

13. Mission (2Q 2009—Walking the Walk: The Christian Life)

Biblical material: Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47; John 14:6; Eph. 4:11–15; 2 Pet. 2:1–3; Rev. 14:6–12.

Quotes

- Anyone who witnesses to the grace of God revealed in Christ is undertaking a direct assault against Satan’s dominion. *Thomas Cosmades*
- *Testimony* is not a synonym for *autobiography*! When we are truly witnessing, we are not talking about ourselves but about Christ. *John R. W. Stott*
- Evangelism is truth demanding a verdict. *Lionel Fletcher*
- Evangelism’s highest and ultimate end is not the welfare of men, not even their eternal bliss, but the glorification of God. *R.B. Kuiper*
- The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to him the more intensely missionary we must become. *Henry Martyn*
- What is the first hypothesis for evangelism? That God is there, and is the kind of God the Bible says he is, and that he has not been silent but has given us propositional truth. *Francis Schaeffer*
- The Word of God is not just for domestic consumption; it is also for export. *William Freel*

Questions

So what *is* our mission? As we consider Christ’s mission, what can we learn from this? How do we best “evangelize”? In our mission, what are the positives and negatives? In all our church programs, what must we never fail to emphasize? What is our wider mission before the whole universe? How do we answer the charges against God?

Bible discussion

We’re told to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mark 16: 15, 16). Exactly how? The message of good news and the call to repentance (Luke 24:46) has always been God’s invitation—wanting us to respond so he can heal and save. Only Jesus is the way, truth, and life (John 14:6)—does this mean we’re exclusive, or that this is the clearest revelation of the saving God? The gifts God gives (Eph. 4) are for this purpose. 2 Peter 2 reminds us that it’s not plain sailing—that the mission of the church will be subverted by those who wish to use it for their own ends, while Rev 14 gives us the extreme results of rejecting God’s saving invitation—the experience of being “given up by God” (see Romans 1).

Comment

To have a deep, personal and intimate relationship with you is what God is interested in! That way He can heal and save you, and prepare you for His eternal kingdom. He’s certainly not interested in bargaining with people or making some kind of transaction. Nor does He want people to believe their salvation depends on working for credit! Some people seem to think that they can make it to heaven without even *liking* God.

Again and again, when God comes to human beings, He wants a relationship based on love and acceptance. *He doesn't want fear!*--which is why He says so often "Don't be afraid!"

There is no other meaning to the truth: "God is love" than that God wants a relationship based on loving, accepting trust that works both ways. That was the reason Jesus came: to show, to demonstrate, prove that God truly is love--and he even let us crucify him to answer the charges that he was selfish and unloving.

Jesus told the story of the sower who spread seed as a way of showing how people respond differently to God and his desire for a relationship with Him. Some hear and yet don't allow God to change them. They just have no depth, and when the heat comes, they dry up. Others get choked out by the distractions of other relationships, other ways of living. Some don't want any relationship at all, and get eaten up by the birds! A lasting relationship only comes from having deep roots in the soil of God's friendship, growing in Him and loving Him and His caring commands.

I remember talking with a woman about her experience. She had tried *so hard*. Doing everything her church leaders told her she had to do. Making sure that her behaviour was faultless. As if she were trying to impress God, just as we try to impress those around us. The result? It made her life miserable, and she ended up hating God. Sad, tragically sad! Because even in human relationships, the ones that last, the ones that are meaningful, are not based on trying to impress. Only by being what you really are can you hope to have a deep and enduring relationship.

The same with God. He loves us just as we are. Not that He loves all the mess of sin that we have got into, but He still sees what we can be. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). He came here to this earth for that very purpose: to show us what He was really like (John 14:9), and to win us back to love Him and to trust Him. What God most wants is that love relationship based on mutual trust, and the Cross shows the ultimate trustworthiness of God.

Said Jesus, "If I be lifted up...I will draw *all* to me." (John 12:32). The drawing power of God is His character that wants to love all of his unlovable, rebellious children. He offers friendship, and saving, healing love. Our role? To let others know!

Ellen White Comments

In His life Jesus of Nazareth differed from all other men. . . . He is the only true model of goodness and perfection. From the beginning of His ministry men began more clearly to comprehend the character of God. . . . Christ's mission on earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot, but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children. He spoke of God by the endearing title of "My Father." . . . {HP 14}

The work of the good Samaritan represents Christ's mission to the world. Our Saviour came to reveal the character of God, to represent his love for man. He acted just as the Father would have done in all emergencies. Christ manifested for us a love that the love of man can never equal. He died to save those who were his enemies; he prayed for his murderers. {HM, October 1, 1897}

Christ revealed to the world the character of God as full of mercy, compassion and inexpressible love. He came to lift up man. It was provided that whosoever should believe in Christ as his personal Saviour should be saved. In all his works he taught men that it was his mission not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. {ST, July 2, 1896}