

CHAPTER 8
MISSIONARIES: THEIR LIVES AND THEIR MESSAGE
(PART 1)

Obedience to God's Word

The Bible is very clear when it comes to the believer's responsibility to reach out with the gospel message:

- 1) Where did Jesus tell us to go (Mark 16:15)?

- 2) The gospel (GOOD NEWS) should be preached to whom (Mark 16:15)?

- 3) The Bible message of salvation should be TAUGHT to whom (Matthew 28:19)?

- 4) The message of salvation and forgiveness should be preached among
_____ (Luke 24:47).
- 5) God's witnesses are to reach out even unto the _____
part of the _____ (Acts 1:8).
- 6) God is very much concerned about saving people "out of every _____ and _____
and _____ and _____" (Revelation 5:9).
- 7) As believers we are to PRAY for _____ men (1 Timothy 2:1) because God desires _____ men to
be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) and God showed His great concern for all men by sending His Son who died for
_____ (1 Timothy 2:6).

Does God have a love and a concern for the whole world (John 3:16 and 1 John 1:2)? Should believers have a love and a concern for the whole world? Is there something wrong with a believer who is not concerned for the salvation of men who are lost and perishing and who have never heard the gospel?

Are the Heathen Really Lost?

Every Christian must give careful thought to this question. If a person has never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ (God's way of salvation), will he really go to hell? Is there any way that a man can get to heaven apart from hearing and believing the gospel? If the heathen are not really lost, then sending out missionaries is not really all that important.

There are some churches today who do not believe that the heathen are lost in their sins and headed for hell. They believe that "all men will someday get to heaven" [this teaching is called *UNIVERSALISM*] and that a loving God would never send anyone to hell. Obviously these people are not very concerned about sending out

missionaries with the gospel message. If they do send missionaries, they send people who can bring food for the hungry and medical care for the sick. They try to help these people **for this life** but they have little interest in helping these people **for the life to come** because they believe that everyone will be saved and that everyone will end up in heaven.

Does the Bible teach this (Revelation 20:15; 21:8)? _____ Will all men be saved (Matthew 7:13-14)? _____
Is there only ONE SAVIOUR and only ONE WAY to be saved (Acts 4:12 and John 14:6)? _____

Consider Romans 10:13-15:

If a person calls upon the name of the Lord he is saved (v.13).

To call on the Lord, a person must first believe (v.14).

To believe a person must first hear the message (v.14).

To hear the message there must be a preacher (v.14).

To have a preacher he must first be sent (v.15).

Can a person be saved if he does not believe (compare Romans 10:9-10)? _____ Can a person believe on Christ if he has never heard of Christ? _____ Can a person hear about Christ if there is no preacher? _____ *If no missionaries are sent forth, can the heathen hear the gospel and be saved?* _____

The Missionary Movement

The first hundred years of Church history were a time of great missionary activity. The early Christians “went _____ preaching the _____” (Acts 8:4). We studied this in Chapter 5.

In the 2nd and 3rd centuries the Church continued to be missionary minded and the gospel continued to go forth into different parts of the world.

In the 4th century the situation really began to change. Instead of the Church reaching the heathen, the heathen reached the Church! The Church became more and more worldly and corrupt, and the fires of missionary activity became very dim.

For many centuries the church as a whole did not do very well. Most church leaders would not have been able to clearly explain the way of salvation to a lost person. In fact, many of the church leaders were not even saved. They were religious but they did not understand the gospel message. Historians have called these years **“THE DARK AGES.”**

In later years certain men began to see the light and began once again to understand what the Bible says about salvation. One such man was MARTIN LUTHER who lived in the 16th century. As he studied the Bible he learned that salvation was not by human works (as so many people of his day were teaching) but by faith in Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross. Martin Luther began a movement which has been called **THE REFORMATION.**

During the years of the Reformation the Church still did very little missionary work. Believers were struggling to understand what the Bible teaches about basic things such as salvation. A person cannot go out and preach to others until he really understands the truth himself. The great reformation leaders were struggling to uncover and understand the truth found in God's Word. The Church had been in the dark for so long that the main job of the Reformers was simply to turn the light back on. Shining this gospel light into the far corners of the world would have to wait until later.

Much more missionary work was done in the 18th century. Two great gospel preachers who lived during this time were George Whitefield and John Wesley. Both of these men lived in England. In those days most people thought that a preacher should only preach in a church. They thought that if people wanted to hear the gospel they should come in to a church. George Whitefield knew that it was important to **GO** where the people are (compare Mark 16:15). In 1739 Whitefield preached in the open fields to miners and he invited John Wesley to do the same. From this time forth Whitefield and Wesley spent their lives doing "open air" preaching. Did the Lord Jesus do "open air" preaching? _____ George Whitefield came to America 7 times to preach up and down the colonies. He was always ready to preach anywhere. Benjamin Franklin was just one of the thousands of people that heard his message. Sometimes he spoke to as many as 20,000 people. He must have had quite a powerful voice in the days when there were no loud speaker systems. Whitefield and Wesley took the Lord seriously when He said, "GO...and PREACH" (Mark 16:15).

The Beginning of the Modern Missionary Movement

The 19th century is known as the great century of missionary work. The father or founder of modern missions was a man by the name of William Carey. He too was from England. He was a humble cobbler or shoemaker who had a real burden for those who had never heard the gospel. He was convinced that the Lord Jesus had commanded believers to "GO into all the world" and he wanted to be obedient to this command. His motto was this: *"EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD; ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD."*

There were many religious people in Carey's day who did not see the need for missionary work. William Carey was once at a gathering of men and he stood up and shared with these men that it was the command of Christ to teach ALL NATIONS and that this was the obligation and responsibility not of the Apostles only, but of believers living even today. After he had said this, a man named Dr. Ryland quickly denounced him with these words, "Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen He will do it without your aid or mine!"

Is this really true? Is it God's plan to reach the heathen without us or is it God's plan to reach the heathen by **using** us to do it? How do we know that God "pleases to convert the heathen" (see 1 Timothy 2:4)?

Carey did not let Dr. Ryland's words hinder him. He went to India as a missionary and he did a great work there. He knew that missions was a vital part of God's plan and He wanted to be part of that plan.

God is the Great Sender!

How do missionaries know where to go? The answer is: **THEY DON'T! But God does!** God is the One who **SENDS** missionaries forth! In Romans 10:15 we learn that a **PREACHER** must be _____ and God is the great **SENDER**. God knows where there are people with seeking hearts. God knows where His workers need to be. He is the _____ of the harvest (Matthew 9:37-38) and His field is the world and He knows just where the workers should be!

Consider the example of David Livingstone, the great missionary to Africa. At first Livingstone did not intend to go to Africa. In fact, at first he did not plan to be a missionary at all. He would help the missionary movement by giving as much money as he could to foreign missions. Later he decided to go forth as a missionary, but not to Africa. He prepared to be a medical missionary to China. However, God closed the door to China. The Opium War was taking place in China and it was impossible for Livingstone to enter the country.

It was at this time that Livingstone became acquainted with Robert Moffat, the great missionary to South Africa, and the man who said, "Oh, that I had a thousand lives and a thousand bodies, all should be devoted to preach Christ to these benighted people." Robert Moffat encouraged Livingstone to make Africa the field of his labors, and this is what Livingstone did.

Livingstone was the first white man to set foot in many parts of Africa. He traveled some 30,000 miles. His remarkable travels from 1851 to 1856 included his walk across Africa from west to east. He was a noted explorer and scientist, but most of all he had a burning desire to bring the gospel message to lost men. He was willing "to go anywhere provided it be forward."

At one point news reached the United States that Livingstone had disappeared in Africa. Livingstone by this time had become quite well known. A large American newspaper sent a special reporter to go to Africa and search for him. Henry Stanley traveled for thousands of miles through African jungle and finally found David in the very heart of Africa, preaching the gospel. The American reporter was the first white man Livingstone had seen for years! After spending four months with the doctor, Stanley wrote: "I went to Africa as prejudiced as the biggest atheist in London. But there came a long time for reflection. I saw this solitary old man there and asked myself, 'How on earth does he stay here? What is it that inspires him?' For months I found myself wondering at the old man carrying out all that was said in the Bible, ...But little by little my sympathy was aroused. Seeing his

piety, his gentleness, his zeal, his earnestness, I was converted by him although he had not tried to do it! It was not Livingstone's preaching which converted me. It was Livingstone's living!"

If Livingstone had his way, he would have been a missionary in China. But God is the great SENDER and God sent this man to Africa! He was the right man at the right place at the right time!

Missionary Sacrifice

It costs something to be a missionary. It costs something to leave the comforts of home and to go to a foreign field. But we must never forget that it cost the Lord Jesus Christ His own life to provide salvation for us. No sacrifice that we can make can compare with the sacrifice of Christ who "loved us and _____ for us" (Gal. 2:20 and compare Ephesians 5:2). Let us consider three people who were willing to make great sacrifices for their Lord:

1) **Count Von Zinzendorf**

This man lived in the 18th century and was one of the great leaders of the early missionary movement. He was a wealthy German nobleman. His family members felt that he should be a ruler rather than a minister of the gospel, but Zinzendorf ignored his position and his riches and he devoted his life to spreading the gospel and doing and promoting missionary work.

Why was this man willing to make such a sacrifice? One day Zinzendorf visited an art gallery. There was one painting that really caught his attention and he stood by it for a long time. It was a painting of the Lord Jesus. Underneath the picture were written these words: "**ALL THIS I DID FOR THEE; WHAT DOEST THOU FOR ME?**" Tears streaked down his face as he thought about what His Saviour did for him on the cross. Because of Christ's sacrifice he was willing to give his life to serving the Saviour. He was willing to leave his riches and position and follow Christ (compare Matthew 19:21-22).

Zinzendorf used some of his money to buy a piece of property and then he allowed believers to settle there. The name of this settlement was called HERRNHUT. Hermhut became a great missionary base and over 200 missionaries left this settlement to serve the Lord in the West Indies, South America, Greenland and many other places. Zinzendorf himself went to different places preaching the gospel.

2) **C.T. STUDD**

This man was a wealthy Christian businessman from England. He was also a scholar and a famous athlete. In many ways this man was like Zinzendorf. He sacrificed possessions and position and he went out as a missionary. He served first in China, then in India and later in Africa. He died in 1931.

C.T. Studd once said, “*If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.*” Here was a man who remembered the sacrifice of Christ. If Christ was willing to give Himself for me, then I am willing to give myself for Him! This was Studd’s attitude.

3) **DAVID BRAINERD**

This man was a missionary to the American Indians. His life is known for its self sacrifice. He traveled thousands of miles on horseback in the Hudson River valley and along the Delaware, reaching the American Indians with the gospel message. He died at the young age of 29, exhausted from his life’s labors.

Why did Brainerd choose such a hard life? Why didn’t he decide to do something that would have been easier? Brainerd once said, “*Oh, that I might be a flame of fire in the Master’s cause.*” As long as he was burning for Christ, he did not mind burning out! Even though his life was not long, he is still remembered by believers everywhere, and the story of his life can still be read in *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* by Jonathan Edwards.

4) **An Example of Supreme Sacrifice**

Robert McCheyne once wrote these words about certain Moravian missionaries:

The awful disease of leprosy still exists in Africa. It is so infectious that no one dares to come near the leper. In South Africa there is a large leper house for lepers. It is enclosed by a very high wall and containing fields which the lepers cultivate. There is only one entrance which is strictly guarded. No one who enters in by that awful gate is ever allowed to come out again. Within this abode of misery there are multitudes of lepers. From the top of a neighboring hill two lepers could be seen sowing peas in the field. The one HAD NO HANDS, the other HAD NO FEET. The one who lacked the hands was carrying the other who lacked the feet upon his back, and he again carried in his hands the bag of seed, and dropped a pea every now and then, which the other pressed into the ground with his foot; and so they managed the work of one man between the two. Such is the prison house of disease! Who cares for the souls of the hapless inmates? Who will venture to enter in at this dreadful gate, never to return again? Two Moravian missionaries, impelled by a divine love for souls, have chosen the leper house as their field of labor. As soon as they die, other Moravians are quite ready to fill their place. May we not be ashamed before God, that we, redeemed with the same blood should yet be so unlike these men in vehement, heart-consuming love to Jesus and the souls of men?

Compare 1 John 3:16, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

In the next chapter we will learn more valuable lessons from the great missionaries of the past.