


1  **“Why Mission Matters”**

Acts 1:8 NLT

2  **Last week we closed the message talking about investing in God’s Global Fund.**

- This fulfills one of your purposes in life – using your resources to take the good news about Jesus around the whole world.
- You see - God doesn’t want us to keep the good news about Jesus just to ourselves, or just our family, our church, or just our community. God’s love includes us, but goes far beyond us.
- Typically the last thing a person says as they say goodbye is very important.
 - Well, the last thing that Jesus said before he ascended into heaven was tell others – tell others everywhere to the ends of the earth!

3  **“⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 NLT**


4  **If we’re honest, we got to admit – it’s easy to be self-centered.**

- I have a natural talent for just thinking about myself, my loved ones, my tribe.
- But Jesus says if you are going to be like me you must care about the whole world – get beyond yourself.
- You see, we are used to hearing the good news of Jesus and his love every week.
 - But just think about the people who haven’t heard about Jesus even once.
 - It’s estimated that over 25% of the world has never heard this amazing good news even one time. Is

that fair?

- 5 **October and November is the time we promote the World Mission Offering for International Ministries.**
- We may be apt to feel – “okay, it’s time to do our bit for mission” – so we give a little bit.
 - But does mission really matter?
 - In the back of our mind we might wonder, “Do people really need to hear about Jesus?”
 - Aren’t they just as well off the way they are with their traditional religions and belief systems?
- 6 **Yet Jesus never thought in those terms.**
- He never thought, “People are just as well off if they never hear of me.” “I think I’ll just stay in Nazereth.”
 - No, He went and told, and he said Go and tell.
 - Be my witnesses. Tell others about me and what I mean to you.
 - You can leave the results to me.
 - God says it’s my business to change human hearts, not yours.
 - It’s your business to tell and love and serve in my name.
- 7 **Why do we go into the whole world? Underscore this: Because GOD SENDS US!**
- We don’t send ourselves. Going is not our idea – it’s God’s!
- 8 **God said to Isaiah, “I will make you a light to the nations of the world to bring my salvation to them.” (Isaiah 49:6)**
- 9 **Jesus’s last recorded words in Matthew 28:18-20 are,**
- 10 **“I have been given all authority in heaven and on**

earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.


11  **²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."**


12  **But does it a real difference?**








- Whether we realize it or not, we are believers here today because someone took the trouble to leave their comfort zone and share the good news.
- Our Anglo ancestors received the good news from missionary orders of monks who planted themselves among the anglo saxons.
 - If they or someone like them hadn't come, we wouldn't be here.

13  **What about our Karen brothers and sisters?**

- What if Adoniram and Anne Judson had heard God's call to go, and said – "No, I don't think so."
- "We'll be just fine right here in Massachusetts. There are lots of churches who could use us here".
- Where would things stand today? If Judson or someone like him hadn't left their comfort zone, where would we be today?
- Does it matter to all of these Karen believers who are here today? Does it matter to A Bo who was just baptized today? What do you think?

14  **We must go. God is the one who sends, but we must respond and go, and support those who go. It starts with praying. Jesus told his disciples,**

15  **Matthew 9:36-38 NLT When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**

- 16  **37 He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. 38 So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."**
- 17  **Where is the next generation of missionaries? Well it's here – it's right here – in our churches.**
- Jesus says to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send them out.
 - Are we praying regularly for workers to go out in Jesus name. How many has our church sent out in Jesus name? Are we praying urgently that God will raise up workers and send them out?
- 18  **I am an American Baptist, and I'm proud of it.**
- Yet I was raised as a Southern Baptist in the south – and you know – there are few things that Southern Baptist got right.
 - One, was they promoted missions at every level of the church.
 - I was part of Royal Ambassadors.
 - On the surface it looked like the church's equivalent to Boy Scouts.
 - Yet, the deeper stated purpose was mission awareness and action.
- 19  **I still remember the Royal Ambassador scripture verse.**
- 20  **Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20 KJV**
- 21  **I still remember the Royal Ambassador pledge.**
- 22  **As a Royal Ambassador I will do my best**
- to become a well informed responsible follower of

Christ.

- To have a Christ-like concern for all people;
- To learn how to carry the message of Christ around the world;
- To work with others in sharing Christ; and
- to keep myself clean and healthy in mind and body

23  **Now truth be told, as an 8 year old I felt that RA basketball and camping were more important.**


- We learned all that mission stuff, so that we could have fun!
- Yet, you know, that mission stuff makes a difference in a young heart and mind.
- Seeds are planted – and they take root.

24  **To be honest, it's never been an easy choice for me to be a missionary.**

- When I felt the call to go to Korea my last semester in seminary, it would have been more comfortable to stay here in the States.
- When Debbie and I accepted the call to go to the Philippines as missionaries, it wasn't easy to leave our comfort zone.
- Who wants to take their young children from suburban Atlanta – a kids utopia with great schools and activities, little league, sports – to a third world country – to a poor, developing nation.
- I'd think, whose going to tune in to the Baylor Bears and root for them if I go? (by the way they beat Oklahoma this week and are 8 and 0!)
- It's never been easy for missionaries to go.
 - Jonah heard the call to go to Ninevah, Israel's hated enemy to the north, and he fled in the opposite direction.
 - When the city of Ninevah all repented, he sat on a overlooking hill and pouted.

– When the plant that provided shade was chewed through by a worm, Jonah complained, “poor, pitiful me”.


– God told him,

25  **9 “Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?” “Yes,” Jonah retorted, “even angry enough to die!” 10 Then the LORD said, “You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. It came quickly and died quickly. 11 But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn’t I feel sorry for such a great city?”**
Jonah 4:9-11 NLT

26  **Jonah – a great saint – how inspiring!**

- But, fortunately, the Bible is full of real people that God deals with as they are.
- As the old saying goes, “God can hit a straight lick with a crooked stick.”

27  **Why does mission matter? As Paul proclaimed,**

28  **But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? Romans 10:14 NLT**

29  **Today, after our song of response and invitation we are going to close with a prayer of blessing.**

- Many of you have contributed to these Christmas boxes assembled here at the front.
- As part of Operation Christmas Child, each of these boxes filled with gifts will go to a specific child around the world.
- Each box has a simple message of God’s love and the greatest Christmas gift – Jesus Christ and his love

supremely demonstrated for us on the cross as he died for us.

- As we close today, we are going to pray for each child who will receive a box. In a moment, I'll ask those who have contributed to come forward and surrounded these boxes as Pastor Deb leads us in prayer.