

The Death of Christ (9) **Confident, Joyful Witnesses**

KSBC 04.19.09

Luke 24:36-53

INTRO How important is it that KSBC sends and supports missionaries to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to people who have never heard? Given our current economy, the political tensions and dangers all over the planet, why should we do it? Why should we try to increase our efforts?

Missions involves the outward focus of people who want to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others who do not necessarily want to hear about him. Missionaries, those who do missions in a vocational way, and missions face opposition of all kinds. Those without the good news of Jesus often want to be left alone while churches with the good news often grow weary and become distracted with building their own kingdoms rather than God's.

Missions has always been first and foremost God's idea. From the very first pages of the Bible he is pictured as crossing boundaries and penetrating cultures in pursuit of people to know him and love him. The essential fact that God is worthy and satisfying and has provided a way for people to know him through Jesus is the motivating force of telling others. People who are genuinely satisfied in God tell others about him. From his earliest days of ministry, Jesus was preparing his followers to fish for men. A form of Christianity that does not sacrificially, confidently and joyfully advance the gospel to those who do not know, have not heard and may not want to hear is not biblical Christianity.

With our world population surpassing the 6.6 billion mark, it is absolutely necessary that we are on mission according to the heart of God. Estimates range from 1.5 – 2 billion people on the planet who have never heard and have significant barriers in place such as language or location to keep them from hearing the good news. Incredible advances have been made in the last century to the point that there are very few countries that are not now involved in sending missionaries to unreached people. Evangelical Christianity is the world's fastest growing major religion in terms of conversion growth.

Yet as one missiologist writes, 'the fact that 1.5 billion people are unevangelized as the 3rd millennium is upon us is evidence that the church of Jesus Christ has not yet complied with the original directive.' One form of that directive we find in the concluding verse of Luke's gospel that we are looking at this morning.

God has blessed KSBC with joyful involvement in global ministry for our entire history. Current involvement can be appreciated in the following statistics . . .

- 20 missionaries supported financially involved in 12 different countries.
- KSBC is the sending church for 7 missionary units.
- KSBC partners with 8 agencies or ministries that work in some way in global outreach.
- 21% of KSBC annual budget is designated to global missions.
- Regular short term trips to various countries expose people to mission work.
- Campus ministry reaches out to 100 students per week from 9 countries.
- Currently 3 missionary units from KSBC seeking financial support to serve.

Look at Jesus final instructions from Luke 24:36-53 to discover the components of a confident, joyful witness that carries the message of God's love in Christ to the ends of the earth.

Read Luke 24:36-53

We see in these closing scenes the answers to our questions of certainty and confidence. Why is the gospel worth our lives, obedience, sacrifice and the sending of our children? What are the components of a clear, confident and joyful witness whether across the ocean or in our own neighborhood? The confidence and passion of our church to reach others with the good news is embedded in these truths.

Components of a confident, joyful witness . . .

1. An open, God-saturated mind. 44-47

Note that Jesus . . .

- Claims that his death and resurrection fulfills/explains/satisfies all the OT
- Opens disciples minds to understand the scriptures
- Focuses the message of the Bible to repentance and forgiveness in Christ

A growing understanding and awareness of God's words that lead to global action.

Illus. Psa. 96

Note Psa. 22, 31, 16:10

2. A powerful life-changing message. 46-48

Note that Jesus death and resurrection result in repentance and forgiveness being made available to all who will hear and believe. God's plan is revealed in these verses with the 3 infinitives to suffer, to rise and to preach. At the core of the plan is this message that results from his suffering and resurrection.

Repentance – turning; change in thinking; a reorientation that is basic to the human response to God's message. People must change minds about God, sin, Jesus, dependency, ability, ect.

Forgiveness – removal of the sin barrier between people and God. God releases the sinner from appropriate condemnation because Jesus suffering and death served as a substitute in our place.

Cmp. Acts 3:19 – repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.

3. A clear compelling mission. 47

Note the unavoidable clarity of preaching in the authority of Jesus Christ to all nations or as others express it, to the ends of the earth.

Preaching – proclamation of the truth of what they both heard and saw. Speeches/Acts.

In Jesus name – in the authority of the glorified Jesus

To all nations – to every people group; geographical regions listed in Acts 1:8

Cmp. Acts 1:7-11

4. A permanent present helper. 49

Note that these first missionaries were not to attempt the task of witnessing to the nations with their own meager resources.

Jesus will send what the Father promised . . . the Holy Spirit. L 3:16

Wait until you are clothed . . . permanently empowered by the Holy Spirit. Gal.3:14

Cmp. John 16:5-11

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Conclusion

'World Christian' is a term developed by David Bryant in his book that bears that term as a title. It describes the mind set of someone who is so gripped by the power and glory of God and the life changing message of the death of Christ that he chooses to align himself with God's mission that the prophet Habakkuk describes as filling the earth with the knowledge of His glory as the waters cover the sea.

Three ways to renew, grow, begin involvement in global gospel ministry:

1. Pray
2. Give
3. Go

Study Questions

1. List/review/tell recent stories about as many KSBC missionaries as you can or have time.
2. What are your questions about missions, missionaries and world evangelization? What role(s) do you play in reaching the nations?
3. Is the lack of passion and courage to share the gospel with others evidence of a closed mind to the truth of the scriptures and God's glory?
4. Which of the 4 components is the easiest to understand and express in life? Which is the most neglected? Why?
5. What role does prayer and dependence on the Spirit play in reaching the lost? How do you connect to God's power to witness to others?
6. How do you reply to the argument that people in other cultures with their own gods and religions should be left alone. Why push our religion on them?
7. What will you do, use or remember from today's study?
8. Spend time in prayer for the Stillwells, Vesses, Tonya Small & Sarah Menefee.