

A Biblical Perspective of Missions

by Mose Stoltzfus

The sermon presents a biblical perspective on missions, emphasizing the urgent need for evangelism and community involvement in the face of modern challenges.

Duration: 1:25:53

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:1

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the simplicity and power of the gospel. He highlights the importance of confessing with one's mouth the Lordship of Jesus Christ and surrendering oneself to Him. The speaker also mentions the shutting down of missions by governments and the need to continue sharing the good news of God's love and salvation. He concludes by reminding the audience that God's promises are trustworthy and that anyone who repents and calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Greetings to you all this morning.

In the name of our Lord Jesus, good to be back home again. Even though we're here to report, as a few of the rest of you know, that we had a very beautiful wedding in Michigan with Brother Jay and Sister Ruthie last weekend and our hearts rejoice that another couple can be sent on life's way together in holy matrimony with so many rich blessings poured upon them and truly it was poured upon us all for having been there. Shall we this morning bow our heads for prayer as we begin? Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy great name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth just like it is in heaven. Give us our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the glory, the honor and the power forever and ever.

Amen. I'd like to speak this morning on the subject of a biblical perspective of missions. Maybe you have heard enough on this subject for a while and if you have, just having come through Missions Conference about five weeks ago, I can understand that.

But I do beg you to hear me out here this morning. I have immersed myself for many weeks on this subject. First of all, I was asked to have the six sessions that I had at Missions Conference on trying to portray a burden for the low German people throughout Canada, some in the U.S., and then in Mexico, Belize, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, and wherever else they are found.

After that, I began to pick up bits and pieces from the Muslim training classes that were held somewhere maybe close to a year ago. Numerous questions came up about that and so I took that material and immersed myself in some of those teachings and then also some questions that come up at CBI that likewise I began to study out, just not having immersed myself enough throughout the last couple of years in some of those subjects. This morning's message I trust will be a bit more on the positive side than the negative if I know a little bit the direction I hope to go with it because I have to admit that there was a revival in my own heart.

I had somewhat the attitude that, hey, I'm nearly 63 years of age, let these young fellows do the exploits for God in other countries and even locally perhaps it seemed like my life, whether I wanted it to or not, was more absorbed in helping churches that were having problems and instead of being evangelistic oriented like I was in the past a lot, and some of you noticed the change in my messages too, I became a lot more in the defense of truth and defense of the gospel and I still believe that God has his hand upon my life for those things simply because of the tremendous astronomical demand for it today and need for it in light of all the false doctrine and false prophecy that is floating around in the world. But I must say my burden for missions, you know, was not as acute or not as sensitive as I wish that it could have been at times. But after I immersed myself like this for quite a number of months here through the winter and not traveling hardly in January and February, I had a revival of it in my own heart.

And then of course all it took was that beautiful phone call from Bolivia concerning the great need that there is and the doors are just open everywhere for the preaching of the gospel and people are hungry and are desperately in need for someone to share with them the truth concerning these things. And then I did get another call or I had another phone conversation a few days ago that gave us the story that a Mennonite couple, no, a Boliviano couple, Spanish-Boliviano couple, 50 years of age, got converted and was baptized this week and is already helping out in the mission down there in Bolivia where some of our missionaries are. And so my heart is thrilled with all of that.

I am motivated and re-inspired because I began to see and is one of my great cautions today and that is one of the reasons I plan to go on a positive note first and hopefully I will give you some of the things I have found and discovered at a later message. But I realize that, you know, there is a tendency that we, in the defense of the faith, we can find so many non-biblical perspectives in our time that we get a bit cynical or negative about missions and we just think, hey, we might as well pack up and come home and do our missions locally and so on. But I'm not at that place.

I do believe that the age of missions is closing very fast upon us because of the conditions of the world and the attitude of the leaders are having tremendous negative propaganda against proselytizing. They do not want to hear of it. They don't want anybody doing it.

And a lot of the missions have condescended to social work, feeding the hungry and nursing the sick and working with AIDS patients maybe and things like that. And we are in a terrible dearth of the simplicity of preaching the gospel, just simply preaching the good news, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and sharing with people how they can get right with God and go to heaven when they die. And that is extremely necessary in our time and I hope to stir a bit and stimulate a bit of revival.

And therefore, I have chosen the title of my message, A Biblical Perspective of Missions. Now, I could have said A Biblical Perspective of Evangelism because I realize when I use the word mission, they allow me to use it in a very broad sense. I'm not talking about Africa today.

Specifically, I'm not talking about Bolivia. Specifically, I'm talking about the whole general sense of we as born-again Christians trying to transmit and transfer the truth of the gospel to another person and the need for that in all of our lives. So, like I said, I'm hoping to share some other things because I have uncovered and discovered and God has shown me some astounding things that are happening in missions.

I've been on this subject day and night. At my age, I often spend an hour or more sometimes a week in the middle of the night. And so, I've used that to pray about this subject and to listen to other messages and to read.

And you know, everything is totally quiet and it is a blessed time. So, to us older folks, there is a blessing sometimes to not being able to sleep like we used to. And I've found it rich at this time.

Also, Brother Steve Coleman just shared with us yesterday morning in our prayer meeting here in the back concerning a Russian Mennonite man he worked with down in Mississippi or Alabama, I guess Mississippi, or Louisiana where they were down there working. It happened to be his foreman. He was out of Canada, right, Brother? And he just said, our people, the Russian Mennonite people are just living in droves away from the churches.

And it's because there's so many of them, there's nothing there. There's nothing to answer to the questions and the needs of their life. And so, that was another confirmation on this whole thing.

Now, first of all, I would like to say that sometimes in mission conferences, because of the way they are geared, I would say, or designed, we may sit through one of them and feel like if we are not involved in an unreached tribe, we're not doing anything. And I'd like to bring that down in our own minds. That is simply not the case.

Even though I want to give my due respect to those this morning who have left family and home and wage earning abilities and all of that, and have gone out in very difficult, very difficult circumstances in order to bring the gospel to a lost and dying world that has never heard the gospel. I want to give my due respect to that. When I look at missions, and I want to look at this subject in a very broad sense, that there is so much more to missions than that.

We want to give that its place, but there's a lot more to it. And one of the things I'd like to do is just make a little bit of a thankful mention, if I can call it that, on some of the ministries that are going on here in the church of which I am so grateful for. I must say, I do not want to puff anybody's mind up, including my own,

concerning this church because we do have some needs and some very pertinent needs that I hope that I can share a little bit about toward the end of my message here in the local congregation.

But I have never, ever been in a congregation that has been so involved in ministry on such a broad sense as I've experienced at Charity in Ephrata in my now almost 27 years that these two churches have been going. So we do appreciate that. The other thing is, I myself did have a number of trips, quite a number of trips to Haiti in the 90s, and I experienced a very, very rich experience there with the preaching of the gospel to a heathen people.

And even though they may not have been quite as totally heathen as some of the unreached tribes of Africa, nevertheless, it's a country ruled by voodoo and witchcraft and the devil, and it is a country where it was as black and white as I've ever seen it. And I have the rich memories and the experiences that I would like to share maybe a little bit later on on some of the things that I've learned, and they stand to me, they stand in my heart and my mind today as a tremendous example of biblical perspectives in mission, and the fruit and the result of them are still going on strong today. Another thing I'd like to say, and I excuse my long introduction here, but it is part of the message, it's not just an introduction, is that I believe our days are numbered.

Like I mentioned a little bit before concerning the governments of our world are shutting down on the concept of missions, and they want everybody to graduate to the social side of it and stop making proselytes and trying to win souls to a specific form or persuasion of Christianity. I do believe our days are numbered. I see our president, and I do want to respect him and pray for him, but he's planning to go to Turkey to establish diplomatic relations with that heavily, heavily Muslim country.

He has notified Iran and given them the opportunity this last week to just erase the past and start fresh. And, of course, Iran, which is very, very heavily Muslim too, and with Muslim religious government in place there, responded back, well, you fellows change and we'll take a look at it, like, or we'll consider it. And so they're asking for the United States to change their attitude concerning Islam, perhaps, and maybe a number of other things that they may have in mind, which is also happening in this country.

The change that has taken place since 9-11 is almost hard to comprehend. The sale of the Quran and the expansion of Islam in the major cities, I think we have now at least five major cities in the United States that have the call to prayer going out over the loudspeakers at 5 o'clock in the morning. And that is only growing and increasing likewise.

And I hope for a greater revival of my own heart. I am, as you know, anticipating to make a trip again to Bolivia or to a foreign country like that and trust to, again, have my heart revived and encouraged as I get a first-hand view of the work there. What is coming upon us in our day is a difficult word for some of you to understand, perhaps, especially some of you newer ones here that have maybe a bit of a limited English education, is the word neo-evangelical missiology.

That is the new concept, that is the new name that is being kicked around a lot, and it has, of course, a lot of other names that are similar to it. But what we're looking at here is the problem with neo-evangelical missiology. Let me read that concept in light of Muslim religion or evangelism.

A man by the name of Bessam Madini had a very, very interesting article as he talked about the historical perspective and the theological perspective and the biblical perspective of Christian missions today, as in the past, while in the historical, of course, he looked at over the years. But during the last two decades, he

writes, some severe criticism has been leveled at the missionary work which has been undertaken since the days of William Carey. We are told by these critics, for example, that missions among Muslims have been a failure.

Most of the missionaries of the past, so the critics say, were not good at cross-cultural communication, and that is assumed to be the problem. This happened because missionaries failed, he writes, to contextualize the Christian message. And what these neo-evangelical mission men, whatever we call them, missiologists or whatever, are saying is that there has been a failure for the last couple hundred years in winning the Muslims, and I agree with that.

They are the toughest group, perhaps one of the toughest groups in the world, to try to win because they believe they have a superior revelation and a superior holy book and all those things. But what these men are saying is not true, and so what they have done is because they look at that failure, they have concluded that there is now a failure in our approach and we must redo and rethink our entire approach of how to give the gospel to a lost and dying people. Now let's be careful here and not get too hard on the Muslim world for this whole thing because it is in Lancaster County all over the place.

Yesterday in the Saturday Intelligence Journal, no I'm sorry, earlier on this week was an article concerning our church up the road here just a half a mile, Effort of Mennonite Church, and their approach to winning the people in the area here. And it mentioned in great detail, you know, how some of the things you might see there that you may walk outside the Mennonite Church there and see a young boy with a cigarette in his hand and just kind of slouching around, or I'm not sure it had all those words to it, but as I picture it standing outside, and of course the church has a major program up there to reach out to the youth in Effort and invite them into the church. And then what they do is they might have a snack for them and have some games for them to play and they might have the contemporary rock music playing in the room where they gather and all this thing to try to make these young people feel at home at Effort of Mennonite Church and then in hopes that somehow making them feel comfortable and at home with that type of outreach and program they might come on a Sunday morning and venture into the church house and sit in the pews some day on a Sunday morning.

That's what we call contextualization. To try to somehow build bridges with their music, with their food, with their clothing, and with all kinds of things so that they might just feel welcome here and might feel at home and all that is done most of the time by without giving them the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That they are lost and on their way to hell if they don't turn from their ways and this can be done in a nice way, you don't have to shout at them or what have you, but you have to give them the message in one way or another ultimately that they are lost and they need to be saved and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and he died and he rose again in order to deliver them from the power of sin.

That is missing. I just read in the last week or so where a large church has a hamburger joint or whatever you call it in a coffee house in the back of their church house and they invite the people in on Sunday morning and say, okay, take your pick, you can either go in there and sit down and listen to the rest and to the main service, but if you don't feel like doing that, just sit down here and have a hamburger, that will be fine. You just choose whatever you want.

And then there was another article in yesterday's paper concerning the Mannheim, a large church wanting to make a \$8 million expansions up here in Mannheim, a Brethren in Christ church and it made a list of the ministries that they are putting in there, you know, there is an abortion ministry and there is a divorce

ministry and there is a, I mean, you name it, they have it, it is a seeker-friendly church or apparently they are trying to transform into a seeker-friendly church and to do that they are going to go into about an \$8 to \$10 million expansion and they got their approval and plan to move ahead for it. So when we talk about neo-evangelical missiology and this whole matter of contextualization, we are not targeting only the way, although that is a major one also, in how Muslims are presented with the gospel and they have rearranged the entire thing. And I am just flabbergasted, I am amazed at the change of how we look at missions.

One of my articles here is called Rethinking Missions Today and that is of course exactly what is happening. The whole premise of missiology is being rethought, redesigned, reorganized and I am sorry, I am of the old school, I cannot relate to it. You want to bring me into a program like that, to approach sinners in that form, they have lost me a long time ago.

And so if you will allow me to, I will probably preach to you the old school today. Okay, what is mission? Mission, just looking it up in Webster's dictionary, that Webster gives there, sent out with authority to preach, teach and proselyte the gospel. It actually gives the first one is the gospel and then it allows that to also be in a political sense or a war like sense, you know how armies have a certain mission to accomplish.

So it also means those things. But the first one on the list is to send out with authority to preach, teach or proselyte people. And I add there very emphatically with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is where missions were invented, especially in the book of Acts and we have much to gain from the pattern and the biblical perspective that is given there. Now, I just wanted to again talk about a little bit of the mission activity from the church here locally. And I say this to encourage it and to tell all those that are involved, we see these things and we recognize them and we appreciate them, you know.

There is so much done here in counseling and hospitality where it just seems, again, a few of us got phone calls in the past week of another young married couple with two children being sent here in order for some help for their lives and for their marriage and for their family. And you know that has been happening over the years. It has been such a joy.

I said many times, you know, it kind of has affected us. Instead of us having to go many times, they have just come and just said, can you help us? And I think that has been a tremendous work in the church here. I also want to make mention of the Fountain of Life work and how individuals just take something like that and put these messages and make them available by phone.

And I know that there are some of you sitting here that have perhaps originally found the Lord through that open door and through all the efforts that brethren put there. I think that some of you who make in-home discipleship visits and sit down with your Bibles and explain the Scriptures to newly converted people and guide them into true faith and obedience to God and baptism, water baptism perhaps, and numerous things like that. Those things are going on here and they don't only go on in an organized manner from the ministry, but they just happen because there are individuals who do that.

On the hospitality level, homes are open over and over again at weekend meetings in the summer and Bible school and leadership seminar and missions conference and people brought in and you sit them down in your living room and you minister to them and find out whether there's a troubled soul in the midst of that, perhaps where you actually more specifically minister to the needs of their heart. I look at the tape ministry or what we now call the, I guess, CD ministry more than tape ministry, but likewise that has been

such a blessing throughout the years of so many people just hearing a message that has been preached locally here and got into the hands of people and they have been able to reorient their home and their church and their concept of God and truth and repentance from sin and all those different things and have led to the conversion of many. I think of the tent trailer and the evangelism, the chairs and the books and the pulpit and everything that has gone out all the way, I think, northwest to Manitoba and Ohio many times and Virginia numerous times and Ontario and many places and have been a blessing there where the gospel has been preached.

I think of church planting and the numerous churches that look to us for stability and kind of a place where it's a little bit like a mother church, even though we don't have a conference set up and we don't have a desire for that where we're the head and the rest of the tail or part of the body down the road there somewhere. We try to respect churches wherever they are planted and treat them as equal brothers and confer together for truth rather than we're at the top and you're at the bottom and we'll tell you what to believe and what to do next and so on. We have never went to that, yet many churches have been planted and I think that work has been a good work for all those involved.

Widows and single mothers finding a refuge for their needs and both financial and social, food and many other things that I see exchanged and transferred from somebody who has, somebody who doesn't have and that is such a joy to me. Brother Earl, I think, is in Haiti this morning or headed for Haiti this morning in the, involved majorly there in the literature program to distribute gospel Christian literature to the backwoods of needy people in Haiti. I even had to think of singing, you know, do you realize the foxes aren't here this morning but the contribution that our brother Earl has made to the church here and to our youth just in the matter of singing and learning how to sing the great hymns of the past and sing them right and beautiful and many of you couples have learned music through that or through various classes that different one had and are able to sing in a harmonious manner because of the efforts of individuals that have put in to that.

Well, let us look more specifically now at some of the biblical perspective because we do want to look at the Word of God. One notices on the reading of the literature of the contextualization movement, the impact of the theologies there brought to us by the World Council of Churches. Now, I had a friend of mine that I worked with years ago who got so curious when he found out that there's this outfit called the World Council of Churches in New York City and they had their headquarters up there at a given place and I mean this is back over 35 years ago now, nearly 40 years ago and he went up there and he began to ask and when I walked into the office and here was this great World Council of Churches and he was very suspicious that they were trying to make leads with local churches here and there and that was in Ohio, I lived in Ohio at that time and he began to ask questions and finally an old man came out of that back office and stuck his nose at him and said, what are you up to? And began to scrutinize him and to put him to the test of what he's interested in.

Well, he said, I just want to know what you're all about, we're living down there in the state of Ohio and we're trying to find out what's happening here, what connection and I think he basically gave him his walking papers and sent him out the road. Because he was not, he appeared to be skeptical and cautious and careful as to what's happening here. Well, the World Council of Churches is far more influential today than it was then and has its fingers in many things, in the ecumenical movement to try to bring all religions together into one.

More emphasis is also given today on the incarnational theology, if you know what that word means, but you try to incarnate yourself or reincarnate, I guess it's incarnate is the proper word there and have a new theology of how to minister to people and less emphasis on preaching and proclamation. Our local Mennonite Central Committee here in Akron, years ago went across the world when there was a catastrophe or just a needy place in Central America and Africa, South America and Asia and wherever and set up places and they would minister to the physical needs of the people but the people that went, the workers preached the gospel. Today the rule is no more preaching, no more proselytizing, just try and quietly minister to the needs of the people with food and clothing and so on and that's what they're primarily about.

Not saying that no one ever preaches the gospel but the primary emphasis is on on this whatever theology that they have and less emphasis on preaching and proclamation of the gospel. There is more preoccupation with secondary issues such as forms of worship, fasting, timing of baptism. The old perspectives course out of U.S. Center of World Missions in Pasadena, California recommends not to baptize people when you have a few converts.

You should wait until you have a whole village and then baptize the people. That is not a biblical concept. That is part of this neo-evangelical concept that is flooding our country with a different view.

And if I can finish that sentence there, there's more preoccupation with secondary issues rather than the primary issues of preaching the gospel and a genuine desire to understand what the biblical precepts and guidelines are for missions today. The spirit of the new approach is not so much the Bible as the new discipline of cultural anthropology, he writes here. What's anthropology? You know what cultural anthropology is? Well, it's a study of the races, it's the physical needs of the people, the need perhaps for hospitals or clinics, and that's not always all bad, but it's their mental needs or their mental characteristics, it's customs, study of customs and social relationships, etc., etc.

Those are in the focus of men's eyes today when they look at missions and have departed from the simplicity of preaching the gospel and showing people how to get to heaven and have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I should have said that the other way around. First of all, have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in this life and then get to heaven when you die.

Let us turn our Bibles to Romans 10 to begin the biblical perspective that we find there along with 1 Corinthians 1 and 2. In Romans 10, Paul deals with the main reason for the failure of the Old Testament people of God in reaching their destiny. He says there in verse 1, Brethren, my hearts desire in prayer to God for Israel that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

They didn't preach the right message or they don't have the right message. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness or going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of all for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

And that is exactly, again, where things are at today. People are going about. They have a zeal of God.

There are more traveling done than you can shake a stick at today of people going everywhere. But what are they going for? What are they doing? Well, they build houses. Perhaps they clean up garbage after a storm.

And again, that is no bad. After a tsunami or after a hurricane or after an earthquake. But they don't go with the primary reason of preaching the gospel of the kingdom of Jesus Christ to them.

They are zealous for God, but not according to knowledge. And they have gone about and established their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Lord, tell me what to do and I'll do it like the apostle Saul said when he got converted on the way to Damascus.

Who are you, Lord, and what will you have me do? I just love it. By the way, converts, that needs to be your prayer. That needs to be your prayer.

It's good for you to pray it on your knees. Lord, what will you have me to do? I want to be usable in the kingdom of God. And I know there's a lot of people sitting in this room that have been usable and still want to be usable in the kingdom of God, and that's wonderful.

But there are many more that need to pray that prayer in earnestness before God. I know that. I know that.

Well, then he quotes Moses in verse 5. Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law, that a man which doeth these things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise. And this is so interesting.

When we look at this portion of Scripture here, Paul says here that But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise. Say not in thy heart who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down from above. It's just such a favorite portion of Scripture of mine.

Or, in verse 7, who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. Now, obviously, we have a setting here. This is a quote out of Deuteronomy 30, I think it is.

And what we have here is a picture of, here's a group of people that are saying, How do we find God? It's a picture that many people are asking today. How do I find God? You know what people are doing to answer that question in our time? They're, and they have it easy today in our jet-set age. They are saving their money and have been for decades.

And getting on a jet plane and flying across the world to the other side and finding a path up into the mountains in Nepal or in India somewhere, trying to find some religious guru who is in Hinduism or Buddhism of some kind or something similar to that. And sitting at his feet to try to find spiritual truth for themselves. I can't forget when I was in Oregon or Washington one time when a lady sat in front of me who couldn't sit.

She was all over the chair and up and down who had done that and got some kind of a demon in her. And she had gone all over the country and tried to get rid of that demon that was driving her absolutely insane about. And I don't, I believe she probably didn't want to get rid of it or totally because I was warned later on she just wears out the saints with her request.

But she had done that, sat at his feet, maybe he laid his hands on her and she was possessed with some spirit of Kundalini from over there. But I'm just saying this is what people do in order to find truth. And somebody says that I was reading here when a commentator said that the, I think it is the Hebrew meaning of that word who shall go into the deep means more that who shall travel treacherously and difficultly across the deep.

Many miles and as he did in ships and by the way the Mediterranean Sea was right beside him there where this was given. And the Mediterranean Sea is a very difficult sea to travel because of storms especially certain times of the year. You remember Paul's shipwreck took place there and apparently he had experienced other shipwrecks because he experienced multiple ones, at least more than one.

And so that was a difficult sea to travel on. And yet the picture is there who shall ascend over the deep I think is the way the Hebrew gives it. But I also see it in contrast with the way it says who will go way up there into heaven and bring God down.

I want to know God. I want to experience God. Or the other one will say who is going to go way down into the deep.

You know the ocean is at least six, seven miles deep I think in certain places. And who is going to go down and get him? God is out there somewhere. But I can't find him and I have no other, I have no idea how to find him and how to get him.

And then the beautiful scripture that the Apostle Paul lays the axe to the root of the tree and said it is nigh thee in thy heart and in thy mouth. Simplicity of the gospel, have you ever seen the likes? We are not giving you some biblical perspective or missions of how to lead people to get the reality of God that you have to have four years of seminary training to get. We are talking about a gospel that is so relevant, that is so powerful, that is so anointed by the Spirit of God and it is right in front of you.

In your heart and in your mouth. And that if you should confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and I think another translation gives it that Jesus is Lord. You surrender yourself and confess with your mouth the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I am finished with my own way, my own religion and I am willing to surrender myself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart men believe on the righteousness and with the mouth confession is made on the salvation.

And therein is the simplicity of the gospel message. And I am jealous for that, brothers. I am jealous for the simplicity of the gospel.

And we must block ourselves and refuse the concept of contextualization and trying to take months and years to try to build friendship. You know, instead of giving them the gospel in a nice and loving way, to sit beside them and open your Bible and show them the truth. Like Dean Taylor said the other week, he said while people are over there trying to make friends with the Muslims, they are over here aggressively making converts to the Muslim religion.

And that is a true statement. We were together the other day, Brother Denny and I, Mark Brubaker, and I said I am not sure anymore. I know I just read the figures that it must be 30 or 300,000 a year old.

And he said it is for sure 300,000 a year of converts that they are making to expand their religion. That is how fast their growth is. That is because they are very aggressive and very forthright and up front as to what they are about.

And they are all excited about their, about Muhammad the prophet and about Islam. And they go at it aggressively. But the Christian church does not.

And I would say too, help us Lord in that. The proclamation of the gospel. And there is something unique about that.

We will look at that maybe a little later if we turn over. Why don't we do that now? Oh, I did want to comment yet in Romans 10. I did want to comment yet on verse 14.

How then shall they call on him? It does say further up. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord. First of all in verse 11.

Whosoever believeth on him shall not be shamed. And then also, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved in verse 13. And then it goes to the question, how is that going to happen? And he says in the end of the verse 14, how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they hear without a preacher? And then verse 17 he says, so then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

We have again the simplicity of hearing the word of God proclaimed in clear tones to the people's ears. That is the way to make converts. That is the way because when that is done, I tell you the secret of it all, is alongside comes the Holy Spirit and lights upon those people.

I have sat there numerous times and preached it in standing in a pulpit, but sat in living rooms the same way. And you begin to unfold the gospel and you can almost feel him coming. And you see him light upon the hearts of men and women.

And they begin to tremble at the truth of the word of God. And I can tell, I am not in charge of what is going on here. Somebody else is.

1 Corinthians, the same way, so beautifully lays this out in verse 17 of 1 Corinthians chapter 1. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. You know they were having their controversy, who is the greatest, do we follow Paul or Apollos or you know which one of the apostles, or Cephas, which is Peter. Which one do we like best, you know, and which one are we going to follow here? And then how many did you baptize? Well, I baptized so many, maybe some of those things were going on.

Paul, the apostle, just stands up and he says, Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. And that lies at the core of the contextualization problem.

They are trying to eliminate the cross. Go to the book of Acts. I went through it last night and I just throw my heart again in chapter 13 when Paul beckoned with a hand and said, Men and brethren, children of Israel, and all those that are gathered here.

And he preached to them the gospel. And what did he do? He threw a hand grenade into the synagogue. You know why? Because he preached the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He died and he was crucified. And if you would do that in a Muslim country, you would probably be treated the same way Paul was treated there. Throw him out for dead, ready to stone him, and actually got the job done.

And it must be that God resurrected him by his divine power and set him on fire to go on to the next village. But you go through 13 and 14. Those two chapters that show him on that missionary journey, going from one village and one town into the next.

And then the Jews would come along behind and excite the people and stir up the women and all the people against him. And then they'd come out with their rocks again. And they'd threaten him again.

And that is what is biblical perspectives of missions. And we need to preserve that. And I must say return to that where we have departed.

A true biblical perspective of missions and of evangelism. Now I'm all for rendering custom to whom custom and honor to whom honor. And I don't believe we should go into some of those places like we own the place.

They didn't either. They went into the synagogue and sat down. And the leader of the synagogue said, Men and brethren, do you have anything to say? Say on.

And they rose to their feet and just dumped it all out. They just gave it out. Oh, you've got to be careful here.

If we say that, death and resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus, that will be the end of the meeting. Well, it was. But if that isn't preached, the message won't be clear.

You see, we must preserve that part of the message. And we must dominate with that message, that part of the message. Because that is the message.

The crucifixion of our Lord is the taking away of sin out of our lives. It's the atonement of the blood for sin. You see, my own experience down there in Haiti was so phenomenal that one time.

I didn't plan on it. It wasn't strategized. It wasn't even prayed about.

It just happened. You know, of course, it was our prayer and our heart to preach the gospel in Haiti. And there was a heathen country saturated with voodooism and witchcraft and witch doctors over the place.

But that night, when we had that meeting under the mango tree, I want to tell you something supernatural happened that was out of our control. But what we did do was stand up by the fence there, and the people gathered around in the dark, and all I had was a little bit of light behind me that I could barely read my Bible. Thank God for being able to quote some scriptures without reading it.

And a good interpreter beside me, Brother Bruce, and I just simply preached the gospel there, and the witch doctors and the people trembled. Not at me, at the preaching and hurling forth of the message of the gospel. Of course, I had my own built-in microphone or whatever, loudspeaker, you know, that I used that night so the people could hear me.

And that ended up to be a blessing. But I remember, to this day, witchcraft has to take a lower place in Ireland, and all back through the hills. The witch doctors slither around like they're kind of scared to operate, because the gospel got to preeminence through the preaching of the gospel.

And I remember there were witch doctors, a couple of them there. Sister Kathy Reinford got one of them up there, a lady witch doctor, and asked for prayer for her. And sometime, I think that very weekend, I believe it was that one, or the next trip or so, she actually came to me and asked for prayer, and I got to lay my hands on her and pray for her.

She has never been converted, because it seems like she has soul or soul to take witchcraft through from the ancestors. Years before we got there. But you know what? She sends her children over to the mission to get converted.

And they have been. She wants them to have it. She thinks she can't have it.

Whether she can or not, I don't know. She might have soul or soul. But in any event, you know, she has bowed to the power of God in the valley and has high regard and respect for it, even though she says she's bound and can't get loose, and that may be a lie of the devil, you know.

I don't know. There are some, I know, that can sell their souls in such a way, with a blood covenant and what have you, that are very difficult to break. Many witches do those kind of things, and Satanists, and you don't find many of them converted.

They somehow sell their soul to the devil and are not often brought back. Over in 1 Corinthians again, verse 20, Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of the world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? And after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them not believe.

How many of you have felt like a fool sometimes witnessing? Of course we do. Sometimes you don't. Oh, this is hard, especially when they know you, or our relatives sometimes, or you have to kindly try to approach a grandfather lying on his deathbed.

Those things are not easy. And I've often felt that shame that comes over you. Who am I, and what can I say? And yet, you know, you are propelled, and you feel like a fool doing it.

But that's because God is designed by the foolishness of preaching to save those that would believe. And we'll never graduate away from that. It will always still be the foolishness of preaching that God has ordained to save those that believe.

Save those that believe. Then he says, further on there, For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified under the Jews, a stumbling block and under the Greeks' foolishness.

Oh, the Charismatics would have liked that. They'd have waited until their great signs and wonders man come around, and they'd have sent him to the Jews. Then they'd have got a doctor of divinity degree, individual, and he'd have sent him to the Greeks and all that.

Paul just put all that aside and preached to him the crucifixion of Christ, and the resurrection. But under them which are called, verse 24, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty. And these things of the world and things that are despised hath God chosen, and the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are. It's not so complicated just to tell another person how good God is and how he sent his Son into the world to die for the sins of the world and for my sins and your sins.

And that if you repent of them and get on your knees and call on the name of the Lord, confessing your sins, God will save you. He will. I tell people, I guarantee it.

Because God said it, I didn't. Amen. Well then, over in chapter 2, he reiterates that whole matter again and talks about the manner of Paul's preaching.

And by the way, this man was effective. He couldn't have won a lot more souls if he had changed his tune. I don't believe.

God, he was anointed by God of the Holy Spirit to do this, and he was powerfully effective for the kingdom of God's sake. I think we ought to take him for a pattern today and let him show us how to do missiology. Verse 1, and I, brethren, of chapter 2, I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. He determined from the beginning that there was not going to be any other message. He was not going to sweet-talk it and somehow bring it into another word.

We were talking to somebody here a few weeks ago about using a whole different set of language concepts, and he admitted he does that so that people don't think it's the same as what the preachers are saying. That's not good. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power.

We must conclude that the Holy Spirit is a key factor in the conversion of men, and in the preaching of it. We can say words, but unless God takes the arrows into the hearts of people, you know, we speak in vain, don't we? Well, your father says that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, in verse 5, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.

And it is a mystery. How that we can talk to a person like that for 15 minutes to half an hour, and they can get on their knees and cry unto God and be changed from death into life, from the power of sin unto the power of God, and never be the same again. That's one of the great things that God does and will do.

I would think that Paul must have been tempted to compromise in order to make the message more acceptable to the hearers. I would guess that he was compromised not to mention that explosive hand grenade problem of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to the Jewish synagogues for sure, knowing it would create a major problem, but he wouldn't do it. He would not compromise.

The Jewish tradition at that time could not tolerate any teaching about the crucified Messiah. I mean, that put the guilt back on them. They crucified Him, and now He becomes the Savior of the world, and we have to believe in Him in order to save us, and we just killed Him.

I don't believe there could have been a more explosive subject to speak about in a Jewish synagogue. And the Greeks, they were much more kinder perhaps in their reaction. You know, they loved to debate and dialogue and test their wisdom against the wisdom of Paul or anyone else who came, but they're the same way.

His message was clear. The fundamental reason why we must proclaim without compromise the word of the cross is that God has ordained it to be the means of grace for the salvation of all those who put their trust in the crucified and risen Messiah. Expect an offense, I wrote in my notes.

Expect a reaction at times. Expect it. Don't feel when you get a reaction, oh, I must have done it the wrong way.

You know, there are times to take a look at our methods. I'm not saying that, that we can't see whether we're not, you know, if we always get a bad reaction and never an acceptance, and we see, hey, something isn't right here, there comes a time. But we can expect an offense of the gospel if we preach the gospel.

So let us not undo ourselves by feeling like a failure because of that. The implication of this apostolic teaching is tremendous in God's sovereign disposition. He has ordained that all humanity originated attempts to find him must fail, must fail.

And they cannot but fail since man's heart is totally darkened by sin. The only God-ordained way of salvation is through the preaching of the gospel. The great emphasis of proclamation may sound rather out of place in an age when dialogue is becoming very fashionable, and all kinds of gimmicks are being used to bring about conversion.

And yet the words of Paul are very clear. God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those that believed. We cannot avoid the offense and the word of the cross.

The contextualization which the Muslims require of us in order to make our message acceptable to them is nothing less than unconditional surrender. He writes here, It is rather naive on the part of so many missiologists who are flying the banner of contextualization in missions to Muslims to think that the followers of Islam will settle for anything less than the Islamization of the Christian messenger. They want to conquer you.

And they'll attempt to do that in one way or another if you're not extremely careful. And don't go in filled with the Holy Spirit and strong and preach the gospel in a clear tone that they know who you're talking about. This doesn't mean that he neglected totally cross-cultural communication.

I believe that being a native of the Mediterranean world, Paul was at home in probably both the Greek and the Jewish setting. He knew a couple of languages and he was able to preach in the language of the people and that's a major, major blessing and important thing to learn languages. Young people, just don't be afraid to learn languages.

I think it's very important that all of us can speak two or three languages and our usability is so much greater in our being able to evangelize people because there are many languages over the world and we can usually find them in various places where we can use them. He spoke the language of the people and gave not only the gospel message but he gave himself with the message and that's the important. They need to know that you love them and that you care for them.

People need to feel that. And that's just so important that they can tell you're into it. I got cornered pretty heavily in a Hutterite colony early on when I started going to South Dakota.

Why in the world are you flying 1,500 miles over Chicago and over all those big cities where all those people are and come here to our colonies? And I couldn't say much more than I cared for their people. And I did. I loved them.

I loved their... I just... God gave that to me and that's why I went that distance. And that's the way God works. The Holy Spirit lays burdens and some of you have burdens like that for... And some who have gone out from here have had burdens like that for peoples and cultures and dark places and have pursued them and are there today perhaps preaching and teaching the gospel.

But I would like to say in closing I do believe that the mission of the universal church as we speak it in a broad sense now is at a crossroads. Now most of them are already turned left, unfortunately. And I've taken this neo-evangelical perspective and have contextualized it so greatly that they don't have a message hardly anymore to give.

Some of them don't have any at all. They are just broken down into a social gospel, into a social presentation. And Jesus Christ and Him crucified has faded into oblivion.

So, but I would even say for most of us in our churches we are at a crossroads. Whether we are earnestly going to contend for the truth of the gospel and not compromise with all these books and ideas and things that are coming down the pike and try to tell us in a different way, in a better way to do it than the old time Apostle Paul way or the Bible way and that's why my burden is on the biblical perspective of missions. The Christian mission to Muslims has a bright future as long as it is carried on in time-honored apostolic tradition.

Folks keep telling me of the open door on the common people on the streets of Iraq and Iran. And our people were in Bangladesh, they found a loving people, open-hearted people that don't know what's going on. And I believe that it is right to pursue some of those open doors that I believe are there but it must be done in a biblical context.

Love them, but go and preach for them, but you better be prepared to have your throat slit. Because the authorities may just want to do that to you. And I'm not trying to scare you away from it.

If you want to give your life for God and you want to give your life for missions, fine. But don't go and compromise the gospel in order to go. Go and preach the gospel like Paul did.

Throw the hand grenade into the middle of them. And tell them that Jesus Christ died and rose again. Incidentally, they don't believe a hair of that.

That's blasphemy to them. But we have to be prepared to take the consequences. We have to be prepared to take the consequences.

You tell me many young Muslims are disoriented. And I think the reason so many in the United States are falling for it is because they want a cause. And Islam gives them a cause, a militant cause.

And they want something that excites them, something they can stand for and perhaps even die for. You know men love to have something to die for? They do. Well, Christianity will give you that too if you preach the gospel.

And you don't need to become a Muslim to do it, to have that experience. Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, you know what's going on in India and other places. They will be converted through Christian testimony and through the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I do have a concern that I'd like to share. I do believe that some of us have far too much given in to the socialistic approach. Just befriend them.

Just take them out to eat. And not lay the truth at their door. It's one of the things that drove me in all the friendships that I made years ago in Hutterite territory.

You know that it is very seldom that I would only try to make friends for a visit. Without at some point in the discussion late at night while the room was still full of people to present the gospel of Jesus Christ. Or to somehow come down to the core issues.

Conversion, salvation, the new birth, a holy life. And like I say, we can visit for a couple of hours perhaps first and get to know each other and get everybody relaxed and comfortable. But then, the message should be given.

And I believe that there are those failing. With that, they have bought in too much of the love of Him. Why say love Him? But love is a great and wonderful thing, but it's not enough.

You can't just love Him into the kingdom. That's not what the Bible teaches. It says, by the foolishness of preaching, they come into the kingdom.

And our vision, I would just like to say for the churches. Even though I gave honor to all these, I believe more can be done. I believe greater exploits can be given.

We need to pray about it. Seek God's face as to what God would have us do. But I think as a local church, it should be a challenge for us to expand our various missions that are already going.

And perhaps to start a few new ones. Opportunities abound. And they are yet an open door today.

But that day will soon close. And it will become illegal, I believe, almost worldwide to do mission work. May God give us a biblical perspective for missions in our hearts and lives and in our church.

God bless you. Well, thank you. That was a positive note in my heart, Brother Rick.

Thank you for the encouragement. Not just encouragement, but for the most. Not just the encouragement, but the challenge too.

It reminded me when you were talking about the book of Acts and the Apostle Paul. The last time I went through the book of Acts, I was challenged there. How Paul, it seems every time he's recorded to speak, somewhere in his discourse, he speaks about the resurrection, about the coming of judgment, about the resurrection of dead, the righteous and the unrighteous.

In all his speeches, it seems sometimes he pulls it out of nowhere. Like that one time he said, I think it was to Felix, that he said, here I am standing saying nothing more than what the Scriptures already say. And then here to Agrippa, he said, Agrippa, can you believe it? I'm on trial today for the hope of the gospel that these men hold to.

And that is that there will be a resurrection of the dead, righteous and unrighteous. Well, he didn't have to say that, but he knew that Felix was listening. And he knew that Agrippa needed to hear that there was going to be a resurrection of the dead.

And I was challenged at the way he wisely wove the conviction of truth into everything that he said. Knowing you're going to be standing before God someday. And there's going to be a resurrection of the dead.

You will be raised for judgment. And I was challenged by that. And I'm challenged again this morning.

And I feel like I need God's help. A resurrection in my life. How to wisely, like that man that we met there at the park the other day, who was a, what did he call himself, an agnostic or something like that.

Oh, to have the clarity just to say, man, the Bible says you will be called before God one day to give an account for your life. Whether you believe it or not, it's happening. And I'm preaching it to you.

God give us grace to preach in a world. Because, really, nothing else works. I think we've come far enough.

Nothing else works. Friendship evangelism does not work. Except that evil communications corrupts good manners.

That works. But, let's just, we have nothing to lose really as I see it. We have nothing to lose but to go and preach the Gospel.

And how many of you have had someone speak a hard word in your life and have a revival in your heart, just a clarity and a cleanness in what they've said to you. Though it hurt. Though it scoured you and wounded you.

Yet you went away when they left and felt that they loved you. And had told you the truth. I've experienced that many times.

Locally and foreign. In the foreign field. Is there anyone else that would have something to share? Maybe a testimony or something that's on your heart this morning? Concerning the message, Brother Jeff? Wayne? Go ahead, brother.

Well, I want to give God glory and thanksgiving for the message today. I'm convinced that successful missions work, successful evangelism is to rightly represent Christ. We have a world where the name of Christianity and Christ is just defiled.

And what we must do as the true and living church of Jesus Christ is rightly manifest Jesus. And it says in Titus 1.3, speaking of God and the preaching of His word, it says, But hath in due times manifested His word through preaching. And there is, I believe, a supernatural Holy Ghost event that happens when a man full of Christ preaches Christ.

God is manifested. And that's why sometimes men repent. That's why sometimes men get angry.

Because the one they're at enmity with is very present. And so our duty is to rightly manifest Christ that men might be saved. Praise the Lord.

Yeah, I appreciated the message this morning. I was struck by a couple of verses that Brother Moe shared. One was that it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save men.

And then again, over there in 1 Corinthians, it says, How shall they preach except they be sent? And I appreciated the conclusion there, Brother Moe, that it seems like a body our size, we could have several missions. And we should have several missions and be sending out. I thought of in Acts 13, there is the church ministered unto the Lord and they sent forth Paul.

And that was a blessing to me to consider that then in the power and the anointing that he had as the church sent him forth. And so thank you for that reminder. I also did want to maybe set the record a little bit straight.

The Christian Aid Ministries in their disaster program, they are very strongly recommending to all the volunteers to preach the gospel as they go. They don't want a quiet workforce. And I stood one morning, Thursday morning.

I got no drywall done for the lady, but we talked for three hours about her needs. And there was a real open door there. And there are many such.

That's just one story. And they really do want the volunteers to preach that, to preach the gospel. That is the point of having that.

And so I guess all the aid organizations aren't the same. So we did have a real blessing. I just want to report that to the church too.

Someone else? I don't know if it works now or not. There you go. I just wanted to thank Brother Mohs for the message this morning.

I've been really, really impressed with the simplicity of the gospel. And not only that, but it's just really amazed me here in the last month how accepting Jesus into our hearts can really change the way we think and the way we do things. And one way that I've really sensed that is just in my, as some of you know, in my addiction with drinking.

And when I gave my heart to Jesus again, I begged God to take the love of alcohol away from me. And I'm just amazed at how God did that. I really don't have the love of alcohol.

It's gone. And I really thank God for that and just praise Him for that. And just in a lot of other areas in my life, I just really feel like a changed man.

And I just want to keep growing and I want to keep doing God's will in my life. And so I just really want to thank Brother Mohs for the message this morning. I was challenged.

And another thing that we were really excited about and we really feel blessed is that our oldest son gave his heart to Jesus last Sunday night. And so that's a real blessing in our family. And you can just pray for me and pray for my wife so that we could nurture him up in the admonition of the Lord.

We need your prayers. Okay. Thank you for that sharing.

I couldn't help but see some connection between our first message that Brother Donnie brought us there. One of the greatest giants that we face is that shame that we feel in stepping over the line with a sinner

and speaking the Gospel to him. But it's so much the same.

We just come in our simplicity and who we are. It's not our strength. But in the name of the Lord, we take up a few stones and we give it a sling.

And so many times, men get born again. Challenged. Changed.

Grace God, I'm very encouraged this morning. Thank you, Brother Moses.

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