her face colored again, her eyes kindled into a smile, and she whispered, 'You never said so before, John.' Then the light died out and she was gone."

How many men and women sacrifice their own hopes and ambitions, their strength, their life itself, for their children, who receive it as a matter of course, and begrudge a caress, a word of gratitude, in payment for all that has been given them.

A REAL HERO

In the southern part of our State, during the past summer, a long, well-filled passenger train had pulled out from the station, and was rapidly moving away on its homeward bound track. Several miles had slipped under the fast turning wheels, when the conductor stepped in the car and called out the next stopping-place. Those of the passengers who were familiar with the road were surprised when the train flew on by it without stopping. Then the speed of the great locomotive seemed suddenly to increase with each moment. On, on the long train flew until the wheels seemed hardly touching the track. Still no one was alarmed; possibly a little lost time being made up, nothing worse, they thought. Then there came a long, screaming whistle, shrieking out with almost human tones of anguish, and then the train gradually slowed up and stopped.

By that time the passengers were sufficiently frightened for a number of them to jump off the cars and run up to the engine, where already a little group of men was gathered. That which they saw there has been burned in their memory with such horror that they will never be able to forget it. Two men were supporting, one on each side of him, the engineer, a great, broad-shouldered fellow. His face was piteously crushed. One eye was gone, and the blood was pouring from his wounds so that his head, face, and even his shoulders, were horrible to see.

The awful story was quickly passed from one to another. Somehow an iron rod belonging to the engine had become loose, and revolving with frightful rapidity had caught and thrown him with terrible force

against the side of the cab. Blind, and suffering so that he was barely conscious, but with the great thought of duty yet undone urging him on, he had groped along, dragging himself on his hands and knees, until he could reach up and, with his poor, bruised hands, grasp the throttle, and with one heroic effort stop the train.

His comrades were tenderly lifting him to a shady bank to lay him down till medical help could come. He was still standing supported on each side by the others, but his head was hanging on his breast, and with his eyes closed and face so ghastly, he looked more dead than alive.

Suddenly he stopped and straightened himself, threw up his head, then blindly thrusting out his hand with a quick gesture, as if to push away the something which was clouding his brain, he whispered in tense, agonized tones: "Wait -- wait -- I -- must-- go-- back-- my-- engine -- will -- burst!"

Something thrilled the little group with a strange awe. Instantly, almost unconsciously to themselves, every head was bared, and strong, rough men found strange tears were in their eyes. What a life of duty, done at any cost, must have preceded this day, that the poor, pain-beclouded brain could so clearly hear and answer the clarion call of duty now.

Other hands were ready to do the work he had felt was his, and he was gently laid on the ground. A doctor was quickly brought, and gave some hope that his life might yet be spared.

A good-sized pocketbook was filled and left for him by the passengers, and after a little longer delay the train moved off, but with all hearts softened, and more than one felt that it was no slight thing in this hard, selfish world to have come in touch with a real hero.

PLUS GOD

And so it has been many and many and many a time; and so it will be many a time again, with individual men and with nations. And blessed is the man, blessed is the nation, of whom it can be said in some life-or-death conflict, "It is that man, that nation, plus God." It makes all the difference in the world to John Smith, or a nation of John Smiths, whether it is John Smith plus God, or John Smith minus God. The work of Foreign Missions, so hopeless to the eye of reason, so hopeful to the eye of faith, is sure to succeed, because it is a few men and women with the Gospel, plus God, against hundreds of millions of heathen.

A NOBLE FORM OF LEGACY

I have recently seen a most touching incident entitled "A little girl's legacy." This little girl, the pet of the house, was on her death-bed. The father bent over his little darling in bitter agony, unable to stay the departing. "Papa, how much do I cost you every year?" the dying child asked, with her parting breath. "Hush, dear." "But, please, papa, how much do I cost you?" To calm the little one, he said, with choking voice: "Well, darling, perhaps two or three hundred dollars."

"Papa, I thought maybe you would lay it out this year in Bibles for poor children, to remember me by." With bursting heart, the father replied: "I will, my precious child! I will do it every year as long as I live." And the Bibles during the passing years continued to bless many souls, while the dear child was an angel in the skies. How many might thus make blessed the memory of the dear dead ones.

THE CHORUS OF CHRISTIANITY

I remember hearing a story in connection with our battlefields. One weary, dreary night, while our army was on the eve of a great and important battle, a soldier paced up and down before the tent of his General. Wearied with his monotonous work, he began to sing, half to himself:

"When I can read my title clear,"

After a little his voice grew louder, and he sang the hymn as though it were a song of victory. His tones rang out on the still night air. After a little, another soldier, off yonder, hearing the music, and fascinated by it, joined in. 'There was a duet. A little longer, and another voice, farther off, joined, and there was a chorus; and it was not long before the whole army, as far as the ear could reach on either side, was joining in that wondrous chorus, and singing in the presence of the enemy, "When I can read my title clear, To mansions in the sky."

When I heard this story, it seemed to me that I could see in the far-off distance that wondrous carpenter's Son of Nazareth standing alone and singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men." After a little twelve disciples took up the refrain, and joined in the chorus. After a little longer -- in the next century -- a still larger company gathered, and sang it with all their hearts. In the next century a still larger number added their voices, and now, after eighteen hundred years have gone by, the music of that wondrous song which began with Him who stood in His father's workshop, is sung and echoed and re-echoed the whole wide world over. It is our revelation from God; and it is the impulse that lifts us all up to God.

-- Sel.

UNCLE BALIS IS IN DEBT

The congregation had been convened to consider how the church was to be relieved of its indebtedness. One wealthy member spoke of the hard times, financially, and gave it as his opinion that the only course left was to go into bankruptcy. Another, who is also a prominent business man in the community, counting his profits by the thousands each year, said he thought that was the only way out of the difficulty. Still another spoke of his own debts, and said it was impossible for him to give anything. The prospect looked gloomy indeed for the liquidation of the church debt, when so many other financial considerations and private debts were taking precedence. At this point Uncle Balis arose from his seat in an humble corner, and, looking around over the discouraged assemblage, said: "Brudderin! Uncle Balis is in debt, too. He don't owe de grocery keeper anything foh de provisions his family eats, dey's all paid fob. H doa't owe de hardware man anything foh iron he makes hoss shoes out of, dat's paid, too. But Bali's is in debt! He doesn't owe anything foh de close de children wears, dem's paid fob. But I tells you, Balis is in debt! Just as long as this church owes a dollar on de buildin' or dere's a brick dat's not laid on de walls, Balis is in debt to de Lord! An I's gwine to pay every dollar ob it. Balis ne'er went into bankruptcy wif anybody yet, and I's not gwine to go back on de Lord in dat way; no, sah, I's not gwine to treat Him wus den anybody else. Balis is in debt to de Lord, an' Balis is gwine to pay his debts."

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There is a world of pathos in the item of news from Berlin the other day, that a deaf mute living in Silesia has written to Dr. Mackenzie offering to sacrifice his larynx if it be possible to transfer it to the emperor's throat. Dr. Mackenzie replies to the man that the loss of his life would neither help the emperor nor benefit science. But this makes the offer none the less a touching proof of devotion and self-sacrifice -- faint

illustration of the greater sacrifice of the One who, though Lord of Heaven and earth, gave His life by the cruel death of the cross, a ransom for sinful men.

ORDER OF THE IRON CROSS

(Is there not a suggestion to many of us in this story of the "IRON Cross"? May not some superfluous expenditures be changed, by the grace of God, into stars for our crowns?)

More than seventy years ago the King of Prussia, Frederick William III., found himself in great trouble. He was carrying on expensive wars, he was trying to strengthen his country and make a great nation of the Prussian people, and he had not money enough to accomplish his plans. What would he do? If he stopped where he was, the country would be overrun by the enemy, and that would mean terrible distress for everybody.

Now the king knew that his people loved and trusted him, and he believed that they would be glad to help him. He therefore asked the women of Prussia, as many of them as wanted to help their king, to bring their jewelry of gold and silver, to be melted down into money for the use of their country. Many women brought all the jewelry they had, and for each ornament of gold or silver they received in exchange an ornament of bronze or iron, precisely like the gold or silver ones, as a token of the king's gratitude. These iron and bronze ornaments all bore the inscription: "I gave gold for iron, 1813."

No one will be surprised to learn that these ornaments became more highly prized than the gold and silver ones had been, for they were a proof that the woman had given up something for her king. It became very unfashionable to wear any jewelry, for any other would have been a token that the wearer was not loyal to her king and country. So the order of the Iron Cross grew up, whose members wear no ornaments except a cross of iron on the breasts, and give all their surplus money to the service of their fellowmen.

If all the girls and women who own and love the Lord Jesus as their King, and want to help Him in the war against sin and ignorance and suffering which He is carrying on, if all these Christian girls and women were to give up their jewelry for His cause, how full the Lord's treasure would be.

-- Forward.

THE SACRIFICE OF A PILOT

Beyond all question the ship was on fire, and the cheeks of the sailors became blanched at the news. They could face the wildest hurricane that ever threatened to rend a vessel asunder, but a ship on fire was something too terrible even for their strong nerves. In a moment the cry went shrieking to the sky, "Fire! fire! fire!"

Then, quicker than it takes to tell it, all hands were called up, and the promptest measures taken to subdue the flames which every moment burst out in fresh places. The fire was raging in all directions, and seemed in its fury to laugh to scorn the buckets of water which were dashed upon the flames. No energy, however undaunted, could save the doomed vessel! To add to the fury of the flames, there were large quantities of resin and tar on board, and when these took fire, the passengers saw that, unless they could reach land soon, their fate was sealed. All this time brave John Maynard never left his post at the wheel, but might be seen through the flames grasping its spokes as with sinews of iron.

"John Maynard," cried the passengers, "how far are we from land?" "Seven miles," was the brief answer.

"How long shall we be ere we reach it, John Maynard?" was the next agonized inquiry.

"Three quarters of an hour at our present rate of speed."

"Is there any danger, John Maynard?"

"Well," said the pilot, "there is danger enough here; do you not see the smoke bursting out? If you would save your lives, go forward!"

In an instant, passengers and crew, men, women and children, crowded to the fore part of the ship, but John Maynard stood at his post. Then the flames burst forth in a sheet of fire, and clouds of smoke arose. At last, bellowing through his speaking trumpet, came the voice of the captain.

"John Maynard!"

"Ay, ay, sir," cried the brave helmsman "How does she head?"

"Southeast by east, sir."

"Head her southeast, and run her on the shore."

Nearer, yet nearer, she approaches the shore.

Once more the voice of the captain was heard crying -- "John Maynard!"

"Ay, ay, sir," was the answer which, though intended to be reassuring, was so faint that it could scarce be heard.

"Can you hold on five minutes longer, John?"

"Ay, ay, sir," was the answer, "by God's help I will."

The pilot's hair was scorched from the scalp, one hand was disabled, and his teeth were set, yet there he stood firm as a rock.

At last he brought the ship ashore. Every man, woman and child was saved. Only one was lost, and that one was brave, God-fearing John Maynard. Lost! did we say? He lost to win; he died to live; for a simpler or more believing spirit never took its flight than that of this Christian pilot. He sacrificed his own life that he might save the lives of others, and the story of his heroic courage shall never be forgotten.

HOW TO MOVE THE WHEELS

I heard Dr. John Scudder use a good missionary illustration lately, which I wish to relate to the children. On his return from India he made a short stay in London. While there, one day he went to visit the Crystal Palace. That was the building where the first world's fair was held; and it has been kept up as a kind of perpetual fair ever since. Among the curious things which pleased the children very much was a great collection of toys. One set consisted of an old woman with a wash-tub, a windmill with its sails all set for work, a mason with his trowel, a big rooster with his wings just ready to flap and his throat to crow, and several other similar pieces. "Wouldn't it be fun," said one of the missionary's little folks, "to see all these things move?" Now, the children might have stood there forever, wishing, hoping and even praying for that end, but it would have done no good. But just drop a penny into a little slip left for it, and behold! the

mason begins to work, the wind-mill to turn, the old woman to rub her clothes and the rooster to crow. The money started the whole machinery. So, Mr. Scudder said, it is with the mission work. The Church has been praying for a great while for the Lord to "open a way" for His Gospel. He has opened it so wide than His laborers do not know what to do. They can not occupy a tenth of the ground. The Church now needs to drop in the money if they would see the works move.

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Several years ago there lived a poor black woman who had been ill for nearly twenty years. In the same town was a rich and kind old man who frequently visited her. One day he said to her, on entering her home, "Ah, Betty, are you still alive?" "Yes, thank God," was the answer. "Why, do you suppose," he then said, "does God keep you so long in this world, poor, ill and blind, while you might go to Heaven, and there enjoy so much happiness?" She promptly replied: "Ah, sir, you don't understand. There are two great things for the Church to do; one is to pray, the other is to work. Now, God keeps me alive that I may pray for the Church; and He keeps you alive that you may work for the Church. Your large gifts do not help much without the prayers of poor Betty." Labor, with prayer, is God's method for spreading His Gospel among the nations. One is not sufficient.

-- Foreign Missionary.

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A Presiding Elder in New Jersey testifies that on his district of 11,000 members he has 2,000 men who use tobacco. At the average of ten cents each per day these 2,000 Christians consume \$73,000 worth of tobacco in a year -- more money than is given for missions by all New Jersey Methodism with her 79,713 members. God says, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?"

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-kulp/missions/>

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