

*Introduction:* I think it would be appropriate to begin the last sermon in our Sent series by sending some love and props out there to a couple of VIPs. First off, our Pastor of Missions & Discipleship, if you didn't already know, is now **[PIC] Dr. Jonathan David Chasteen**. Jon did it! He graduated with his Ph.D. on Friday at SEBTS. He did an awesome work on the Sabbath and displayed awesome character through his studies and writing process.

Then most of you also probably heard about this next Superstar, **[PIC] Jordyn Hope Turley**, made her entrance into the world on Saturday May 10, 9:39pm. She is healthy, beautiful and allows her parents to sleep on select nights of the week.

Now, one of the added joys her arrival is the arrival of family who come to see her and lend helping hands as we adjust to life as a family of five. I picked up mother-in-law (Beverly Harris; best in the world) on Friday night. My sister will be visiting in a couple of weeks, along with my parents who fly in a day later, and then I found out that we will have a very special guest in mid-June. My 80 year-old grandmother, Nancy Gordon, will be making the first flight of her life so she can spend some quality time with us.

All of these travel plans have me in airport mode, running back and forth to Logan to retrieve our loved ones. As we conclude our global missions series today, I want us to consider how the church of Jesus Christ has a lot in common with an airport terminal. Think about these three points:

- 1) They contain a mass of people. I love the peak hours of travel in airports because people are running to and fro, some chillin on layovers, some super stressed because they are about to miss their flight. If you like to people watch, terminals are great.
- 2) They have one overarching purpose: help move people from one destination to another. And # 3...
- 3) They require a carefully designed strategic plan in order to coordinate all of the moving parts of people, luggage, and planes.

A terminal is a lot like a church isn't? It is a mass of people, moving from one destination to another, requiring a carefully designed strategic plan to fulfill our intended purpose. As we have examined the mission of God, we have seen how God has a church for his mission and a strategic plan to accomplish his plan of redemption. This morning we are going to look at . . .

### **“Reaching the Unreached: The Global Mission Strategy of Redemption Hill Church” Romans 15:14-33**

We are to do so by looking at the greatest missionary of the church, the Apostle Paul, who devoted every fabric of his being to *take the gospel of Jesus to the unreached peoples of the world*. As we look at his example we are going to be challenged to

**The Point: Be filled with a holy ambition to reach unreached people with the gospel of Jesus.**

I want to give us three encouragements this morning...

#### **I. Be driven by a great ambition to make Christ known among the unreached (15:14-21).**

*Read 14-21.* As Paul moves toward the close of his lengthy letter, he explains his motivations and future plans. In doing so, he reveals the purpose of his life as a missionary of Christ.

Verses 17-21 form the heart of this passage. I believe by focusing on two key verses (vv 20 & 16) we can understand Paul's aim in mission to make Christ known. I want to take them in reverse order.

- 1) Verse 20. “and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named.”

- Ambitions can be selfish or selfless. Paul's ambition was a holy ambition: to preach the gospel, where Christ has not been named.
- What does he mean? Is he referring to people who had never heard the name "Jesus?" Or does he mean something more? The answer is something more.
- Paul's greatest desire was to go where people had not "acknowledged and confessed" as Lord, which many times were places where people had never heard of his name at all.
- His mission was to preach Christ, plain and simple, and through the preaching of Christ to make disciples who confess Jesus as Lord! That's the kind of naming Paul is referring to here in verse 20.
- The context makes this clear. Quoting Isaiah 52:15, he writes in v. 21, "but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand." To paraphrase, those who were spiritual blind and without knowledge will have spiritual sight and understanding when they hear of Christ. That's verse 20. Now . . .

2) *Verse 16.* "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

- How is mission a priestly service? Paul was making an offering. He calls it "the offering of the Gentiles" because he is presenting them as new worshipers of God. Mission exists because worship doesn't, right?
- His aim was "to bring the Gentiles to obedience." (18) What obedience? "The obedience of faith (1:5 & 16:25-27)."
- That is how they became an acceptable offering as the Holy Spirit caused them to be born again and experience new life in Christ, which highlights one of the most pivotal missionary principles we can ever learn: the Spirit accomplishes God's work through us!
- We see this again at the end of verses 18-19. Paul went forward in word and deed (which by the way, those should never be separated in either direction! Expound?), signs and wonders, and by *the power of the Spirit of God.*"
- If the Spirit does not move, nothing moves! We can share the Word until we're blue in the face, but if the Spirit doesn't work to bring life, our efforts are in vain.
- We must desperate for the Spirit to empower us, ordinary people with an extraordinary God infusing and energizing our work in his name. We are simply instruments, and this is beautiful because he gets the glory and praise (as Paul points out in vv. 17-18).

App: Do you share Paul's ambition to make Christ known and present worshipers to God? I hope you are convinced after last week's sermon that the Great Commission not reserved for "super Christians," missionaries, and pastors.

For anyone still thinking, the Great Commission is just one command among many, please consider this. After the gospels, the rest of the NT is the outworking and fulfillment of *that* Command. So if you don't think it's important, don't pick up your Bible and read the rest of the NT because you will be confronted with the mission of the church on every page!

That's why we never want to hear people say: "I am not called to be a part of God's global mission." Let the words of **William Booth** convince you further: "**'Not called!' did you say? 'Not heard the call,' I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. . . . Then look Christ in the face -- whose mercy you have professed to obey -- and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world.**"

T: Flowing from Paul's ambition to make Christ known, we next see his determination to

## **II. Be determined to strategically invest in the most unreached places of the world (15:19-24).**

Where did Paul go? What guided his decision-making? It all has to do with his ministry of taking the gospel to the unreached. *Verses 19-20* provide the heart of his ambition and strategy...

Here we have the clearest statement of Paul's missionary mindset:

- **MAP of Paul's Missionary Journeys.**
- In a 10 year period, from roughly 57-67AD, Paul complete his three missionary journeys. He was preaching Christ in cities like Antioch, Iconium, and Derbe; Ephesus, Troas, and Philippi. Not to mention Berea, Corinth, and Athens. He covered an area that stretched from the Middle East, across Central Asia and into Western Europe over his three missionary journeys.
- If there was already gospel work happening, Paul was not as interested. He was looking for UUPGs. You remember that lingo from two weeks ago, right? Pop quiz. Who are UUPGs? Unengaged, Unreached People Groups. UUPGs are groups less than 2% evangelical without an active church planting strategy to reach them.
- Abd here's what I love about Paul. He viewed the unreached *as the soon to be reached*. How? He possessed massive confidence, not in himself, but Christ. After all, you better know Paul had heard the words of Jesus, "All authority is mine! I will be with you!" What more did he need? What more do we need?
- C. T. Studd was a missionary stud who also made it his ambition to reach the unreached. Though he was a famous cricket player late 19<sup>th</sup> century England, he left his career in his prime to take the gospel to China, India, and eventually Africa, where he died in Congo at the age of 70. Dude was hardcore: he named his firstborn daughter Salvation Grace Faith Studd.
- In one of his most famous statements, he said this: **"Some wish to live within the sound of Church or Chapel bell; I want to run a Rescue Shop within a yard of hell."**—C. T. Studd

T: BUT look back at verse 19. How could Paul say that he covered the area from Jerusalem to Illyricum?

- **MAP of Paul's Missionary Journeys.**
- When Paul speaks of Jerusalem, he is not speaking of the starting point of his mission, but the "southeastern limit of his missionary activity."
- When Paul speaks of Illyricum, he is referring to the northwest boundary of his journeys (present day Croatia, Montenegro, and Albania)
- When Paul says he fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem and all the around to Illyricum, he does not mean he preached the gospel in every city and village between those two points, but that he covered the major urban centers of influence.
- Then what? Glad you asked. He left the work of evangelizing the surrounding districts to his converts!
  - Let me ask you this: what would have happened to Redemption Hill Church if our leadership team would have taken off a year ago? Or 18 months ago? That's what Paul did.
  - The mission in your hands... When a person follows Christ, they become responsible for fulfilling his mission. Know the gospel, live the gospel, share the gospel. Simple as that. That's what the early churches did.
- And they did it SO well that Paul can say in *verses 22-23* – "But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions..." No more room? Wow!!
- Reach Boston, reach New England. Reach NYC, reach New York. Reach Philly, reach Eastern PA and Jersey... You get the point.
- But now . . . where does Paul's missionary gaze land? Off the map! Spain: the farthest frontier of the empire on the west.
- In the words of **John Falconer** Paul's knew he [had]: **"I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light."**

At Redemption Hill, we will seek to fulfill the Great Commission in a way similar to Paul by using an Acts 1:8 model. In **Acts 1:8**, Jesus gave his Great Commission again to his disciples before he ascended to heaven and said: **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

[Though the listing of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth does not exclusively carry a geographical emphasis, it is certainly not less than that, which is why we believe it provides a good framework for investing on a global scale.]

T: Here is the overarching principle of **The Global Missions Strategy of RHC: *We will prioritize underserved and unreached cities as well as like-minded missionaries.***

Redemption Hill Church is in Boston. We came to plant in Boston, because it is not only the most influential city in New England, but a global city that touches the world. We saw Paul going to urban areas in Acts, and we said, "Let's do the same thing." But our entire mission strategy has an urban focus. Why? It's like **D.L. Moody** said roughly 150 years ago: "**Water runs down hill, and the highest hills in America are the great cities. If we can stir them we shall stir the whole country.**"

We feel this way about America, and we feel this way about the world. Why? Not only because we see it in the Bible, but we also see what is happening in our world. Let's talk about the phenomenons of globalization and urbanization. Globalization refers to how our world is becoming increasingly flat where communication and travel between countries and continents continues to grow smaller and smaller. Urbanization refers to how the world is flocking to the cities. Right now, over half of the world's population lives in major cities. But you're not ready for this next astounding stat. **By 2050, the UN predicts that 64% of the developing world and 86% of the developed world will be urbanized.** (<http://esa.un.org/wpp/>) That is mind boggling. If we want to reach the world, we better reach cities!

#### **Global Strategy – Acts 1:8**

- **Boston**: We want see gospel-centered churches planted all over our city. Right now, we are focused on investing in *Grace Harbor Church* (formerly named *Coram Deo*), in **Charlestown**.
- **New England**: We will adopt a city in New England where we will seek to plant a church. What city? We're not sure yet: **Hartford, CT? Providence, RI? Portland, ME?**
- **North America**: We have adopted **Toronto** as a strategic city and have partnered with *Trinity Life Church* as they seek to reach that city of 5M people.
- **World**: We have adopted **Indore, India** and the unreached peoples who dwell in that city of almost 4M people..

\* For each of these areas, we plan to help plant churches by putting the full weight of our capacity to pray, give, go, encourage, equip, and send, which brings us to our third and final encouragement.

### **III. Be delighted to partner holistically through sacrifice and service (15:24-33).**

- *Verse 24*. Some people have argued that Romans is a missionary support letter.
- We can see he hopes and expects the Roman church will be a refreshment to him (15:32), that they will be able to mutually encourage one another (1:11-12), and that they will be eager to assist him in taking the gospel to Spain.
- To conclude our time, I want to take Paul's experience of partnership as a missionary and answer the following question:

**How will we [as RHC] strategically partner to reach these cities?**

1. **We will pray intentionally and fervently for the fulfillment of the Great Commission** (Sundays, CGs, Prayer, individually).
2. **We will give financially through our budget and special offerings throughout the year.**
  - Talk budget...
  - We will also support church planting efforts and missionaries in other areas of New England, North America, and the World through our giving to the Cooperative Program of the SBC. ☺
  - *What one thing in your life could you sacrifice to give more financially to global missions?*
3. **We will go on short-term trips in North America and to the nations.** (Toronto & India)

- Who is already praying about taking a week of vacation over the next year?
  - Who will pray about going on one of these trips over the next 2-3 years? I can't wait to go back.
4. **We will encourage our missionaries through regular contact, visits, and fellowship.**
    - Support. Coach: provide Wisdom.
    - Pastor Bruce. With tears in his eyes, said, "We encourage, so that they will stay."
    - Most of the time the reason missionaries leave the field is discouragement.
  5. **We will equip future pastors, church planters, and missionaries.** And we will do that, so that we can #
  6. **We will send our people to the globe to be Jesus' witnesses until he returns.**

Listen, in all of this: we pray, we give, we go, we encourage, we equip, and we send so that the gospel might go forth and disciples might be made to the glory of God!

So as we finish this series, let me ask you a hard question: **Have you been moved to sympathy or have you been moved to sacrifice?**

**David Livingstone**, the great missionary to Africa, said: **"Sympathy is no substitute for action."**

I hope you have sympathy for the 150k people who are dying every day, most of whom are stepping into a Christless eternity, but I hope your sympathy will move you to sacrificial action. We want to see a movement of God in Boston and to the end of the earth, and one of the great markers of any movement, whether here or there, is sacrifice.

- **Tim Keller** says, **"There is no more practical index of whether your church has movement dynamics than examining whether you have a culture of sacrifice. If the top leaders of the church are the only ones making all the sacrifices, then you don't have a movement culture."** This is true at RHC and this will be true of our global missions strategy as well.
- We are not just going to send you people. We're going to send you some of our best! We're not just going to give a little to mission. We're going to give generously, wishing we could give more!

*Conclusion:*

Every ambition, and certainly every **Holy Ambition** can be summarized in three words: **Perceive. Prize. Pursue**

- Have you **perceived the glory of Christ**? Do you see him as infinitely valuable and infinitely worthy of worship? Have you **perceived** the incalculable need for the gospel to go forth to the nations?
- If so, are you **prizing making that glory known** above everything else? Would that be more valuable to you than everything else? Your reputation? Your plans? Your comfort? Your life?
- If so, then the only thing left for you to do is **pursue God's global glory by living out his global mission with everything you've got.**

Do you possess a holy ambition to see the gospel reach the unreached peoples of the world? It does not matter how hard you try, you will never find a greater ambition under the sun. There is nothing more important, nothing more rewarding, nothing more glorious than this!

I pray the heart of Paul will become our heart. I pray the mantra of **C. T. Studd** will become our mantra: **"Forward Ever. Backward Never."**

What part will you play? I hope you're saying. I'll pray. I'll give. I'll go. I'll encourage. I'll be equipped and help equip. I'll send and I'll be sent! Whatever Jesus says, it's *done*. My yes is on the table. "Forward Ever. Backward Never."

Let's Pray.