

# Missions

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[ 0 : 00 ] Tonight is on missions. I'm going to read the introduction and the scripture and then we'll watch the video and we'll take the test test yeah the study questions together and then we'll have our discussion.

History is a tale of God's mission of reconciling the world to himself. In this lesson Dr. Devers shares what a great privilege it is to be part of God's mission to the nations and a such essential concern and mark of a healthy church. Acts 1 8 you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth Romans 10 14 and how are they to hear without someone preaching? Okay let's watch the video together.

Okay let's do the study questions together. Question number one. The basic story of the Bible was never merely about an ethnic minority.

True. Two. Missions is taking the gospel across boundaries especially across let's see language C. Though I think the others would be possible but he did say language over and over. Three. God promised to bless the nations through Israel, Jesus, Abraham, D, all the above.

[ 1 : 48 ] Missions is an aspect of evangelism. True. Five. It is in the combination of blank and love of God and neighbor that we find the seed of missions in the church.

A. Faith. B. Justice. C. Courage. D. Self-sacrifice. D. Self-sacrifice. Okay. Six. A narrative with a strong emphasis on the missions can especially be found in D. Acts.

Sounds good. Okay. Everybody gets an A. Study or discussion questions. I have a microphone up here somewhere.

Question number one. Why do you think everyday evangelism cultivates a culture of missions?

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Why do you think everyday evangelism cultivates a culture of missions?

[ 3 : 16 ] I'm on the job every day. Okay. You're on the job every day. So you're, in doing so, you're more aware of the lostness in your own community and the lostness of the world.

And, you know, our inability to reach everyone and seeing the need to send more to those places where we're not able to go.

Okay. I think that's right. I mean, the more you evangelize, right, the more important missions is to you. You see how great of a need there is for the gospel to go forth and to be a part of that and to support that.

Any other comments to that question? Dan? Everyday is, we need the gospel everyday. I'll just say that. Everyone needs the gospel everyday.

And any, I mean, the reason we need to care about evangelism everyday is because anyone we see needs to hear the gospel.

[ 4 : 28 ] That includes us, includes everyone in our church, everyone in Bartlesville, and anyone else we see. And so I remember my first year here, the theme of Missions Month was every day on mission.

And I remember saying, it doesn't matter whether you go all the way across the world to China or just go across the Walgreens parking lot to the Chinese buffet.

You need to be on mission. And that's true. It really is. Anywhere we go, we need to be on mission. Amen. Good. Good comments.

Paul? I think it's something I can always be better at. But I think when we have that idea of evangelism more consistently, then we're more open and more sensitive to seeing God at work.

And when we see God at work, it then encourages us to invest more, to see him work more. And there's nothing like seeing God change a life to create some excitement towards helping others do that as well.

[ 5 : 46 ] Amen. Yeah, if you've ever been involved in a missions activity, you know, where your purpose is to share the gospel, and you see the outcome of that, there's nothing like it.

I mean, it's just, it's so great to be a part of, play a small role in what God is doing to redeem his people. That's one of the things why, you know, I've heard people talk about mission trips. You know, and you've maybe heard some of the debate about why, one side would say, why spend all that money to go over there when you could just use that money that you would for plane tickets or whatever else, lodging, food, and you could just send it over to them. And I understand the logic behind that, but there's another side to it that I don't think people fully grasp who feel that way. One is the people who are there.

You know, I've heard David Platt give testimony. I've heard other missionaries give testimony. I think we've experienced that, and some of you have if you've gone on a mission trip, maybe especially if it's been out of the country to a people, you being there sends a powerful message to them that you care about them personally.

[ 7 : 11 ] And there is something about that for them to see you making the sacrifice to come be there with them in person, to minister to them and to serve alongside of them.

That's a powerful thing that they really, I mean, whereas a check is great, it's impersonal. But you being there sends a powerful message. And then the second thing I know I've noticed a lot being a youth pastor formerly when taking teens on mission trips, those were mission trips inside the United States, but getting them outside of where they were comfortable going and spending a week with the intent of ministering to and serving people and sharing the gospel, they, I mean, there's just been powerful moments where to them growing up in the church, you know, they've heard it. Maybe they were believers, but to be actually living it out, there's just like this excitement that comes from them. And I've seen so many of their lives changed through being involved in God's work in missions.

And so that's why I think it's so important that, you know, as a church we encourage those kinds of trips, you know, whether it's a Latvia trip or whether, you know, as a church we decide to go on mission somewhere or a youth group goes.

God works in powerful ways through those things. Question two. How can you trace God's missionary intent throughout the Bible?

[ 8 : 43 ] How is evangelism participating in the same overarching narrative? How can you trace God's missionary intent throughout the Bible? How is evangelism participating in the same overarching narrative?

So we go back to, okay, go ahead, Dan. Sorry, you put the microphone on. We'll go all the way back to Genesis. All the way back to chapter one. We are to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. That's one thing. We go to chapter three and we see the fall of man. And we see that, you know, when God told Eve especially that her seed would, her seed and the serpent would be conflicting. And it would be her seed that would conquer in that way. And that being the first idea of Christ, the first idea of salvation.

The true part of salvation we see in chapter six of a horrible debauchery going on. And yet, and God was going to destroy the earth.

[ 10 : 05 ] Yet, he found grace in Noah. Or Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord is what it says. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And eight people were saved.

And we see in that ark the very essence of salvation. I mean, the reality that, you know, we all deserve destruction.

And yet, God saved some. And it's an amazing, amazing truth. We see in Abraham that God blessed the world through him and through his offspring.

We see through Jacob and Esau that the Lord chose one over the other.

The idea that the Lord loved one. Despite his depravity, despite his sin. He loved Jacob. He loved the people of who Israel would be.

[ 11 : 05 ] You know, he chose those people. That is certainly an overarching role that through that people that the Lord's mission would spread. And, of course, it did spread through, you know, within the people, through the judges, through the prophets, through David and his offspring who were kings.

And then, of course, culminating in the person of Jesus Christ. And yet, even before Christ, there were instances of Gentiles being saved.

Instances of Gentiles being reached out. Really, in Christ's genealogy, there are two Gentiles. There's Rahab and there's Ruth.

And yet, you know, the Lord used that in a way even to bring into that line. But that's really awesome as well.

But there's many times that the Lord used the Jewish people to reach out to the Gentiles. Through, you know, Ruth and Naomi. Through Esther. Through Daniel.

[12:17] Through Nehemiah. You know, post-exilic. And so many other things that we can bring up in the Old Testament. Of course, after, you know, Christ.

Of course, the person of Christ being the reason for the message of the Great Commission. You know, through his apostles. Through the Apostle Paul. And all of them.

What, you know, how the church began to spread. Through Jerusalem. Judea. Samaria. The uttermost parts of the world. You look at the book of Acts. That is just pretty much, I mean, you know, Acts 1-8 is pretty much the thesis of the book of Acts.

And that's what's going on. And, of course, that continues through the mission as well. So, you know, that's how we trace that.

And evangelism, you know, the good news of the gospel was through that. Whether it was the Old Testament, they were looking toward the Messiah. The coming Messiah.

[13:15] Whether it was after Christ. Talking about Christ. Telling others about Christ. Of Christ. Bringing them to this word. And that's all throughout Scripture. And, of course, that's what we're called to do today as well.

Good. Good answer. Good answer. Yeah, you see, like Dan, you know, went through the Bible. It's, this is the theme.

God calls and preserves a people for himself who are to serve as a light to the nations. And so, we continue to participate in that overarching narrative, right?

By going and sharing the gospel and making disciples. Yes. Question three. What must a healthy church do to promote the spread of the gospel?

What must a healthy church do to promote the spread of the gospel? Amy? Well, I don't think we should take what we do already lightly.

[14:26] Or haphazardly. I mean, yeah, we've got Sunday school on Sunday morning. And we've got Bible school in the summertime. And we've got Iwanis on Wednesday night.

And youth and stuff. And the adults that meet in the parlor out here. Instead of going down to the Bible study. All those times that we've got people in the building.

It's a time to build the church and spread the gospel. But do it, like I've said before, do it purposefully. Do it on purpose. And go.

Every chance you get, go. Go do something. Go serve a meal. Go out there and give somebody a bottle of water. Do it.

But make sure that you do it with Christ in mind and do it. And it's the little girl that was that came up this morning to profess Christ.

[15:25] I was so tickled with her. And she was so. She was so shy. And stuff. And I told her. I said, baby, I'm so proud of you today.

I'm so proud that you had the courage to go up there. I said, I know it's tough to go up in front of everybody. But it gets easier the more you do it. And it's truth.

The more you do it, the more you go out, the more you put yourself out there. And yeah, you're going to get smacked in the head. Not everybody's going to receive what you've got.

But you can at least go. That's what I got to think about that. Good. Thank you. Yeah. Sometimes we can get in a cycle where we've been doing certain things for so long that we kind of forget the purpose and intent behind it.

You know. And so I think it's good every once in a while. Huh? Even singing in choir. Yeah.

[16:28] But I think we can, yeah, we can get to the point where we forget. And so I think it's good we, every so often we go back through what are we doing? Why are we doing it?

And sometimes those things can become something that we didn't initially intend for it to be. You know, and that's how I think sacred cows can start to become things in church, you know.

It's like, well, we can't, you know, that's why we can't change that or get rid of that or whatever. Make hamburger out of that because that's so precious. But we can tend to do that.

And then when we do that, it's because we've forgotten what was the initial purpose and intent for it. So staying focused on that, I think, is key.

We don't do VBS just because we've always done VBS. You know, we don't have Bible study just because we've always had Bible study. Or we don't have a choir just because we've always had a choir. And so on and so forth.

[ 17 : 29 ] There's a reason and a purpose behind that. And so I think it's good to always be re-evaluating so that we're making sure that, you know, the purpose is there. And we haven't drifted off into an area where, you know, now we're just doing it because we've always done it that way before.

I like the comment that he made that I wrote it down here. He said, all the marks of a healthy church lead here. And so what must a healthy church do to promote the spread of the gospel?

Well, they've got to be healthy in all of these areas, you know. And it's when we start to get sick in these areas that now all of a sudden our focus becomes inward, right?

And we're not so concerned about being missionaries where we are or sharing the gospel in our community. You know, we're more concerned with other things that detract us from the mission that God has given us.

So, you know, taking all of these different marks that we've gone through and making sure that, you know, we're healthy in all of these different areas. And when we are, like he said, you know, the natural result from that will be an outward mission focus to wanting to go, wanting to reach, wanting to support missions, wanting to share the gospel and make disciples.

[ 18 : 55 ] Anybody else have an answer for this question? What must a healthy church do to promote the spread of the gospel? One thing that we do as a church, and I like what Amy said too, because, you know, we're not always looking at this as like the glass is half empty.

There are things that we are doing as a church that this church has been doing for a long time to promote the spread of the gospel. One of the things that, you know, the gospel debt is a thing that has been going on for a long time.

And, you know, that's been effective as far as, you know, giving to different missions that we support, the different partnerships that we've started.

One with Latvia, you know, that's important in going to a far away land. And partnering with them in ministry.

So, and a lot of the other things we do, going to the Lighthouse, different Engage events, the different ministries that have been in existence here for a while are giving to the cooperative program.

[ 20 : 03 ] The videos that we play to keep everyone aware of, you know, the state of things and how to give and how to be in prayer for these different ministries and people who are ministering there.

Well, what else could we do, do you think, to promote the spread of the gospel? James. James. I thought it was interesting that he talked about how their church is involved with other churches in their area to build those up that are struggling, that, you know, have dropped in their numbers. And they come in and try to help build and get those churches back on track again. And it made me think while I was sitting here, how good are we in our association in doing that for our other churches that are struggling?

So, I just, I don't know, that thought just popped in, you know, my head when he was talking about that. Yeah. I'm glad you mentioned that because I was thinking about some of the things that our association did and I wouldn't have said it if he hadn't said anything.

So, one example is the church in Venita that was not associated with the SBC, was a Baptist church.

[ 21 : 31 ] I can't remember who their association was with. They might have just been not associated. I don't know. But they were down to two members and they were both in their 80s and they called Monty, our DOM, with a realization that, you know, we're looking at one another and realizing that they're not young and that once they go to be with the Lord, you know, there's nobody in the church.

So, they reached out to him. He reached out to Oshaleta, I think it's First Baptist Church, Oshaleta, and the pastor there is a good guy because they're close.

And he's like, hey, you know, and then Skyatook, too, First Baptist Church, Skyatook. Am I forgetting something? Vera. Yeah, the church. Vera, not Venita. Vera, sorry. V's, you know, all these Oklahoma cities have weird names.

Like, I kept wanting to say Muscagee, and that's our inside joke with Danny. Anytime I see it, I'd be like, oh, Muscagee has got something going on.

Anyhow, back to Vera. And Kansas has some weird ones, too, but we're not as weird as, but I guess I'm one of you now. I've been here long enough. So, reached out to Monty.

[ 22 : 54 ] Monty connected with these two churches, found somebody who was able to come as their, fill in as their pastor. That person is now there on a more permanent basis. And they went from two to, last report, they were running about 40.

So, that's awesome. You know, there's one example. And then, in some of the other conversations that I've been a part of, I know that because of the way we work as Southern Baptists, you know, churches have autonomy.

So, we can't just go in there and say, you're struggling, and you need to turn things over. And, unfortunately, for a lot of churches, there's the pride factor of, you know, yeah, they could use the help, and there would be a lot of people willing to help.

But they're not willing to come to grips with reality, unfortunately. Because I know that there are some churches, we have a lot of good churches in Bartlesville and in the surrounding area.

We have a lot of really good churches and a lot of really good pastors in our association. And I know that, you know, there would be a desire to want to be involved with some of the other churches that are struggling.

[ 24 : 08 ] I love going to our association meetings because there's no, amongst those who come, there's no rivalry or competitiveness.

You know, everybody talks about what's going on in their churches, and we pray for one another. And there's really a togetherness, which I think is awesome.

And that's the way it should be. But I, you know, that's one of the things that I'm big on, you know, James, because that was my home church. You know, I always was brokenhearted over what happened there and had a desire, you know.

Well, why won't somebody look at that church and go and pastor there or do something for them? And some of it's the church, but, you know, going back to the thing that bothers me a lot in going to seminary.

I know I've probably shared this before, but it seems to me that a lot of the students are eager to plant churches, not to enter into established churches. And I think a lot of that has to do with the thought in their mind, well, I'll go to a, I can start things out fresh.

[ 25 : 15 ] And I can kind of do things the way I think that they want to be done without having to deal with any past history. And, but then it's like, man, but, you know, there are so many churches that would be blessed by having someone like you come and minister to them there.

So I have seen more of a focus on church revitalization, like he's mentioned. Different churches do it, do it different ways. Sometimes a church will come in and say, okay, give us your, give us the, you know, the deed to your property.

And, you know, we may not change everything, but we're definitely going to breathe new life into here. Some will just come alongside and say, you know, what can we do to financially maybe help you, to give you some people, to maybe reach out and do some more evangelism in your community.

There's different ways to do it, but I definitely think it should be happening more often than it does. Willard? That's been something that's been attempted in our association for a long time.

Some things began well, but when it comes to the realization that it requires sacrifice on the part of the church that wants to help, sometimes they're not so willing to sacrifice because it takes people.

[ 26 : 33 ] In reality, to help a struggling church, say if our church were going to help a struggling church, the best way, I think the proper way of doing that is to have a group of people from our church that feel led to the Lord and are committed to go and be a part of that church for however long it takes for it to get on our feet and go well.

And that's been tried here, but invariably it ended up, well, we'll support you financially for a while. So hopefully that'll change more, and there has been some change, but until we're ready to let go of not building our own empires, that'd be a problem.

And then, of course, there are some cases, too, where churches don't want you to come in. Yeah. They don't want anything to change. Yeah. You hit on another side of that that I think is important, too, is it's not just sometimes the churches are too proud, but the pastors are, you know, pastors can covet numbers.

Oh, yeah. And to think of letting half of my or a portion of my congregation go and then thinking about budget-wise and everything else, I mean, they're just not willing to make that sacrifice, unfortunately.

Yeah. Nothing like trusting God in it all. Yeah. Yeah. I think those are the best church plans that I've seen is usually the church will find the planner, or the planner will come, and, you know, the church will sponsor them.

[ 28 : 10 ] And part of their sponsoring is not just financial, but they'll say, here's 50, 100 people. If the church is bigger, more, and, you know, take them, and they'll make those people.

The way I've seen it done before is they'll call the people forward, and they'll be in front of the rest of the church, and then they'll pray for them. But then they'll have them make a commitment that, you know, you're going to be with this pastor in this church for at least three years or until everything is going, and then you have the option of coming back or staying.

But that takes, you know, a really healthy church and healthy leaders to be able to see, you know, like you said, to have a kingdom vision instead of a, I'm going to build my own little empire here.

Where at? At Oak Park, West Oak, whatever you want to call it now. I mean, now you know what's happened to it. And, you know, some churches of the association more so were willing to give financially for a year.

One of the churches, maybe two, sent some folks there to be a part of that for a while, but I don't know whatever happened to that. They ended up going back to their churches.

[ 29 : 31 ] And so it didn't work, you know. I don't know. You know, it's the thing. It's, you know, one of the things you've got to be sure God's directing that.

Yeah. That that's his direction, that's his will, or else it won't work. And, you know, the church that needs help needs to be sure that's what God wants. The church that wants to help needs to do the same.

So it's, you know, just being sensitive to what God wants to do. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Sometimes we, you know, we're glad to see the fruit, but we want our taste of it as well.

Yeah. And, yeah, it should be happening a lot more than it is. And it's unfortunate because pride gets in the way of that.

But I am, you know, James, I'm, you know, there is a lot of those types of things, I think, happening in our association as, you know, as much as can happen despite those different barriers.

[ 30 : 29 ] Though, I know that, you know, any church, any church in our association, if it reached out and said, hey, we're struggling, we need help, I know that they would, there would be churches that would be willing to help, hopefully, you know, not to build to their own empire.

But unfortunately, that happens a lot. Last question. What is your specific prayer for missionaries, evangelists, and those who are suffering persecution in the church worldwide?

Might be a hard one to answer. But, you know, obviously something that we need to be aware of, that we're fortunate here, that there is persecution in other places. I think of the testimony I shared this morning that I heard from Aslam talking about, you know, the pastors over there grabbing his arm and pleading with him not to abandon them.

And so, I think we've just got to be more aware, too, that we're not, you know, Jesus isn't only the Savior for America, that he's the Savior of the world.

And so, we need to be praying more and thinking more of them. And I'm, you know, I'm pleased with the results. I don't know if you've heard some of them about what's happening in the Middle East and how the gospel is really taking root there and it's starting to spread.

[ 31 : 47 ] And that's really encouraging and that's awesome. And to be thinking about, you know, VOM is in our own backyard and be praying for the persecuted church and be praying for those who are out in those areas and for the work that they're doing as well.

So, we just need to be a lot more mindful than we are a lot of times. Thank you.