

**“How Shall They Hear?”**

# **“How Shall They Hear?”**

*13 Lessons on  
Means and Ways of  
World Evangelism*

*By*

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1968 when my family and I went to New Delhi, India to do mission work, I wrote this book and published it there. Most of it was shipped back here in 1971 where it was distributed.

I have been intending to reprint this material ever since, and I am happy that this is finally being done. I hope to use it as a textbook for the promotion of world evangelism, both in spreading it among individual Christians and congregations across the country and through a correspondence school.

The theme of this study, "How Shall They Hear?" is based on the question found in Romans 10:13-17. This question should disturb every Christian until it is answered by God's people as they march over the world preaching the gospel to every soul.

How can we expect to please the Lord until we have done what he has asked us to do? That doesn't mean that every member of the church must physically move to another part of the world to preach the gospel, but it does mean that those who can should go, and all others should have a part in sending them.

My brethren, this world is not going to be changed for better until we care enough to try to change it. It doesn't begin with the other person, but it begins with you and me. We are the solution to the world's problems and needs as we take the gospel to the lost. Let us not rob the world, or ourselves, of the salvation and the blessings that the Lord has for those who will obey him.

If you are interested in doing something about this,

in being one who will go or send, please let me hear from you. By ourselves we can do something but together we can do much more.

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## LESSON ONE

### **"THE FIELD IS THE WORLD"**

**Matthew 13:36-43**

#### INTRODUCTION

In explaining the parable of the tares, Jesus taught his disciples, "The field is the world" (Matthew 13:38). They understood what a literal field was. There were fields all around them. It was a place where the seed was sown, and the harvest followed. Jesus was making it simple for them. He wanted them to know that the spiritual field was the world. He wanted them also to know that it would be necessary for the seed to be sown in this great field in order for a harvest to come. The seed was the word of God (Luke 8:11), and the harvest would be the children of the kingdom who would result from the sowing of the good seed. As simple as this was, the disciples did not fully comprehend it, but the day would come when they would.

In spite of all that Jesus said then, and all that the Bible teaches on world evangelism, the church today has been very slow in coming to view the world as the Lord intended. This may be traced back to a multitude of root causes, but the results have been disastrous.

## DISCUSSION

### I. ISOLATION.

The history of the church in modern times in the United States has been one mainly of isolation. This has been true perhaps because there was such a struggle by those who desired to restore pure New Testament Christianity to get away from man-made churches, and all sight was lost of anything that lay beyond that. At first, it was a fight even to exist here and to become established. Then came the struggle to hold the gains that were made and to spread the borders of the kingdom.

During the past one hundred years little has been done to reach beyond the United States. The major part that has been done, has been done during the past twenty years.

#### A. Reasons for isolation today.

Many are still living in the past. They have not awakened to the world that is around them. They are satisfied that they, and those immediately nearby, are saved. They are cold and indifferent to the needs of others, and they are selfish when it comes to sharing it with others.

Members of the church are ready to take care of their **own** immediate needs, but if a need does not involve them directly, they often have no sympathy. I heard of a congregation that was not willing to give \$5,000 to enable a family to go to another part of the world to preach the gospel, and that on the basis that they were not financially able. Yet, the same congregation turned right around and made a decision to **cushion their pews**, even though it would cost

in excess of five thousand dollars to do it. They put their **money** where their **hearts** were.

We often see no need of going beyond our own area, and especially our own country. We reason that it costs so much, that those people wouldn't believe it, that we have work that needs to be done at home.

The real **value** of souls has not been seen (Matthew 16: 26). Therefore, the **urgency** of reaching them has been lost.

## **B. The results of isolation.**

Because of our isolation the church has failed to see its **purposes** for existing. It is therefore not doing the work that it needs to be doing. The congregations become **sluggish** and lose members. Just to exist is **not** enough. The church must **grow** or **die**.

One of the by-products of this has been the growing **reluctance** of the young men of the church to become preachers. They are not **challenged**. They see no great **examples** to follow. They have no encouragement. If all they are going to do is to sit at home and compete for good salaried pulpits, then why not compete for other types of jobs that pay more?

While we sit at home, the **denominations** are spreading their false doctrines in every part of the world. They have the **volunteers** to go. They have the **money** to send. They have the **tools** with which to work. They go about it in a **big** way. They show more faith in error than we do in truth. And the few workers that we send out have to contend with this — with the abundance of denominational workers and tools and influence. Shame on us!

Our **faith** is so weak and our **love** is so little. Our time



is for **ourselves**, our friends, our **work**, but **not** for the Lord. Our money is for **our** needs, but **not** for the spreading of the gospel. We, as a whole, are failing the Lord, humanity, and ourselves. What is the remedy?

## II. EDUCATION.

Our great need for today is education. I am not thinking about secular education.

### A. We need a Bible education.

How much do we know about the Bible? Do we know the teachings of Jesus? If not, perhaps we are not even converted ourselves. Oh, we may be converted as far as the first principles are concerned, but what about the rest? There is much more to Christianity than the **first principles**, and unless we know that, we cannot very well teach others something that we don't know ourselves. When we **know** better, and really believe in it with all our hearts, then we will **do** better. If we do not then it won't be because of ignorance, but because of other interests coming foremost.

### B. We need to be educated on the needs of the world.

We cannot close our eyes to the rest of the world. It is there and it won't go away. Furthermore, the Lord wants us to be conscious of it and he wants us to do something about it. And if this be the case, then we should want to know as much about it as possible. When we learn about it, we will become interested in it and we will do something about it.

I can personally tell you that I have been to countries that I had hardly heard of up to that time. Before, I had no interest in them because I knew nothing about them. The people there didn't even exist as far as I was concerned. But after going, all of that changed. All of a sudden, it was **real**. The people **lived**. I became interested in them and had a desire to help them. So it is with all people. So it is with you. When the world becomes **real** to you, you will want to **help** it.

You must learn about people to have an interest in them. If you can't go to them then you need to have someone come to you to tell you about them to create that closeness between you, and that feeling of concern for them. You can have a missionary to come to tell you about them, or you can read the reports in the gospel papers about the different people of the world. There are other ways, too, and you need to use them all to get acquainted with the world.

When you become acquainted with the different people of the world then you'll get concerned. You'll take an interest. You'll find yourself **wanting** to help. You'll encourage the **local** congregation to do what it can to help. You will show more interest and do more locally. Oh yes, it will make a difference, a big difference.

### III. VISION.

The wise man said in the long ago, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). How true this is even today. Lack of vision indicates ignorance and a lack of knowledge. There is no planning, no goals, no future. There is only slow death and disaster.

When we are educated to the needs of others, our eyes will be opened, our vision will be raised. We will be able to see ways and means of doing the work that the Lord asked us to do. We will be making plans and then working to fulfill them. With faith and zeal we will be going forth to conquer for the Lord.

Have you ever noticed how members will sit around and bemoan the fact that there is nothing for them to do? They see no opportunities to work for the Lord. They know of no one that needs the gospel. Yet, there are dozens of opportunities all around them. There are people all over the place just **waiting** for someone to convert them. There is no end to the good works that can be done. It just means that the eyes of such people are closed. They are asleep, dead. They have no vision. They only excuse themselves for their laziness and failure.

Those who want to work for the Lord can find plenty to do. Neither do they have to wait until someone comes to ask them. These are the ones who do all that is done in the church. They are few in number, but all the church looks to them. What a pity that their number is so few. The Lord would have each one to be wide awake and full of good works.

#### IV. WORLD VISION.

Those who have vision at **home** are the ones who usually have **world** vision. Because of the work they are doing, they have the ability to look beyond their own immediate area and see the need of taking the gospel to others. They have faith, zeal, and determination to reach out to a lost and dying world.

The Lord would have us to lift up our eyes and see that the field is white unto harvest. That just means that the Lord would have his people to see the field as the world and that it is ready for harvesting.

Because we have only a small percentage in the church today who have any vision at all, this means that the number is few indeed who have any world vision. Ignorance, laziness, selfishness, and a lack of faith keep many blind to the truth and the job of sharing it with others.

How we need to wake up to the world that is around us and realize that it is our responsibility. If we will only put forth the effort to reach it, the Lord will bless us. He will open doors for us **when** we put forth an effort to go through them. He will not fail us if **we will but try him**. He will help us if we find ourselves in **need** of him.

For information, example, and inspiration, we need to go back to the Bible and learn the secret of world evangelism as it is revealed there.

## V. GOD'S DEALING WITH MAN THROUGH THE AGES.

### A. God dealt with the individual.

To begin with, God dealt with individuals and heads of families. There were Adam and Eve, then Cain and Abel. Later came Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc. God spoke to these patriarchs and in turn they shared his will with others. Of course during this period of time there weren't as many people in the world as there are today, but then as now, God dealt with those who would be used by him.

## **B. God dealt with a nation.**

Through God's direction, Moses led the children of Israel out of bondage and they went on to receive his law for them at Mt. Sinai. Now God was not just dealing with individuals, but with an entire nation.

## **C. God dealt with the world.**

With the coming of Christ, the Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17). God has dealt with the entire world, through Christ, since his coming.

## **VI. THE COMING OF CHRIST.**

Have you noticed the life of Christ closely enough to see the direction in which it was going, and the pattern that was set? Even John, the forerunner of Christ, dealt with the masses of the people to prepare the way for the Lord. Christ himself, although he spent only three years in his public ministry, traveled the length and breadth of his country and the areas around about. The scriptures say that his fame went throughout the land. His miracles, his teachings, his personal life, brought believers, as well as enemies, from every walk of life.

Jesus had come to build the church (Matthew 16:18), and in his parables he taught again and again of its growth and how it would spread. The parables of the sower, the

mustard seed (Matthew 13), and most others dealt with this truth. In his teaching he looked beyond the time that the Jews would be God's people and he included the people of all the world. Even in the judgment scene (Matthew 25), he speaks of all being there to receive their reward, whether good or bad.

The Lord chose twelve apostles to send out, and then later the seventy were sent forth (Matthew 10; Luke 10:1). Still living under the law, they were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Later the apostles were to be sent to all the world.

When Jesus died, he didn't just die. He died not for one man, but for each man. And he died not for one nation, but for each nation. Yes, he died for **every** man of **every** nation of **all** the world of **all** time. Jesus therefore became the Saviour of the **world** and Paul said of him, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 4:2).

## VII. THE GREAT COMMISSION.

Just after Jesus had been crucified, buried, and resurrected, and just before he returned to his Father in heaven, he called his apostles together to give them some final instructions. Matthew records it like this: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20). Mark wrote, "And he said unto them, Go ye

into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

In the Great Commission Christ laid down the following truths:

- A. All power and authority belonged to him. He therefore had the power to issue the Great Commission.
- B. The apostles (and all Christians) were given the world-wide responsibility of preaching the gospel to every creature.
- C. The gospel, which was the good news of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, was to be preached along with the commands to believe and be baptized to be saved.
- D. The gospel was to be taken to every creature of every nation of all the world.
- E. The believers were to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- F. They were to be taught their responsibilities as the Lord's disciples.
- G. Then it would be their duty to go and do likewise, with the Lord's assurance that he would be with them.

This same commission has come down to us today. As Christians we **must** deal with this, as with any other command. We can obey it, or not obey it. We can act upon it, or ignore it. But souls are at stake regardless of how we deal with it. If we obey the Lord, we, and others that we reach with the gospel, may be saved. If **we fail**, then **we will be lost** and so will all of those that **we did not reach**. So we have a heavy responsibility resting upon us. Let us have the faith and strength to do as the Lord has commanded. If we will, he will help us. Surely he will not require more of us than we can do.

### VIII. PLAN FOR WORLD EVANGELISM.

The Lord had given the great commission, but what was his plan for carrying it out? Speaking to the apostles, he said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In this, the Lord was saying that the apostles should start at home, and then keep spreading out from there until the gospel had been taken to the whole world. That is exactly what they did.

But where should we begin today? Where we are. First in our community, then our state, then our country, and finally to all of the other countries of the world. That doesn't mean that we should stay in these places until all of the people have obeyed the Lord, but the gospel is to be preached there and then it is to be taken to others. To preach the gospel to the **same people indefinitely will not** bring them to the Lord, and **will not** make it possible for us to carry out the Lord's command to take the gospel to



the whole world! We have preached the gospel to the people of our own home; now it is time to move out to other places.

I remember once I was talking to an elder of a congregation in a small city where there were already several congregations and where they had more than one radio program, and I asked him if the church there might help us to take the gospel to India. He replied that they were still in a mission field **themselves!** I was very discouraged to think that an elder of the church would even make such a suggestion. I am afraid that there are many other elders who think they are still in a mission field after years of preaching in their area. Perhaps they are in a mission field, but one of a different sort!

## IX. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH.

It had been prophesied that the Lord's kingdom or church would be set up and that all nations would flow into it (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Joel 2). Christ had said that the gospel would be preached first in Jerusalem and then it would go forth from there (Luke 24). All of this came to pass on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, as the gospel began to be preached and as it went forth from that city (Acts 2). Even the gathering that took place on the day of Pentecost was an international one, which meant that the church would begin to grow and spread throughout the world from the beginning. As the people from the various nations heard the gospel, and obeyed it, then they would return home as Christians to share the truth with their own people. This is probably how the church in Rome had its beginning. There is no record of how it began, but Acts 2

tells us that there were strangers from Rome present when the gospel was first preached. Perhaps they obeyed the Lord and took the gospel back to Rome with them. We know that this happened in many other cases with reference to other nations. This was one of the reasons for the church beginning on that specific day.

## X. NEW TESTAMENT EVANGELISM.

After the gospel was preached on the day of Pentecost to the many nationalities present (Acts 2), it was preached again several times thereafter in Jerusalem and through Judea according to the record itself (Acts 2-8), and then Philip went down to Samaria to preach. Many there believed and were baptized (Acts 8). As a result of a persecution having come upon the Christians in Jerusalem, the record says that "they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria" and that they "went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:1-4). Because of this, in a matter of some thirty years, Paul was able to say that the gospel had been taken to every creature under heaven (Colossians 1:23). So these people carried out the great commission, and the Lord's plan for evangelizing the world was executed. Think again: they were able to do this in spite of the fact that they started out with only twelve men; in one city; without modern-day transportation, communication, and means with which to work; yet they did the job the Lord had given them to do. Armed with a love for the Lord, faith in him and courage to obey him in the face of death, and determination to deliver his message, they swept across the world to conquer and to plant the cause of Christ among all the people of all the

world! It is such a wonderful story, and one that we should read often for inspiration.

This was New Testament evangelism of the first century. What is it like in this twentieth century? Although we have the perfect law of liberty and all of the modern day tools and means with which to work, we have not yet evangelized the whole world. **What is wrong?** There must be **something** wrong — not with the Lord's plan, but with us who are to carry out the plan. We must find the fault and correct it, and not rest until we can say with Paul of old that the gospel has now been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. That will be a wonderful day indeed and let us pray that it will soon come. Indeed, we are able!

## CONCLUSION

So let us realize that the field is the world and that we have not completed our job until we sow down this vast field with the gospel. Furthermore, let us remember that the harvest **cannot** come until the seed has been sown. Our job, then, is clear. We have the responsibility of sowing the seed. At the present time, we are primarily sowing the seed **over and over** again in the same area. This will not produce the results that the Lord wants. Over-planting will only kill the harvest that we would get even at home!

As we move out into different parts of the world with the gospel, we are going to see more and more the wisdom of the Lord's command in his plan for the world. Not only so, but as the harvest begins to come forth, once more we will see the results of obedience, and enjoy the blessings of sharing the gospel with the world.

We cannot improve on the Lord's way. We can only

comply with it.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is the field?
2. Give the verse that says that the seed is the word of God.
3. What has been the history of the church in the United States?
4. Why has the church remained so isolated?
5. State the results of isolation.
6. Tell what the denominations are doing.
7. What is the great need of the church today?
8. Why do we need to be educated on the needs of the world?
9. When will we become interested in other people?
10. Quote Proverbs 29:18.
11. How may one's vision be raised?
12. Who is it that is unable to find anything to do in the church?
13. Explain "World Vision."
14. When will the Lord open doors for us?
15. List some ways that God has dealt with man through the ages.
16. How does God deal with man today?
17. What was the work of John?
18. Give a summary of the Lord's personal ministry.
19. Upon what did he put his emphasis?
20. What was the limited commission?
21. Tell the difference between it and the great commission.
22. For whom did Jesus die?

23. Quote the great commission as listed in Mark 16: 15, 16 and Matthew 28:19, 20.
24. What do they teach?
25. Do they still apply?
26. What was the Lord's plan for the world?
27. Show how his plan was followed.
28. How did the church begin to spread from the beginning?
29. Give a brief summary of New Testament evangelism.
30. What was the final result?
31. Give a brief summary of world evangelism today.
32. What must be done before the harvest can come?
33. Can one improve on the Lord's way?

## PROJECTS

1. Discuss what the church is doing today to take the gospel into all the world.
2. Appoint someone to make a talk on "World Vision."
3. Let different ones explain what the Great Commission means.
4. Write a report on "Why the early church succeeded in evangelizing the world."
5. Give a report on what the local church is doing to share the gospel with others.

## LESSON TWO

### THE FIELDS ARE WHITE UNTO HARVEST

John 4:35

#### INTRODUCTION

Once more Jesus talked to his disciples about the fields and the importance of the harvest. As far as the literal harvest was concerned, it might have been four months away. This literal harvest was very important to them, but the one Jesus had in mind was far different and far greater. It was a spiritual harvest, one that dealt with the souls of men. To see it, all they had to do was to lift up their eyes and look around them to see that the fields were already white for the harvest.

The Lord taught this same lesson in other ways. For instance, he called Peter and Andrew who were fishermen and said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). He invited them on another occasion to cast out into the deep because that was where the fish were (Luke 5:4-6). The Lord would have each of us to fish for men, for the souls of men, but before we ever catch any we are going to have to launch out into the deep. We will have to go where the souls are. We'll never catch any on dry land, because the fish aren't there. We'll have to put forth some effort to be successful. That is the whole point.

On one occasion Paul was about to give up on Corinth and leave, but the Lord spoke unto him and said, "For I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10). What did he mean by this? He meant that many good people were there who would respond to the gospel if they only had the opportunity to hear it. And that is where Paul came into the picture. He did stay, and many of the Corinthians were taught the word of the Lord (Acts 18:11). This very thing has encouraged me time and time again in places like Karachi, Colombo, and New Delhi, when I realized that surely there were many people in those places that would obey the Lord if they could just be found, and that it was up to me to find them since I was the only one there with the message. Just think of the many people that the Lord must have all over the world who **would** be Christians if we would but take the gospel to them! Think how it must hurt him when we do not even put forth an effort to reach those who could be saved.

## DISCUSSION

### I. THE FIELD.

Jesus tells us that the field is the world (Matthew 13:38). It is a big field. Although the world seems to be shrinking every day as far as travel and communication are concerned, yet the population of the world is growing. Based on the latter fact, we are losing ground daily.

To travel around the world and to see all of the many countries, and the numerous large cities, one is made to realize even more the great task that is before us. Especially is this true when we remember that we have only barely

established a work in the majority of these countries, while there are others that have not been touched.

In John 4:35 Jesus spoke of the fields being white unto harvest. I think we could think of the world not only as one large field, but as being divided into many different fields.

#### **A. The varied fields of the world.**

##### **1. *Territorial fields.***

Each community, city, state, and country of the world might be thought of as a separate field. Each one has its own needs, opportunities, and problems. Different ones are suited to work in different areas, but one should find his place and go to work. There is plenty of work for everyone.

##### **2. *Specialized fields.***

Some choose to work in the field of education to reach people for the Lord and to do good. Others choose medicine, nursing, business, government or other professions through which to work. All are important and all can play a great role in reaching the lost. Jesus chose men out of different walks of life to serve him (Matthew 4:18-20; 9:9). Today different ones may choose different fields through which to reach the lost of the world.

##### **3. *Religious fields.***

There are several world-wide religions in



existence today. Apart from Christianity there is Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikkism, Jainism, Shintoism, etc. Their followers number into the hundreds of millions, and different ones of them dominate whole countries or whole parts of the world. Each of these is a great field within itself. They are challenging and offer many opportunities. They are not easy fields by any means, but they need our attention. We need workers for them who are prepared to combat their teaching. We need members of the church who will take the time to study these religions on the field itself and prepare materials to deal with them. In addition to this, the materials can be made available to future workers who can use them to better prepare for the work they have chosen to do.

#### 4. *Economic fields.*

The world is divided into two groups of countries today: developed and undeveloped. That is, on the one hand you have those that have made a great deal of progress materially and have a better way of life. On the other hand, you have those that are very poor and backward and are struggling to catch up. These are different not only economically but in many other ways as well. In religion, it appears that the church is more likely to make progress numerically in the poorer countries, but that progress is dependent to a great

extent for financial help from the church that exists in the developed countries. There is plenty to be done in both areas, but some may prefer to work in one area while others may prefer to work in the other. Jesus taught that we are not to neglect the poor, but the rich need the gospel too (Luke 7:22; John 12:8; Luke 6:24).

#### 5. *Political fields.*

Some governments will freely allow the gospel to be preached, and even assure freedom of religion, whereas others frown upon religion of all kinds or discourage certain ones. For instance, the world is divided today into those countries that are Communist and those that are non-Communist. Those that are Communist frown upon religion, whereas the non-Communist ones permit religion to be practiced and many of them welcome missionaries. But there is a good work to be done even in the Communist countries. Brother Bob Hare has lived in Vienna, Austria a number of years and has spent much of his time going into the Communist countries of Eastern Europe to teach and preach the gospel among interested people there. As a result of these efforts, many souls have been won to the Lord and the church has been planted in many different areas. I remember

when I visited in those countries in the fall of 1966 I found many wonderful opportunities for preaching the gospel. I saw numerous signs of religious activity going on in spite of the governments under which they lived. I couldn't help but wonder then why more was not being done to take advantage of these opportunities.

6. *Opened and closed fields.*

Most of the countries of the world are considered to be open to the gospel, but there are other countries that are said to be closed. Some of those closed are closed to Americans, but are open to people of other countries. However, I am convinced that all countries are open to the gospel, in one way or the other. If we will just try and keep trying, with the help of the Lord, we'll find it possible sooner or later to go in. Our trouble is that we just don't try, and therefore we don't give the Lord an opportunity to show us what he can do through us. If the Lord is going to help us, we are going to have to be in a situation where we really need help (Psalm 50:15).

7. *War and peace fields.*

There are places in the world today like Vietnam and Nigeria where war is going on. There are many other trouble spots over

the globe. These places need the gospel too, and some have chosen to go there to help. Others need to go. But many fear, and want to stay where all is calm and peaceful. It is strange that men can go to places to risk their physical lives in carnal warfare and yet so often we are not willing to sacrifice the least bit to the gospel to such places that souls might be saved, including our own.

For the past two or three years I have been trying to put emphasis on Vientiane, Laos with the prayer that some family would go there to preach the gospel. It may not be the safest place in the world to live, but the cities in America are just as dangerous with their many traffic deaths year after year, not to mention all of the rioting that goes on and other types of violence. Although no one seems to be interested in going to Vientiane, there are some dozen denominational missionary families there. They didn't offer excuse — they went. This is why we are not evangelizing the world today.

The world could no doubt be divided into many other fields, but regardless of who we are, what we are, or where we are, if we are Christians and want to serve the Lord, then we can find a field to work in.

#### **B. What the field represents.**

What we don't seem to be able to understand is that this field, or fields, represent souls. The world is full of people and each person has a soul — a soul created by God in his own image, and therefore **precious**. God has done much to provide salvation for men, but has chosen to work through man to reach other men. This is why he said that we should take the gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15).

### **C. Lift up your eyes on the field.**

Jesus could certainly see the field. It was that field of humanity which had brought him from heaven, and for which he was going to die. But he wanted his disciples to see the crying need, and he wants you and me to see it. We **must** see it if we are going to do anything about it.

Perhaps many of us are like the apostles in the garden of Gethsemane. There the Lord was in the shadow of the cross, and he was praying for strength and courage, but each time he returned to the disciples, he found them asleep (Matthew 26:36-46). I am afraid that most of us are asleep spiritually. We are unable to see the field and the many wonderful opportunities to preach the gospel because our eyes are closed. Even if they are open, we are too busy looking down or looking at ourselves, when we should be looking upon the field, to know, to plan, and to go to harvest it. That is what Jesus said we should do.

### **D. We are to go to every part of the field.**

We might compare the world to a field of grass that we want to burn off. It would be possible to light a fire at one point, and it would eventually burn over the whole field,

but the job can be done much more quickly if the grass is set on fire at many different points all over the field. And so it is with taking the gospel to the world. We might eventually evangelize the world by gradually working further out from one point, but we can do the job more quickly if we'll take the truth now to many points throughout the world. Look at Paul in his missionary journeys. He went to the major cities throughout Asia and touched a few such points in Eastern Europe, and the gospel spread forth from all of those places. It is said that the apostles spread out and went into different countries of the world. Why? Because the field was the world and they were going into different parts of that field to do the job they had been sent to do.

First of all, we need the gospel planted today in every country of the world. Then we need to get it to every major city of each country. After that it will spread to the minor cities, and then to every community, and finally to every individual. We can do it when we want to do it, if we want to do it. But why haven't we already done so? Why aren't we right now taking the gospel to every country of the world? I have personally been begging my brethren to send workers to countries like Iran, Laos, Cambodia, etc., but after all of this time, nothing has happened. I would go to them, but I can't do it all. We must all work together. It is **my** responsibility to evangelize the world, but it is **yours** too.

It is true that there are some parts of the field where the results will be much greater than others, and the results certainly vary from country to country. It would seem wise to concentrate more fully on those areas that are more productive, but the less productive areas should not be

neglected either. The whole story may reverse itself one of these days, so we must be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities now. We must also strive to keep the doors opened to those "hard" countries by keeping workers in them lest they be completely closed and we not be allowed to return.

Jesus taught that the seed is the word of God (Luke 8: 11). Again Jesus said that "The good seed are the children of the kingdom" (Matthew 13:38). That is, the children of the kingdom are the result of the sowing of the good seed, which is the word of God.

The word of God is powerful (Hebrews 4:12) but it must be planted in the hearts of men and women before it can influence people for good. It is like any other seed: as long as it is lying unplanted it cannot produce any fruit.

This seed will produce only Christians and members of the church whenever and wherever it is planted all over the world. The fruit of it is love, joy, peace, etc. (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Division and all of its by-products are produced by the sowing of the tares. The devil and his workers are on the job constantly sowing tares around the world (II Corinthians 11:12-15). It is such a shame that the teachings of men are always sown before the good seed is brought. As a result, before that seed can be sown, the ground must be properly prepared by the rooting up of error and tares. Otherwise, the seed may spring forth only to be choked out by thorns and thistles.

Finally, it should be remembered that the seed must be planted in order to insure a harvest. Sometimes the fruit that might be expected is not forthcoming simply because sufficient seed wasn't planted at the time of sowing. It all

reverts back to the well-known saying that we reap as we have sown (Galatians 6:7, 8). This has always been true and will always be true. Thus around the world, to have a harvest now or later, will all depend on whether or not the seed has been sown properly.

### III. THE SOWER.

As any farmer well knows, the sower is important. The field may be there and the seed may be ready for planting, but unless the sower is there to do his job, then there will be no harvest. This is just as true in the spiritual realm. The field is the world, and the seed is the word of God, and the sower is the preacher or the one that delivers the message to others. The field may be ready for planting, the seed may be there to produce its fruit, but unless there is someone to sow it then there will be no harvest. This places a great responsibility then upon the sower.

The importance of the sower is emphasized in the various cases of conversions in the book of Acts. In every case there was a gospel preacher on hand to deliver the message and then to assist those who wanted to obey the Lord. Paul tells us "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Corinthians 4:7). This just means that God has chosen the human being to be the means of conveying his message. **The Lord will not do for man what he can do for himself.** That is why it is up to us to take the gospel to the rest of the world. The Lord could teach all men, but he has not chosen to do so when it is possible for us to do it ourselves. If we do not do so then God has not failed us, but we have failed him.



Paul said on another occasion, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). It is therefore necessary that we preach the word of God that faith might be produced, and that faith might lead to obedience. On the other hand, if error is preached then faith will be placed in error. For this reason the same writer shows the consequences for preaching another gospel or for adding to, and subtracting from, God's word (Galatians 1:7-9; Revelation 22:18, 19).

The importance of the sower is again seen, inasmuch as the Lord has said that the gospel is to be **preached** and **taught** to all of the people of all the world (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16). Again, Paul charged the young preacher Timothy to "**Preach** the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort** with all long-suffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). Again, he said, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both **save thyself, and them that hear thee**" (I Timothy 4:16).

As to the methods that are used, they matter not, provided they are not wrong within themselves and they result in the message being proclaimed. For instance, the Bible itself may be found all over the world, and as people read it in many languages they are being taught the word of the Lord by Peter, Paul, and the other preachers and writers of the New Testament. As they read (hear) the truth then it is possible for them to learn the Lord's will and to obey it. At the same time, the truth may be proclaimed through the means of literature, radio, television, etc., but in every case the seed is being sown to produce the harvest. This is a **must**.

There is a great need today for more sowers. This does

not mean necessarily that all the sowers must be preachers, as such. Actually, every Christian **should** be a sower, and **must** be, if he is going to be saved himself. **We are saved to share the message of salvation with others.** If all would do their part in this respect, it wouldn't be very difficult to evangelize the world itself. The trouble is that the entire work of the whole church is left to only a handful of members, and the results are disastrous.

Unless we work now while we have the opportunity, we will lose ground in the end. Because of our failures to evangelize the world we have already seen a number of reverse effects. Besides having an influence on the world that would prevent wars and many other world problems, we have seen the church weakened by internal problems and a liberal element springing up among us. You might not realize it, but these problems go back to the fact that the church has become idle and indifferent to its duties and responsibilities. But if this is shocking, get ready for more shocks **unless** we awaken to our responsibilities and discharge them. In order for the church to be alive and strong, it **must** do its work, and this will bring growth and strength. When it does not work the reverse happens, and we are suffering right now some of the consequences of an **idle church.**

#### IV. THE HARVEST.

The harvest also is very important. All of the things that are necessary to bring about a harvest will have been in vain if the harvest itself is not gathered in. A farmer may have worked hard and everything may have combined to enable him to have a great harvest, but unless it is gathered,

all is lost. That is the way it is in the spiritual realm also.

There were many things in the days of Jesus that brought about the white fields. The Old Testament scriptures and prophecies, the preaching of John the Baptist, and the mighty works of Christ, all helped to prepare the field and sow the seed. Therefore the Lord urged the apostles to look upon the fields and to observe that they were then white unto harvest. His admonition served to encourage them to work **then**, because the time of harvest would certainly pass away.

Today we find the fields for the most part white unto the harvest. The Bible has gone throughout the world to provide man with an opportunity to read and study God's word. Christianity is known by the masses of the people of the earth, and the majority are benefiting from its influence either directly or indirectly. Man is tired of false religions and man-made systems. As a whole, man realizes that the material things of this world cannot satisfy his needs and longings. So it is that worlds of people are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Many are asking, seeking, and knocking. They are searching for the truth. So the hearts of countless men, women, and children are prepared to receive the Lord's will. It is just a matter of going out to reap the harvest that is ready.

As any farmer well knows, when the harvest is ripe it must be gathered in. A few days of delay will cause all to be lost. That is the situation in the world today where whole areas, even whole countries, could be harvested for Christ if we as Christians would rise up and reach them. Whereas it is this way now, we do not know how long it will be before the harvest may be lost. Realizing this, we **must** be working feverishly day and night while we have

time. We should let nothing hinder us, but put this important work first always.

The harvest represents souls, and that alone should suggest the urgency of gathering it in. We have no time to lose. There is no time to wait. Tomorrow will be too late for hundreds, thousands, and even millions. We may be able to wait because **our** souls are saved, but what about those who are **lost**? They can't wait, if they are to be saved. May the Lord help us to open our eyes to the opportunities of the harvest that is all around us and may we arise and work together in it.

Jesus could see the harvest and he wants us to see it. Will you open your eyes to it? Will you look at a lost and dying world? Will you see as Jesus would have you see? What are we going to do about it?

## CONCLUSION

Yes, the fields are white unto harvest. There is therefore room for all of us to work. There is no need for any competition, envy, or jealousy over souls. There is no place for selfishness and all of the other impure qualities that would render us useless to the Lord. Rather, the world is wide open. It is full of opportunities to win souls and to work for the Lord. The question is not, what are you doing now, but what are you going to do?

## QUESTIONS

1. Of what harvest does Jesus speak in his word?
2. Give some of the other ways that Jesus taught this same lesson.

3. Explain what God meant when he said, "For I have much people in this city."
4. Define the field.
5. What kind of field is it?
6. List some of the different fields to be found in the world.
7. What are some other fields that you might think of at this time?
8. Discuss the importance of each.
9. What do they represent?
10. Why are we to look upon the field?
11. Tell why some are unable to see the field.
12. Why should we go into every part of it?
13. Where is the gospel needed today?
14. Are some parts of the field more productive than others?
15. What should be done with the hard fields?
16. What is the seed, and what will it produce?
17. Define "tares."
18. Does the devil have any workers?
19. How can a good harvest be assured?
20. Why is the sower important?
21. Define "earthen vessels."
22. How does faith come?
23. Why are more sowers needed?
24. What made a white harvest possible in the days of Jesus?
25. What has made a white harvest possible in our day?
26. When must the harvest be gathered?
27. Explain the results when the harvest is not gathered in time.

## PROJECTS

1. Compare literal and spiritual harvests.
2. Discuss what it means to be a fisher of men.
3. List some reasons why Jesus emphasized the field as being the world.
4. Let someone make a report on some hard field.
5. In what ways is all the world open to the gospel?
6. Give each one an opportunity to discuss the field in which he is personally interested.

## LESSON THREE

### THE LABORERS ARE FEW Matthew 9:37

#### INTRODUCTION

There has never been any great rush on the part of any people of any age to proclaim God's will to others. The Lord said in his day, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37, 38). And so it is today. You wouldn't think that it would be this way, but it is. There are many reasons for this but there are also many reasons why there should be more workers. We will consider these and other points in this lesson.

#### DISCUSSION

##### I. THE LABORERS OF THE PAST.

Laborers of the Lord of the past were not very popular. Even in the days of Christ he said to his disciples, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in

heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11, 12). On another occasion, Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37).

John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod, and later Christ himself was crucified (Matthew 14:27). Both were put to death because of their preaching, although their only guilt was that they told the truth. But truth is not very popular, especially when the majority of the people are in sin and do not want to have their sins exposed (John 3:19-21).

After the church was established, Stephen was stoned to death as he preached to an audience of Jews (Acts 7). Later Herod had James beheaded for his preaching (Acts 12:1, 2). Peter and John were beaten and thrown into prison for the same reason, and warned not to teach any more in the name of Christ (Acts 6). They refused to submit to this and ended up suffering more at the hands of the enemy. Saul was a great persecutor of the church until he himself was converted, and then as Paul he suffered much for the Lord and his kingdom (Acts 9; II Corinthians 11:21-28).

Secular history tells us that all of the apostles except John died as martyrs for Christ. Even John was persecuted and finally banished to the lonely isle of Patmos. Truly these men came to know the real meaning of suffering for the Lord, although they did no harm but simply tried to do good wherever they went.

## II. WHO IS A LABORER?



The preacher, minister, teacher, or missionary, has been so emphasized in recent years that most people think only of him when they think of a laborer. They further define him as being an individual who is giving his full-time to the Lord's work, or who is receiving financial support for his labors. All of this may be true, but does not fully define a laborer. Actually, any and every true Christian should be thought of as a worker for the Lord, for that is exactly what he or she is if they are doing what the Lord wants them to do.

To limit the work of the Lord to the preacher, or at most, to only a few others in the church, is a serious mistake. It shows that in this case many Christians haven't been sufficiently taught, or else they are using this as an excuse for not doing their part.

Just because one cannot give all of his time to the Lord's work that doesn't mean that he should do nothing. Although the public preaching is limited to the men of the church, that doesn't mean that there is nothing for the women to do (Titus 2:1-5; Acts 9:32-43). There is work for all to do according to the time they have and the opportunities that come to them (I Corinthians 15:58; II Thessalonians 2:17).

But let us think further why there are so few who are willing to labor for the Lord.

### III. WHY LABORERS ARE FEW.

It is not popular to preach and teach the truth for those who work for the Lord often have to suffer. In some countries there is physical persecution and danger of death. In others one may only feel a mental type of persecution by

being rejected and looked upon with contempt. These obstacles discourage many from putting forth any effort at all (I John 3:13; Luke 6:22; Acts 13:50; II Timothy 3:12).

Some who claim to be laborers are **hypocrites** in their life and work, and this does not encourage others to follow them (Luke 11:44; 18:9-14; Romans 2:21-24).

There are those who work only as **hirelings** and do not therefore have the Lord's cause at heart. If they find better paying or easier work, they are glad to give up their laborer's position. This causes resentment on the part of many members as well as those that are outside the church (Job 7:2; John 10).

So much emphasis is placed upon the material things of this world that young men are looking for work that **pays** more than preaching, and the average member is so busy trying to make money that he doesn't have any time to spare for teaching his neighbors about the Lord (Luke 9:23; Matthew 6:19, 20; Luke 12:34; Proverbs 15:16).

There is no real **challenge** to work for the Lord. Those who try are more likely to be criticized than encouraged.

Members have only **surface religion**. They have not yet grasped the meaning of having a soul, or the possibility that they might lose it. Such people need to be converted themselves (I Corinthians 11:30). When we become converted to the Lord to the extent that we should be, we will work for him. As it is, we are willing to follow him as long as it is on our terms, and he is not too demanding. We want to salve our consciences, but not get any muscle strain in the process. We are too dependent on the **preacher** to do our work for us. As long as we can pay him to do the teaching and visiting and good works, we feel that that relieves us of our responsibilities, but **nothing** can do

that. On the same basis, we give a little money to help preachers go to the mission field, and we soothe our consciences, trying to convince ourselves that we are doing all we can to reach others.

We do not encourage our young people to work for the Lord as we should. Rather, we emphasize the material side of life; at the same time we criticize before them those who are working while we are doing nothing ourselves. How can we expect the next generation to be more zealous and dedicated than we, with such training?

#### IV. WHY LABORERS ARE NEEDED.

The world is **lost** and is in need of salvation. The Lord is depending on you and me to take the message of salvation to man. If we fail, the world is lost, for Christ died to save those that **"obey him"** (Hebrews 5:9). This verse would include both those that **obey** him in baptism and those that **obey** him in teaching others (Mark 16:15, 16).

The world is getting **no better** as it is. The only thing that can change it is the gospel of Christ, and there is no one but us to take it to those who do not have it. Only this will change the world for good.

The **population** of the world is growing day by day. This within itself necessitates more workers. Since it has not been evangelized in modern times, more and more teachers will be needed until that job is done.

There is a crying need from every corner of the world for men to preach and teach God's word. Where the gospel has already been preached there is the need for replacements and for additional workers to expand the present efforts. So many new fields are waiting for workers to

come. There are so many opportunities to proclaim the truth of God all over the world. The present workers cannot possibly take advantage of all the opportunities that exist. The only solution is to find more who will help.

## V. WHY LABORERS SHOULD GO.

Jesus saved us to save others. If our salvation means anything to us then we should want to share it with others. If we are not doing this, something is seriously wrong with our own understanding of the truth.

The Lord has commanded us to go. All we need to do is to read the great commission again (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16). If that will not convince us, then what would? If we do not obey that command, how can we hope to be saved ourselves?

We have something to give to the world that no other people can give. We have the gospel — the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 10:15; I Corinthians 15:1-4). We can tell man what to do to be saved and how to have the hope of eternal life — what greater message could we bear?

It is in our own interest that we go. Apart from saving our souls, and the souls of others, it could be a means of saving the world from ruinous wars, and certainly it will help to save it from sin.

Time is short. We have today, but have no assurance of tomorrow. What we do for the Lord must be done **now**. While we tarry souls are dying without God and without hope (Jeremiah 8:20).

We have an individual responsibility to warn the wicked. If we do not take the gospel to others their blood will be

upon our hands. Listen to the man of God: "Son of man, I have made thee a **watchman** unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and **give them warning from me**. When I say unto the wicked, **Thou shalt surely die**; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to **save his life**; the same wicked man shall **die** in his iniquity; but **his** blood will I require at **thine** hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, **he shall die in his iniquity**; but **thou hast delivered thy soul**. Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because **thou** has not given him **warning**, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done, shall not be remembered; but **his** blood will I require at **thine** hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, **he shall surely live, because he is warned**; also **thou hast delivered thy soul**" (Ezekiel 3:17-21). What more needs to be said to impress upon us our grave responsibility?

We have wonderful examples to follow. In the Old Testament there were great men like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jonah, and many others. In the New Testament we read of John the Baptist, Christ, the apostles, and the whole church. They were all missionaries. They had a message for others and they delivered it, sometimes in their own blood. But they did not die guilty of the blood of others. They could say, ". . . I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26, 27).

The staggering realization is that there are souls to be

saved in this world whom no one can save but **you**. We all have an influence, and if it is good, we can use it to lead those people to God. Our goal should be to convert others. When we try we can succeed. World evangelism is simply a combination of thousands of individual efforts to win others to Christ, to win the world to Christ.

In the Lord's vineyard all are laborers, and woe be to us if we fail to do the work the Lord has set before us (Matthew 21:40, 41).

## VI. WHY BE A LABORER?

There is no work in all of the world that is any greater than the Lord's work. What a joy should flood one's soul to know that he is carrying forth the gospel to others. What a thrill to be able to convert souls to Christ. What a wonderful blessing to establish a congregation of the Lord's church and to see it grow, knowing that every soul in it, is one more that will be spared the agonies of hell.

Yes, it is thrilling to be able to help others, to have them to look to you for help and guidance, but there is a grave responsibility too. We cannot afford to fall short of what is expected of us. We must prepare well to be efficient laborers.

Another important reason for being a laborer is that when Christians are busy winning souls for the Lord they don't have time to be gossiping, finding fault, criticizing, condemning, etc. This is left to those who are lazy and indifferent about the Lord and his work.

Then there is the final reward for those who have been faithful in the Lord's service. God will not forget those who have labored for him, but he will crown their efforts

with eternal life.

Yes, we should all be workers for the Lord and we should be so happy with what we are doing that it will cause others to want to go and do likewise. It is an opportunity to use our talents and abilities for the Lord. We belong to God and he wants **all** of us, not **part** of us (Romans 12:1).

We aren't doing enough for the Lord when all we do is to meet once or twice a week for worship. That is not **Christianity**. That is not **working** for the Lord. When we give our hearts to him we will find time to pray, study, teach others, to attend gospel meetings, go to Bible classes, go to worship, help our neighbors and friends, to do right, to let Christ live in us, teach others as we have the opportunity (even making opportunities), and thus to influence others for good. Christianity in depth is far more than the majority of Christians put into it, and that fact is clearly seen by what the church is doing — or **not** doing.

When we go to work for the Lord, there won't be any preacher shortage. Neither will there be a lack of congregations to preach for, for the workers will establish new congregations, and reach new areas. Our greatest problems come about when we stagnate and fail to do the work that the Lord has asked us to do.

## VII. HOW WE CAN HAVE MORE LABORERS.

We can begin with ourselves — we can begin to do more for the Lord. But what can we do? **MUCH**. We can **quit being so timid about being a Christian**. We have no reason to be ashamed, but every reason to be happy (Matthew 10: 32, 33). Even in these modern times when it is not fashionable with many to be a Christian, this is even the more the

reason why we should want people to know that we are Christians. I had much rather for people to know that I am a Christian than for them to know that I am to be counted with the other crowd. We can begin to invite and encourage our friends to go to worship with us. We can set up studies in which we do the teaching, or in which someone else teaches. We can teach a class, maybe help some nearby congregation with occasional preaching. We can get out to some area where the church does not exist and begin a congregation. These things can be done at home. It may be, too, that we can move to a new area, or we might even move to a foreign land. If we love the Lord and want to serve him there will be means and ways of doing much more for him. There will be many more opportunities than we can take advantage of for sure.

We can begin to encourage our children to help in the Lord's work. There are many things that they can do among their friends, but first they need encouragement from their parents. We can give them the example, the teaching, and the moral support they need. We can encourage our sons to preach the gospel and to be missionaries. What greater thing could they do in life? Which had we rather do: see our sons become preachers and missionaries, or to allow them to go along, become disinterested, be sent to a foreign land by Uncle Sam as a soldier, and perhaps eventually to be lost to the church? This is not to say that all who do not become preachers and missionaries are finally lost to the church, but many are, simply because they have not been given the encouragement they needed. What I am saying is this: we have our own ideas of what we would like our sons to be sometimes, and often forget that first of all they should be workers for the Lord.



As to our daughters, we should begin to train them with the thought in mind that they will grow up to be wives of preachers; or good Christian men. We should teach them so they can grow up prepared to be Bible teachers and zealous workers.

We should send our children to a Christian college to better prepare them for life and service for the Lord. It may cost more, and there might not be as much prestige as to send them to some well known university, but it might mean the difference between being saved and lost. Personally, I had rather for my children to go to a Christian college where they can be taught daily by Christian men and women, and where they can be associated with other young people who are Christians. Even at its worst, it is far better than the best of other schools.

We can attend meetings, workshops, schools for preachers, etc., as a means of being instructed how to better serve the Lord, and to receive the inspiration and encouragement to act on what we have learned. There are many such opportunities for this.

We can perhaps join a group of workers to go to another part of the country to establish the Lord's church. This will make us feel a vital part and we will thus do more for God than we would if we stayed at home where our help might not be needed as much.

We can become a part of a group of workers to go to a foreign land to conduct a campaign. If we will do this, it may be in the future that we will find ourselves returning to have a greater part in the work there. This will result from having our eyes opened to the opportunities that are there, and from the knowledge that it is possible for us to have a part in them.

Congregations can arrange for missionaries to come to give reports on their work to educate the church, and to build interest, to encourage more to help and possibly even to enter into this type of work. Not much can be done to get a church involved in mission work, if the congregation will not even allow men to come to tell about their field. Something terrible is wrong with churches with such an isolationist policy.

Elders, preachers and teachers can train and encourage the young men (and even older men) of the congregation to begin to preach. Likewise, training classes can be conducted to teach the members how to be personal workers. Every member of every congregation should be put to work. Idle members die spiritually and potential workers are lost to the Lord's cause.

Tracts and good Christian literature should be made available to the members and they should be encouraged to pass it out.

All of the members should be taking one gospel paper or more. Unless the church is informed, it will not be challenged to do its work.

Good Christian books need to be made available. More books need to be written to advance the cause of Christ at home and abroad.

The Christian colleges can do more in the area of preparing men and women to go into the mission field.

The college lectureships can offer more time to those who have been in the mission field, to encourage brethren at home and to challenge preachers and members to go to other parts of the world with the gospel.

Classes can be taught in the Sunday morning Bible schools, from the youngest to the oldest, that would

emphasize the mission and work of the church. When the church learns its duty abroad then it will do its duty at home, and vice versa. There is no competition between the two fields at all when the church is at work.

World evangelism schools can be established that will specifically prepare men and women for foreign mission work. Such schools need to be operated by former missionaries. Theories are not enough. The students need to be taught by those who have engaged in the work itself.

Missionary magazines and papers need to be begun that will give the news of the church the world over and carry articles that will tell the needs and educate the church as to what can be done.

Programs should be begun in the States to take in more workers that will eventually end in the church being planted in every city and community in the country.

Members need to be taught to give more, and with more being given, more can be done.

Various congregations need to take it upon themselves to see that the church is planted in every country around the world. This task needs to be begun and nothing should be allowed to stop the church from reaching its goal.

More missionary workshops need to be conducted to place emphasis on what is being done and what needs to be done. Every congregation needs to have one of these, and by so doing they will change their minds about mission work.

Every congregation that has the ability to have a local preacher can and should sponsor a missionary in some other part of the world. If this were carried out it would change the church over night. The members are not going to give and work until the leaders challenge them to do so. When

will this lesson be learned?

The laborers are few now, but it is possible for the church to have many more workers — NOW — or whenever we want them enough to put forth the required effort.

## VIII. QUALIFICATIONS OF LABORERS.

As already pointed out, every member of the church should be a worker and must be a worker if he is going to be acceptable to the Lord. Then what would be the qualifications for such a laborer? This would all depend on the kind he might be, and where he might serve, but to be a laborer in any sense, he must be a member of the Lord's church, and a faithful one at that. He should be a student of God's word and be prayerful in life. He should be morally clean, and an example of faith, zeal, and courage. He should be determined to live for the Lord and to bring others to him. He should have a love for God, his church, and the souls of men. These are some of the qualifications that would be considered as musts for the average worker.

To be a public preacher or teacher, naturally one would need some formal education, and preferably a college education, with a thorough Bible knowledge.

To be a foreign worker, one would need some special training in Christian Evidences, Bible, Geography, Culture, Religions, Languages, Methods, etc.

## CONCLUSION

The laborers are few today all over the world. How many times have I tried to find help, only to be disappointed. How many times have I tried to find someone to go to

another country, only for my pleas to be ignored. What's wrong? Why is this so? Why must it continue to be? It is true now, though it doesn't have to remain so, but there is a good chance that it will continue to be like this unless the church can be educated, trained, and challenged to meet these needs.

## QUESTIONS

1. Quote Matthew 9:37, 38.
2. Were the laborers of the past very popular?
3. What happened to most of them? Why?
4. Tell what happened to the apostles.
5. Who is usually defined as a laborer?
6. What kind of work can women do?
7. List some reasons why laborers are few.
8. What will we do when we become converted to the Lord?
9. What do we do with our young people?
10. Why are laborers needed today?
11. Give some reasons why we are to take the gospel to others.
12. Read Ezekiel 3:17-21.
13. List some missionaries in the Bible.
14. Define, "world evangelism."
15. What is the greatest work in all the world?
16. Mention some reasons why one should be a laborer for the Lord.
17. Are we doing enough for the Lord when we meet once or twice a week for worship? If not, why not?
18. What will happen when we go to work for the Lord?

19. Tell what we can do to have more laborers.
20. What can the individual Christian do?
21. Should we send our children to Christian colleges?  
Why?
22. What can the church do?
23. What can the Christian colleges do?
24. Give the qualifications for being a worker for the Lord.

## PROJECTS

1. Discuss the importance of being a laborer for the Lord.
2. Run a survey to find out how many young men of the congregation are planning to be preachers.
3. Consider some of the things that the class might do to involve every member.
4. Talk about the things the church might do to encourage more work on the part of the members.
5. What steps could be taken to encourage more of the young men to preach the gospel and to be missionaries?
6. Let someone give a talk on "Why I would like to be a preacher."
7. Let someone give a talk on "Why I wouldn't want to be a preacher."

## LESSON FOUR

### PRAY FOR MORE WORKERS

Luke 10:2

#### INTRODUCTION

There are not many workers in the church in comparison to the demand. The world itself must be evangelized, but how is this to be accomplished when so few are willing to go? What is the solution? Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37, 38). Let us therefore see how this might work today.

#### DISCUSSION

##### I. HOW MANY PRAY?

How many Christians do you know of that really believe in prayer? How many do you know of that pray? How often do they pray? Do you pray? Why do you pray? For what do you pray? How deeply do you believe in the effectiveness of prayer?

The Lord's work is the greatest work in the world, yet how many pray for it? How many pray for the elders,

deacons, preachers, teachers, and workers? How many earnestly pray that they might teach the truth, might use wisdom in their methods, might be successful in winning souls for the Lord? How often do they pray? Do you pray? How often do you even think of this work and take time to say a prayer? How often do you pray for your own efforts in the Lord's work?

When the church meets for worship, how many pray for the elders, for the preacher, and for the various ones who are actively trying to win souls? How many times have you heard the preacher, elders, or other members of the church pray for a meeting, for the cottage meetings that are being conducted, for any work of the church? How often have you heard a member of the church pray for the work of some foreign missionary, for the work of any such missionary? How often have you heard anyone pray for the young men of the congregation that they might become gospel preachers? Have you ever heard anyone within the church pray for more workers?

My friends and brethren, is it any wonder that we are doing no more than we are to evangelize the world when we are not concerned enough to even pray for those who are putting forth the effort to win souls, and we feel no need to pray for help even at home? I am afraid that our prayers tell the sad tale of the church today. How many farmers would try to reap a great harvest without any help? How many business men would try to carry on without any assistance? How many factories could operate without laborers? Isn't it strange that we are so often wiser in the ways of the world than we are in the Lord's work? We not only recognize these needs with reference to our secular endeavors but we go out and find the help to do the job at



hand. But in the Lord's work we do little to gather in the harvest. It bothers us little if there are not enough workers. We only brush it aside and use it as an **excuse** not to do more. Think of what men will do to gather in cotton, corn, etc., but how little he will do to gather in souls! Yet, the souls of men represent the greatest and most precious harvest in all the world. This shows **what** we value and **how much** we value it.

## II. WHAT KIND OF PRAYERS DO WE ENGAGE IN?

So many of our prayers are for ourselves and for our own immediate needs. They are the same prayers that we have said over and over again, thus becoming a mere formality and nothing else. We go through them a number of times every week and no one really expects them to be answered. Everybody knows when the prayer is going to be said, who will say it, what it will include, and how long it will last. There is the "opening prayer," the "main prayer," the "closing prayer," and that is it. For an additional prayer to be engaged in would probably be such a shock that most members would get little from it.

I doubt very seriously if the foregoing is exaggerated much. This is the cold, hard truth in the majority of the congregations today. In other words, we have gotten in the rut on prayer. We have gotten away from the meaning of prayer. We have lost faith in prayer. We don't know the blessing of it. We don't take advantage of it. We are just not **praying people**. Therefore, it is to our own hurt and to the hurt of the work.

We need to pray, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). We need to learn to turn instinctively to the solace and

comfort of prayer. We need to pray for one another, for our enemies, and for the world (Luke 6:28). We need to pray for the church, the leaders, the preachers and teachers, and the members. We need to pray for the sick and afflicted (James 5:13), and for the weak and the erring (James 5:16). We need to pray for our country and leaders of the world. We need to pray for peace. We need to pray for those in hard fields and our missionaries over the world. There is such a wonderful opportunity here if we would only take advantage of it.

### III. WHY ARE THERE NO PRAYERS?

Jesus taught that, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). He was a prayerful man himself, finding many occasions to approach his heavenly Father. The apostles and disciples were men of prayer (II Thesalonians 3:1). The early church was known as a praying church (Acts 2:42). And the New Testament is full of teaching on prayer (I Timothy 2:8). Why is it then that we do not stress prayer and the extreme importance of it? There are several reasons for this:

So many of us have allowed prayer to become a **formality**. We have become repetitious, only using the prayers that we have learned from others, and thus what we say does not come truly from our hearts.

We have been so blessed **materially** that we have not felt the need of prayer. For some reason, people who are so showered with material things seldom feel the necessity of going to the Lord for help, as do those who find themselves in difficulty and in need of even the necessities of life (Philippians 4:6). It is only when our private world crashes

around us that we realize we cannot run it alone — that we **need God**.

Inasmuch as God does not **answer** prayers directly (miraculously), for some reason we conclude that he doesn't answer them at all. Whereas it is our duty to pray for the sick, we conclude that if the sick get well it will really only be as a result of the medicine and care they have had. We find it hard to see God's part. The same is true of any other important request — we may pray, but we seldom have firm faith in God hearing us.

Many prayers are said to be **heard of men** rather than to be heard of God. They are pretty, but that is all.

We have had little example from the leaders of the church, showing what prayer can mean to us. Therefore, there has been no real encouragement for us to pray.

We have not been **asked** to pray for others. This being so, how many of us pray for others?

We are so **self-righteous** that we feel that perhaps others have sins that need to be prayed for, but not us.

Since we are **not** directly **involved** in taking the gospel to the lost, then we feel no need for praying for those who are. As a matter of fact, we hardly ever think about anything like that, do we?

No, we are not praying people, but we need to be. Oh, how we need to be, and what a difference it would make for us and for others. When we really search God's word to learn what he says prayer can do, and what it will mean to us, we will surely not want to miss such blessings.

#### IV. WHY PRAY?

The Christian is a child of God. He has the glorious

knowledge that God is his Father. This is therefore a Father and son relationship. While God speaks to his son through the Bible, he has made it possible for his child to speak to him through the medium of prayer.

God has promised to hear the requests of his children and to grant them, provided they are according to his will (Philippians 4:6; I John 5:14). The Christian may therefore use this means of talking to his Father as often as he desires. He may want to thank God for those blessings that he has received, to pray for additional needs, to pray for the forgiveness of his sins, to pray for his friends, to pray for the church and to talk of any other subject that burdens his heart.

Think about it. Through prayer one is able to go to the throne of God himself, through Jesus Christ, and there pour out his petitions. What a privilege and an honor! What if we had the opportunity to go directly to the president of our country with our requests and to know that he would personally handle them? Wouldn't we count ourselves to be "somebody" if we could do this? And wouldn't we count ourselves blessed and fortunate? You know we would. But we can go to **God**! We are his children and we can take our requests to Him! How we need to do this.

Prayer is one of the most powerful means at our disposal for it is one of the most powerful weapons in the world. It can change things. It can move God. It can move men. It can move the world. Christ said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will

he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:7-11).

To show the power of prayer, take note of the following: "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8).

Truly if we are the Lord's children, trying to be faithful unto him, striving to pray according to his will, and will continue to pray to him for wisdom, guidance, and help, the Lord will bless us beyond our fondest imagination. I believe with all of my heart that the Lord answers prayers. I am confident that he has heard and answered my prayers many times. Prayer **does** make a difference.

## V. WHAT PRAYER DOES FOR US.

In the first place, prayer **humbles** us. It puts us in the right frame of mind. We are letting the Lord know that we need his help. We are admitting our insufficiency.

With a heart that is so prepared, we are ready to proceed with the prayer itself. As we humbly and sincerely pour out our hearts to God, we are in position to submit to God, to abide by his wishes, and to accept his guidance. We are ready to do our part, believing that he will do his part. We have more faith, more love, more humility. We are more spiritual and more like the Lord. We find ourselves returning again and again to the throne of grace to speak to our Father. We are consequently transformed and more nearly the Christ-like person that God would have us be.

Prayer will cause us to feel differently toward God, toward our work, toward others, and toward life.

## VI. PRAYER AND WORK.

When we learn how to pray, and the value of prayer, as the Lord would have us to understand it, it will cause us to become involved in the Lord's work as we have never been involved before. The reason many people don't do any more than they do is because they don't pray as they should. One cannot pray truly for the Lord's work without getting involved himself. One cannot pray for others without having a desire to help them. One cannot pray for the souls of men without trying to help to win them to Christ. One cannot pray for the church without helping it to grow. When there is prayer, **genuine prayer**, there is **work**.

Just think of what would happen in the church today if all of the members began to earnestly pray for the spread of the gospel! Just think of what would happen if all of the members started to pray for more workers. Wouldn't it mean that many of those would end up becoming workers themselves? That is the whole point.

## VII. PRAYER AND PROVIDENCE.

I believe that **prayer** and **providence** go hand in hand. When we fully submit ourselves to God and call on him for help and guidance, things begin to happen. When we let God know that we really **need** him, that we are depending on him for help, then he doesn't let us down. When we try him, he proves that he is living and is ready to help us in time of need.

God is not dead. He is very much alive (John 6:57). While he will not do for us what we can do for ourselves, when we make a move and put forth a genuine effort and go as far as we can, then he sees to it that we are able to go the rest of the way. When the Lord said that he would be with us until the end of the world (Matthew 28:19), **he meant just that.**

Don't mistake me — I am not talking about God performing any miracles to help us, or to accomplish his will. I am talking about God overruling and working in the lives of men to accomplish his purposes.

I have seen the providence of God at work in my own life, and his providence has made many things possible. Things have been brought about that would not have otherwise happened, and it was as plain as day. I recognized then that God's hand was in it and I still believe with all my heart that this was the case. For example, our efforts to take the gospel to India ended not only in India hearing the gospel, but Karachi, Pakistan, and Ceylon as well. We didn't get to go immediately so our Canadian brethren who probably would not have gone otherwise, went to answer the call. We wanted to go to Bombay, originally, but God saw to it that other Americans were able to go there with secular jobs and

to plant the cause of Christ. Then through an "error" we were able to get "entry visas" to India — visas we had tried to get for more than eight years. Some would call these accidents or good luck, but I would call it the providence of God at work. I would have to be an unbeliever to say otherwise (Romans 8:28).

If we will pray and trust God, doing all we can, then God will help us to accomplish his purposes. On this basis, I suggest that we **can** evangelize the world today if we **want** to. All things are possible with God. Do you believe that? I do.

Have you seen the providence of God? If you haven't, it is probably because you haven't been praying and you haven't been striving to do the "impossible" (Matthew 19:26). Don't be afraid of the impossible. Don't let men tell you, or even members of the church to tell you, that you **can't** do something. If it is right, and needs to be done, then with the help of God, you can do it.

When we started out in 1960 to get visas to go to India our brethren told us we couldn't go. But we did go. We didn't go immediately, but with the help of God we went, nevertheless. If we had listened to our own brethren, I am confident that India would not have the gospel today. Wouldn't that be a shame? If there is not a lesson in that for us then I am mistaken about many things.

## VIII. PRAYER AND WORLD EVANGELISM.

The world needs to be evangelized today. When are we going to do it? It is always tomorrow. At the rate we are going I doubt seriously if we will ever do it. We could, but we aren't. Why? The primary obstacle is that we have yet



to decide that we **want** to reach the world. We haven't become serious enough about it yet. We haven't prayed very much about it to this date.

If we'll begin to pray about evangelizing the world, and really be serious about our prayers, then we will evangelize the world. Especially is this so if **enough** of us will pray about it. We cannot really pray for world evangelism and do nothing about it ourselves.

## IX. PRAY FOR WORKERS.

If there ever was a time that we should pray for our workers, and to pray for **more** workers, it would be now. With the world's population being what it is, and with it multiplying every year that passes, our responsibilities and our tasks grow also.

Jesus has taught that we should pray to the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth more workers. He would not ask that we do this if it had nothing to do with the **increase of workers**. The Lord will help us when we get to the point that we **recognize** the need, and then **ask** for his help. When we get far enough along that we begin to turn to the Lord for help, we will do all we can to find and train more workers, and therefore God will help us in the task.

On the other hand, the Lord will not give us workers if we do not ask for them, if we put forth no effort ourselves to find some. But, as we become aware of the needs around the world, and put forth an effort to go to help, and then as we call for more workers, gradually the number will increase. In the past eight years I have personally seen an increase of workers in Asia, and I believe that in the next few years the number will more than double and perhaps triple.

So the Lord is answering our prayers for more help.

Some may wonder why it is that they are always reading pleas for help from around the world. If those individuals will but go to another part of the globe to work for the Lord, then they'll understand why. Neither will it take them very long to get a letter on the way back to the States to ask for help.

I would therefore like to encourage all members of the church to earnestly pray for more workers. Pray, and pray often. Pray for help now. Souls are at stake and we must do all we can to reach them while there is yet time to save them. While you are praying, dedicate yourself to the Lord and make up your mind that you yourself will become one of those workers. If you will, you will thank God for opening your eyes and making all of this possible.

## X. SOME THINGS TO PRAY FOR.

As individuals, as families, and as the church, your prayers are needed. You must know what is going on in the church at home and abroad and take these things to heart and pray to God about them. If there are some special needs, give special attention to them. Get to know the missionaries around the world and pray for them. You have no idea what this would mean to them and to the work they are trying to do. They are going through many problems, trials, and hardships. Your prayers can make the difference in their success and failure. Especially, get well acquainted with those missionaries that may be sponsored or supported by the congregation with which you worship, and talk to God about them. Call them by name and talk to God about their special needs, naming them one by

one. This will mean more to you, to God, and to them, than just to pray in general terms out of habit more than from the heart.

If you are unable to remember all of those for whom you want to pray, or if you are not able to remember all of the specific problems and needs that you should pray about, make a list of them and take them one by one to God. Pray as often as possible. Pray until you know that your prayers have been answered, even as in the parable of the widow and the judge.

As you are thinking about prayer, think about these:

1. *Pray for the congregation with which you worship.*

Pray for those who are leading it, that they may have a deep spiritual understanding and may guide the church with wisdom and vision. Pray for the weak in the church, for the new converts, and for those who are near the truth — they need this concern to help, and only those who love them enough to pray for them can be of real help to them. Pray especially, too, for the young people in the church, that they may live above the worldliness and sin that is such a craze among this generation of teenagers. Don't forget to ask to help the Christian parents in bringing up their children, that they may grow to be shining lights in the world.

2. *Pray for the missionary workers around the world.*

There are many Christians and workers in the world who live under trying conditions. They sacrifice much to be what they are and to do the work they are doing. They get discouraged and tired; they become weak and begin to

wonder and doubt; they often feel forgotten by the rest of the Christian world. These people need our earnest prayers. We should ask God to strengthen them, to help them to reach those who are searching for the truth, to use the best means for reaching the lost. We should pray that the church will support them morally and financially so that they can accomplish the work they set out to do.

3. *Pray for more workers at home and around the world.*

If we are going to evangelize the world, more of the young generation will have to become actively involved, both by going as missionaries and by doing secular work abroad. Pray to this end, that we may inspire, guide, and educate them so that they will develop into a true army of workers for God.

4. *Pray that the gospel will be taken to all the world at this time.*

There are fifty countries or more yet without the gospel, and hardly any country has been truly evangelized. Prayers for these countries, for the countless souls they represent, should pour in anguish from our hearts. How can we sit idly by never thinking of far-off Bhutan, Nepal, and numerous others, when people there are hopelessly lost?

5. *Pray for the church in America.*

Pray that every member may be awakened to his or her responsibility of taking the gospel to others. Pray that the

present preachers will quit trying to hold indefinitely to their present pulpits and will see that the greater work is to reach out to those who have not heard the truth. Pray that they will go into different parts of the world and plant the cause of Christ. Pray that the remaining elders of the church will be awakened to their real responsibility and will begin to help support and sponsor men and women to go into other areas of the world with the gospel. Pray that all members of the church will begin to give more to make it possible for those to go who are willing to do so.

As you pray, do so **believing** that God will hear your prayers and will answer them. Don't give up, but continue to pray day after day, week after week, and year after year. If enough will do this, then there will be drastic changes made.

## CONCLUSION

Prayer has meant much to my family and me. We have been able to do what we have done because of it, for we have prayed that God's will might be done in all, and we have accepted whatever has happened therefore as being his will. How else could we look at it?

Prayer can be a blessing to you also if you will only take advantage of it and use it as the Lord intended.

## QUESTIONS

1. Quote Luke 10:2.
2. Read Matthew 9:37, 38.
3. What are some of the questions that may be asked concerning prayer?
4. Is much emphasis placed on prayer in worship?

5. Who are the ones who usually lead the public prayers?
6. What kind of prayers do they pray?
7. Do they pray very often for missionaries and for the spreading of the gospel?
8. Why is it that we do not pray for more missionaries?
9. Who are some of the people for whom we need to pray?
10. What does the Bible teach about prayers?
11. List some of the reasons why there are not more prayers.
12. What is the purpose of prayer?
13. Why is prayer the most powerful means at our disposal?
14. What is taught in Luke 18:1-8?
15. Tell what prayer will do for us.
16. What will prayer lead us to do?
17. How do prayer and providence work together?
18. What is possible with God?
19. To whom must we listen before all others?
20. Why should we pray for more workers?
21. What must we do to have more workers?
22. List some things we should pray for.
23. Give some reasons for praying for the local congregation.
24. Why do missionary workers need our prayers?
25. Will God do for us what we can do for ourselves?

## PROJECTS

1. Appoint someone to give a talk on prayer and

world evangelism.

2. Discuss prayer as it is used in the local congregation.
3. Begin to have prayer each time the class meets (provided you don't already).
4. Bring up some special need as related to foreign mission work and encourage the members of the class to pray about it the next week.
5. Consider what can be done to encourage the congregation to take greater advantage of the privilege of prayer.

## LESSON FIVE

### **“HOW SHALL THEY HEAR?”**

**Romans 10:14**

#### INTRODUCTION

It is interesting to note Paul's reasoning concerning the importance of preaching the gospel of Christ. Paul begins by saying, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in my mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the



dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shalt not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all of the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, all day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Romans 10).

Please notice these points especially:

- A. All who call upon (obey) the Lord will be saved.
- B. But how can they call (obey) if they have not believed?
- C. And how shall they believe unless they have heard?

- D. Then how shall they hear without a preacher?
- E. Finally, how shall they preach except they be sent?

In our study to follow, we will take a closer look at these points.

## DISCUSSION

### I. GOD REQUIRES ONE AND ALL TO OBEY HIM TO BE SAVED.

#### A. What God has done.

God created man and gave him everything materially and spiritually, but man sinned and became the enemy of God. Thus man found himself lost without God and without hope. At this point, God sought to remedy that by sending his own Son to die for the sins of the world. So we are told, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17). The Hebrew writer says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Other verses make it just as clear: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "For the Son of man is come to seek and to

save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). And so by the grace of God was all of this made possible, and therefore it is by his grace that we are saved. Paul writes, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). That is, God provided salvation for man but it is up to man to accept it by **faith**. This is where obedience comes in, and for this reason, we read concerning Christ, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he **obedience** by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey him**" (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

## **B. What man must do.**

The Lord has given man something to do. James says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). Christ himself tells us, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

To be saved and to be a member of the Lord's church one must obey the gospel of Christ. In the first place, Paul told the Romans that this gospel is the power of God to save them that believe it (Romans 1:16). Then he explained how it saved them: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed** from the heart that

form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17, 18). Christ put it like this, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 15, 16). The commands of the gospel to be obeyed are these:

1. *All must believe in God and that Christ is his Son.* "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Christ said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1).
2. *All must repent of their sins.* Christ warned, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
3. *All must confess that Christ is the Son of God.* Again Christ said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32, 33). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the

mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). We have an example in Acts 8 of where this confession was required before baptism.

4. *All must be baptized for the remission of sins.* After preaching to the people on the day of Pentecost, when they wanted to know what to do to be saved, Peter told them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Then Paul tells us that those who are baptized enter Christ and his church (Romans 6:3, 4; I Corinthians 12:13). This is also the new birth that is spoken of in John 3:3, 5.

But what about those who fail or refuse to obey these commands? In this case, the apostle Paul says, “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

On the other hand, while one may be **initially** saved through his obedience to the gospel, to **remain** saved he must meet with the Lord’s people each first day of the week

for worship (Hebrews 10:25), live for the Lord daily (Colossians 3:17), teach others the will of the Lord (I Timothy 5:16), and in general, live the faithful Christian life (Revelation 2:10).

The Bible teaches that **obedience is necessary** to salvation. This is true of all accountable beings on the earth. And since we have only the word of God to go by, and it is said that it will be our judge in the last day (John 12:48), then we have no authority to say that the Lord will save any individual, or group of individuals, apart from obedience.

## II. GOD REQUIRES ONE AND ALL TO BELIEVE.

**A. One must believe that there is one true and living God.** We have already seen that without faith in God it is impossible to please him (Hebrews 11:6).

**B. One must believe that Christ is the Son of God.** Christ said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth in him" (John 3:36). Again, he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 6:24). Jesus answered and said unto them, "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). Finally, the Lord said, "I am the way, the

truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

- C. One must believe the Bible to be the word of God.** "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:20, 21). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16, 17). We are not to add to it, subtract from it, substitute for it, but speak only as the oracles of God (Revelation 22:18, 19; Galatians 1:6-9; I Peter 4:11).
- D. One must believe in the religion of Christ.** This includes the church, worship, work, and all of the principles and teachings that go together to make up Christianity, including the belief in a future life (Acts 2; I Corinthians 15; James 1).

How can one obey the Lord and his teachings unless he is willing to become a believer? Christ said, "But he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

### **III. GOD DESIRES THAT ALL SHOULD HEAR HIS WILL.**

God created all things (Genesis 1-3). He therefore created man and gave him a spirit or soul (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7). Hence, man has an inner urge to worship something higher than himself. Without even being taught the word of God, it is possible for man to be conscious of the God of heaven. This was Paul's point in Acts 17 as he dealt with those who were bowing down to idols. To the Romans Paul declared, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:21). So it is possible for one to know of the true and living God by observing that which is around him. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work" (Psalm 19:1). Only a fool would deny God (Psalm 14:1).

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that if one really is hungering and thirsting for righteousness, he shall be filled (Matthew 5:6). That is, if one is really seeking to know God and his will, the Lord will see to it that he has the opportunity to come in contact with it. The conversion of Cornelius is a good example of this (Acts 10; 11). Although he and his household were Gentiles, yet because of the prayers that he uttered, the alms that he gave to the poor, and his desire to do the right thing, God saw to it that he and his family had the opportunity to hear and obey the gospel. Concerning those who received Christ, we read, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

Although **man** has the obligation of coming to believe in God, we also have the responsibility of taking the gospel



to all of the world that one and all might **know** the will of the Lord.

**A. God has spoken.**

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

**B. God has spoken through his Son.**

At the transfiguration, the record says concerning Christ, “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5).

**C. Christ’s message is recorded in the written word.**

James says that we now have the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). Paul says that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

**D. The word of God is the truth.**

When Christ was praying to God, he said, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Again, he said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

- E. Christ commanded that the gospel should be taken to all mankind in order that one and all might hear it (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16).**
- F. Paul said that one must hear the truth to believe it.**  
“So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).
- G. Finally, based on one's faith, then he is able to obey the Lord's commands, but not until he hears (James 1:22).**

#### **IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PREACHER.**

This means, then, that the salvation of millions of people around the world depends on whether we take the gospel to them, to enable them to hear the truth. It is true that the Bible has gone all over the world, and the gospel has been sent over much of the world by means of literature, radio, and other mass media, yet the preacher is still important and always will be. There are millions of people around the world who are not even literate and the only way they will ever know God's will is for us to take it to them. Even though the gospel may be known to most of the world by means of the Bible, it is still necessary that the preacher follow that up in further teaching, encouragement, and assisting the believers in their obedience, and to give the necessary guidance in establishing congregations, etc. There was a preacher involved in every case of conversion in the book of Acts, and this should make us aware of one outstanding fact — the importance of the preacher today.

We have a lost and dying world. We have the truth that

can save. But before it can save, it must be planted in the hearts of men and women around the world. To whom can the Lord look to do this job? He naturally turns to those of us who have already obeyed him. If we refuse to do the work, to whom else can he look? Think how it must hurt the Lord when his own children refuse to take his message to others. Such rebellion and disobedience is the same as working against him.

What would you think of a doctor who was standing by, watching a whole city of people die one by one, when he had the knowledge and the medicine to cure them, but refused to offer any help? What would you think of the person who noticed that a house was on fire in the middle of the night, but instead of offering any warning, continued to walk along as though all was well? We could go on and give illustration after illustration to show that we would expect such people to act upon the knowledge and the means at their disposal to try to save those who were faced with physical disaster. Yet, we have the truth and are in position to take it to others to give them an opportunity of saving their souls from eternal hell, but what are we doing about it? Most of us are going along as though there is no danger, and everyone is going to be saved. It is so sad to think that we are so careless with the souls of others, and even with our own souls.

Turn it around and consider it from the other fellow's standpoint. What if you had been born in one of those countries where the gospel has never been taken? What if you had been born in one of their villages? Picture yourself there. You are born to poor parents who have no education and therefore you grow up without the ability to read and write, doomed to an illiterate existence. You live in a mud

hut among many similar mud huts. You have little in this life, and every day is a struggle to live. You make your living by farming dry dusty lands with the crudest of tools. You live as people did a thousand, two thousand, or more years ago. Your marriage is finally arranged and the cycle begins again when you and your wife have children. There is little in this life to look forward to for you and your children – only drudgery and poverty and want. This is bad, and to me it would be worse than death, but how much more heartbreaking if no one in all of this world cared enough about you and your poor soul to bring the gospel to you to lead you out of this plight physically and spiritually! Wouldn't that be too horrible to even think about? Well, thank God you weren't born in that kind of condition – but millions and millions were. **What about them?** What are we going to do about them? Just leave them in their ignorance and lost condition? If so, **we will surely have to answer to God for them.**

We have the gospel, which is the wonderful news of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, thus bringing salvation and the hope of eternal life. If this means anything to us, we will want to share it with others. The lost should weigh heavily upon our hearts and we should not rest until all have heard the gospel of Christ.

Unless they have **heard** the gospel, how can they **believe** it? And unless they have **believed** it, then how can they **obey** it? And unless they have **obeyed** it, they can't be **saved**. So it comes back to you and me. **Who** is going to take this message to the other countries of the world? **Who** is going to share it with others? My brethren, we can't all stay at home, and do what the Lord wants done. But instead of going, we only offer excuses:

1. *I don't know enough.* (Then it is time to begin to learn.)
2. *Let the other fellow go.* (But he can't go for everyone. Besides the Lord has commanded us to go.)
3. *I am too young.* (If you are a Christian, then you are not too young to share the gospel with others. You can influence people that older people could not reach.)
4. *I am too old to go.* (As long as you are living you can tell people what the Bible teaches, and when your children are grown and no longer a responsibility it is the most opportune time for you to strike out in the world for God. Besides, most of the more important offices and positions of the world are filled by older people.)
5. *I have a family and must think about them.* (Wherever you go you will find people with families and they too are trying to think of their welfare.)
6. *I must educate my children.* (Good schools are found all over the world, and the best supplementary education they could have is traveling and seeing life in other parts of the world.)
7. *I am not a preacher.* (I know quite a number

of good missionaries who are not preachers. Who said you had to be a preacher to win souls to Christ?)

8. *I can't find anyone to support me.* (Then go and support yourself. There are many such opportunities if you really want to go.)
9. *I am in debt.* (Then get out of debt and go. But you can pay your debts from the other side of the world also.)
10. *I think it is too far away.* (Who said so? You can go to the other side of the earth in less than twenty-four hours. Someone asked brother Marshall Keeble what if he should die while he was in a foreign country. He told them it would be just as close to heaven there as it would be at home in America. People need the gospel there too.)
11. *I can't convince my wife we should go.* (You need to convert her.)
12. *I think it is too expensive.* (One soul is worth more than the world.)
13. *I am afraid.* (So was the one talent man in Matthew 25.)
14. *I don't have enough faith.* (I would be ashamed to admit it, but are you sure you have enough

faith to go to heaven?)

And on and on the excuses go, but there is no good excuse for not doing the Lord's will. It is true that some may have valid reasons for not going, but certainly none have good excuses. But regardless of what the situation is, one must either go or send. I mean by that that each Christian must go in person, or help to send someone else. Even then all must go in the sense of going to his friends and neighbors. It is therefore not a matter of whether we will go or we will not go. As Christians we must go. If we fail to do so, we are not faithful Christians. That is all.

## V. THE IMPORTANCE OF SENDING.

The preacher may be ready to go, but who will send him? It takes money for the work to be established and to be maintained, and for the missionary to live. Where is this coming from?

I am actually surprised that so many are willing to go, when you consider what they have to go through in order to find support and a congregation to sponsor their work. It would appear that if a man and his family would be willing to make the sacrifice to give up work at home, leave all of the things that they enjoy, say goodbye to their relatives and friends, and live in a foreign country, then the church would gladly stand behind him and make it possible for him to go. But this is not the way it is.

While the preacher, and others who can and will go, have the responsibility to go, the church has just as much responsibility to send them. As a matter of fact, its responsibility may be even greater, in the sense that it is not

going personally, and is only supplying the financial means for messengers to go. Furthermore, unless the brethren at home are willing to send, even though there are those who will go, still the result is that no one is sent.

Remember, the Lord requires obedience of all responsible people, but before they can obey they must believe, and before they can believe they must hear the truth, and before they hear the truth, the preacher must take the gospel to them, but in order for the preacher to go, the church must be willing to send him. So the one is dependent on the other all the way through. If the chain is broken at one point, all is spoiled. Much depends on us then. We must go, if at all possible, but if this is impossible, we can send those who can go. It is just that simple, but it is imperative that we do our part. But just one question please: If the Lord would condemn a person for not obeying the gospel, will he not condemn us if we fail to take the gospel to the lost?

## CONCLUSION

This is the Lord's plan for taking the gospel to all of mankind. It is not impossible to follow, or difficult to do. It only requires obedience.

It is a plan that involves everyone: the lost, the individual Christian, and the church. It gives all an opportunity to have a part. Those who can't go to people in foreign lands can go to those in their own country. Those who can't go across their country can go across the street to teach a neighbor. Those who can't give their lives to this work, can give their money, prayers, etc., to it. All these things are needed, and all are necessary. The job is



tremendous but if it is evenly divided up with each one doing what he can, it will not be a crushing burden for any of us, and the job will be done.

## QUESTIONS

1. Quote Romans 10:14.
2. Read Romans 10.
3. Discuss some of the things this chapter is teaching.
4. How did man become the enemy of God?
5. What did God do to provide man with salvation?
6. List some verses of scripture that teach the love of God and salvation from sins.
7. Whom does the Lord save?
8. What has God given man to do?
9. What must one do to be saved and to be a member of the church?
10. List the commands of the gospel.
11. Give some scripture references for each.
12. What must one do to remain saved?
13. Name some things that one must believe.
14. What will happen to the unbeliever?
15. Can one know of God without being taught of him?
16. Who has said there is no God?
17. What will happen if one hungers and thirsts for righteousness?
18. What does the conversion of Cornelius and his household teach?
19. Give some verses that show that God has spoken, and how he speaks today.
20. How does faith come?

21. In what way is the preacher important?
22. What would it be like to be born in another part of the world without the gospel?
23. Name some of the excuses that are given for not going.
24. How would you answer them?
25. Who has the responsibility to go?
26. Who has the responsibility to send?
27. Will the Lord condemn one for not taking the gospel to others?
28. List some places that one can go.
29. How may one go?

### PROJECTS

1. Appoint someone to give a talk on the subject, "How shall they hear without a preacher?"
2. Discuss ways and means by which the members of the class can take the gospel to those of your own community.
3. Explore ways for the class to help with preaching the gospel elsewhere.
4. If a member of the class has had a personal part in a campaign, conducted a cottage meeting, etc., then let him give a report on it.
5. Make a survey of the congregation's efforts to preach the gospel to others and give a report on it.
6. Invite the preacher to come and discuss ways of reaching others with the gospel.

## LESSON SIX

### **"EXCEPT THEY BE SENT"**

**Romans 10:15**

## INTRODUCTION

Naturally everyone cannot go to another part of the world to preach the gospel, but those who **can** have the responsibility to **go**. Those who **can't** have the responsibility to **send**. One work is just as important as the other and one responsibility is just as great as the other.

In this lesson we are going to consider the different ways we can have a part in sending workers out to preach the gospel. As we think along this line, let us realize that if we refuse to send the workers out it will result in souls being lost, and therefore God will hold us responsible for them.

## DISCUSSION

### **I. WHY MORE WORKERS HAVE NOT BEEN SENT**

#### **A. Members of the church as a whole have not been educated on the need of going.**

The majority of the members of the church know very little about what is going on in the church and around the world. They know even

less of the needs that exist. Therefore, they are not interested in going, or sending, or training, workers to be sent. We must launch an over-all program of education to correct this basic weakness in the church. But **where** is the education to begin? **When** is it to begin? **Who** will do the teaching? Those are some real good questions that need answers, and we need to be trying to do something about them.

**B. Missionary work has been frowned on for such a long time that it still keeps many from going.**

It has been said that those going to a foreign land are only going for a trip, to take a vacation, or because they cannot find work at home. People fear to be accused of such motives, so they stay at home. Actually nothing is accomplished by making mockery of any Christian who is trying to work. What we want to do is to try to see the Lord's church in the universal sense, as well as in the local sense, and thus try to take care of the needs of the church at home and abroad.

It is no disgrace to go to a foreign field any more than it is to stay at home, and vice versa. One can have impure motives for going, but he could also have impure motives for staying at home!

**C. We haven't yet seen the real mission of the church.**

The mission of the church is to preach the

gospel to all of the people of all the world. That includes more than the people of our community, city, state, or even our country. If we ever accomplish this task, someone is going to have to go, someone is going to have to leave home. Why should this be the task of only a few when it is the responsibility of every member? If we would all try to do our part, it wouldn't be difficult for anyone.

**D. We haven't yet realized the urgency of doing something about the world now.**

We certainly haven't been in a hurry to evangelize the world to date, and it doesn't appear that we are going to get in any big hurry. The denominations are already one or two hundred years ahead of us, but that seems not to matter to most Christians. But we have a big job to do and we only have **now** to do it in. We may be saved, but the **world** is lost. Their only hope is for us to take the gospel to them. If we do not, we'll be lost for failing to do so. That should make it **urgent**.

**E. We haven't yet seen the world in its true condition.**

We have been so isolated and so surrounded by Christians, or those who are under the influence of Christianity in one way or the other, that we have not seen the world in the rough, raw, sinful condition it is in. We have not seen man at his worst, in his most deceived state.

We have not seen the consequences of sin as some have experienced it.

For instance, even in the realm of religion, millions still bow down to man-made idols, offer animal sacrifices, and do every kind of hideous act that you can imagine. They disfigure themselves, punish and mutilate their physical bodies, commit acts of violence and lasciviousness, all in the guise of religion. You just can't conceive of what it is like unless you have seen it with your own eyes.

But what is the answer to all of these sins, problems, and troubles throughout the world? How can man be changed? How can the world be made better? By sending the gospel. That doesn't mean that all of the people of all the world **want** the gospel, but if it is sent, many can be won to the Lord, and in time even the others can be directly or indirectly influenced by Christianity so that the world may be a better place in which to live. If we could just realize this, I am sure we would do more.

**F. We have not become aware of the world itself.**

How many of you have ever been outside of your own state? How many have visited on the other side of the country? How many of you have ever been in another country? How many have gone around the world? When these questions are answered, you will begin to see what I am talking about. It is true that one can live all of his life in his own community

and know a lot about the rest of the world, for he may turn on his TV and see what is happening all over the world, or he may pick up his newspaper and read of events in Vietnam, Nigeria, or hundreds of other places. But does he really get the picture? Is it staggeringly real to him? Does he picture the people there as real, with feelings, with needs, and with souls? What will he do about it? Most often it is: out of sight, out of mind. The masses of the world are just too far away.

**G. We have not yet come to see what the church can accomplish in the world.**

We picture ourselves as small, insignificant, and without the means of accomplishing what needs to be done. This is certainly underestimating the greatest institution in all the world. With God, we can do **all** things, and we should never forget that.

**H. We don't have enough dedicated members to go, and enough dedicated congregations to send.**

We are living in a land of milk and honey and we are not anxious to leave it or to share it with others. We are so selfish and thoughtless when it comes to the needs of others. I have traveled a great deal among my brethren and if you could just hear all of the things I have heard concerning taking the gospel to others, you would be shocked, if that is possible.

Preachers just simply tell why they aren't going to go and many congregations don't mind to get ugly when they are asked to help someone to go. What a shame! I wonder if the Lord would even class such people as Christians?

## II. EXCUSES FOR NOT SENDING.

When a Christian approaches a congregation about sending him and his family to the mission field, he is more than likely bombarded with many excuses as to why the church is not able to assume this responsibility. Mind you, no real reasons are given, but many excuses are offered. Some of them might be as follows:

**A. We are not able to assume such a financial responsibility.**

Answer: Often a congregation that is presently serving as a sponsor to some missionary family is not giving all of the financial support, but is giving what it can, and the remainder comes from those congregations who cannot or will not assume sponsorship.

**B. We are not familiar enough with the responsibilities that go with such a work.**

Answer: Then it is time to begin to learn what sponsorship is, what is required of the congregation. Actually, any congregation that really wants to be a sponsor can be, for only a slight enlargement of Christian activity is required.



**C. We are too small.**

Answer: The size of the congregation doesn't necessarily have anything to do with it — it is the size of the dedication that counts. I know of small congregations that do an outstanding job of serving as sponsors.

**D. We are engaged in some other projects at this time.**

Answer: It is wonderful for a congregation to have a good program of work at home, but its program should never be so one-sided that it cannot help to send the gospel to other peoples of the world. If it will try to balance its work, with efforts at home and abroad, it will find that its overall program of work will be boosted and the members will more readily respond to the needs of the congregation.

**E. We are now in a building program and can't help.**

Answer: There is nothing wrong with having an adequate building to help promote the Lord's cause, but this shouldn't be used as an excuse to do less. I have talked with many brethren who told me personally that in spite of the fact that they had decided to build a new meeting house, they determined not to take one penny away from their mission program in order to do so. I think this is a wonderful spirit.

- F. We have a full budget and it will not permit us to do any of this work at the present.**

Answer: Then the budget needs to be re-studied and revised. I just believe that we can make better use of the Lord's money than to put every dime that is given on ourselves and on local needs.

- G. We suggest that you call on us later.**

Answer: This is usually just a nice way of saying that the congregation is not going to do anything, but that they don't want to just come out and say it flat. In a case like this I think it would be better if the brethren would simply admit the truth and not hide behind hypocrisy. It is wrong and cruel to keep someone hanging on with the hope that he is going to be helped, only to end up in receiving no help at all.

- H. We are doing all of our mission work at home.**

Answer: No one is going to condemn you for doing mission work at home, but that doesn't mean that you can't help to take the gospel to other parts of the world. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world."

- I. We are already helping someone.**

Answer: Most every congregation is doing some mission work at home or abroad. This is the popular thing to do now. But most of them give only enough to soothe their

conscience and to use as a reason for not doing more since they are already doing some. But **some** may not be enough, and it seldom is enough. The point is, one and all are going to have to do more if the world is ever evangelized. It is not that brethren can't — they can if they want to.

**J. We just aren't interested.**

Answer: Can you believe that there are some congregations that just aren't interested in mission work? Well, there are, and may God have mercy upon them because they are going to need all of the mercy they can get.

There are many, many other excuses that no doubt could be listed here, but enough have been given to suggest that this is another reason why more workers are not going into different parts of the world with the gospel. Furthermore, because it is a well known fact that one will have to face such attitudes should he decide to go, then rather than to endure all of this, many just decide to remain at home. It takes brave people to go from congregation to congregation like beggars only to hear one excuse after another in most cases, and I can certainly understand why it would discourage some from even trying. If you don't believe it then why don't you try it for awhile?

I know that I have done a lot of traveling myself, and I have probably heard about as many excuses as the next fellow. Then many brethren wonder why we take so much time and spend so much money in finding a sponsor and getting our support! As the situation presently exists, it

just can't be helped. I am sure that all of us had much rather omit all of the traveling and asking one congregation after another to help us, and we will — if we can only find brethren that will help us sufficiently from the beginning.

Some leaders refuse to even allow preachers to speak to the congregation and to ask for help, and many others allow it but do not like it. But if these congregations were only taking the lead and were out looking for workers to go, this kind of thing would be eliminated. It is a shame that the church not only does not assume its responsibility in this, but even refuses to hear those who want to go. There is something wrong somewhere, but brethren should not take it out on the poor man who wants to go. Why should he be blamed and looked down on and even rejected when he is only trying to do what the Lord has asked him to do?

I certainly do not want to leave the impression that there are no good congregations, for there are many good and wonderful churches all over the brotherhood and I thank God for them. Many of them are not sending just one man, but many men. There are other congregations that are not sending now, but I believe they will in time as they are properly taught.

I am sure at the same time that there are congregations that, for one reason or another, just cannot send a man. In this case they can surely help support someone that another congregation is sponsoring. Surely **any** congregation that really **wants** to help send the gospel to other nations can do **something**. All it takes is the proper **desire**. Beyond that, almost every congregation in the States **could** be a sponsoring congregation right now if it wanted to be. Especially is this true if a congregation is able to have its own elders and

preacher, and is stable in doing its own local work.

If the church was challenged by such a program, I believe that the members of these many congregations would give more to help make the work possible, and would do more at home. Our great need today is to broaden our comprehension of what we are capable of doing.

### III. HOW CAN WE BUILD MORE INTEREST?

If congregations are offering excuses for not sending, then somehow, somehow, we must build more interest in mission work at home in order that the excuses might be removed. But how can we do this?

#### A. Let's begin with ourselves as individuals.

Perhaps we already see the need, but we complain that we are worshipping with a congregation that is just not interested. Well, I doubt if we are going to accomplish much by merely sitting around criticizing. We need to begin to do something constructive that will change things. Talk to other members who may have a similar interest. But don't just gripe. You and the others should get out and do more work on a local level. Then encourage the congregation to begin some classes on mission work. Talk to the elders about having some missionaries to come in to tell about their work and the needs. Talk to the preacher about preaching sermons along this line. Pray for world evangelism privately and publicly. Give of your money to help spread the

gospel of Christ. You can do a lot as an individual if you will.

**B. What about you as a preacher?**

You can do much in the congregation where you work to change things for better. You can engage in mission meetings, perhaps go on a campaign, tell your accomplishments in these efforts, preach sermons, encourage the church to give more to mission work, encourage the elders to have a missionary from time to time to visit, begin classes on this subject, put appropriate articles in the bulletin, use the bulletin board to call attention to what is being done around the world, have a missionary workshop, talk to the brethren about sponsoring a family, and greater than all — you can encourage them to send you and your family to a country where the gospel has not gone.

**C. As Bible teachers there is much you can do.**

In your classes you can begin to make points that will emphasize mission work and you can gradually lead your class into a deeper study of this subject. You can even encourage the elders to order materials for a class of this nature. You can use your bulletin board to dramatize the study. You can correspond with a missionary and take an interest in his work, reporting to your students and deepening their interests. The real education of the church lies in the classroom, and teachers need to realize

this.

**D. As the elders of a congregation, you have the responsibility of teaching and developing the church in this work.**

If you choose to do nothing, perhaps the congregation will do nothing. If you choose to become active in spreading the gospel at home and abroad then the church will respond. You can see to it that classes include the vital subject of mission work, that the preacher speaks on the challenges and needs of the world from time to time, that missionaries are invited to come, that a missionary workshop is conducted annually, that the members are kept informed about the Lord's work around the world by providing the necessary literature, that various workers are given monthly support, and that one or more men are sponsored by the local church. Then perhaps one, two, or more of the elders can visit from time to time the workers that are being sponsored, to see what is being done and to know the needs. Think of what a good effect this would have on the work!

Yes, there is much that can be done to build interest in mission work. We are gradually doing more along these lines, but there is still much to do. But whatever we do in the future will depend largely on the kind of teaching and encouragement we are given now, and on what the individual Christians do to spur on the church as a whole.

#### IV. IN WHAT WAYS CAN WE SEND?

Apart from sending the gospel by means of the Bible and literature, there are some other things we can do. If we cannot go in person, we can have a part in these ways:

*First*, we can help send by giving financial support directly to the individual going. The better way of doing this would be to send the money on a monthly basis, or whenever possible, to his sponsoring congregation. But usually such individual giving grows out of the fact that brethren want to help in spite of indifference of the congregation with which they are worshipping. This only goes to show that if the church itself would help more, brethren would back it and in the end there would be nothing lost financially, but much would have been gained.

*Second*, each congregation can assist other congregations to make it possible financially for one or more workers to be sent.

*Third*, and better still, the ideal thing would be for the individual congregation to sponsor a worker and if possible to give all of his support and work fund. Should the church do this, the members would more readily respond with contributions that might otherwise be sent to sister congregations as partial support of missionaries.

#### V. BECOME A SPONSOR.

Paul asked, "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" He was well aware of the importance of being sent, since he himself was sent out by the church at Antioch to make the various missionary journeys. Being sent is just as important today.



When we begin to think about a congregation sending a preacher today, we see that we have come to rely on a modern-day term to express what is involved. As far as the local congregation and the preacher may be concerned, the church is merely sending him to preach the gospel, with the necessary support to sustain him and his family and the work while there. But as far as the country to which he may be going is concerned they usually require the man to have a "sponsor." This just means that in most cases they require him to have someone, or some organization, that assumes his financial support while he is in their country.

The government of the country in which the family will be working wants to be sure that someone is standing behind them financially so that it will not eventually find itself in the embarrassing position of having to send the family home at its own expense. At the same time, the preacher and his family want to know that while they are away, they will be financially cared for. They will have enough problems without having to constantly worry about where the next meal is coming from.

There is nothing mysterious or difficult about this. In most cases, there are no unusual problems to get excited about. It is just a matter of finding a good man to work with and then agreeing for the next three or four years, or for the period desired, that the congregation will sponsor him or support him as he and his family go to a certain country to preach the gospel of Christ.

The congregation may be able to assume all of the support or it may be able to give only partial support. Nevertheless, the sponsoring congregation would promise to stand behind the preacher and assure him and his family that they will receive adequate support, travel expenses, etc., while

they are away.

The elders can appoint some good man in the congregation to serve as treasurer of the funds and to receive funds from other individuals and congregations who want to help financially. His job will be to put the funds in the bank, to pay the local bills, to see that the checks written on the fund by the missionary are cleared, to give a monthly report, etc.

Next, the elders or leaders of the congregation can appoint someone to assume the responsibility of receiving the preacher's monthly report and seeing to it that it is printed or mimeographed and then mailed out to all of the supporters and those who have a personal interest in this particular effort.

All of these things, and any other work that may be required, can easily be done by the local members. There will usually be those who will volunteer for these jobs and it just gives the elders the opportunity to put more members of the church to work.

## VI. RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVED BETWEEN THE SPONSOR AND THE WORKER.

The sponsor assumes financial support and guidance while the worker and his family are away. The elders and members should do everything possible from their side to cooperate with the missionary. The funds agreed on should be made available and all requests should be given prompt attention. Communication with the worker should be given prime importance.

The preacher and his family should keep the brethren well informed as to what is happening. He should be willing

to work with the sponsoring congregation, to work hard on the field to do the job that he was sent to do, and to handle the financial matters in a responsible manner.

Both the congregation and the preacher should understand one another well, should trust and respect one another, and have goals to work toward. It should be understood how much the salary will be, how much will be available for the work fund, for how long the work will continue, and what the future plans are for the work. Both should realize that they will be separated by great distances and therefore should be careful in dealing with one another so as not to cause a misunderstanding and thus to have an unhealthy situation to develop. Both should try not to be too demanding of the other, but to love one another and to try to be tolerant and understanding.

## VII. BLESSINGS OF SENDING.

While there are many blessings that come to those who go, there are likewise many blessings that come to those who send. Let us notice a few of them.

- A. The church is doing what it should do.
- B. Another preacher is able to go and fulfill his responsibility.
- C. The gospel will be taken to the lost in another part of the world.
- D. The church will be established in yet another country, city, or community; or if it is already there it will be further strengthened.
- E. The members will give more and do more at home when they realize that the church is truly at work.

- F. A tremendous example is set for others to follow.
- G. The church is able to see what it can do and therefore takes courage and launches out to do more.
- H. The local church grows as a result.
- I. It is a wonderful blessing and joy within itself to be able to share the gospel with others.
- J. The Lord is glorified.

## VIII. THE CURSE OF NOT SENDING.

Of course the very opposite of the foregoing is true when the church fails to send. Since sharing the gospel is the prime function of the church, if that work is neglected the church finds itself in the condition similar to that of an unused muscle of the body. It withers away, consuming itself. The end is disaster. **Nothing, no substitute program, can do for they body of Christ what his own plan will do.** He intended that we **go and preach.** We must do that or **die spiritually.**

## CONCLUSION

The church **must** take the gospel to the world. If we are members of a congregation that is not sending, we should begin to realize that there is something seriously wrong somewhere, and we should not rest until that is corrected. My brethren, to **send** means more than sending a local preacher to a **local** pulpit. This is important, I know, but we also must send workers to all of those areas of the world where the gospel has not gone. It is a responsibility, but it is a great blessing as well. When we think of it in that manner then perhaps we will do more of this type of work.

## QUESTIONS

1. Quote Romans 10:15.
2. Who has the responsibility of spreading the gospel?
3. Why have more workers not been sent?
4. How much does the average member know about taking the gospel to others?
5. Why has mission work been frowned on?
6. What is the mission of the church?
7. Why is it so urgent that the gospel be taken to others?
8. What kind of world are we living in?
9. How much do most people know about the world, outside of their own state?
10. What does dedication do for members and congregations?
11. List some of the excuses for not sending the gospel to others.
12. Give the answers to the excuses.
13. Why do brethren make excuses?
14. Can one excuse himself from doing what the Lord wants him to do?
15. Why would any congregation refuse to allow a missionary to come to speak?
16. Are all congregations in position to send a missionary to the field?
17. Mention some ways that we can use to build more interest in mission work in the church.
18. What can individual Christians do to encourage mission work?
19. What can the preacher do?
20. What can Bible teachers do?

21. What can the elders do?
22. In what ways can we send the gospel to others?
23. Define "sponsorship."
24. In what ways would the congregation be responsible to the missionary?
25. In what ways would the missionary be responsible to the congregation?
26. Discuss some of the blessings of sending.
27. What happens when the church does not send the gospel to others?
28. What does it mean to send forth the gospel?

## PROJECTS

1. Run a survey among the members and find out how many would be in favor of sponsoring a missionary in a foreign field.
2. Appoint someone to give a talk on "What it will mean to become a sponsoring congregation."
3. Make a study of the church at Antioch and its sponsorship of Paul, and give a report on it.
4. Take a count of the members of the class and find out how many would be willing to go to a foreign field to preach the gospel.
5. If possible have a missionary to come to speak to the class.

## LESSON SEVEN

### WHY WE ARE ABLE

Matthew 19:26

#### INTRODUCTION

As small as the church may be in numbers, and as great as the task may be to evangelize the whole world, nevertheless we are **able** to do it. Yet, it is one thing to say that we **can** do it, and it is a far different thing to **do** it. But to convince you that it is possible, I want to give you a number of reasons for my conviction. Of course even though these reasons are true, we will never complete the job unless we make a beginning, backed by the necessary amount of effort. But it is hoped that once we see that it is possible, this realization will give us the initiative to do the work.

#### DISCUSSION

##### I. THE BIBLE HAS BEEN CIRCULATED THROUGH- OUT THE WORLD.

The Bible has been translated into the major languages of the world and even into most of the minor languages, with new editions being made regularly. This means that the day will soon come when the Bible will exist in every

living language on the face of the earth. All of this has been done, and is being done, by dedicated men and women who are desirous of seeing the Bible published in every man's own language.

The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in all the world. It is the most printed book. There are more copies of it in circulation than of any other, and annually it continues to be the world's best selling book. There are numerous societies around the world that do nothing else but print and circulate the Bible. This is in addition to all of the printers and publishers and religious groups that engage in this type of work. Regardless of where you might go in the world, in all of the major cities and many of the smaller ones, you would find copies of the Bible.

Thus, since the Bible has been so circulated and so used, it has to some degree acquainted man everywhere with Christ and with the religion of Christianity. The soil has been prepared to this extent for the preaching of the gospel in every country in the world.

Wherever I have gone I have been able to find the Bible, and this means a great deal to the work. It is equally true that there is no problem when one wants to buy Bibles for distribution — they are available. This also is a tremendous help. Thank God for the wide circulation of the Bible.

## II. THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD.

In spite of the fact that most people who have accepted Christianity have accepted a corrupted form of it, and thus the majority of the people have no conception of its purity,



still it has had an influence upon the world for good.

As bad as the world may be, it is as good as it is because of the influence the Bible and Christianity have had upon it. This influence has reached into all of those parts of the world where the people follow other religions, altering and modifying those religions in various ways. Thus when going to the people with Christianity they have already heard of it, know something about it, and the majority are anxious to learn more about it. I have been amazed to find in Hindu India a great hunger for Christianity. Hundreds and even thousands would write in requesting literature and the Bible, etc., saying that they want to know more about the Bible, Christ, and Christianity. The same could be said in other countries where other religions are in the majority.

With the influence of Christianity upon the world, the time is right for us to go forth to evangelize.

### III. PEACE IS TO BE FOUND IN MOST OF THE WORLD.

Although war is raging in places like Vietnam, Nigeria, and a few other areas, and there are riots in various cities around the globe, nevertheless, as a whole, peace reigns over the earth. Even in the places mentioned, it is possible to visit to preach the gospel.

With peace existing in the world, it means that people are able to travel from country to country, to live in foreign nations for the purpose of working, preaching, and influencing them for good.

On the other hand, as terrible as war may be, this has been a means of arousing the church in the past, scattering Christians, and bringing about the establishment of the

church in many places in the world where it might not have existed otherwise.

So whether in war or peace, there are many opportunities to spread the gospel of Christ.

#### IV. THERE ARE MANY AVENUES THROUGH WHICH TO WORK.

While we have depended to a great extent on missionaries spreading the gospel, there are many others that can equally teach the truth, and in some cases do so where others cannot. Today, construction projects may be found around the world. Big business is world business. One may practically teach in the country of his choice, and especially is this true wherever American schools are located. Tourists may be found everywhere. Government workers may naturally be found in the capitals of most nations of the world. Service men are stationed in many countries. In all of these professions and services one will find some members of the church. Thus, as they go on with their normal work, they can also serve the Lord. This is happening now in Iran, in Turkey, in Germany, in Vietnam, and in many other parts of the world, and more of it could be done if more brethren would seek these types of jobs through which to serve.

I have often said that the church could easily be planted in practically every major city of the world, and many of the lesser ones, if American Christians who live in these places would put forth a little effort to teach those around them. Some do, but many don't, and often it is not that they are not faithful, but just that they are not aware of the opportunities and do not have the know-how. We need to educate the church on this point.

In addition to members of the church being scattered everywhere, radio, television, literature, and many other means are at our disposal through which to evangelize the world.

## V. WE HAVE THE TRUTH.

The wonderful thing about the Lord's church is that we have the truth and we know we have it. This should be a great incentive within itself to make us want to get it to the rest of the world. Having such truth certainly carries with it a great responsibility, because if we **have** it, and **know** we have it, and then fail to take it to the remainder of the world, we are knowingly keeping from man that which can save him. This would be comparable to a doctor knowingly refusing to give to his patients the medicine they need to save them from death.

We must realize, though, that even though we have the truth, unless we are willing to share it with others it will not do them any good and neither will it save us. The truth can save if applied, but it also can condemn if mis-handled or not used. We need to be haunted by that realization.

## VI. THE LORD HAS COMMANDED US TO GO.

The Lord has commanded us as individual Christians, and as the church, to take the gospel to the world. We have this clearly stated in Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16 and in many other similar scripture references. This duty is also taught in the example of the early church as it launched out to preach the word to every living soul. Now,

if the Lord has commanded us to evangelize the world then it is altogether **possible** for us to do so. Surely, He would not ask us to do a thing, and then condemn us for failing to do it, if it were an impossible task in the first place.

Someone might point out that there are more people today than there were in the days of the early church. That is true, but we have many additional mediums through which to work, too. Therefore it would be just as easy today to evangelize the world as it was in the days of the apostles, with the same amount of dedication. Actually, it would seem much easier, considering what they had in contrast to what we have. So, if we fail to evangelize the world in our own time, we will have no one to blame for it but ourselves.

## VII. GOD WILL HELP US.

We already have the **truth**, we have the command to go, and we have the Lord's **assurance** that he will be with us (Matthew 28:20). What **more** is needed? If the job was ours to do alone, we know we could not do it, but God has promised to help us. He has provided us with the opportunity to call upon him for any help we need (Luke 10:2), and he has given us the Christian armor (Ephesians 6), along with the sword of the truth (Hebrews 4:12) to enable us to defeat the enemy.

Why can't we realize that if the Lord wants us to do a job, he will help us do it? Why can't we realize that we are serving a living God, and that with him **all** things are possible? (Mark 10:27).

If we'll just look to God he will help us to preach the gospel at home and abroad too. He will help congregations

to be able to sponsor and to send men to the field. He will help preachers to find support and sponsors. He will help us to get visas and to swing the doors open to the countries we want to enter. He will help us to be successful in doing his work. Yes, he will help us to do all of this, and hundreds and thousands of other things — **everything** that is needed. He will help us **if we will seek** to do his will. If we will **bend our will to fit his will**, and if we will live by whatever is his will.

When we fail to go, it is not that it is God's will, but it is **our will**. The reason doors remain closed is because we don't put forth any real efforts to open them. The reason we **fail** is because we are trying to do things **our way**.

If we'll pray to God for help, and ask him to guide us in his providence, and then accept whatever follows as being his will, doing all that we can to accomplish his will, then he will help us and guide us, and will see to it that we are successful in reaching the lost.

We were told that we couldn't go to India, but because we looked to God instead of man, in time we were successful in going. Who opened the door? God did. In the meantime, other countries and other cities were able to hear the gospel. We will be amazed at what can be done if we'll only try the Lord. He wants to help us if we will let him. He wants to work through us, if we will be tools in his hands.

When God is with us, how can we fail? This is the way to look at it, and there is really no other way that a Christian can feel.

## VIII. THE CHURCH HAS THE WEALTH TO DO THE JOB.

We are well able to take the world for Christ. We have the material means, the leadership, the tools, and all that it takes to do the job, and these are just more reasons why the responsibility is upon us to do it.

However, there is one lesson that we need to learn: that it is more blessed to give than it is to receive (Acts 20:35), and that the more we sow the more we will reap (II Corinthians 9:6).

The church has had great material wealth through the years, but nothing in comparison to what might have been if we had given more of it to the Lord (Matthew 6:33). At the same time, had we used our wealth as we should have, the church would no doubt be many times larger than it is, there would be more to give to help with the work, there would be more to go, and there would be more help in evangelizing the world. All of this is closely related to the way we use what the Lord has given us.

As blessed as we have been, many of us talk about how poor we are and how we would like to have more so we can do more. But if we fail to use what we have, we would fail to use more if we had it. We need to read the parable of the talents again (Matthew 25).

It is not that we are not financially able to evangelize the world, but the problem is that our wealth is not used for the right purpose. While we have been so concerned about home, buildings, more preachers for ourselves, etc., we could have been thinking about reaching more of the world with the gospel. I have noticed that every time the church gets in position to begin to be financially able to launch out in helping to evangelize the world, the congregations manage to come up with some new project to take their money and thus to keep it at home. If it is not a new building,

then it is a new educational wing, another preacher, an educational director, a local orphan's home, etc. I am not saying that these are not good, but when so many things are done at home, and so many more local workers are put on the payroll, then it just kills all hope of ever getting into position to reach beyond the local work. In this case, perhaps it does become wrong. Too much of any one thing is just too much.

We need to use wisdom and foresight in spending the Lord's money. For instance, I know of some places where small fortunes have been poured into radio programs for years and years. Well, it is wonderful that the gospel can be preached by means of radio, but where so much of it is done for so long, then either most of the people should have already been converted, or perhaps the money could be more wisely used by putting it on sending the gospel to some place where the people have not heard it so many times. We need to remember that it is forbidden to continually offer the truth to those who have shown that they do not want it (Matthew 7:6).

We have been so financially blessed for so long, but have done so little with it. I am wondering how long the Lord is going to continue to wait for us. You know, the day may well come when we will not be so blessed and we will not have the opportunities we now possess. Or the day may come in which some other country will be given the chance to succeed where we have failed. Watch out! **Things will not continue forever as they are going now!**

We need to begin right now (and we are already years late) to properly use the money entrusted in our care (Luke 12:42-48; I Corinthians 4:1; I Peter 4:10). Come on, let's give more in order to enable the church to give

more and to do more. Let's also urge the congregations where we worship to do more for the world with the money it has. Now we have the wonderful opportunity to do so, and we need to take full advantage of it while it is ours.

## IX. THE DOLLAR IS INTERNATIONAL.

Did you know that the U. S. dollar is in greater demand in every country than any other money in the world? Even in the Moscow airport, the **dollar** is used for prices and not rubles! Many people had much rather have the dollar than their own currency. Prices are often quoted in U. S. dollars, and when people travel they try to obtain dollars because they can be spent **anywhere** for air tickets, hotel bills, food, gifts, etc. Few other currencies enjoy such popularity and confidence.

What does all of this mean? It just means that in the providence of God, American Christians have been given the opportunity to go all over the world by means of the U. S. dollar to preach the gospel. You can't fully appreciate that statement until you get out of America and begin traveling and trying to work in other lands. The lack of financial difficulties can make all the difference.

## X. ENGLISH IS UNIVERSAL.

Although the world is full of languages and dialects, there is one language that is known and respected and spoken to some extent all over the world. That language once was French. Now it is English. That means that we as Christians can go anywhere in the world and find people who speak and read English. In many places we can do a



good work in English alone. In other countries, we can use English until we can learn the local language.

Look at God's providential care for the spreading of the gospel: Suppose a country like India was fully evangelized and the church was strong there. And suppose it recognized its responsibility to take the gospel to the rest of the world. What **would** it do? What **could** it do? With the language and money situations being as they are, it would be hopeless. Why? In the first place, more than two hundred dialects are spoken there, and only a small minority of the people could **converse** with the other peoples of the world. Secondly, the Indian government will not allow an Indian to take out more than about \$10.00 worth of rupees. But even if he was able to take out rupees — all that he might want to take — he wouldn't have that wealth at his disposal because most Indians are miserably poor. And if he was one of the rich few, and could take millions of rupees abroad with him, where would he spend them? The Indian currency would not even be accepted in most countries!

This only illustrates again the fact that the Lord has blessed us with the **gospel**, with fluency in the **international language**, with the **material wealth** with which to do the job, and with the **right currency** for use all over the world. The Lord's providence is amazing indeed.

## XI. THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TODAY IS SUCH THAT THE WORLD CAN BE EVANGELIZED NOW.

The world was evangelized in the days of the apostles, although they had to depend on slow methods of travel:

walking, the donkey, boats, etc. But think of the kinds of transportation we have today: cars, buses, trains, ships, and jet lines to speed us around the world. Today we can go from one side of the globe to the other in a matter of a few hours. Transportation-wise, the world is very small, so this increases the opportunity of evangelizing the world.

## **XII. THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM TODAY IS ANOTHER MEANS THAT MAY BE USED TO EVANGELIZE THE WORLD.**

Again, in the days of the apostles, they had to teach the world by word of mouth or by means of single copies of scriptures made on parchment. Today, one can remain in one spot and preach to practically all the world by means of radio, television, and literature. What **could** be done through such mass media is simply amazing. But the vision of what **could** be done makes our shortcomings that much more glaringly clear. We are presently doing only a small fraction of what we are capable of doing. Just think: we should be able to **evangelize the world today** through the powerful **communications system** alone! What more could the Lord provide us with to accomplish this great task that he hasn't already given us? Think!

## **XIII. WE HAVE THE RESPECT OF MOST OF THE WORLD.**

Americans have the respect of the world, and we would be received with outstretched arms in most countries today. The very fact that we are from this country makes us welcome. The people want to know us, they want to be our

friends, they want to learn about our thinking and our way of life. This presents a wonderful opportunity to live among them, to work with them, and to influence them for Christ.

Wherever my family and I have gone, as Americans, we have been well-treated. We have not found anyone shunning us, or trying to have us thrown out of their country. Rather, they think of us as coming from a rich land, from a highly developed nation, and they seem to have great respect for our country. As I said, this creates a situation in which we can use our earthly citizenship to further the Lord's cause.

But one thing we need to guard against: we are not to go forth to make Americans, or to convert anyone to our politics, but to Christianity. On the other hand, neither do we have to be ashamed of our country, or to criticize it, but to seek to use our background to promote the Lord's church and his cause.

#### XIV. WE HAVE THE KNOW-HOW TO DO THE JOB.

Along with all of the other assets, we as members of the church have the know-how to do the job. We have the background, the teaching, the education, the financial needs, and the tools with which to work. The church has already been planted in many countries around the world, and there is no reason why we cannot take the gospel to all of the other lands. We know what is needed and we know how to do the job. Now it is just a matter of shouldering the responsibility and doing it.

We are just as capable today, when it comes to leadership ability, as the Christians of any previous generation.

What we need is the vision and the faith to do what we should. If we'll just use our abilities there is no end to what we can accomplish for the Lord.

## CONCLUSION

Isn't it wonderful that we have all of these things combined to make it possible for us to evangelize the world? And even more wonderful is the fact that the world will respond to our efforts. It seems that man everywhere is hungry and thirsting after righteousness. He is not satisfied with what he has. He is looking for something of deeper value, and we can give man the pure gospel.

How long we will have the means through which to work, I do not know. I only know that we have them now and we need to use them while we do have them and while we can help man. Otherwise they may be taken from us — they may anyway, since we have already waited this long.

Neither do I know how long the world will be in a receptive mood. It appears from all standpoints that mankind at this time, as a whole, is ready for the gospel. That is why we should move now. To wait another generation could result in an entirely different kind of reception to our message. If we fail to do what we can now, the world may turn to something else and our great chance will have been lost.

Don't say we **can't**. Say we **can**. We **can**, for with God all things are possible. We had better believe that.

## QUESTIONS

1. Is the church able to evangelize the world today?

2. Do most members believe this?
3. Where has the Bible been circulated?
4. What is the world's best seller?
5. Does Christianity have any influence in the world today?
6. How much influence does it have?
7. How does Christianity measure up in other parts of the world where there are different religions to compete with?
8. To what extent is there peace in the world today?
9. What does peace in the world make possible?
10. Is the gospel welcomed in war-torn areas?
11. What opportunities come out of war?
12. List some of the avenues through which Christians may work to share the gospel with others.
13. Where may American Christians be found?
14. What does it mean to have the truth?
15. What responsibility does having the truth carry with it?
16. Who has commanded us to go?
17. Give the great commission.
18. Would the Lord command the impossible?
19. What will the Lord do to help us evangelize the world?
20. Is the church able to evangelize the world?
21. Explain what has happened to much of our wealth.
22. Will things always continue as they are now?
23. To what extent may the U. S. dollar help us to take the gospel to others around the world?
24. How can the English language help us evangelize the world?
25. What does the transportation of today have to do

- with world evangelism?
26. What role may communications play?
  27. What does it mean to be an American around the world?
  28. In what ways do we have the know-how to do the job?
  29. Will the world respond to our efforts?
  30. How long will we continue to have these opportunities?
  31. What if we fail? Who will be responsible?

### PROJECTS

1. Can you think of other ways in which we are able to evangelize the world?
2. Have someone to give a talk on "Why we have not evangelized the world."
3. Do you have someone in your class that has traveled outside of the United States that could give some of his impressions?
4. Let various ones explain what the great commission means to them personally.
5. Discuss ways and means by which the members of the class may encourage the congregation to send a missionary to another part of the world.

## LESSON EIGHT

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVANGELIZING

Galatians 6:10

#### INTRODUCTION

If the world is not evangelized today, we cannot say that it was because of lack of opportunity. There are not only opportunities to preach and teach God's word and to do good, but there are many more opportunities than we can possibly take advantage of at this time. This would continue to remain true regardless of how many more entered the work, inasmuch as when efforts are put forth to take advantage of the existing opportunities, then they begin to multiply. It is similar to converting a person: in most cases, that opens the door for the possibility of converting many more as you work through him.

There are tremendous opportunities to further the Lord's cause both at home and abroad, both for those who cannot go and for those who are able to go. This is so thrilling to those who really have the Lord's cause at heart. On the other hand, it saddens us to think of the little that is being done in comparison to what **could** be done.

In this lesson we are going to consider what can be done by those at home and what can be done by those who go into the field itself.

## DISCUSSION

### I. OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO CAN GO IN PERSON.

The world is a big place. While there are opportunities all over the world to preach and teach God's word, the opportunities may vary from country to country and even from place to place within any given country. Also it should be kept in mind that the needs may vary from place to place, making it possible for a variety of people to be useful, with varied backgrounds, professions, and abilities.

Most any member of the church can go to another part of the world to work for the Lord if he really wants to go. This is the problem — getting him to the point where he wants to go. Once this hurdle is passed, the rest comes easier. He may go with the support of the church, with partial support, or without any support. He may go to do full-time work, to work with others, or to work as he has opportunity. But let us notice some of the avenues of service:

#### A. Opportunities to go.

1. *You can go to preach, supported by the church.*

Perhaps you have been preaching full-time for some time. You have training, experience, and a good background. Don't you think it is time for you to do some mission work? It could change your life. You will be so happy that you went. Sure, you can find excuses for



not going, but you will probably find it difficult to come up with any legitimate reasons. You must realize that you have just as much responsibility of taking the gospel to others as the next fellow. Besides the whole church won't fold up if you leave for a while.

Or, although you don't preach full-time right now, perhaps you have had a good bit of experience in preaching, and therefore you may decide to begin doing foreign work. I have seen good men like this go and do a wonderful work. As a matter of fact, we are looking more and more to people like you to go, since it is almost impossible to tear preachers away from the larger congregations.

Perhaps you are not even a preacher, but you may want to go to do personal work, to engage in Bible correspondence work, or to help out in many other ways. We have had quite a number to do this and they have been worth so much in helping to advance the cause of Christ in different parts of the world. As a matter of fact, we need many, many more to go to help with this kind of work. They may be of any age, married or unmarried.

2. *You may go without the support of the church.*

You might be in one of any number of professions that would enable you to go to another part of the world with your secular work, and there to plant the cause of Christ or to

assist those who are already there. You may go as a construction worker, as a government worker, as a school teacher, as a businessman, etc. Wherever I have gone I have found members of the church who are in position to do great things for Christ, if they would. Actually, we need dedicated people with professions that will enable them to go all over the world with their work, but to take Christ with them. We need to be training our young men and women who are Christians to enter such professions with the purpose of being able to help spread the cause of Christ. This is being done by some, but many, many others are needed. As you think about this, consider the example of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-4).

You may be in a branch of the Armed Services and be sent to different parts of the world. As a Christian, you can locate other Christians in these places and begin to conduct worship services, and then you can work together to get the gospel to the local people. After completing your duty in the Services you may want to return to resume this work. Many have done this and perhaps the course of the world has already been changed by this very type of dedication to Christ.

You may be retired from your business or profession and you may be financially able to go to some part of the world to establish the church or to assist the workers in some other area. In this way you may render a great work,

where otherwise you might sit around home and accomplish practically nothing.

In these ways, and perhaps others, you can help to spread the gospel, and the church is left free to use its resources to support those who could not go otherwise, and to do other worthy works.

#### **B. Opportunities in the field.**

Just because you may go into another part of the world, that will not mean that everyone there will want the gospel. Many are not even aware of what it is, or that they do need it. This is where you come in. You are going to preach the gospel, not just to baptize and send back glowing reports. It is wonderful to be able to baptize those who have been converted, but this takes teaching and time to bring them to this point. On arriving you will begin to discover that there are many opportunities, and more and more will develop the longer you stay and the more you do.

Sometimes brethren are afraid to go because they will be dealing with another country, another people, another culture, another language, etc. They fear that they will not be able to communicate with the people and to influence them. But these fears should be discarded, because it won't take long to get settled down, to become acquainted, and to see that there is a great deal that can be done.

Let's think of some of the opportunities that may be encountered.

1. *Personal contact.*

From the beginning you'll be in contact with people. It won't matter about the color of their skin, their language, or a lot of other things. The point is that you'll be dealing with people in finding a place to live, meeting your neighbors, purchasing your household goods, buying your food, etc. Get to know them, give them a calling card, take down their names and address, visit with them, talk to them, send them literature, invite them to worship, study with them, etc. Before you know it you'll be baptizing some of them. Now is there anything hard or frightening about that? Of course not. So don't underestimate yourself. Reason that if the other fellow can do it, you can too. As you try, you'll be amazed at the results that will come. Try it, and see for yourself.

2. *Advertising.*

You'll have many opportunities to advertise the work, and you need to take advantage of every one possible.

Advertise the worship service of the church. Advertise your Bible correspondence course. Advertise your meetings. You may do this through the newspapers, handbills, literature, and so on.

In addition to carrying ads, many newspapers will take "teaching ads," articles on Bible subjects. This is a wonderful medium through which to preach Christ, and I would

encourage you to use it as much as finances will permit.

3. *Bible correspondence work.*

Here is a wonderful opportunity to reach hundreds and thousands of people that you perhaps would not be able to teach otherwise. People of many countries are anxious to study and learn, and especially is this true of the younger generation. With the proper courses, and a good follow-up program, this can lead to the conversion of many.

Through this type of work you can have contacts from almost the very beginning and therefore, the opportunities to teach them by correspondence and perhaps also by personal study. In the various places that we have been, many of the prospects came through this method and also many of our conversions.

4. *Literature work.*

Along with Bible correspondence work, additional teaching can be done through tracts, magazines, and books. This is a great field within itself and we really need dedicated men who will spend all of their time in doing this work.

I have often said that if countries in Asia, South America, Africa, and other areas of the world, could just be sowed down with good Christian literature, over a period of time, it would result in hundreds, thousands, and

perhaps millions being converted to Christ. But we can't very well get that result when we print a thousand tracts from time to time and then slowly scatter them among millions of souls. We have the opportunity at this time to use literature effectively and we need to take advantage of it. We don't know just how long there will be a hungry audience for such teaching.

5. *Filmstrips.*

The people we have worked among love the filmstrips. Actually they love to see pictures, and so the filmstrips become a powerful medium through which to teach and convert them. This didn't work too well in Pakistan because of the teaching of Islam on religious pictures, but in Ceylon and India it proved to be one of the best ways to get a crowd of people.

Brother Carl Johnson in South India rigged up his Jeep so he could run his projector off of it, and then could go to the villages and there gather the people to show the filmstrips and to teach them the word of God. It proved to be very successful.

6. *Gospel meetings.*

Another wonderful method we have used was to have gospel meetings very often, especially if we could have guest preachers coming in from other countries. Because of this we tried

to contact every preacher coming through about the possibility of conducting a meeting for us.

7. *Radio and television.*

In some of the countries, the gospel may be preached through radio and television. In other places only radio is in use for the present.

Brother Mack Lyon told me that he had a TV program every Sunday night in Perth, Australia. Just think of the people that must have been reached through this effort, and the good that was done.

More radio and television will probably be available in the future and we need to be ready to take advantage of it.

8. *Schools.*

There are several types of schools being operated at this time. Some colleges offer recognized credits, and in addition are the Bible training schools. Brethren operate grammar schools in some countries. In others, the workers concentrate on short Bible schools. All of these are good and much can be accomplished through them.

One of the great problems in the foreign field is to educate and train workers. Especially in undeveloped countries it is not wise to send men to the States for their training, since the majority would never return home, and if they did they would have to come back

practically as American missionaries. So the solution is to try to establish schools in their own countries, preferably, and to give them the teaching and training there. Many teachers are needed for this work alone.

There are many other countries and many methods may be employed to take advantage of them, but the important thing is to take advantage of them right now.

Don't forget, there is plenty of room for you to work, if you want to go. There is no reason why anyone who wants to preach or to work in any way should not have the opportunity to do so. There are whole countries, with millions and millions of people, where you are needed and can do a great work. And just because you are not effective in one area doesn't necessarily mean that you wouldn't be effective in another. The point is, regardless of our personalities, our likes and dislikes, our backgrounds, our abilities, etc., if we are Christians and want to serve the Lord, there is a place for us.

## II. OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT GO IN PERSON.

Just because you cannot go in person as a preacher, or teacher, or personal worker, that doesn't mean that you cannot go. Just because you are unable to go to a far away place to preach and teach the gospel, that does not mean that you cannot help. Actually, someone must send. Someone must support those who can go. Someone must stand behind those who are willing to go. Those who remain at home, as they do what they can to send, and support the



efforts of those abroad, are just as important as those who go. What could we do without brethren at home?

So first of all, don't feel that you are not needed and not wanted just because you can't go to the front line. Neither do I want to leave that impression, although there is a danger of this since we emphasize so much the importance of going personally. I can tell you that I have been, but I could not have gone had it not been for so many wonderful brethren at home who made it possible for me to go. I have often said that if I have accomplished anything at all, much of the credit must be given to my brethren at home who have so faithfully stood behind me.

Thank God for those of you who realize that even though you can't go in person, there is something you can do. Thank God for you preachers who can't go but who will preach, support, and back those who are able to go, instead of turning sour and opposing interest in foreign work. Thank God for the good elders and deacons and congregations who sponsor and send.

I would like for you to begin to think about what you can do.

#### **A. As a congregation.**

1. You can sponsor a family (or more) to go.
2. You can give support, or partial support at least, to one family or more.
3. You can help various ones with their travel funds.
4. You can help supply a work fund.
5. You can help by providing funds for Bible courses, Bibles, radio programs, etc.

6. You can send an elder, or elders, from time to time to see the work firsthand and to encourage it.
7. You can gather Christian books, clothes, etc., that might be sent to help with the work. (Work closely with the man in the field on these things).
8. You can send your preacher over for some meetings.
9. You can stay in constant contact with the worker and his family and show that you are concerned about them and what they are doing.
10. You can have special prayer regularly for the family.
11. You can encourage other workers to go.
12. You can make a study of mission work and the needs.
13. You can keep the congregation informed and encouraged in the work.
14. You can keep the local community informed by issuing news reports for the paper and having interviews on radio and television.

**B. As an individual Christian.**

1. You can support the local congregation in its mission program.
2. You can give as you have been prospered to make it possible for the church to do more.
3. You can let the missionaries coming through know that you are behind them.

4. You can give an extra contribution to help visiting missionaries raise necessary funds.
5. You can pray for those workers at home and abroad, calling them by name and remembering their particular needs.
6. You can write those in the field occasionally, but remember to write letters that will be helpful and encouraging and not just something to kill his time.
7. You might be able personally to furnish something that would be of great help to the work.
8. You might be able to work with the elders in some special capacity in the mission program.
9. You could donate Christian books, etc., to be sent for work.
10. You can encourage other members to have an interest.
11. You can send personal contributions to help with radio and literature preaching at home and abroad.

As both the congregation and the individual Christian explore the possibilities of what they can do to help send the gospel into all the world, they will discover that there is no end to the ways to help. The sad part is that the majority sit with folded hands, not aware that there is something they can do. And, sadder still, some don't want to do anything.

The question is asked sometimes, "But what can we do?" That question either suggests ignorance or a lack of interest. In either case, it isn't good. Those who really want to do something will have no problem in finding work

to do. Their problem will be trying to take advantage of the opportunities that they see.

There is a work for the congregation to do, and there are also things that the individual Christian can do, but both should work together as far as possible on these matters. The reason many times that the church doesn't accomplish what it should, and thus the members go off on their own program of works, is simply because the church does not challenge them and encourage them to work through it. For instance, if you have a congregation that is not helping anyone in the mission field, but several of the members want to see some of the money going to help workers in other parts of the world, what is the result? Simply that the church goes one way and those members go another. They send their money somewhere else to help preach the gospel in other areas. Now if that congregation had been wise, it would have begun to engage in some of that type of work, and then it would have had the cooperation of those members; the members would have put that extra money in the collection plate, and then the church could have done the work that it was obligated to do. That is the way the Lord would have it to be.

### III. OPPORTUNITIES FOR MASS EVANGELISM.

There are several ways today in which the gospel may be taken to the whole world within a very short period of time. Of course they will not eliminate the missionary and the importance of his work, for in spite of all that may be done there will always be the need for the worker to go forth to follow-up on the mass teaching by private instruction, baptizing, establishing congregations, and further teaching the

members so that they will grow and develop, learning to teach others, to help those in need, and to do good works in general. But in order that mass sowing of the seed may be done initially, here are some of the opportunities that we have for proclaiming God's word on a large scale:

**A. Radio and television.**

The Herald of Truth and World Radio have done much in the United States to get the gospel to every person here, for if the truth were known, probably everyone here has, in one way or the other, heard the gospel or had the opportunity if he so desired. Also, these programs have done a great deal to take the gospel to other countries of the world. This is wonderful and we pray that they can do more in the years to come.

Apart from these programs, there are many local programs all over the world, and I am sure there will be more with the passing of time.

Perhaps the day will come in which all of the people of all the world can hear the gospel at one time by radio and television.

**B. The printed word.**

In addition to the circulation of the Bible itself, another way in which the people of the world may be reached on a mass scale is through the medium of literature. The denominations have used this method profitably for many years, and wherever you go you can find Billy Graham's writings in various languages. You can also find Oral Robert's tracts and T. L. Osborn's tracts.

Herbert Armstrong's magazine, *The Plain Truth*, is also widely circulated. Although some of these men have never visited many of these countries, yet they have greater followings than the local heads of State. Think, too, about all of the literature that the Jehovah's Witnesses put out. Surely this should open our eyes to the possibility of what can be done — as is so often true, the children of darkness are wiser than the children of light (Luke 16:8).

I would say that through literature alone we could practically reach all of the world with the gospel — but when will we put this medium to use on the scale it deserves?

#### C. Sending workers.

Also it is possible for us to reach all of the world with the gospel if we would only send the necessary workers into the field. We could, but we haven't — and won't — unless we begin to do a lot more than we are doing now.

When we think of all of these possibilities and opportunities, it just makes us sick to think of what could be done. Brethren, let's wake up and go to work and not rest until we have completed the task before us. We'll never do it by crying about our failures and what might be. To get the job done, we'll just have to go to work and do it.

### CONCLUSION

What are we doing now? What can we do? What are we

going to do? This is up to you and me. The opportunities are before us. James reminds us, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

## QUESTIONS

1. Quote Galatians 6:10.
2. Are there any opportunities today to evangelize the world?
3. How may one go in person?
4. Who can go?
5. What is one's greatest hindrance in going?
6. Explain how one can go, supported by the church.
7. Explain how one might go even though he is not supported by the church.
8. List some opportunities in the field itself.
9. Discuss how one might go about making personal contact with the people.
10. Give some opportunities in advertising.
11. Talk about the importance of Bible correspondence work.
12. Why is literature work so important?
13. What can be done through filmstrips?
14. How can gospel meetings help?
15. To what extent are radio and television being used today?
16. What kinds of schools are being operated now in the mission field?
17. What is one of our greatest problems in the mission field?
18. Can you think of some other opportunities that

- might be found in the field?
19. Just because you cannot go in person, does that mean you cannot go at all?
  20. Give some opportunities for those who cannot go in person.
  21. What can the congregation do?
  22. What can the individual Christian do?
  23. What do some of the members do when the congregation fails to do what it can to take the gospel to others?
  24. What are the opportunities for mass evangelism?
  25. Discuss what the church is doing now to take the gospel to the world.
  26. Is it doing enough?
  27. How can it do more?
  28. What are you willing to do to help?

## PROJECTS

1. Discuss the opportunities to preach the gospel at home.
2. Discuss the opportunities that you have to preach the gospel abroad.
3. Put forth an effort to begin a Bible class in another part of the city or in a nearby community where the church does not exist.
4. Gather some of your friends together and have the preacher to come and preach the gospel.



5. Consider the various methods that the church is using there to spread the gospel.
6. Encourage each member of the class to begin to give out tracts on a regular basis.
7. Place tract racks in different parts of the city and keep tracts in them.
8. Put announcements in the papers concerning the services and work of the church.

## LESSON NINE

### NEED OF CHANGING ATTITUDES

Matthew 22:37-39; Acts 9; 26:9

#### INTRODUCTION

Before we can evangelize the world, we are going to have to change our minds about a number of things. We will have to learn some lessons and then apply them. We will need to reverse our thinking on several points and we will have to stop being negative and begin to be positive.

We have the strength, the material means, and the know-how to evangelize the world, but we aren't doing it because of our basic thinking. Furthermore, we will continue to think in this manner unless we have some of these things called to our attention. It will thus be our purpose in this lesson to deal with some of these attitudes.

#### DISCUSSION

##### I. THE ATTITUDE THAT WE CAN STAY AT HOME AND PREACH THE GOSPEL.

Many of our elders, preachers, and members see no need of taking the gospel beyond their own immediate areas, and certainly not to another country. They feel that there is yet

plenty to do here.

How many times have you heard sayings like this: "You don't have to get sea-sick to preach the gospel" or "You don't have to get your feet wet to preach the gospel?" Of course these statements of ridicule are gradually dying out because brethren are beginning to learn better.

We are to preach the gospel to those that are around us, but Jesus also said that we should take it to the rest of the world. This is what Christianity is all about — the sharing of the good news with others, trying to help the rest of the world. What kind of Christianity do we have if we are willing to sit at home and let the masses of humanity die and go to hell?

## II. THE ATTITUDE THAT AS LONG AS THERE ARE PEOPLE AT HOME WHO HAVE NOT OBEYED THE GOSPEL THEN OUR DUTY IS HERE.

According to that reasoning, the apostles would have never left Jerusalem, and we likewise would never leave our own country, because the time will never come in which we can say that all of the people here have obeyed the gospel of Christ.

We should be concerned about our own people, and we should do what we can to convert them, but after awhile it becomes evident that they have had sufficient opportunity to hear and obey, and so then it is time to go elsewhere and give the gospel to others.

Why should we spend all of our lives preaching to our own people when there are millions who have never heard it the first time? But we continue to preach to hundreds

and thousands and millions of people by word of mouth, the printed page, radio and T. V., and what is the result? Only a few are brought to the truth. But it took a number of people to do it, lots of time, all of the modern means of communication, and hundreds and thousands of dollars. Oh, brethren why should we forever cast our pearls before swine?

### III. THE ATTITUDE THAT OUR COUNTRY HAS NOT YET HEARD THE GOSPEL.

As much as the gospel has been preached in America then there should be a congregation in every community of every state. Why do I say that? Because our country has the Bible and has had the influence of Christianity from the beginning. Not only so, there is every opportunity for every soul here to know the truth. The gospel is going forth constantly by literature and radio all over the nation, and there are preachers and congregations in the majority of the major cities and every state. Further, I dare say that there would be few cities in the United States without one or more faithful or unfaithful Christians living in them. If we took our religion with us as did the early Christians, we would have mass evangelism of America overnight.

If there is any country in the world today that has been evangelized then it would appear that America would be that country. If it has not yet been done then may I ask, how long is it going to take us? Another hundred years? Fifty years? How long, my brethren?

How long will we use this kind of reasoning to evade our responsibility to the rest of the world?

We must change our attitude and realize that we are not

the only people on the earth. Neither are we the only people God loves. We are not the only people who need the gospel. God loved the world and we must love it too. Christ died for the world not just us.

It is only right that we should preach the gospel to our own people, and we should continue as we have the opportunity, but we should not neglect the rest of the world in order to do so.

#### IV. THE ATTITUDE THAT THEY WOULDN'T ACCEPT IT EVEN THOUGH WE TOOK IT TO THEM.

I think this is based on ignorance more than anything else, and deliberate ignorance at that. Anyone who knows anything at all about world evangelism knows that the gospel has been as well received everywhere else as in America. The people of the various countries of the world are real, and they have feelings and needs just like us. They are intelligent, but they are deceived in religion in most cases just like those that live around us. For all practical purposes people are the same everywhere, and they can be taught and converted to Christ. I have seen many wonderful people brought to Christ myself and it caused me to rejoice just as much as if they had been the people of my own country.

But when pressed, some will say, "Yes, but what about their being faithful to the Lord?" Well, I say that with their background, the amount of teaching they have had and the opportunities they have to serve the Lord, they will be just as faithful as those in America — and maybe more so. In comparing the two, I would say that we have more to be

concerned with on that score at home. While we have brethren asking about the faithfulness of members in the foreign country, I have seen American Christians come through and deliberately miss worship while the local Christians were present for worship. What would you say about this?

I am very proud of my foreign brethren and I think any member of the church would be if he could only visit among them. I also believe that we just need to be doing more to try to convert more to Christ.

Everywhere I have gone I have been asked, "If you have the truth why didn't you come before now?" Many others have been asked the same question in different parts of the world. This is difficult to answer. What would **you** give as our reason?

#### V. THE ATTITUDE THAT WE CAN'T EVANGELIZE THE WORLD.

This is the defeatist attitude. It is the spirit of giving up, of not trying, of not shouldering any responsibility to the world. I wonder what the Lord thinks when we sit down and don't even put forth any effort because we have already convinced ourselves that the job is too big for us? Sure, it is a big job, and will take effort and a lot of work, but it **can** be done. It **must** be done. It **will** be done, with God's help.

#### VI. THE ATTITUDE THAT IT WILL COST TOO MUCH.

I would be the first one to admit that it takes a lot of

money to prepare a family and to send them to the other side of the world with support and work fund for three or four years, and then to bring them home. But I would like for you to realize that it takes just as much money, or more, to carry on the work at home. Of course we never think about what we spend at home because that is for us, but I want us to think about it at this time. For instance, think about most any city of ten to fifteen thousand people where you already have three or four congregations or more. Count up the time the church has been there, the amount that has been spent on buildings, materials, preachers, radio and television programs for that community, the advertising done, the amount put on gospel meetings, etc. Then take into consideration the number of members in those churches, and the number converted from year to year. Then you'll begin to get the picture. Now when you compare that with overseas work, I think you'll change your attitude about the cost of missionary work.

Regardless of what it costs, the Lord hasn't made bankers out of us to watch money in the sense of saving it. While we are not to waste money, at the same time we are to freely use it to promote the Lord's cause. I am sure that he knew that it would cost money to travel and to work, but he has asked us to do it nevertheless.

It is not exactly that we are paupers. Think of all the money we spend on ourselves, on local preaching, on buildings and every type of luxury. It is amazing how much money we have for little things like that, yet when it comes to carrying the gospel to others all of a sudden we are poor people. I wonder what the Lord thinks? I wonder how we will feel to stand at the judgment side by side with those that we failed to win by the gospel, because we had to have

everything for ourselves? God help us. God forgive us, and help to begin to put the emphasis on the right thing – the souls of men (Matthew 16:26). May the Lord help us not to be like the rich man whose one thought was to store up more and more for himself, only to die while trying to do it (Luke 12:16-21; Matthew 6:19-21).

The Lord has blessed us so abundantly. If we would give as we should, even half-way give as we should, there would be more money in the treasury than we would know what to do with. There would be money for our work at home and enough left over to do all the mission work we might want to do.

Remember, God gave it to us, and God has commanded us to use it for the spreading of his word. Now what is going to happen if we don't?

## VII. THE ATTITUDE WE HAVE TOWARD THE PREACHER.

We have gotten into the rut of thinking that only the preacher can work for the Lord at home and only the preacher can take the gospel to the rest of the world. It is true that the preacher does these things, but they are not limited to him alone. Actually, if we ever evangelize the world, it is going to be on the basis of all of us working together to do the job. This business that only a certain group of people can do it, and that others either have no responsibility or cannot help, is simply not scriptural.

## VIII. THE ATTITUDE THAT WE HAVE TOWARD THE MISSIONARY.



So many of us simply misunderstand the missionary and his work. We misunderstand his motives and make accusations that are not always true.

For instance, we fail to realize that he is trying to do what Jesus commanded him to do. He has a love for the Lord and for the people of the world and he wants to take the gospel to the lost. He wants to give other people the opportunity that we have had for so long. Now what is wrong with that? Not a thing in the world, and we should not think of him as being queer or a crank just because he wants to do that. For after all, he will be going at great sacrifice. He will be leaving his own home, and many of the material and spiritual blessings that he has known through the years. He will be going to a strange land to work among a strange people. He will face many hardships and problems. Only those who have already been could truly understand and sympathize with him.

Moreover, before he can even go, he has to do a lot of traveling and a lot of talking to raise funds for his support and expenses, and then after he goes and works hard for three or four years, enduring all kinds of things to share the gospel with others, he returns to find many congregations not even willing to give him time to give his report! You know that this is so.

What if Paul had made a missionary journey and then on returning he had found that the congregations were not interested in hearing his report? What would he have thought of any congregation that would have sent him word not to come to tell his story, when they have invested some of the Lord's money entrusted to them in his work? I can imagine what Paul would have said and would have written, and I expect you can too.

We need to read Paul's missionary journeys and get the picture of what really happened. We need to realize that the workers who go out today are doing the same thing Paul did. Yes, we need to change our attitude toward the missionary.

- A. Congregations need to be looking for workers to go instead of waiting for workers to approach them.
- B. If the congregations are so lax as to wait until the missionary approaches them, they should not take it out on him by being ugly to him, but should be as kind as possible and show every courtesy and consideration and help in every way possible.
- C. The congregations need to be commending such workers and constantly praying for their welfare and the success of their work.
- D. The congregations ought to point to them as examples of courage and zeal for the Lord.

It is true that from time to time there may be a man who is not sincere in his mission and is only out to take advantage of the brethren, but the majority are not like this.

Also, I should point out that so many congregations are appreciative of the missionaries and do everything they can to help and to encourage them. The majority of the members of the church, I have found, are like this. Thank God for it.

## IX. THE ATTITUDE WE HAVE TOWARD THE MISSIONARY'S TRAVELS.

Many insinuations have been made concerning missionaries. One is that the missionary and his family are taking a nice vacation in a foreign country. This can be traced back to ignorance or jealousy. Anyone who knows the work of a missionary knows that he and his family work harder in the foreign field than at any other time of their lives, for in the foreign field all of the work is on their shoulders, instead of being turned over to the elders, a host of other members, a secretary, etc. Much could be said about this alone. Then in the next place, it is insinuated that the missionary is going to a foreign country only for the sake of the trip. This is also, in most cases, based on ignorance or jealousy. But let's just suppose the preacher was interested in the trip. Well, by the time he spends three or four years of his life away from home, and goes through all of the problems and toils of a foreign work, he surely has paid a dear price for the trip. But I would say that if an individual just wanted to go for the trip he could find a way without having to pay for it with years of hard work. Therefore there must be something more to it than just a trip.

Now you and I need to realize that we travel at home. Nothing is ever thought of preachers traveling all over the United States for the purpose of preaching, lecturing, or conducting different types of workshops and meetings. As a matter of fact, this is usually listed to his credit in the papers, and when this or that preacher is being introduced, it is proudly pointed out that here is a man who has traveled from coast to coast for the sake of the cause of Christ.

Well, America is a big place and covers a lot of territory, which means much traveling and expense — and you can be sure that the expense didn't come out of his pocket. As far as I am concerned that is fine, but the point is, these same brethren will turn around and criticize those who go to another part of the world to preach the gospel, and especially if they move around any while they are there, even though it is in the interest of the Lord's work. In such a case it appears to me that my brethren are being very childish and are criticizing out of selfish, jealous hearts. This might not amount to much if it were not for the fact that other brethren are prejudiced by what these brethren say, and thus use it for an excuse not to help missionaries go forth to preach the gospel. This is the tragedy.

I'll admit that I used to criticize certain brethren for making survey trips. I felt that there was no point in it and it was just a waste of the Lord's money. Since then I have made some survey trips of my own, and I do not say what I am saying just to justify my own actions, but I now realize that I was only ignorant in those days and didn't know any better. I pray the Lord to forgive me. But we **must** do some traveling if we are going to take the gospel to the world. Frankly, I see no other way.

When Christ commanded the apostles to go into all the world with the gospel, don't you suppose he visualized them doing some traveling? Paul's journeys took him through Asia and into Europe. Why did he go? To plant the cause of Christ. This could never have been accomplished had he stayed at home.

I feel today that we need brethren who will spend all of their time traveling, preaching here and there as they have the opportunity, looking into the possibility of getting

doors open, visiting with congregations in different countries to give them teaching and encouragement, conducting meetings, etc. There are many places where workers could not go and remain, but where a preacher could spend a day or two, a week or so, or two or three months. This may not appear to be much, but it is a great deal when that is all the time you can get. It may be possible in this time to make some contacts, distribute some tracts, do some teaching, try to convert some to carry on, and then to visit with them from time to time in the future. I believe if we would do more of this type of work we would accomplish more than we ever dreamed possible. Brother Bob Hare and others are doing this in Eastern Europe, and the church has already been planted in the majority of these countries and the work is growing. Oh my brethren, it hurts me to think how little we are in our thinking, and in our attitudes toward the world and toward one another. Why can't we be concerned about one thing — trying to reach the world with the gospel of Christ and thus to quit all of this petty, childish quibbling. God help us to so do.

Because of the incorrect attitude, not many brethren dare to travel for fear of being criticized and condemned. But we need a lot more traveling though it will be difficult for brethren to accept this until it is done and the wisdom of it is seen.

The few missionaries that are to be found in the world, and the few who are planning to do missionary work, don't need a lot of criticism just for the sake of being criticized. In spite of the fact that they are men, and are therefore subject to mistakes and errors, they are at least trying to do what they can to reach the world with the gospel. And thank God, not all brethren are sitting on the sidelines

finding fault. For every missionary that goes, there is one or more good congregation behind him, along with many individual Christians, who are trying to encourage him and help him in every way possible.

#### X. THE ATTITUDE WE HAVE TOWARD VISITING PREACHERS.

I can appreciate the fact that some brethren must begin to wonder if there is not a place to draw the line since so many missionaries come by asking for financial help. Yet, if they are to go, to whom else can they turn to send them?

I have been deeply hurt as a result of the treatment I have received from certain congregations. I'll admit that the number was few, but it still hurt that my own brethren would not hear my plea. I don't think it would have damaged them, and might have helped. Even if they couldn't have given any financial aid, I would have felt better had they said, "Well, we can at least listen." Occasionally a congregation has told me that, and I appreciated the fact that they at least were interested enough to hear of the needs.

Some congregations will say that the reason they are not allowing the missionary to come is because they don't want to waste his time when they are unable to give anything then, or to make a promise to help for later. In such cases, these brethren completely misunderstand the purpose of the preacher's visit or they are simply trying to say in a polite way, "Just don't come." But the purpose of the missionary's visit with a congregation is to either tell of plans for going, or to give a report of the work already engaged in. In the first place, it is for the sake of informing, encouraging,

and inspiring the congregation. This within itself should be worth something to every member of that congregation and if not, there is something wrong. In the next place, if the congregation can help and is going to help, probably the commitment will be made at this time by the members and the leadership. Naturally this can mean much to both the preacher and the church as they discuss the needs and program of work together. Finally, if immediate funds cannot be given, it may be possible to help later or to help someone else. So regardless of how it goes, the experience has been for the good of both. If brethren could just see this, it would make a big difference.

Yes, there may be quite a number of preachers coming through. Instead of resenting this, or taking it out on the preacher, brethren should thank God that more and more are desirous of going. It means that more and more Christians are becoming aware of their responsibility. The question should then arise: how long will it take the congregations to match this fervor and to charge ahead and begin to search for workers to go? Another way of looking at it, hasn't the church been praying for more workers? If so, then don't turn them away when they want to come to see you. If you can help them, do so. If you can't give financial aid, you just can't, but of course you can always help with your kindness, encouragement, and prayers. This counts too. Then, too, there might be someone to come that would touch the heart of some member and cause him to respond when no one else could do so.

If a congregation gets to the point where it is beginning to resent those who would come by, there is something wrong somewhere. Surely if these men can go, the least we can do is to listen to them and try to help them. How

selfish we are — not even wanting to share — not even wanting to listen to the story. Perhaps such resentment stems from a guilty conscience.

Sometimes the local preacher can turn the congregation against mission work. Of course it is evident, in such cases, that he is not interested in doing any himself, so he doesn't exactly enjoy having men come by to remind him of his duty, and to take money away from the local congregation that he would like to see put on some project he has in mind. Thank God, though, the majority of preachers are not like this.

Brethren, when we have the right attitude toward the visiting missionary, his visit will not hurt us, but will help us. He will not take anything away from the congregation but he will leave a lot behind in broadened vision and greater love for men.

## XI. THERE ARE STILL OTHER ATTITUDES THAT NEED TO BE CORRECTED.

Besides correcting our attitudes toward the elders, the congregation, the work, and giving, the missionary himself may have built up some bad attitudes. It is very easy for him to begin to look down on the church, especially certain elderships, preachers, and congregations, and to become bitter. I suppose if we had been treated as some missionaries have, we perhaps could understand his feeling of injustice. On the other hand, some churches have stories of their own too. Once more, I want us to see that there can certainly be faults on both sides, but what we all must do is to try to remove the bad, cling to the good, and strive to do better and to do more.



## CONCLUSION

All of us have attitudes, good and bad. When they are bad they need to be changed. How can this be brought about?

- A. **By study.** We need to study our Bibles to learn the truth, to be converted, and thus to put forth an effort to share the gospel with others.
- B. **By prayer.** We need to pray to God for wisdom on what to do that we might always do the right thing.
- C. **By being kept informed.** We need to know what is going on in the church and around the world. We need to know the needs and what we can do, and then to try to do it.
- D. **By becoming involved.** As we get involved more and more in the Lord's work at home and abroad, this will change us for the better.
- E. **By giving.** If we'll give, and give more, and even sacrifice for the Lord's cause, we'll be humbled and we will be drawn closer to the Lord and his workers.

So may God help us to be of the same mind and of the same judgment as we engage in the greatest work in all the world.

## QUESTIONS

1. What must be changed if we ever evangelize the world?
2. Can you think of some statements that you have heard brethren use, making light of taking the gospel to other parts of the world?
3. Is it possible to stay at home and preach the gospel as Jesus commanded?
4. Can we ever hope to convert all the people at home?
5. Why did the apostles go to other parts of the world?
6. Why should we forever preach the gospel to the same people when there are millions who have never heard it?
7. Would you say that America has heard the gospel? If not, why not?
8. If America has not heard the gospel then how long will it take to see that she hears?
9. Why is it that brethren reason that others would not accept the gospel even if we took it to them?
10. Will foreign people receive the gospel?
11. Will our foreign brethren be faithful to the Lord?
12. Who said we can't evangelize the world?
13. Does it cost money to send the gospel to others?
14. Did the Lord know this?
15. What does it cost to preach the gospel at home?
16. What is the most valuable possession in all the world?
17. What is our idea of the preacher?
18. Who is a missionary?

19. What is he trying to do?
20. Should he be blamed if he asks for help to take the gospel to others?
21. What should congregations be doing?
22. How do many brethren feel about the missionary's travel?
23. How do brethren feel about preachers who travel in the States?
24. Is it possible to carry out the great commission without doing some traveling?
25. Who is it that criticizes missionaries for their traveling?
26. Discuss what can be accomplished through more traveling.
27. What attitude is often expressed toward visiting preachers?
28. How do some congregations treat the missionary?
29. Is it possible for one to turn a congregation against mission work?
30. How may we change our attitudes?

## PROJECTS

1. Make a survey of the members and see what attitudes they may have toward mission work.
2. Give each member of the class an opportunity to express his feeling on this subject.
3. Let the class encourage the congregation to have a missionary come by to speak.

4. Find out how much it takes the local congregation to carry on its work for one year and then compare that with what it would cost to send a missionary and his family to a foreign field to work for one year.
5. Encourage the congregation to have a missionary workshop.
6. Do you know of any member of the church that is really sacrificing for the Lord? What would a person have to do to be classified as one who is sacrificing for the cause of Christ?

## LESSON TEN

### EVERY MEMBER A MISSIONARY

**Matthew 16:24; Acts 8:4**

#### INTRODUCTION

Christianity begins with the individual. The Lord died for every man (Romans 5:6). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Christ built the church but he adds the saved to it **one at a time** (Acts 2:47). At the judgment **each individual** will have to give an account for his own life, whether it be good or bad (II Corinthians 5:10).

With the foregoing in mind, surely this reminds us once more of the fact that the church is made up of individual Christians and that each Christian is to be a worker for the Lord according to the responsibilities that he is given and the abilities that he has to deal with them.

In this lesson we want to see that every member is a missionary.

#### I. WHO IS A MISSIONARY?

The term missionary itself is not in the Bible. Yet, it is a term that has been widely used by all religious people to describe an individual who has been sent to do a special

work. We think of Paul, for instance, as a missionary because he was sent to do a work. In other words, he had a mission, he had a goal to reach, he had a task to accomplish.

Some do not necessarily like this term, and indeed it is not wise to use it in some parts of the world where certain countries have come to frown upon such men and the work they have been sent to do. But although the term itself may not be in the Bible, the definition, or the qualities, or the work that makes one a missionary, are certainly found there. So for want of a better word, we use it, since it is not unscriptural to do so.

Our problem, though, is that we think only of a preacher, or those individuals who go in particular to a foreign land, as being missionaries. It is true that these individuals are certainly missionaries, and in the narrow definition of the term, may be thought of as the only ones who may be classed as such. However, a missionary is one who has been sent, or one who has a mission. In this case, every Christian would be included, for we have all been sent out into the world with the gospel and our mission is to convert souls to Christ. I would like for us to think about a missionary as simply being a Christian. I believe that when we shed the idea that only certain ones are missionaries, and therefore there is nothing for the rest of the church to do, but when we begin to think of every Christian as being a missionary and that there is work for all of us, then we will do more for the Lord at home **and** abroad.

We think of those who obey the Lord as being Christians — both men and women, young and old. Then as Christians we are all to be workers of the Lord — some are able to go and some are not — some work in one place, others work in another place, but we are still all workers.

If we are at home, we are trying to win souls to the Lord. If we are in some other part of the world we are trying to do the same. Now what is the difference? Not a bit. But the moment we begin to think about missionaries, we think that a few are in this category, and the rest are not. Therefore, psychologically, and in every other way, there is a barrier between us and we don't accomplish as much because we think of one's work as being more important than the other, of one doing more than the other. But this is not true, provided we are all doing what we can do.

If we can just think of ourselves as workers of the Lord, and that we are **all** workers, then we will do more. Even if we want to use the term missionary let's use it to include all — some missionaries work here and some missionaries work there, but we are all doing the same work although we are in different parts of the world.

## II. WHO IS A PREACHER?

Jesus taught that we should go forth to preach or teach the gospel. Paul said, "Preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). Now who is to do this? Someone answers quickly, "The men of the church." That may be true, if you are thinking of public preaching, but is that the only type of teaching that is to be done? Maybe that is why we are doing no more to win the world to Christ. We have so defined preaching and teaching as to limit these works to only a very few, and many qualified preachers are quitting one by one. What's wrong my brethren?

### A. In the first place, let us think about public preaching.

I am afraid that we have a clergy system, just as the religious world around about us. No, it is not wrong to pay a man a salary for preaching the gospel provided he is a worthy man, doing his work, and is giving his time to it. But we have so commercialized the pulpit and so abused it that I doubt if the Lord is pleased with it. It has become a symbol of competition, of power and politics. It has become an office, where the preacher is considered the head of the church. It has often become a testing ground where one's beliefs and convictions are pitted against a salary and sermons are designed to fit the wants and whims of many ungodly and worldly brethren. How many scriptural subjects can you think of that are not preached because to do so would result in the loss of the preacher's position? How many preachers today are really preaching the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? What would happen if they began to do so? There would probably be a noise that could be heard around the world. Don't you suppose that if most preachers really did what they should, many of them would leave their pulpits and begin to follow the example of Paul and launch out into different parts of the world with the gospel? But instead, many of them today are treated like kings on thrones, and woe be to the man that crosses one of them. They strut around as though they own the world, and most of them are not doing bad at all. "You couldn't drive the majority of them from their present posts," an elder told me once. They have it good, and they



know it, and they are going to keep it that way if possible.

Many of our preachers don't know what the Lord's work is. They are office men. They have their big plush offices with every luxury. They have their secretaries. They go to banquets, visit around a little, conduct a few meetings, attend the lectureships, preach a few sermons, speak on the radio and television, and then baptize the children of the members. They tell the world, "We have the gospel for you if you'll come to get it." How many go out to another part of the city to conduct meetings? How many go to communities where the church does not exist, to preach and establish the Lord's church? How many go to different parts of the state to conduct "mission meetings?" How many go to the lower part of town to try to teach the truth? They are professional, hirelings. They don't look for a small, weak work, to build up, but a large, strong congregation, to keep up the name and the prestige. Can you imagine Paul or Peter in their positions?

May I suggest that one of the great reasons why we have a preacher shortage today is simply because of the preachers that we have and the members' attitude toward preaching. If our young men had the encouragement and the teaching, and were given the opportunity, we would see many of them wanting to become preachers. But what do they see in the church? Competition for pulpits, striving for prestige; all that I have described and much more. Our preachers themselves have lost the vision, the mission of preaching, and have been overcome by the desire to keep up with the other fellow. One by

one they have quit, or will quit, to take other jobs that pay more money, while at the same time they do not have to answer to their brethren for what they do. What kind of inspiring example is this for our young people? When we shift the emphasis from spiritual values to a struggle for name and fame, how can they properly see the important things?

Don't misunderstand me. I am not down on preachers. I have been a preacher myself for twenty years, and I am still a preacher and expect to remain one. I know that there are many good preachers, dedicated men, and hard-working, but we have a lot of the other kind too — if it were not so the church would not be in the luke-warm materialistic state it is in today. The preachers shape the thinking of the church. This is what I am hitting out at. If you are not in that category, I am not talking to you, but if you are then I am saying to you that you need to repent and return to the Lord and determine to do the work that God wants you to do.

Preachers are needed today, and lots of them — but the **right** kind of preachers. The Lord needs converted men, God-fearing workers, those who have love for the lost, with dedication, zeal, determination, and of course to be right and preach right. With this kind of men preaching the gospel, the church will be changed and the world will be changed, and it won't take long to do it.

But who is responsible for preachers being the way they are today? We can blame the preachers, but it is not all their fault. They are in error for sure, but the members are guilty too. We have made preachers what they are. We have emphasized their work to de-emphasize ours. We have taken all of the work of the church practically and heaped it into their laps. We hand them a salary and say, "Here

now, it is your work; you do it; we don't have time."

More and more we have come to look to the preacher to do all that is done. He does the preaching, the visiting, the studying, the personal work — but he cannot do all that needs to be done, and so much is left undone. Then if anything is said about work, we point immediately to the preacher and say, "He's not doing all of his job."

What is wrong with us, brethren? What is going to happen to us? Do we think for a minute the Lord is happy with us when we act this way? It is true that there are many good, conscientious, hard-working members, but they are few in comparison to those who never lift a little finger for the Lord, other than to go to worship once a week and maybe give a little so they can feel that they are discharging their responsibility. But this is just not the Christianity that we read about in the Bible.

Those of you who would object to what has been said are the very ones that are guilty of the thing I have been talking about. Those who are doing what they can know that I am telling the truth. We not only fail to do God's will, but act the hypocrite as though we are working, and condemn the one who would point it out. Who are you going to condemn at the judgment?

We simply have a lot of members of the church who need to be converted to the Lord.

**B. In the second place, let us think about personal teaching.**

If all the preaching and teaching is to be left to the preachers of the church, then very little will be done since only a small percentage of the members are public preachers. It would therefore follow if

all is done that needs to be done, the other members of the church are also going to have to share in the responsibility of teaching.

Every member of the church, whether man or woman, young or old, can teach their relatives, friends, neighbors, business associates, and so on. There are opportunities to teach in cottage meetings, in Bible classes at worship, etc.

Sure, you may have a local preacher, but he cannot do all that needs to be done and he cannot do your work for **you**. It is also true that you may have a secular job, but you have time for many other things, and you'll have time for the Lord if you are the kind of Christian you should be. **You will take the time.** You can be a Christian on the job as well as at home. You can be a Christian through the week as well as on Sunday. You can be a Christian by sharing the gospel with others and trying to help those in need. When you love the Lord, people are going to know it. When you are concerned about the lost, you will find occasions to teach them. When you are a Christian in name only, no one will ever know that you are a Christian at all.

What I am trying to get you to see is that every member of the church is to be a Christian, and every Christian is to preach and teach God's word. Brother and sister, if you are **not** doing this, you are **not** a Christian.

We have just got to get away from the idea that only certain individuals are missionaries, preachers, teachers, etc.

**This is the work of every Christian. It is your work. It is my work. There is no other way to describe it.**

When we stand before the Lord one day he won't ask who was a preacher or missionary, but the question will be whether we were Christians and what we did for the Lord. "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

### **III. NEW TESTAMENT EMPHASIS IS ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS WORK.**

The church is not only made up of individual Christians, but it is spoken of in different ways to bring out this very truth and to present the true function and work of the church. Let us consider a few of them.

#### **A. The church is spoken of as the house of God (I Timothy 3:15).**

In every house there is a father and the children, and this is the way it is in the Lord's house. Christ is the elder brother, but all of the members are brothers and sisters. None are above the others. All have responsibilities and obligations. All have work to do according to opportunity and abilities. That work cannot be shifted to other

family members. As a result, all share the blessings the father has in store. Read Luke 15.

**B. The church is spoken of as an army (Ephesians 6).**

Christ is the Captain of our faith (Hebrews 2: 10). Each individual Christian is to put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:11-20) and go forth to fight the forces of evil. If we will all fight we will be victorious over the world. If we as individuals fail to do our part, we will be destroyed by the enemy — no one can fight in our stead.

**C. The church is spoken of as a vineyard (John 15: 1-8).**

Christ is the vine and we are the branches. Every branch is expected to produce fruit. Listen, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:1-8). That says it much better than I could ever say it.

**D. The church is spoken of as a kingdom (Colossians 1:13, 14).**

Christ is the King and each Christian is a citizen under him. As citizens, there are responsibilities to be dealt with. Each citizen must be loyal and do his part of the work.

**E. The church is spoken of as a body (Ephesians 1:22, 23; I Corinthians 12).**

Christ is the head of the body and each Christian is a member of that body. Each member of the body has its own function. Please listen to Paul: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I

have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all of the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12:13-27).

In all of these descriptions, the Lord is emphasizing the fact that each member is to work, is to do his part, is to fulfill his responsibility. One **cannot** put that responsibility off on someone else. As far as the Lord is concerned, we are all one (Galatians 3:26-28), with one responsibility — serving him.

#### IV. THERE ARE MANY NEEDS.

The world is full of needs. There are troubles on every hand. There are wars and rumors of wars. There are great problems in the church. We wonder what is going to happen next.



**A. Let us begin with the church.**

Our great need is to understand the church, its mission, and then to go to work. Our young people are trying to find their place, but how can they know where they belong unless we know where we belong? How can we lead them to obey the Lord if we are not obeying him? How can we encourage our young men to go forth with the gospel when we refuse to go?

The solution, of course, is work and more work; service and more service; dedication to the Lord; zeal to go and do. When we catch this spirit, we won't have to sit and argue and fuss and spend all of our time at lecture programs talking about problems that should have never been problems to begin with. The devil's workshop is an idle church. Get out and go to work, save souls, do good, and we won't have to try to think up new things to entertain ourselves with, new things to do, new projects to begin, new men to honor, and so on.

**B. Let us see the world as it is.**

How do you view the world? What do you think of it? Are you amazed at what you see? Are you wondering what the solution is?

The needs of the world are great. But they are not any different from what they have always been. Man needs God, Christ, the Bible, the gospel, the church, and salvation. Man needs a sense of direction, a purpose in life, a work that he can do and of which he can be proud. Man needs

moral purity. He needs godliness, honesty, and righteousness. He needs to be taught how to deal with his fellow man. He needs to be concerned about his neighbor.

Man is living in the depth of despair without God and hope. What are his chances of survival? They are not good, unless you and I step in to help. Brethren, can't we see the role the Lord meant for us to play? Can't we understand that there is something that we can do? The Lord is looking to us to do that.

The world as a whole will be doomed unless we as Christians strive to bring the true light where darkness now dwells. We can influence the world for good. A little leaven can leaven the whole lump (I Corinthians 5:6). If we could just realize the power that we have, and the good we can do; if we could just realize how much the world needs us, and then strive to help, what a difference it would make!

## V. THE MESSAGE WE HAVE.

We have the message of God, and it is for the world. The Lord is looking to us to take it. It is the message of the Christ who desires to be the saviour of all the world. It is the message of salvation, but can save no one unless it is taken to those who need it. It is the message of peace and hope, and oh, how this old sinful world needs it.

Each one of us is a messenger and we have a wonderful message, but the question is, will we deliver it?

## VI. WHY WE ARE NOT GOING.

When we analyze our situation we find that we have misunderstood our mission. We are lazy and indifferent. We are too busy and too interested in the things of this world. We do not realize the value of the soul, the brevity of life, and the reality of a coming eternity.

We just don't have the love for the Lord that we should have. We don't have the zeal that we need for the lost. We don't have the courage that should characterize us. I am afraid many of us are weaklings and cowards. We are only Christians because that is about all we have ever known, and there is no opposition to it. It is just easier to be that, or we might be something else.

We are just not the Christians we ought to be. If we were, things would be different. This is not good, but it doesn't mean that we have to remain in this condition. We can always repent and do better. This is our hope and the hope of the world.

## VII. QUALIFICATIONS TO BE MISSIONARIES.

- A. We must be genuinely converted to Christ.
- B. We must love God and the souls of men.
- C. We must know where we are going, and then go.
- D. We must have determination to stick it out.
- E. We must be willing to give ourselves and our possessions to the Lord.
- F. We must have zeal.
- G. We must be doers of the word.
- H. We must put Christ and his work before

everything else.

- I. We must use the opportunities that we have to reach others with the gospel.
- J. We must be humble and patient.

## VIII. THE RESULTS OF OUR LABORS.

If we could just realize what we **could** do if we **would** do it, I am sure we would **want** to do it. If we could just realize the power that we have at our finger tips, I am sure we would use it. If we would just realize that we have the potential to change the world, I am sure we would. If we would just open our eyes and go out into the field and labor for the Lord, the results would begin to pour in.

God will help us, bless us, and reward us if we will do his bidding. What joy to save a soul, to bring happiness to the disheartened, to help strengthen the weak, to bring blessings to the poor, to bring salvation to the lost. There is nothing that can compare with it. There is nothing greater in this life.

What does Christ mean to **you**? Think of what he may mean to **others** as you share him with them!

## CONCLUSION

We can turn the world upside down for Christ. We can change the course of history. We can convert a nation. We can lead a community to Christ. We can give ourselves to the Lord. How thrilling to think of what can be done when we as individuals begin to be instruments in God's hands instead of making excuse or putting our responsibilities off on someone else. The Lord wants **YOU** and he wants **ME**,

and he wants the OTHER FELLOW. But he deals with us one by one before dealing with us as a body, as a church. May the Lord help us to be what he really wants us to be and to accomplish what he wants us to accomplish.

## QUESTIONS

1. With what does Christianity begin?
2. List some scriptures that emphasize the individual.
3. Who is a missionary?
4. Who is a preacher?
5. What is the clergy system?
6. In what sense do we have it?
7. What has the pulpit become?
8. Describe some of our modern-day preachers.
9. What do they do?
10. With what kind of congregations do they want to work?
11. What has happened to so many of our preachers?
12. What kind of preacher is needed today?
13. Who is responsible for the kind of preachers we have?
14. Can a local preacher do all of the teaching for you?
15. What will you do when you love people?
16. How many are obligated to teach the world?
17. Who is the greatest in the Lord's kingdom?
18. Discuss the church as being the house of God.
19. In what sense is the church an army?
20. What kind of fruit is the Lord's vineyard to bear?
21. Explain how the church is a kingdom.
22. What role do the members of the Lord's body play?

23. List some of the great needs in the world today.
24. What is the message that we are to take to the world?
25. Give some of the qualifications of missionaries.
26. What will be the results of our labors?
27. We have the potential to do what for the Lord?

## PROJECTS

1. Appoint someone to discuss the question, "Who is a missionary?"
2. Appoint another to bring in a paper on the question, "Who is a preacher?"
3. Discuss the role the pulpit should play in the local work.
4. List the assets of the pulpit and also its limitations.
5. Seek ways to put every member of the class to work.

## LESSON ELEVEN

### MAKING THE BEST USE OF OUR MONEY

James 2; Matthew 16:26

#### INTRODUCTION

The Bible says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10). Money itself is neither good nor bad. The thing that makes the difference is our attitude toward it and our use of it. It may be used for good or it may be used for bad. It is wrong to hoard it up but it is just as wrong to squander it or to misuse it.

In this lesson we are going to give our attention to money as it relates to the church and its work, and how to best use our money for the Lord. We are doing this in order to get to one of the root causes that is keeping us from evangelizing the world, and to see how we may correct it.

#### DISCUSSION

##### I. IT TAKES MONEY.

As in everything else, it also takes money to carry on the Lord's work. I am sure that this is no new revelation to

most of you, but evidently some members of the church do not know this. So, for their benefit, this needs to be said.

It not only takes money for the church to carry on, but it is taking more money all the time. Even beyond this, much **more** money is needed to do all the things that should be done, but **cannot** be done with the present funds of the church.

Now where is this money to come from? We cannot look to the government to give it. We cannot appeal to the business world to supply it. We cannot go around as beggars and ask for it. This being true, there is only one other place to look, and that is from you and me and to all others who are members of the church. We cannot turn to the world to furnish the money to do the work of the church. Rather, the church must do its **own** work. Therefore, the church must give adequately to do this work. The more that is given, the more can be done. The less given, the less will be done.

We should not be afraid to do something because it is going to cost money. Everything else takes money, and those who accomplish things in every phase of life are those who spend money, and lots of it. What could be more profitable than spending money to win souls, when one soul is worth more than the whole world? The Lord himself has named the value. Can we argue with him that winning souls is too costly?

## II. FAILING TO GIVE.

One of our major problems in the church is that we fail to give what we could and what we should. Some do not give because they do not have it to give. In other words,



they are poor and in this case, they are not to be condemned. But the larger group is composed of those who have it to give but keep it for themselves. Of course this is not new to our times because we read of Ananias and Sapphira doing the very same thing in Acts 5. In their case they were supposedly giving all that they had when in reality they were holding back a portion of it. For their sin, they were stricken dead.

What about those today who would imply that they are giving as they should? They are sinning before God, and they will have to answer for it at the judgment. Why are they sinning? Because they are refusing to obey the Lord, and keep back what is not rightfully theirs (I Corinthians 16:2). They are robbing God. They are preventing the church from doing its work. Their money is used on self and is therefore wasted as far as the Lord's work is concerned. When we fail to give, it shows we have not given our hearts to the Lord and that we will not give ourselves to the work.

It would be amazing to see what could be accomplished if all Christians would only give as they should.

### III. WHY WE DO NOT GIVE.

Why is it that the majority of the members of the church do not give as they should? Well, in the first place, it is not that they don't have the money to give, for most have money for anything they really desire. Then what is the reason? It may be traced to a number of things.

- A. It would appear that members of the church, like everyone else, are basically selfish.

One of our biggest problems in life is overcoming self. We are all wrapped up in self. We think of self. We promote self. We want, we crave, we covet, we save, we store up for self. Consider the parable of the rich man: "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21). Now what about this man? His sin was not that he was prosperous. It was not that he was industrious. It was not that he did others wrong. No, it was none of these things. Rather, his great sin was that he was selfish, that he was putting his trust in riches, that he was not willing to share with others.

**B. Some are ignorant of their responsibility to give.**

They have not been taught sufficiently on giving. They only know that they are to give something, so they give a dollar each Sunday. They are not aware of the amount they **must** give to be pleasing to God. As much as the Bible teaches on

the subject it would appear that everyone would know his duty on it, but evidently some do not. Perhaps this is due to the lack of personal study and the lack of preaching that has been done on it. For example, some preachers never bother to touch on the subject to any great extent, because those who are selfish object to this kind of preaching. Not a few preachers have been "fired" because they did preach on it in spite of the "advice" given by the elders or others of the congregation to stay off that subject.

**C. Some congregations simply do not have a program of work that would encourage giving.**

There are members of the church who reason that if the church is not going to have a real program of work at home and abroad for winning souls, then why should they contribute their money? Others see no need of giving when all the elders do is to put the funds in the bank. While this may not be sufficient reason for not giving, neither is the church justified in not having an active program of work. One wrong does not justify another wrong, but what is the solution? The members should continue to encourage the elders to enter into a greater program of work, until action is taken. Perhaps, in the first place, the congregation needs some new leadership.

**D. Sometimes the members don't give because they aren't interested in doing anything.**

In this case, even though there is a good

program of work, some are not sold on it and simply do not see the importance of supporting it with their contributions. Such people need to be converted, instructed concerning the work of the church, taught the importance of giving, and therefore encouraged to give.

These, and other reasons, are why members of the church do not give. They are not legitimate reasons, and therefore God will not accept them.

#### IV. THE BIBLE TEACHES THE NECESSITY OF GIVING.

If we know the Bible very well, we know that it definitely teaches the importance of giving, both by example and by direct command. On the other hand, the Bible shows the consequences of failing to give, the wrong use of money, etc.

The Bible teaches giving, who is to give, when we are to give, how much we are to give, why we are to give, and the results of giving. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:1, 2). Again he wrote them, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:6, 7). Jesus taught, "It

is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Those who love the Lord and want to do his will and want to see the gospel taken to others do not find it difficult to give. As a matter of fact, they find it easy because they want to have a part. Neither are they content with just giving something, but they give as much as possible. These are the ones that have first of all given themselves to the Lord (II Corinthians 8:7).

Paul tells us that the Lord doesn't want part of us, but he wants all of us. He says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). When we sacrifice ourselves to the Lord then that means we will sacrifice our pocketbooks too. We cannot give the one and cling to the other. But I am wondering how much sacrificing any of us have ever done for the Lord, in spite of what we have given or done. Maybe this is why we have not, and we are not, evangelizing the world. When we really get serious enough to begin to sacrifice, things will change in the church and in the world.

We like to think of ourselves as giving scripturally, but I think most of us just give enough to try to convince ourselves that we are justified. I think we just give enough to sooth our consciences into thinking that we are doing our duty. Especially is this true as the church gives to help preach the gospel in different parts of the world.

Our Lord is a jealous Lord. He wants all of us or nothing. He wants us to follow him all the way, or none of the way, and he wants us to follow without looking back. He wants us to put him first. Again, this includes our money as well as everything else.

If we will only give as God would have us to, it will not hurt any of us but we will have all the money that we need to do the work that is before us. God's way is the right way. He does not ask us to give and do more than we are able. Rather, when we give he blesses us that much more. If we could just realize this it would change our entire lives.

## V. THE WRONG USE OF THE LORD'S MONEY.

As Christians we have a responsibility to give, but as the church we have the responsibility of using the money properly. However, we do not always use it and when we do use it, we do not always use it as we ought. Concerning money, the Lord's work faces two great obstacles — first, it is a problem to get the individual Christians to give scripturally, and then it is a problem to get the church to use the money for preaching the gospel as God intended.

### A. Hoarding up money.

Some members of the church are stingy and do not use the money as they should. Some congregations are also stingy and do not use the money that they have. For some reason they think that it is their responsibility to hold on to all that is given. These are the ones that start a bank account and increase the amount every Lord's day. They are holding to the Lord's money as though he will be in need of it when he returns. These are the congregations that are opposed to borrowing money for any purpose. They are never in debt, and brag about their financial condition. Such an attitude discourages giving, for some members will finally

conclude that if the church has money in the bank, it is not all that important that they give a lot.

Congregations that are in the money saving business, holding to what they have, are the ones who are not doing anything. On the other hand, congregations that are working for the Lord challenge the members to give more by not only having an active program to spend what is given, but even borrow money that they might do more.

**B. Putting it all on self.**

Some congregations spend all of the money that is contributed, but they put it all on themselves. If they have money above the budget, they can always think up additional things to do that will enable them to keep every penny at home. Through the years I have personally observed this in the church throughout the brotherhood. Many had rather put their money where they can keep a finger on it, where they can personally see how every penny of it is being used. They do not trust others with it.

There are things that need to be done at home, but when we use **all** of our money on ourselves there is something wrong with our program of work. I doubt seriously if we can do what the Lord has said, and do that at the same time. I think you know what I mean.

**C. Misuse of our money.**

There are many things that may be considered necessary to carry on the Lord's work, but it is

possible to overdo it, and I am afraid that is exactly what we have done on a number of things.

For instance, we have emphasized the meeting house so much that we have gone completely wild over it. Congregations all over the country are not content any more to have a meeting house, even a nice one, but they must splurge and spend large fortunes constructing them and maintaining them. Then even after they build them, they only use them two or three times a week in most cases.

Congregations not only build meeting houses, but because they don't plan ahead, many times they have no more than gotten into them until they are already in need of more space. This means that they must turn around and build again, or make an addition to it. The latest craze has been to construct an "educational building." I am wondering what the next building will be called. I am sure that someone will eventually come up with something so that there will be no funds to use elsewhere.

Brethren not only have nice buildings but scores of them have every luxury imaginable. They have carpeted floors, cushioned pews, beautiful offices, air-conditioning from end to end — you name it, and they have it. Some of these congregations are not content any more to have a preacher, but they have so much money that they can afford an assistant preacher or two, an educational director, a youth director, a song leader, minister of missions, and so on. Now some of this might not be so bad, provided it is really necessary and it



really advanced the Lord's cause, and provided these congregations were doing much to preach the gospel in other fields. But the sad truth is that in spite of all of this spending, these luxuries, these workers, and so on, these congregations grow very little. Many of them are not doing much away from home because they have all their money tied up at home, and not just for the next year or two, but for years to come. Then by the time present debts are paid off they'll probably be to the point where it is time to start all over. My brethern, we are so vain and foolish.

All of this emphasis on material things is not going to really save anyone. If all of this has to be used to win people to Christ, then what will they be worth after you've won them? Rather, if you'll win them with the gospel, they will be faithful regardless of the type of facilities you have.

I am afraid that we have missed the whole point. In the days of the apostles we read of the church meeting primarily in the home. This is the way it is today in much of the world. Where the meeting house has been over-emphasized, the buildings are eventually turned into museums. Even our meeting houses scare many of the poor classes of people away because they feel that they would be out of place even if they should attend.

What are we trying to do with all of these buildings and luxuries that go with them? Haven't we allowed materialism to get to us and to influence us? Haven't we allowed the world to influence us more than we have influenced the world? I think we have.

Personally, I am convinced that it is possible to go to the extreme anywhere in the world with a meeting house. It is possible to have one too nice, and it is possible that it will not be nice enough. May God help us to consider our own individual cases, and to use proper wisdom in the kind of meeting house we have, and in all of the other things, so that we might be able to do more at home and abroad in spreading the gospel.

**D. Supporting foreign preachers directly.**

One of our biggest mistakes in my estimation is that of supporting foreign preachers directly. Especially is this true with reference to preachers of undeveloped countries.

In nearly every case they are given too much and this presents great problems for that man and the work in that country.

Congregations at home do not realize the damage they are doing, for they are not aware of the difference in economies and how it affects people and the Lord's work.

The brethren, if they want to help, should work through the missionary who is more correctly aware of the needs.

Of course one of the problems here sometimes is that the missionary brings these preachers and congregations together through correspondence. But it is a tremendous mistake. On the surface, in the beginning, it may appear that a lot of good is being done, but in the long run it will only hurt the cause of Christ there.

**E. Giving money to make it possible for foreign workers to come to the States for a Christian education.**

We as Americans think how wonderful it would be for our foreign brethren to be able to come to the States and have a good Christian education. It does sound good, but after being tried many times, it has been found to be unsuccessful. Once more the problem is the difference of economies.

Millions of young men and women are anxious to go to Europe or America for their education. In order to do this, they must find someone to foot the bill. If they can go through the church then that is a way. Naturally, most of them have no intention of returning to their home land or of even being faithful to the Lord.

There are others who are converted to the Lord and they want to be Christians. But then we destroy them by making it possible for them to go to America. Even if they return, which seldom happens, they must return as a supported missionary and this creates many problems.

If you really want to help the foreigners then send the gospel to them. If you want to see them educated, then send teachers and schools to them. To do otherwise is but to waste your time and money and spoil and destroy souls.

**F. Spreading our money around too thin.**

So many congregations could sponsor a family and give their support so they could go to the mission field, but instead, they give five dollars to this one, ten dollars to that one, twenty dollars to

another, ten dollars to still another, and so on. They end up in putting out a good bit of money, but it is so spread out that they really don't realize anything from it, and have no special interest in any of it. It would be far better to put it all together and concentrate it on a particular work and really get behind it. In this way, they will find the rewards to be much greater and more good will be accomplished in the end.

Realizing that the money we have can be directly instrumental in winning souls to Christ, we should be very prayerful concerning the way we use it. We should not be stingy with it, but neither should we be too free with it and waste it. Neither should we over-spend and thus tie ourselves up so that we render ourselves helpless. Again, we need to pray for wisdom.

## **VI. THE PROPER USE OF OUR MONEY.**

### **A. Some of our money needs to be spent at home.**

I mean by this that some of our money needs to be spent locally and in other parts of our own country to help further the cause of Christ. There is much to be done in these areas.

We have to meet somewhere, and this necessitates a hall, a meeting house, or some type of building. We should be careful not to go to the extreme, but to have something that will meet the needs according to the number of the congregation, the size of the community and city and the

reception of the gospel by the local people. There is also the need for a preacher and various supplies. Naturally this takes money, but we shouldn't allow it to take **all** of our money. If all of the members will work and give, the church will have sufficient funds for the work at home and have money left over to do work abroad.

**B. Some of our money needs to be spent on work away from home.**

I mean by this, that some of our money needs to be spent on work in another part of the world. What is wrong with this? There is **nothing** wrong with it. We not only need to be doing it, but should be trying to do more.

The congregation should put forth a real effort to sponsor a good family and to give most of their support, if not all of it. If it is not possible to sponsor, then the church should most definitely determine to give as much as it can to help someone to go.

How do we think we can justify our existence if all we do is take care of ourselves? We are not the only ones in the world that need the Lord and we should realize this and should take it upon ourselves to do all we can to share the gospel with others.

We don't have to go to the extreme on anything, but we can quietly and sincerely do our work at home and have a part in reaching the lost in other parts of the world. If this is not our goal, it should be. If we are not already doing it, then we need to begin **now**.

The Lord has blessed us with material gain and he would have us to give a portion of it to the church and then the

church has the responsibility to use it either directly or indirectly for the saving of the **world**.

## VII. THE LORD WILL BLESS US AS WE GIVE.

I wonder how many of us as individuals and as congregations have really tested the Lord on our giving? I wonder how many of us really believe that the Lord will bless us according to the way we give? We may believe it in theory, but do we believe it enough to practice it?

I can tell you personally that I used to preach it but I didn't practice it. I am ashamed of it and I pray that the Lord will forgive me for the lack of faith that I had in him. But all the time I knew that I should give more. Gradually, little by little, I began to grow in faith and in my giving. Today I give much, much more than I used to give. Today I try to give as I have been prospered and even beyond. And today I can tell you that I am far more blessed than I was during those former days of selfishness.

My brethren, if we will only give as the Lord has prospered us, and if congregations will only use the money given to further his cause at home and abroad, then he will bless us beyond our fondest imagination. The reason he does not do any more for us than he does is because we do not truly submit ourselves to him. We only offer lip service. We tell him how much we love him, but then put our money on other things before him. The fact is, we do not love him. We love this world. We love ourselves, and that is what we spend our money on.

When we really begin to love the Lord, we will show it by giving his share **first**, and **then** he will bless us. When congregations really get concerned about a lost and dying

world and begin to put their money on the spreading of the gospel instead of on little petty things at home, **then** the Lord will begin to bless them as they have never been blessed before.

## CONCLUSION

God knows we can give more and we can do more. We know the same. What a great responsibility we have. Let us sit down and think seriously about these things in the light of what the Bible teaches. Let us pray sincerely about them. Let us pray for guidance and direction. Let us pray for wisdom and the opportunity to act wisely. Then let us rise up and put forth an effort to do the right thing.

I am sure that with **knowledge, prayer, faith, love, and zeal** for the lost, we will **do** what is right.

## QUESTIONS

1. Quote I Timothy 6:10.
2. Is money good or bad?
3. What makes the difference with money?
4. Why is money important in the work of the church?
5. From where does the money come?
6. Should we be afraid of something because it costs money? Why not?
7. State one of our major problems in the church.
8. Quote I Corinthians 16:2.
9. Why is it that members of the church do not give?
10. Read Luke 12:16-21.
11. Is it possible for one to be ignorant today of his

- responsibility to give?
12. Will members of the church give as they should when there is no real program of work?
  13. What does the Bible teach about giving?
  14. How will one reap?
  15. Why is it more blessed to give?
  16. How much does the Lord want of us?
  17. Quote Romans 12:1.
  18. Why is the Lord jealous of us?
  19. List some ways to misuse the Lord's money.
  20. Are congregations to be in the money saving business?
  21. Why do some congregations put all of their money on themselves?
  22. Can we put too much emphasis on meeting houses?
  23. Why should brethren think twice before supporting foreign preachers?
  24. Is it wise to make it possible for our foreign brethren to come to the States to get a Christian education? What is the usual outcome?
  25. How do brethren spread their money too thin?
  26. List some proper uses of money.
  27. Should all of the money be spent at home? Away from home?
  28. Who will the Lord bless?

## PROJECTS

1. Take a survey of the class and find out how many members are financially contributing for mission work.
2. Give a report on how the local congregation is



using its money.

3. Would it be possible for the congregation to better use its money? What affect would this have on the members?
4. What steps can be taken to encourage the members to give more?
5. Give a talk on, "The Blessings of Giving."

## LESSON TWELVE

### GETTING INVOLVED

Romans 12:1; I Timothy 4:15

#### INTRODUCTION

Most members of the church have never really experienced the blessings of the Christian life and of sharing the gospel with others because they have never really gotten involved. They see Christianity only at a distance. They stand on the sidelines. They have therefore not totally committed themselves to the Lord. They have not made up their minds fully to serve the Lord, and therefore they have chosen to join the opposition — we must be on or off, in or out, cold or hot (Revelation 3:16).

What we need today is for members of the church, and the church itself, to get **involved**. In this lesson we want to show the importance of every member and every congregation, yea for the whole church, to become involved in the Lord's cause so that his purpose might be accomplished.

#### DISCUSSION

##### I. PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME.

A. We must overcome the devil and his influences

**(Matthew 6:24; Romans 12:21).**

The old devil doesn't want us to be Christians, but if we are determined to obey the Lord, then his next attempt is to convince us that if we are a Christian then that is enough. In other words, he wants us to be Christian in name only. He doesn't want us to get involved, to go to work, to accomplish anything for the Lord, to lead others to the truth. He tells us that we are too busy, that is what the preacher is to do, etc. But if we are going to be the kind of Christians the Lord wants us to be, we are going to have to overcome the devil and give ourselves completely to the Lord. That includes obedience, working for him, teaching others, and being faithful to him.

**B. We must overcome ourselves (II Corinthians 5:17).**

We may be selfish, jealous, and lazy. If this be the case, or whatever we may find in us that shouldn't be there, then we are going to have to get rid of these things and replace them with those qualities that would make us worth something to the Lord. Sometimes we are our greatest enemies, and this is something that we must rid ourselves of to be what the Lord wants us to be (Matthew 16:24).

**C. We must overcome our families and relatives.**

Sometimes our families, relatives, and friends are fully behind our efforts to be a

Christian and to serve the Lord. But this is not always true. In this case we must do as the Lord said, in spite of them. Jesus said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26, 27).

Many wives are keeping their husbands from the mission field. Also, many husbands refuse to go when their wives want to go. I have seen both sides. But how much better it would be if both would agree to work together and go.

**D. We must sometimes overcome our brethren.**

Believe it or not, but sometimes we must even overcome our own brethren to do the Lord's work. This has certainly happened many times with reference to doing mission work. A family looks to a certain congregation for help, encouragement, and guidance, but instead they only get a cold shoulder. They are left dazed, shocked, and discouraged, not knowing what to think. Sometimes missionaries are appreciated by all brethren except their own home congregation. In this case, we must be determined to go in spite of them.

**E. We must overcome any other obstacles that may be in the way.**

The road to dedication and service is not always easy. There are many pitfalls along the way. Those who fall just weren't strong enough. Those who go on are made the stronger because of it.

There will be all kinds of temptations to quit, to turn to something else, but we must remember that the Lord has promised to help us overcome every temptation. Paul assures us, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

## **II. SOME GREAT QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS.**

### **A. Why did you become a Christian?**

Different people become Christians for different reasons. At least, some of them became Christians, and the others are Christian in name only. In such a case, they did not obey the Lord from the heart for they had various ulterior motives for going through the act. This is indeed a shame.

But did you become a Christian? Can you say that you are a faithful Christian now?

### **B. What are you doing to prove that you are a Christian?**

It is one thing to say that you are a

Christian and it is something else to prove it. Most people never get beyond obeying the first principles, and perhaps assembling for worship. Is **worship**, a **privilege** God grants us, the ultimate in our **service** for him?

**C. Are you trying to teach anyone the truth?**

It is possible for you to teach others the truth. If **you** obeyed it, surely you can teach **that much**. Furthermore, if you have the Lord's cause at heart surely you are studying and preparing yourself to be able to do more teaching.

**D. Have you converted anyone to Christ?**

If not, then what are you waiting for? There are people all around you who need to be saved. You are in contact with some of them. Some of them are your friends. You talk about many things. Why not talk to them about the Bible and what one must do to obey God? You can be a soul winner. Once you become one, then you will really begin to move out for the Lord.

**E. Are you a worker for the Lord?**

I mean by that, are you active in the Lord's work to the extent that others think of you as a worker for the Lord? Are you always co-operative with the other members and workers? Are you always on the lookout for new opportunities to teach and to influence people

for good? Are you a leader for the Lord in your area? If you are not, then why aren't you? Why should you sit idly by and let the others do it all? If you are successful in other phases of life then you can be successful also in the Lord's work.

**F. What are you doing to personally help get the gospel to the rest of the world?**

Much depends on your thinking, on your interest, on your actions, and your leadership as to whether the rest of the world will hear the gospel or not. Because so many members of the church have not been taught, are not interested, are not pushing mission work, then the cause of Christ must suffer at home and abroad. Why should this be? People like you can rise up to take the lead and to give the teaching, the guidance, and the inspiration necessary to take the world for Christ.

### **III. GETTING PERSONALLY INVOLVED.**

You'll never be worth much to the Lord until you get personally involved in his work, and the more involved the better. If there is any way possible at all, try to go personally to another area yourself to preach the gospel. If you can go to a foreign field this will be even better. You don't have to be a fanatic to do this, but just be a Christian. If you will, it will have a tremendous impact for good on the Christians that you are associated with and the congregation where you worship. If there are things that prevent

your going now, then work for the day that they are removed and then go. Remember where there is a will, there is a way.

**A. Plan now for the day you will go.**

If possible set the date and work toward that day. Make all the necessary arrangements in the meantime.

**B. Find a sponsor.**

It would be wonderful if the local congregation would decide to send you. It would be for your good, and their good too, since you will have the advantage of knowing each other. However, if they should choose not to help, don't allow that to hinder you.

**C. Choose the field.**

Decide where you are going, and learn all you can about the country.

**D. Think about the methods.**

Will you be going as the preacher, to help someone, to work with the Bible correspondence courses, to work as a printer or what? Think of all the means that will be at your disposal to teach the word of God.

**E. Consider the problems that you will be faced with.**

With each problem there is a solution, so you will have to try to be patient in searching for and applying those solutions.



**F. Have some goals.**

Why are you going? What are you going to do? What do you hope to accomplish? It would be good to set some goals. Go to preach and teach the word of God. Go to influence people for good. Go to convert souls to Christ. Go to establish the church. Go to help the church to be strong. The more goals you have, the harder you will work to accomplish them.

**G. What fruit can you expect?**

You will be overjoyed with all of the blessings the Lord will shower upon you in return for the efforts you will put forth. Souls will be saved, congregations established, etc.

If you should be unable to go personally, you can still be involved in the Lord's work.

- A. You can be determined that you are going to be a Christian.
- B. You can strive to have a Christian home.
- C. You can help with the Lord's work in whatever capacity you are able.
- D. You can win souls to Christ.
  - 1. Set a good example.
  - 2. Be active in teaching others.
  - 3. Have some goals to work toward.
- E. You can encourage mission work at home and abroad.

- F. You can take the lead in encouraging and teaching others on the importance of world evangelism.

Congregations as a whole need to get more involved in the Lord's work. Many are doing little more than keeping house for the Lord. They meet for worship, but that is about all. They have no plans for their own community or city, much less for their country and other countries. Some congregations don't want to get too involved because it will take too much work and it will demand too much money. More alive and alert congregations therefore must lead the way and set an example before these to make them ashamed of themselves and to challenge them to become more active in the Lord's work. In order for a congregation to be what the Lord would have it to be, it is going to have to get involved. There is much that can be done.

- A. Study to learn your responsibilities and to be big enough to admit failures and have determination to do better.
- B. Put every member of the church to work.
- C. Become concerned about the local community by planning to preach the gospel in meetings and classes throughout the whole area.
- D. Explore the possibilities of becoming a sponsoring congregation.
- E. Make plans to expand the program of work, which would include accepting the sponsorship of some

family to take the gospel abroad.

- F. Prepare a budget that will challenge the members to work and to give.
- G. Be a soul winning, growing, and spreading church.
- H. Show your faith in the Lord and his cause by your willingness to step out on that faith alone.

If there is no interest, then you should begin to work on the matter and build interest. The church will respond to the proper teaching.

#### IV. THE KIND OF TEACHING WE NEED.

While we need to be taught the word of God concerning our duties and responsibilities to others, there is still another kind of teaching that we need.

##### A. We need to be taught by example.

The kind of teaching that we get in the classroom is not going to be worth much to us unless it is practiced. We can be sold on it more easily if the elders, preacher, and teachers of the congregation demonstrate the lessons by their own example. How much easier it will be for us to see the truth of the lesson, and the importance of it, if we have the proper guidance. This is the crying need today. When the leaders of the congregation do not practice what they preach, what can be expected of the members?

**B. We need prayerful teaching.**

When our teachers are godly, spiritual, and prayerful men and women, then we will sit up and notice what they are doing. We will admire them, respect them, and love them and count it an honor to have them to teach us and to guide us. We will listen and we will work.

**C. We need teaching that is given with love.**

The leaders of the church should be men and women who love the Lord and the souls of men. When we have teachers like this we know that they mean business and we are not just there to argue, fuss, to entertain ourselves, and to kill time. Rather, we are there to learn how to save souls and to carry out the great commission. We are aware that we are dealing with souls and that it is urgent that we prepare ourselves to go out and harvest souls unto the Lord.

**D. We need teaching with the emphasis being put where it is needed.**

Many of the sermons are based on teaching people what to do to be saved, although most of the listeners are already members. Much time is spent teaching about the church although the audience is primarily composed of members of the church. Much time is spent on teaching the errors of denominationalism although the hearers are not usually members of any denomination. Much of the Bible with its proper emphasis is never touched. But brethren, we need to be taught how to live

the Christian life, the mission of the church, and what we can do to spread the gospel. We need to be taught about God, Christ, and the souls of men. We need to be taught about life, death, and eternity. It is little wonder that any number of congregations are dead spiritually, and are gradually going down in every way. You could expect little less with the kind of teaching that is done.

**E. We need teaching by qualified teachers.**

A few days ago one of our dear friends wrote from Nashville, Tennessee that their family was attending a large congregation there and that one of their classes was conducted by an individual who didn't know how to teach and he certainly didn't know the Bible. So what were they doing? Some of them who knew a little about the Bible were trying to teach the teacher. I have sat in many a class myself where the teacher did nothing more than ask questions on the lesson and the members did nothing more than follow along in the material and answer the questions. Neither was prepared for the class, and neither knew any more after it was over. This goes on in congregations all over the brotherhood Sunday after Sunday. This kills interest, people complain about it if they have any interest left, and those who don't either continue out of habit or drop by the wayside.

We need teachers that have a well planned course of study, who know their material, and who can deliver it to their class and inspire them to act upon it. With proper teachers and teaching the

church can be brought to life.

**F. We need teachers with experience.**

How can a teacher tell others how to be a personal worker if he has never done any personal work? How could a teacher sell others on mission work if he is not interested in it himself? What I am saying is that if the church is going to be prepared to do a work, it is going to have to have the proper teaching from those who are equipped and qualified by experience to do the job.

**G. We need teachers who have a zeal for the Lord.**

We need the kind of teaching that will stir us up, that will move us, that will not let us rest, but will spur us on, excite us, to want to go out and win the world to Christ. Teaching that never disturbs us, never gets any reaction from us, that leaves us numb and dead is a waste of time and effort.

**H. We need the kind of teaching that will involve us.**

We can talk about the needs of others, but we must have lessons that will deal with our needs. We can talk about what others might do, but we need to consider what we can do. We need to pray together, study together, and work together. We can start some projects of work, set some goals, and all take part to bring about their fulfillment.

**I. We need consistent teaching on a regular basis.**

We need much teaching and encouragement to

live the Christian life and to discharge our responsibilities. That is why it is necessary not to forsake the assemblies.

**J. We need the kind of teaching that we can easily pass on to others.**

The best way to retain that which we have learned is to go immediately and pass it on to others. Otherwise, after a little while we have forgotten it and cannot present it with the same interest and zeal.

**V. BECOMING INVOLVED MEANS RESPONSIBILITY.**

To know the truth means that one is obligated to obey it. And to obey it obligates one to teach it to others. Why this responsibility?

**A. One has a soul that needs to be saved.** No one else can obey God for you and me. We must obey him for ourselves, for it is **our** soul that needs to be saved.

**B. One is saved to save others.** The Lord looks to you and me to share the knowledge we have with others, for how else can the truth spread? It is common sense to know that those who do not know the truth cannot teach anyone else.

**C. There is the responsibility to establish the church where it has not yet been established.**

The world is the limit. Wherever man is, that is where we are to go with the gospel of Christ. We must take it to every creature under heaven, and that is a tremendous responsibility.

- D. Our responsibility is to God, to the world, to every man, and we cannot shift that responsibility to another.**
- E. Our responsibility is to teach the truth and that only.** If we fail to preach it we will stand condemned. If we add to it, subtract from it, or substitute for it, then the curse of the Lord will be upon us (Revelation 22:18, 19; Galatians 1:6-9). It is the truth and the truth only that will make men free (John 8:32).
- F. We have a responsibility to the church.** We are members of it and therefore we must support it, help to expand it, help it to do its work, and help to strengthen it. We should love it and never do anything to harm it. The church is the spiritual body of Christ and therefore we must love the church as we love Christ.
- G. We have a responsibility to one another.** In Acts 2 we read where the early Christians were so concerned about one another that they sold their possessions and divided them among themselves equally so that all had all things common. We read again of where Christians helped one another materially, worked



together to further the cause of Christ, and suffered for each other. This is the way it should be today, and this is the way it must be if we are going to please the Lord.

As we meet our individual responsibilities in our personal involvement, this will lead to other things.

## VI. WHAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT CAN DO FOR YOU.

- A. You can be a preacher of the gospel.
- B. You can be a Bible teacher.
- C. You can be a worker for the Lord.
- D. You can be a missionary.
- E. You can be a soul winner.
- F. You can plant the church in new places.
- G. You can be a blessing to hundreds, thousands, and millions.
- H. You can save your soul in the end.

## CONCLUSION

Personal involvement can make all the difference in the world. It will not only make you a Christian, but it will keep you faithful to the Lord. It will make a worker out of you. It will open doors of service for you, give you opportunities to do good, to be a blessing to countless people physically and spiritually.

God will therefore bless you and reward you, crowning you with success in this world and taking you one day to heaven, along with all of those precious souls you have

influenced for good and won to the truth. Isn't that wonderful? For what more could you ask?

## QUESTIONS

1. How do most members of the church view Christianity?
2. What do the members and congregations need to do?
3. List some problems that need to be overcome.
4. What does the devil want to do?
5. Who is our greatest enemy sometimes?
6. How much must we love the Lord to be what he would have us to be?
7. Is it possible sometimes for our brethren to hinder us? How?
8. Why did you become a Christian?
9. How can you prove that you are a Christian?
10. Are you trying to teach others the truth?
11. Have you converted anyone to Christ?
12. What are you doing to work for the Lord?
13. What are you doing to help get the gospel to the rest of the world?
14. List some steps you can take in preparation to go to a foreign field.
15. What can you do if you are unable to go personally?
16. How can a congregation get more involved in the Lord's work?
17. What kind of teaching is needed today?
18. Where should the emphasis be placed?
19. What kind of teachers are needed?

20. What does involvement mean?
21. Give some of our responsibilities.
22. To what can involvement lead?

## PROJECTS

1. How many in the class are directly involved in a teaching program?
2. How many in the congregation would you say are directly involved in some form of teaching to win souls to Christ? Could you find out?
3. Write a missionary and tell him about the class and ask for suggestions.
4. Gather up good Christian books from the congregation, and from nearby congregations, and send to some foreign work.
5. Discuss what the ladies can do.
6. Appoint someone to give a talk on "Total Commitment."
7. Have someone report on a missionary book he has read.

## LESSON THIRTEEN

### BLESSINGS AND CONSEQUENCES

Matthew 6:33; Galatians 6:4-10

#### INTRODUCTION

In the final lesson of this study we are going to consider the blessings that come as a result of doing the greatest work in all the world. Perhaps these blessings alone will induce us to enter into this type of work, but we need to consider the consequences of not doing this work. This should bring home to us afresh that we cannot deal lightly with God's will and our responsibility to it. As the Bible says, "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6: 4-10).

## DISCUSSION

### I. THE BLESSINGS OF GOD.

Have you ever stopped to think of how good God has been to us? I am afraid that the majority of us have not. Rather, we have been blessed so much for so long that we have come to accept it as a course of life. Instead of thanking God, we gripe, complain, and whine about all of the problems we are having. How sad it is.

Most of us have never known what it was to be in real need. We have never had to do without the necessities of life. We have not only had what we needed, but many of the luxuries as well, and we have had the luxuries for so long that we have come to think of them as necessities.

I wish I could take you to some of the places in the world where I have lived. If you could just see those places and see what the people have, or don't have, and could see the way they live, then it would change your whole outlook on life. But greater still, if you could see the spiritual needs that I have seen, I am sure that you would be a changed person and would decide that your life is not so bad after all and that perhaps you could help with the spread of the gospel more than you are doing.

With the foregoing ideas in mind, I would like to talk to you about some of our real blessings.

#### A. The blessing of giving.

Did you know that one of the greatest blessings that we have is the blessing of giving? Jesus recognized this when he said, "It is more blessed to give than it is to receive" (Acts 20:35). Most people

have turned that around and they reason that it is more blessed to receive than to give. But let me ask you something in all seriousness. Which had you rather do: be able to give, or be in the position of having to depend on someone to give to you whatever you had? I think that you will agree with me when I say that I had much rather be able to give than to have to depend on someone giving me everything I received. When you think of it from that standpoint, it is a blessing indeed to be in position to give. Not all people are that fortunate, inasmuch as there are millions all over the world that can't give because they have **nothing** to give. My brethren, let us be thankful that we are able to give of our abundance.

**B. The blessing of being asked.**

We are blessed of the Lord to the extent that we are in position that many things are asked of us. Some gripe and complain about this. But, to which group had you rather belong: those who are being asked for help, or those who are forced to ask? I already know the answer, and you know that I know! To be in a place where we can be asked suggests that we have what the other fellow does not have, that we have the truth while others do not, that we can go to help those who cannot help themselves. Yes, it is quite significant when you really think about it, and we should count ourselves fortunate that we are in position of being asked and that we can do much to help.

There are different calls for help:

1. *As congregations, you may be called upon to sponsor some family, to give support or to help in other ways. Had you rather be having one to come to you to ask these favors, or had you rather be needing someone to come to help you?*
2. *As preachers and teachers, you may receive the "Macedonian Call" to come over to help. This may bother you, disturb you, and aggravate you, but don't you appreciate the fact that someone brought the truth to you and made it possible for you to know God's will and to obey it and to have the opportunity to teach it to others? Is it any great sin that someone should ask your help that they might know the truth, or is it wrong for you to help someone to take the truth to others? But for the grace of God you might be in their shoes at this time. How would you feel if the shoe was on the other foot, if you were in need of the gospel instead of the one being asked to share it? How blessed we are to be in position to be asked.*
3. *As members of the church you may be asked to give a special contribution to help a family to go to some distant land. While many gladly give to such a plea, and even count it as an opportunity, others gripe, complain, and fuss about it. Let me ask you: would you be willing to exchange places with that family? Even*

if someone offered your entire support, tickets, and everything, would you be willing to go? When you come to think about it, you don't have anything to complain about, do you? How thankful you should be that **someone** is going, and that you are being given an **opportunity** to help, and that you can help. What about those on the other side of the world who have never even heard the gospel? Would you change places with them? Oh, my brethren, we are so childish and so ungrateful for all the Lord has given us. Here we are so blessed, and how thankful we should be, but instead we gripe if we are asked to share just a little of what we have with others. We condemn the preacher, the elders, and anyone else that we feel might encourage this sort of thing. What are we going to say when we stand before the Lord? What will our money do for us then?

**C. The blessing of being able to go.**

Not all people are able to go forth with the gospel, for various reasons. They would like to, but cannot. If you are able to go you should not offer excuse after excuse or refuse to go, but you should be so thankful that God has blessed you and made it possible for you to share salvation with others.

**D. The blessing of being able to send.**

Not all congregations can sponsor. Not all members of the church can give. Not all congregations and individuals will do what they can.



What a terrible state to be in! If you are able to do these things, you should count yourself fortunate, and you should thank God for the opportunity he has given you.

If we could just catch this spirit, what a difference it would make! We shoulder a responsibility, but it is also a great honor and privilege. Therefore we shouldn't think of it as being a burden or a handicap, but we should consider it as a great blessing, for that is exactly what it is. Suppose we did not have the truth to send or the money with which to send it?

**E. The blessing of freedom.**

Here we are, so blessed materially and spiritually, and blessed further with the gift of freedom. We have freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom to move about, and to go to other lands. We are blessed with the means not only to go, but to do the work we were sent to do. I wonder if we realize and understand what this means? It means that God has blessed us as no other people on earth in this age. It means that he has placed in our hands every needed tool to evangelize the world. We are left without excuse.

But what do we do with all of this? Sit, **squandering time and opportunities**. My brethren, unless we use the blessings that are ours and the freedom that has been given to us then all of this may be eventually taken away from us. Times are beginning to change. I would say that in all probability

our children will see things different to what we have now. If so, we will have no one to blame but ourselves. We can always say we had the opportunity and it is our fault that it was taken from us and our children. Will that be any consolation?

**F. The blessing of serving others.**

What is life if all one is going to do is to live for himself? What is there to that? Where is the joy? What has been accomplished? The thing that counts in the end is being able to spend a life that will benefit others. There is no better way to try to help man than to share the gospel with him, to help him find God so that he may live and die for Him.

Jesus taught that we should love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39) and Paul says that we should bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). This is what brings meaning to life and gives purpose to our existence. When one has done this, he can die peacefully.

**G. The blessing of suffering for the Lord.**

Peter and John counted it all joy that they could suffer some for him who suffered so much for them (Acts 5:41). Christ taught the disciples, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so

persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:10-12).

How can there be any blessing in suffering and persecution? It lies in the fact that one is doing God's will, that he is teaching the truth, and that he is doing the right thing regardless of the consequences. Peter wrote, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:12-16).

#### H. The blessing of having the promises of God.

Christ has made many promises and we know that he is faithful to keep his word (II Peter 3:9).

1. *The Lord has promised to be with us.* Christ said, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

2. *The Lord has promised to hear us in time of need.* "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14).
3. *The Lord has promised to bless us materially.* "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).
4. *The Lord has promised that all things will work together for our good.* "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).
5. *The Lord has promised to give us life.* "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8).

These, and many others, are the promises of God. Man can never offer so much, and can never gain so much except as he looks to God. We have all of this and much more as we put our trust in the Lord and obey his will.

Do you believe the Lord's promises? How much do you believe them? Enough to obey his teaching and to abide by his will that you may possess them? The Lord wants to test your faith, and he does test it.

#### **I. The blessing of faith.**

How much faith do you have? Do you have enough to obey the Lord's teaching no matter where it leads you? He needs people today who have faith and lots of it, people with the kind of faith that will lead them to go wherever they can do the most good. I am afraid most of us have faith only when we are at home and all is going well, but that kind of faith doesn't amount to much.

A strong faith in the Lord and his power is a tremendous blessing within itself for it is the only way we can find our burden to be light (Matthew 11:28-30).

**J. The blessing of small things.**

You don't have to be rich to use what you have for the Lord. You don't have to be a famous speaker to take the gospel to others. You don't have to be a congregation of a thousand members to send a man forth to preach the truth. Regardless of how little your means may appear to be, it can be used of God to accomplish great things. If people would just use what they have, the Lord's will would be accomplished.

**II. REWARDS OF THE FAITHFUL.**

There are many rewards that come to us when we do what the Lord wants done.

**A. There is growth.**

As individuals when we put forth an effort to

share the gospel with others by doing or by sending, then we grow in the Lord. We grow in all the qualities possessed by Christians. We grow in knowledge, in the desire to serve and work. We end up far ahead of what we were at the beginning. As the church, when we put forth an effort to sponsor and support, we grow in number, in depth of spiritual dedication, and in monetary contributions. We grow in interest and service.

No one is hurt by faithfulness and work but all are blessed. There is joy and happiness as never experienced before.

**B. The Lord's kingdom is expanded.**

Through our efforts to evangelize, we are rewarded by the knowledge that the church is spreading to other parts of the world, that congregations are being established, that souls are being saved, that Christians are being strengthened, that people are being influenced for good. What a satisfaction to know that this is taking place because we are helping to make it possible.

**C. We are accomplishing the Lord's purposes.**

As a result of doing the Lord's will, his name is being taken to others who have never heard of him, and he is being glorified, praised, and honored. Think of how pleased He must be with that, for such worship of God is the reason for man's existence in the world.

**III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT GOING.**

For the remainder of our study, I would like for us to think of the consequences of failing to do God's will with reference to world evangelism.

**A. God will not accept ignorance as a basis for not taking the gospel to others.**

The Bible makes it very plain what the will of the Lord is on this subject. As a matter of fact, God, Christ, and the whole Bible make it crystal clear that we are to share the truth with all mankind. God has chosen to work through us; he has spelled out our duty, and most of his instructions directly or indirectly emphasize the necessity of carrying the message to others. So we all know what he wants.

**B. God will not accept disobedience.**

If we fail to take the gospel to the world, there will be just one reason for it: plain disobedience. We condemn disobedience among non-Christians. What about disobedience among Christians? Will it save us? My brethren, how sad it is going to be if we stand before the Lord having failed to obey him.

**C. God will not save the world on the basis of our failure to take the gospel to it.**

This simply means that if we fail, the world will be lost and we will be lost too (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Just think how terrible that will be, and all because we did not do what the Lord asked us to do. Although we claim to be Christians,

many souls who should be saved will be lost because of us.

- D. As a result of our failure, the world will have to suffer physically.**

If the gospel is not taken then its power will not be felt and Christianity cannot have its influence on man. Many terrible physical woes can come out of this alone. Even today the world is suffering much simply because the gospel has not been taken and spread to the extent that it should have been.

- E. Another consequence will be that the church at home will not be made stronger but will be weakened because of our failure.**

The church is not strengthened by less work, by failure on our part to carry out the Lord's will. Money on the surface may have been saved, but actually in the final analysis, money will not have been given because the members saw that it was not being used to carry out the Lord's will. Thus, in the end the church is hurt, is weakened, and is therefore not able to do the work that it should be doing.

- F. Precious time is lost.**

We don't have forever to live. Every day that passes is another day forever gone; a day that cannot be recalled. If we did not use it to further the Lord's cause, we have wasted that much more time and squandered that many more opportunities.



I have felt that since I am getting older every day, I owe it to God, to my fellow man, and to myself to do all I can **right now** to get the gospel to the world. In the end, regardless of what others may do, that will be all that counted as far as I am concerned.

Suppose one spends all of his time making money, seeking worldly gain, obtaining fame. What will that be worth to him at the judgment if his soul is lost? We **must** see that time is precious, and that we need to use it properly. We must try to redeem it (Ephesians 5:10).

**G. All of the pleas for help will have been in vain.**

It is sad to think that today there are so many calls for help, for replacements, for new fields to be opened, but most of them are going unheeded. Most members of the church go on about their business as though there is nothing to be alarmed about. With those cries being passed up, it means that so many opportunities to do good and to save souls are being lost forever. How we will wish we had it all to do over again one day, but it will be too late then.

**H. Listen to a scene at the judgment day:**

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his

right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”

(Matthew 25:31-46).

My brethren, how will it be with you and me in that day?

## CONCLUSION

God has been so good to us. He has given us a wonderful land, he has blessed us materially, he has given us the gospel and the opportunity to take it to others. Is it asking too much that we carry that gospel to others? It is not that he is asking us to do many other dangerous and horrible errands. Rather, he is simply asking us to share with the world that which should have brought joy and happiness into our own lives.

As we close this study with these concluding remarks, please take to heart this challenge: **DETERMINE NOW TO GO OR SEND THE GOSPEL TO OTHERS IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.** When? Right now. Set some goals. See how much you can do within this next year. See how many souls you can personally win to Christ. As a congregation, see how much you can give to help send forth the gospel. Why not even choose a country where the gospel has not gone and send a worker there? Wouldn't that be wonderful? You can do it. I know you can. The Lord knows you can. And you know you can, if you really want to.

This is an emergency. Souls are dying, **lost**, every minute; and one day it will be our soul that goes to meet God. **Our very own.** Let's work hard now to save these souls so that they can meet Him in peace.

I am going to be praying for you that you may succeed, and I believe that you will. May all praise and honor be given to our Lord Jesus Christ both now and forever

more. Amen.

## QUESTIONS

1. Read Galatians 6:4-10.
2. In what ways has God blessed us?
3. Discuss the blessing of giving.
4. Quote Acts 20:35.
5. Which had you rather do: Be blessed to the point that someone can ask you to give, or be in such a state that you are forced to ask for help?
6. Why do people complain when they are asked for help?
7. List some of the different calls for help.
8. Why is it a blessing to be able to go?
9. How is freedom a blessing?
10. What does it mean to serve others?
11. Discuss the blessing of suffering for the Lord.
12. Read I Peter 4:12-16 and comment on it.
13. Give some of the promises of God; give the scripture references for them.
14. How long has the Lord promised to be with us?
15. When does he answer prayer?
16. Has the Lord promised to bless us materially? When?
17. What works together for our good?
18. What is the greatest promise of all?
19. Why is faith a blessing?
20. What are the rewards of the faithful?
21. Give the consequences of not going.
22. Will ignorance excuse us of our failure to take the gospel to others? Why not?

23. How will God deal with the disobedient?
24. Will God save the world in spite of our failure to take the gospel to it?
25. Can the church be strengthened through a policy of non-evangelism?
26. Why is time so precious?
27. Read Matthew 25:31-46.
28. What is the great emergency that we are facing to-day?

## PROJECTS

1. Discuss the benefits and blessings that come to the congregation when they sponsor a family in a foreign field.
2. Make a study of some country that is without the gospel and look into the possibility of getting the gospel to the people there in one way or the other.
3. Make a study of Paul's missionary journeys and note in particular his methods.
4. Set some goals for the class to work today.
5. What could be done to encourage the congregation to give more?