

*Thank you:* As many of you know, I have not preached in the past four months primarily so that I could devote attention to finishing my dissertation. I know that I've shared this with many of you personally, but let me publically thank you. God was gracious with me and sustained me and my family through this tough season and I know he heard the prayers of his saints, many of you, who have labored often in prayer for me. Thank you.

*Introduction:* If you've been with RHC for a little more than a few weeks, then you have probably quickly realized that "mission" is key to how we go about doing church.

- Mission Statement: RHC exists to glorify God by living out his *mission*...
- Core Values: Gospel, Community, and Mission
- Corporate prayer: we pray for missionaries and the nations weekly
- Community Groups: each group has adopted a missionary to pray, support, and encourage. In fact, we've even used CG over the past month to encourage and resource people to live on mission and reach their relational networks.
- Movement cards, invite cards, door hangers, gospel booklets, Easter egg hunts
- Look at our budget: 4% of NA (Charlestown, Toronto) and 4% to INT (India, Keith Campbell in China, Kevin Luce in Africa).
- Even an entire sermon series on mission.

With all of the emphasis at RHC on mission you might be tempted to conclude that mission is the primary goal and task of our church. The goal of this sermon is to persuade you that missions is NOT the ultimate and primary goal of RHC and neither should it be ultimate in your life.

### **Read Psalm 67**

Here are a few initial observations before drawing out two truths for missions:

1. This is a prayer of blessing upon Israel.
  - a. This blessing is reminiscent of the priestly benediction in Num 6:22b-26:

*"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup> 'Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, <sup>24</sup> The LORD bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.'"*

- b. This blessing is reminiscent of God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3:

*"<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

- c. This prayer of blessing looked to a future day when the Gentiles would receive God's light. That day has arrived with the coming of Christ:

*"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us . . . so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles..." (Gal 3:13-14).*

“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith” (Gal. 3:7-9).

Verse 1: God be gracious with us and bless us: “[T]ill he be merciful to pardon our sins through Christ, he cannot bless or look kindly on us sinners. . . . God cannot so much as bear any good will to us, till Christ makes peace for us” (Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 131).

### **Why did God bless Abraham? Why does the psalmist pray for blessing? Why does God bless you with salvation today?**

- Ps. 67:2: that your way may be known on earth, your saving power (i.e. salvation) among all nations. This is a prayer that the nations might enjoy the fullness of God’s salvation, all the benefits of God (his kingship, rule, blessings and promises).
- Ps. 67:3, 5: Let all the peoples praise you!
- Ps. 67:4: Let the nations be glad. . .
- Ps. 67:7: Let all the ends of the earth fear him!
- They and we are blessed in order to be a blessing to the nations.

**Transitional question:** what does God want from the nations? He wants to be known, praised, enjoyed, and feared. Namely, he desires to be worshiped! What is the goal of missions?

#### **I. Worship is the goal of missions.**

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t” (John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*, 17).

- The Beginning: Genesis – the earth is filled with worshipers (no mission)

“*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it*” (Gen 1:28; cf. 2:15-17).

- The End: Revelation – a new heaven and earth is filled with worshipers (no mission)

<sup>9</sup> *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,"<sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,<sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"<sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"<sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and **worshiped**. (Revelation 5:9-14; cf. 7:9-12; 15:1-4; 22:3)*

“When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever” (John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*, 17).

- The Fall: Genesis 3 – Sin is the reason worship does not exist globally. The nations, just like you and I, have rejected God as King because we want to be king. When God does away with sin, missions will be no more.

### **The need to clarify two terms:**

**1. What do I mean by worship?** We see in the NT that Jesus frees worship from a specific time and place and turns it radically inward. Thus, I'm not primarily thinking of praise and worship with hands raised and voices lifted up, though this can be worship. But all of those things can be done in vain. True worship is the response of one's entire being to the glory, honor, and worth of the triune God. It is to know, praise, enjoy and fear God.

- Worship is a response of your whole being to work of God displayed in the gospel:
  - Rom. 12:1: In view of the mercies of God, offer yours bodies as a living sacrifice...
- Worship is for your greatest joy and delight:
  - Ps. 16:11: In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
  - Ps. 34:8: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing."
- "Some sing for form, others for show, some as a duty, others as an amusement, but to sing from the heart, because overflowing joy must find a vent, this is to sing indeed" (Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 129).
- "Go to church once a week and nobody pays attention. Worship God seven days a week and you become strange" (A. W. Tozer).

### **2. What do I mean by missions?**

- Missions: the strategic task of the church sent into the world to make disciples of all nations.
- Missional: to live every day of your life on mission displaying and declaring the gospel in your relational networks.

**Get this: Missions is the means to the ultimate goal of global worship.** "Worship . . . [is] the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God" (John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*, 17). Missions is the summoning of the nations to find true joy, delight and satisfaction in God (Ps. 16:11; 37:4). To worship Him! God is worthy to be worshiped because he is gracious, providing salvation, righteous in all his ways, righting all wrongs and releasing all who are oppressed, and the giver of eternal joy and gladness.

Imagine what it will be like to collectively sing for joy and gladness one day with all the peoples of the earth.

The first and primary purpose and goal of RHC is to worship God. Our mission statement begins with: "Redemption Hill Church exists to *glorify God* by . . .

## II. Worship is the fuel of missions

What do I mean by fuel? Think of your car. If you have no fuel in your car, it will not go. Thus, what stirs your heart and life to be about this goal of global worship is worship itself.

“But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can’t commend what you don’t cherish. Missionaries will never call out, ‘Let the nations *be glad!*’ who cannot say from the heart, ‘*I rejoice in the Lord. . . . I will be glad and exult in you, I will sing praise to your name, O Most High!*’ (Ps. 104:34; 9:2). Missions begins and ends in worship” (John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*, 17).

“Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak” (John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*, 18).

“How can people who are not stunned by the greatness of God be sent with the ringing message, ‘*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods!*’ (Ps. 96:4)?” (John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*, 20).

“As we seek to find out why, with such millions of Christians, the real army of God that is fighting the hosts of darkness is so small, the only answer is—lack of heart. The enthusiasm of the kingdom is missing. And that is because there is so little enthusiasm for the *King!*” (Andrew Murray, *Key to the Missionary Problem*, 133, quoted by John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*, 41).

Missions Biography: William Carey, the Father of Modern Missions (1792), who called people to expect great things from God and attempt great things for God, was fueled by worship. Shortly before his death, Carey said to a friend: "You have been saying much about Dr. Carey and his work. When I am gone, say nothing about Dr. Carey; speak about Dr. Carey's Savior."

You will never engage the nations unless you wholeheartedly worship God with your life. The main hindrance to missions is *self*. You love your self, your house, your comforts, your job, your money, your kids, etc. When you turn to God in worship, you turn away from yourself; you deny yourself; you take up your cross. When you begin to worship God it becomes the fuel that frees you to spend your life for the sake of the nations.

**The point: Worship God and spend your life inviting the nations to worship God.**

### 3 Concluding potential objections:

#### 1. Isn’t it arrogant to claim that everyone should worship my God?

“The psalmist does not pray: May all the nations become sincere worshipers of their gods since all gods are one” (John Piper, *Finish the Mission*, 139).

“Skeptics believe that *any* exclusive claims to a superior knowledge of spiritual reality cannot be true. But this objection is itself a religious belief. It assumes God is unknowable, or that God is loving but not wrathful, or that God is an impersonal force rather than a person who speaks in Scripture. All of these are unprovable faith assumptions” (Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*, 12).

“It is no more narrow to claim that one religion is right than to claim that one way to think about all religions (namely that all are equal) is right. We are all exclusive in our beliefs about religion, but in different ways” (Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*, 13).

If true delight and satisfaction are found in knowing Christ, what would be the most loving thing to do? Take this news to the world.

## **2. What happens to people who never hear the gospel?**

Rom 10:13-17: How will they call on Jesus if they have not believed? How will they believe if they never hear? How will they hear unless someone preaches? How will someone preach unless they are sent? The proclamation of the gospel is essential.

But, some think that it would not be fair for people who never hear to be kept out of heaven:

- a. Remember, the world is not innocent. We are all born sinners and none of us deserve salvation.
- b. Nothing will kill global missions than to believe that somehow people will be saved even if they never hear and believe in Jesus. In fact, if that were the case, it would be better not to go, because by going and telling them of Jesus, they are now accountable to respond to such truth.

## **3. What about all of the needs here in Boston?**

David Platt suggests that this objection is usually just smoke screen because most Christians are really not concerned about the needs around them. He notes, “Most Christians rarely share the gospel, and most Christians’ schedules are not heavily weighted to feed the hungry, helping the sick, and strengthening the church in the neediest places in our country. . . . But even if we were doing these things, we would still be overlooking a foundational biblical truth when we say our hearts are for the United States. As we have seen all over Scripture, God’s heart is for the world. So when we say we have a heart for the United States, we are admitting that we have a meager 5 percent of God’s heart, and we are proud of it. When we say we have a heart for the city we live in, we confess that we have less than 1 percent of God’s heart” (David Platt, *Radical*, 76).

Jesus didn’t die just for you. God loves you *so that* you might make him known among all nations. God’s heart is for the world. "We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God." — John Stott

Key point: Regardless of where you live, here or overseas, your heart should be consumed with making the glory of God made known in all the nations. From the beginning, RHC has tried to instill this reality in how we go about doing church (missions categories in our budget, coaching church planters). Why are we giving away so much time and money? Because that is the heart of God.

Concluding challenge: the benefit of having a 4-sermon series on mission is that I don’t expect everyone to get it today. But I do want to propose one specific challenge to every person here today. Starting today, will commit to praying Psalm 67 for you life and this church?