



## **Hope & the Himalayas: Why We Must Go to the Ends of the Earth.**

### ***The Story of Scripture – Part 15***

First and foremost, as one of your pastors, I want to be clear: local ministry and local mission are totally necessary. We're going to talk a lot today about the Himalayas and other places in the world that are far from Metro Washington, DC, but that doesn't mean that ministry and mission aren't totally necessary right here in Metro Washington, DC.

#### **Local ministry and mission are totally necessary.**

Local ministry is necessary, meaning there are men and women and children in our church right now who are walking through all kinds of struggles—marriage struggles, family struggles, work struggles, physical struggles, emotional struggles, spiritual struggles. I could go on and on. I want to be a pastor, and we want to be a church, who cares for, serves and supports one another well. We're specifically praying through some major changes here at Tysons in particular to better care for individuals, marriages and families.

Local ministry is totally necessary and local missions outreach is totally necessary. There is so much need for the gospel right here in this city. Jesus' command to make disciples plays out most practically right where we live. We have so many opportunities to reach the nations right here in Metro Washington, DC. Local mission is totally necessary.

#### **Global mission is tragically neglected.**

At the same time, the second reality is that global mission is tragically neglected. The region I was in last week in the Himalayas has about nine million people, which is approximately the population of the Metro Washington/Baltimore area. But do you know how many Christians there among these nine million people? About 100. There are more believers sitting in this small section of the auditorium here than there are among nine million people in the Himalayas. That is a problem that we can't just ignore.

If the spiritual need in those mountains is not heavy enough, add on top of that the physical need. A study was done years ago in this region and they found that half the children were dying before their

eighth birthday. One of my biggest fears is something happening to one of my kids. I can't imagine that being an expectation for half of them. And they're dying of preventable diseases, such as cholera due to unclean water and lack of medicine.

I've shared before that one of the byproducts of poverty in these villages is trafficking. Young girls are taken from their homes and put to work either in the city or taken to other countries, never to return again. There was an art therapy session while I was there for girls who've been rescued from trafficking. One of the girls who had been rescued was eight years old. I have an eight-year-old girl.

So one option is for us to sit here and say, "We are only going to care about Washington." But I do not believe that is what God's Word compels us to do. Today I want to show you that God's Word compels us to care about the world—starting right here in Washington, but not stopping here. That's why I've titled our journey together through the Word today, "Hope & the Himalayas: Why We Must Go to the Ends of the Earth."

I want to show you in Psalm 19 why we must go. I've prayed that through God's Word and not anything I say that our thinking would be changed and thus the trajectory of lives in our church would be changed, even our future together as a church. So let's read God's Word together from Psalm 19:

*The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.  
2 Day to day pours out speech,  
and night to night reveals knowledge.  
3 There is no speech, nor are there words,  
whose voice is not heard.  
4 Their voice goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.  
In them he has set a tent for the sun,  
5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,  
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.  
6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the end of them,  
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.  
7 The law of the LORD is perfect,  
reviving the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure,  
making wise the simple;  
8 the precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is pure,  
enlightening the eyes;  
9 the fear of the LORD is clean,  
enduring forever;  
the rules of the LORD are true,  
and righteous altogether.  
10 More to be desired are they than gold,*

*even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey  
and drippings of the honeycomb.*  
<sup>11</sup> *Moreover, by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.*  
<sup>12</sup> *Who can discern his errors?  
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.*  
<sup>13</sup> *Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;  
let them not have dominion over me!  
Then I shall be blameless,  
and innocent of great transgression.*  
<sup>14</sup> *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable in your sight,  
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*

We actually studied this chapter back in January when we outlined a method for reading the Bible: MAPS - Meditate, Apply, Pray and Share. But as I was reading this chapter again this week in our Bible reading plan, I couldn't help but think about the Himalayas and specifically the need for God's Word in the world. The truth of Psalm 19 is really pretty simple.

### **God reveals Himself generally in the world around us.**

Psalm 19:1-6 are all about how God reveals Himself generally in the world around us. Without any words, creation shouts, "God is glorious!" This is all around us here and was all around me in the Himalayas. We landed by plane in one particular city, got on a helicopter and flew into the mountains. We landed at about 12,000 feet. To put that into perspective, the highest mountain east of the Mississippi is about 6,000 feet. So we landed at an altitude of twice that. It was like we were in a valley, as we were dwarfed by mountains all around us.

The highest peak we trekked was just over 15,000 feet. That's higher than any mountain in the continental United States. At that height, we were still looking up at mountains towering above us. As we were hiking across bridges, over mountains, through villages, we just watched the clouds form above these mountaintops. It was like the sky was continually shouting, "God is awesome!" He's the One Who just said a word and all this came into being.

Then at night the stars would come out and it was like God was putting on a show. Here's a time-lapse video with stars shooting left and right. My friend was capturing these pictures when the stars started shooting in different places. He has one picture of a burning meteor lighting up the sky. All this to say Psalm 19:2 is true, everywhere—especially in the Himalayas. Day to day the heavens pour out speech and night to night they reveal knowledge. God is declaring His glory, His greatness, His beauty and His grandeur in the world around us.

But what is the effect of all this? Romans 1:18-20 is really humbling. Listen to what the Bible says is the effect of all this:

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

The next verse goes on to talk about how all people see the glory of God in creation, but we reject the glory of God in creation. Some people deny the glory of God in creation altogether. Atheists look at those mountains and conclude, “There’s no God Who created this.” All kinds of other people worship other gods instead of the one true God—all kinds of other people like you and me. We have all turned aside from the worship of the one true God. We’ve all turned aside from His way to our own ways. As a result, we are separated from God and we know this. We see God’s glory in creation, but the result of God’s general revelation is humbling separation from Him.

God’s revelation in creation is sufficient to show us that God is our glorious Creator and we are sinful creation, separated from Him—and that’s where the story stops. Which means we desperately need more revelation from God.

### **God reveals Himself specially in His Word to us.**

Enter Psalm 19:7 and following, where we learn that God reveals Himself specially in His Word to us. There’s a major transition in Psalm 19 when you get to verse seven, where David starts to address God’s revelation in His Word. There’s actually a crescendo in the Hebrew poetry, as his heart overflows in speaking how the revelation of God in His Word is even greater than God’s revelation in the world.

In the first six verses, God is called “El” —a fairly general name for God. That name is only mentioned once here. But in the second part of Psalm 19, God is referred to with His covenant name—Yahweh, The LORD—seven different times, the last of which is punctuated by three full titles: “*O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*” That’s just it. The world reveals the general glory of God, but the Word reveals the special redemption of God.

The result of God’s special revelation in His Word is hope for salvation. Just look at all the effects of the Word here in Psalm 19 that are far greater than God’s revelation in the world. God’s Word is able to do what the world can’t do, what the Himalayas can’t do. God’s Word revives the soul in a way the Himalayas can’t. It makes wise in a way the Himalayas can’t do. God’s Word rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, endures forever, in a way that even the Himalayas won’t. Ultimately God’s Word

redeems and saves in a way that nothing in creation can do—not even Mt. Everest, the highest mountain in the world.

Think about this Word that we talk about every week. I'll summarize here for those who are new or visiting, particularly if you're not yet a follower of Jesus. What this Book reveals is how good and glorious God is and how we have sinned against God. We've all turned aside from God. But that's not the end of the story here, because this Word reveals how God has made a way for you and me to be saved from our sins and reconciled to Him.

This Word reveals how God has come to us in the Person of Jesus to give His life as a sacrifice for our sin. He came to suffer the separation we deserve. It's what we read a couple weeks ago in Psalm 22:1: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* Those were Jesus' words on the cross when He paid the price for your sins and my sins. He suffered separation from God the Father, judgment for sin, so that you and I could be forgiven of our sin, reconciled and restored to a relationship with God. Through Jesus, God has made a way for you and me to know Him and to be in a relationship with Him.

I was sitting every morning on those Himalayan mountainsides thinking, "I know the God Who created these mountains. I'm in a relationship with Him! I'm talking to Him. He's talking to me—the God Who created all this." It was awesome. At night, He was putting on a show in the stars and I was sitting there clapping. It was so glorious. I was applauding my God.

How is this relationship possible? This relationship is only possible through God's revelation of Jesus. Without Jesus, I could not have a relationship with God. I would be a sinner separated from Him. But through Jesus, by faith in Him, I have been restored to a relationship with God now that will last forever. It was so humbling trekking those trails. We saw landslides all around where pieces of the mountain have broken off—and could break off at any moment.

There was one large village we walked through—well, it used to be a large village. But one day a landslide happened. An entire mountain wall collapsed and buried the whole village underground in just a moment. Imagine your neighborhood, without any warning, totally buried. A trail now goes over that rubble. It was overwhelming to walk over what was basically a graveyard beneath us. The bodies of hundreds of men, women and children were under those rocks. I was reminded how life is really fragile, especially in those mountains.

But as I was trekking there, I was not afraid. I had nothing to fear, because I know if a landslide comes or something happens to me suddenly on the side of one of those mountains, I know exactly where I'm going, because I've been restored to a right relationship with God that will last forever. Psalm 19:9 refers to this as a life that endures forever. I know that because of this Word. Because of this Word, I have hope. Because of this Word, you can have hope that outlasts death itself.

I was talking with a car salesman this week. We had a few extra minutes, so I said, “Do you know if you were to die tonight, you would go to heaven?” He said, “No.” I told him, “You can know through faith in Jesus.” I shared, based on what God’s Word teaches us, how he could know he can have eternal life with God. You can know you have eternal life with God by trusting in Jesus. That’s what God has said in His Word.

### **All people have God’s general revelation in the world.**

Now, all that leads to the situation in the world where right now, at this very moment, all people have God’s general revelation in the world. All people everywhere. That’s what we just read in Psalm 19:4. God’s revelation in creation “*goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*” Creation’s testimony to the glory of God reaches everybody on the planet. The sun we see today is the same sun that shines in the Himalayas. It hears every language on the planet. The moon and stars you and I see tonight are the same moon and stars that shine and shoot over those mountains. All people have God’s general revelation in the world.

### **Many people don’t have God’s special revelation in His Word.**

Many people only have God’s general revelation. They don’t have God’s Word verbally proclaimed to them or written down in front of them. Maybe the Bible is not available in their language, which is still the case for many languages right now. Or the gospel is not accessible where they live, meaning the good news of what God has done in Jesus to pay the price for our sins has not yet reached where they live.

This is the massive difference between Metro Washington and the Himalayas. The gospel is accessible to people in Metro Washington, DC. There are Bibles in our languages that contain the gospel. There are churches all across this city today proclaiming the gospel. There are Christians throughout this Metro region who believe the gospel and who can share the gospel here.

But in the remote villages in the Himalayas, there are practically no Bibles in their language. There are hardly any churches preaching the gospel. There are hardly any Christians who even know, much less could share, the gospel. That is the case, not just for remote people groups in the Himalayas; that is the case for more than 6,000 people groups in the world. If you’re not familiar with that terminology, a people group is basically an ethno-linguistic group of people who share common ethnicity, language and culture—which is what the Bible means when it talks about nations.

The Great Commission to go and make disciples of all the nations is not a command to go to every country. Remember, countries like the United States did not exist when Jesus gave that command.

Jesus said, “Go to every *ethne*.” That’s the word in Matthew 28:19—every ethnic group—and there are over 6,000 ethnic groups. The Hui of China, the Balochs of Pakistan, the Berber of Morocco, the Bot of India, and 24 different people groups in the region of the Himalayas we were in, among whom there are very few if any followers of Christ, hardly any churches and basically no gospel, no good news of salvation.

These 6,000 plus people groups comprise over two billion people in the world. Individual men, women and children, just like you and me, who have general revelation of God. But what’s different from us is they don’t have access to the good news of what Jesus has done for their sins. It’s not that they’ve heard and rejected it; it’s that they haven’t even heard it. It’s not that they have access to this and they’re turning away from it; it’s that they don’t even have access to it.

### **If over two billion people do not hear God’s Word, they cannot experience salvation from their separation.**

Put this together and realize what this means. God, please cause lightbulbs to go off in minds and hearts right now. Help thousands of people right now feel the weight of this, either for the first time or in a fresh way. If over two billion people in more than 6,000 people groups do not hear God’s Word, they cannot experience salvation from their separation. They cannot be saved from their sins if they don’t hear about the Savior of sinners. This is straight from the Bible in Romans 10:13-14 and 17:

*For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

Interestingly, right after that, it quotes from Psalm 19:4. The point is clear: people can only come to faith in Christ if they hear the Word—the revelation of Christ. But if they don’t hear this Word, they can’t be saved from their sin. Moreover, they won’t ever hear this Word unless someone goes and shares it with them, speaks it to them. Therefore, it is the responsibility and privilege of everyone who has God’s Word to make it known to everyone in the world. It’s our responsibility, right?

This is so simple. Think about it. If you have a cure for cancer, do you keep that to yourself? Or, do you share it only with the people who live closest to you in your city? No way. You share it with everybody possible. You work to get that cure to everybody possible. Church, we have the cure to an eternal cancer, a cure to sin and death itself. Even a cure to cancer will only hold off death for a time. We have a cure that will hold off death forever. We cannot limit who gets this. Why would we do that? We must work to get this to everybody we can. This is exactly what Jesus told us to do. It’s not just “go and

make disciples generally where we live.” It’s “go and make disciples of all nations”—all the *ethne*, all the people groups of the world.

**Therefore, it is the responsibility and privilege of everyone who has God’s Word to make it known to everyone in the world.**

This is what Jesus told us to do: “Go make Me known to all of them.” This is your responsibility and privilege. Do you realize what a privilege this is?

I was walking through the Himalayas and it hit me in a fresh way. These mountains are beautiful, day after day, night after night proclaiming the glory of God, and they’ve done that for centuries in these villages. But as beautiful as they are and as much as they’ve proclaimed God’s glory, do you know what they haven’t done? Not for one moment have any of those mountains ever proclaimed the gospel. Not one time over the course of centuries have they ever proclaimed the good news of God’s love in Jesus. That’s a privilege reserved for you and me. This is why Romans 10:15 says, “*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!*”

Do you realize you and I have the privilege of doing what not even the heights of the Himalayan mountains can do? You and I have the privilege of proclaiming to people who, in their sin, are separated from God. We have the privilege of telling them they can be forgiven of all their sin and restored to a relationship with God forever.

There’s one really high mountain right next to where we were and the villagers believe this mountain is a god. Many people have tried to climb it, but no one has made it. Sixty or 70 people have died trying. The villagers believe that mountain is a god who does not want to be known and who will punish anyone who tries to know it. We have such good news, that the one true God Who created all these mountains—including that one—not only wants to be known, He wants to be enjoyed. He has made a way to be known and enjoyed in a relationship with Him that is available to anyone anywhere who simply trusts in His love.

This is the greatest news in the world. Anyone anywhere can know and enjoy God forever. Why would we ever limit who we make this news known to? Why, 2,000 years after Jesus came, have two billion people still never heard this news? I think a lot of it has to do with the things we say in the church that we must stop saying. Things like, “But I’m not called to global mission.” I hear versions of this all the time. People say, “You talk about global mission but I’m just not called to that.” At the root of this statement is a fundamental error in thinking. When we’re thinking about global mission, we’re thinking about an optional program in the church for a select few people who are called to that, but this is the central command Jesus gave every single one of us to obey all our lives.

The Great Commission is global mission and is for every Christian. God help us! We've taken Jesus' last command to us before He left the earth and turned it into an optional program for a couple of special people. So when we hear Jesus say, "Go and make disciples of all the nations," we assume that means others. But when we hear Jesus say, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest," we assume that means me. We hear Jesus say, "You will be My witnesses to the ends of the earth and think, "Well, that's for others." But when we hear Jesus say, "Cast your cares on Me and I will care for you," we think, "That means me."

What right do we have to draw a line of distinction between the promises of Christ and the commands of Christ? We try to create a Christianity where we are content to sit back and soak in His promises, as if they're for all of us, while we ignore His commands, as if they are for others. This is not biblical Christianity. The statement, "I'm not called to global mission," reflects an unbiblical understanding of our salvation. As we're reading through the story of Scripture, I hope you're seeing crystal clear, over and over and over again, that God saves His people for the spread of His grace and His glory among all peoples.

Wake up, Christian! Your salvation is not just about you. You have been saved for the spread of God's grace and glory in the world. You have been commanded to make disciples of all the nations. This is not a calling for a couple of us; this is God's purpose for all of us. We're not just called; we are created for the spread of God's grace and glory to the ends of the earth. That's the purpose of our lives. It's why we have breath. Now, obviously this will look different in each of our lives, but I guarantee you that our lives change when we realize we are created for global mission, created for the spread of God's grace and glory in all the world.

So we stop saying, "I'm not called to global mission." We stop saying, "Wouldn't it be better for me to give than to go to people who have never heard the gospel?" Now, don't get me wrong here. Giving is an extremely important part of our involvement in global mission, which I'll talk about more in a minute. But I often hear people say, "I'm not going to go anywhere beyond where I live. I'll just give." This reflects an unbiblical understanding of the gospel.

I remember one of the first times I went on a trip overseas. I went to Sudan before South Sudan even existed, for the purpose to come alongside the persecuted church there as they were working to share the gospel in unreached areas. I remember it was a pretty expensive trip and somebody came up to me in church saying, "Why are you going to pay all that money to go on a trip? Why don't you just send the money?" I remember wrestling with that, but I did go on the trip.

When I got over there, I was spending time with our persecuted brothers and sisters in Sudan. One of them was a guy whose name was Repent. Great name! He could share the gospel every time he introduces himself. Repent was talking to me and said, "David, in all the persecution and suffering we've

experienced, there have been many people who have done many good things for us—even nongovernmental organizations that have come and helped. And we are so thankful.” Then he looked me in the eye and said, “Do you know how I can tell who a true brother is?” I said, “How?” He said, “A true brother comes to be with you in the time of need. I just want to thank you for being my brother.” In that moment, I was keenly reminded that when God brought salvation to you and me, He didn’t send gold or silver, cash or credit. He came Himself.

So how are we going to share the gospel if we never go ourselves? I trust we’re not so shallow as to think our money is the primary answer to the needs of the hurting. We know well in our culture here in Metro DC that money is not the answer. How many neighborhoods among us have large houses, expensive cars, hefty bank accounts, yet homes are filled with strife, hurt, pain, insecurity, bitterness and separation from God? God help us to not think that our money alone is the answer, especially when it comes to people’s greatest need, the need for the gospel. And God help us not to so skew that gospel by sending money while refusing to go ourselves. Not that money isn’t important, which we’ll get to.

But at this point people say, “Well, why don’t we just let the locals do it?” Meaning, “Aren’t there other Christians in the world who can do this better than us? Why don’t we just send other Christians who are closer to the Himalayas, for example?: Without question, it is wise and right and good for us to partner together with our brothers and sisters around the world in spreading the gospel in places where it hasn’t gone. We must do that. But thinking, “Why don’t we just let the locals do it?” misses the point.

When it comes to unreached people, there are no locals. That’s what it means to be unreached. There are no local Christians, or very few local Christians, in these 6,000 plus people groups. There are not churches there. So this statement reflects an unbiblical understanding of the need. This is why Jesus said in Matthew 9 and Luke 10, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.” Get that. Jesus says, “The problem is not that there are not people who are ready to hear the gospel. They are ready.” Translated today, two billion people are ready. The problem is there aren’t Christians going to them. That’s the point.

When we say this, we’re in essence saying, “Somebody else can do that, but not us.” It’s like Isaiah before God in Isaiah 6, when God says, “Whom shall I send?” Instead of us saying, like Isaiah did, “Here am I! Send me,” what we’re saying to God when He asks, is, “There they are. Send them.” Basically, “God, don’t look at me. Send somebody else.”

“But what about the needs here?” we ask. Meaning, “Aren’t there enough needs in Metro Washington to keep us busy?” To be honest, people usually this as a smoke screen, because the majority of us are not sharing the gospel and serving the poor right here in Metro Washington. Even if we are, when we say this we’re still flawed in our thinking. Because, yes, there are needs here—tons of them—

and we want to share and show God's love in the middle of them. Like we said earlier, local mission is totally necessary.

What if every Christian in every church thinks, "I'm just going to focus on needs right around me"? Here's what would happen. We would ultimately be disobedient to Jesus' command to make disciples of all the nations. Meanwhile, millions of people in the Himalayas and two billion people around the world would continue to be born and live and die and enter into an eternity separated from God without ever hearing the gospel. At some point, somebody has to care about needs beyond where they live and go somewhere else in the world.

You know what's really interesting? Even when churches and Christians focus on missions, we primarily focus on places where the gospel has already gone. Did you know that well over 90% of missions dollars and over 90% of missionaries actually go to places and peoples in the world where the gospel is already accessible? Even when we have thought about missions in the church, we often think about Ethiopia, Uganda, the Dominican Republic. But there are thousands of churches in these countries.

I want to be clear. That doesn't mean there's not work to do there. We're taking teams there this summer for a variety of good reasons. But we still need to be aware that even in many of the things we think of as missions, we're still not getting the gospel to places where it hasn't gone. Don't miss what's happening here. Right where you are sitting, Satan is doing everything he can to keep you and me—individually, in our families and in the church—from getting the gospel to where it's not gone, even to the point of overwhelming us with needs right around us or with needs in reached places which ultimately keeps us from going to unreached people in the world. Satan will always pull you and me away from the unreached toward areas reached by the gospel. He's so subtle.

This is why inevitably you will hear, whenever there is talk about mission to the ends of the earth, people in the church say, "Why do we talk about missions so much? We spend too much time focused on unreached people." I guarantee people will say it today and in the days ahead in this church and in any church. Brothers and sisters, with all due respect, there are over two billion individuals who have never even heard the name or the love of Jesus. I assure you, we are nowhere close to be too focused on them.

You can actually think you sound spiritual when you say things like, "Well, God has given me a heart for this city," or "God has given me a heart for my country." Phrases like that sound good but think about what you're saying. God's heart is for the world, which means if you have a heart for the United States, then you have about 5% of God's heart. If you have a heart for Metro Washington, then you have even less than that. So apparently we've created the idea that you can have a small percentage of God's heart and be proud of it. But this statement reflects an unbiblical understanding of compassion. Jesus' heart beats for the ends of the earth, for all the peoples of the earth, including the people I was around last

week. The Spirit of Jesus lives in you and me, so each of our hearts as Christians should beat for the glory of Christ in all the earth among all the people.

The last thing we must stop saying—that people will inevitably think, if not outright say when this topic comes up—is that it’s too costly, risky, difficult and dangerous to get the gospel to some of these places. It’s true. It’s costly, risky, difficult and dangerous. If you hike through the Himalayas, you realize that unreached people are unreached for a reason. They’re hard, difficult, even dangerous to reach. The partners we were working with, when they first went to those mountains years ago, were told, “Do not come back with this message about Jesus. If you do, we’ll kill you.” But they kept going back and now, years later, people are coming to faith in Christ in these villages.

I met the first believer in one village—the first known believer in the history of his people group. Now he’s facing persecution. So what are we going to say? Are we going to say to our brothers and sisters around the world, “You risk your lives, but don’t expect us to do the same alongside you”? Are we really going to say to people who are on a road that leads to eternal suffering, “If it’s easy for us, we will bring the message of Jesus to you, but not if it’s hard”? Are we actually going to say, “We would rather live in comfort on earth than have you live with God for eternity. Our earthly comforts are more important to us than your eternal life”?

I give you the posture of the American church today. We have created an entire Christian culture where we are content to live nicely in one of the wealthiest settings in the history of the world—not only physical wealth, but spiritual wealth. We have access to the gospel where we can give lip service to our Lord every Sunday, all the while turning a deaf ear and blind eye to billions of people who have never even heard the name of Jesus. This is not biblical Christianity. This kind of thinking and talking is an unbiblical understanding of discipleship. If you are a Christian, you have died to yourself, to the comforts of this world, to the pursuits and possessions of this world, and your life is God’s to spend however He wants for His glory in the world. This is not just for mature Christians or crazy ones or radical ones. This is for every Christian. We’re not playing a game here.

You have not been called to or created for a nice religious game to play every Sunday, while you live like everybody else in the world. The Jesus you follow said, *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it”* (Matthew 16:24-25). This is your Lord.

**We start going right where we live and wherever God leads, continually sending our resources from the church into a world of urgent spiritual and physical need.**

So stop saying these phrases and start going—right where you live and wherever God leads. Start right where you live, on mission, local ministry, local mission. Yes, God has put you in the neighborhood you're in right now, in the apartment complex you're in, on that campus, in that workplace, in that restaurant or shop this week. God has put you here in this city, in different places all around the city, surrounded by people who need this revelation from God. So yes, we go right where we live—and we go wherever God leads.

In a world where over two billion people have never even heard the gospel, surely God will call multitudes of us to go to them, in all kinds of ways. I've met so many different people who are working for the spread of the gospel in those mountains. Some of them have gotten teaching degrees, but instead of looking for a teaching job in a place where the gospel has already gone, they have moved to this place where the gospel has not yet gone to teach there. Others who have gotten nursing degrees, instead of getting a job where people have already heard the gospel, they've intentionally moved to places where the gospel has not gone.

I met one guy who's an aquaponics expert. I don't know if you know much about aquaponics, but it's basically trout poop. The way this works—actually, I don't know how it works, but I'm about to try to explain it. He basically takes trout waste and turns it into nutrients for plants that provide food in the villages that are struggling to find food. I'm looking at this brother. Here he's got gifts in aquaponics that he's using for the spread of God's glory among people who have never heard it.

I look across this church and see so many different gifts. I see so much opportunity. I see students who can study in places where the gospel has not gone. I see professionals who have jobs that pay you to go where the gospel has not yet gone. I see retirees—what better way to spend these days in your life before you see your Savior's face than making Him known among people who have never even heard His name? What happens if we start to say, "How can God use my gifts—the unique grace He's given me—to make His name known where it's never been heard?" So we start going right where we live, wherever God leads and continually send from the church with our resources.

I think about Acts 13, when the church in Antioch prayed and fasted and worshiped, and God said, "Set apart Saul and Barnabas for the work to which I've called them." He sent them out to go where the gospel had not yet gone. At some point in the next few months, we're going to have a time when we fast and pray as a church, asking, "God, who are You setting apart to go?" And we're going to see what He does. We're not going to be content with business as usual in a world where two billion people have never even heard the name of Jesus. We want this church to count, and our lives and families to count, for the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth. We are indeed not just going to play a Sunday game here. We want to send multitudes from here to the unreached. Yes, with our resources and giving behind

them God has entrusted many physical resources to us; how can we use them for the spread of His glory in the world?

Here's one thing I want you to know we're doing along these lines. I want to continually encourage you to give generously and sacrificially each week to the church. Much of what we do in missions locally and globally comes out of your weekly giving. Then I know that periodically you might have some extra resource that comes your way that God provides. We've set up "The Fund" from which 100% is going to go to urgent spiritual and physical needs in the world. Initiatives like ICM, which Dale shared about a couple weeks ago, working among the ultra-poor, or in places like Ethiopia, the Dominican Republic or places right here in Metro Washington' ministries like The House and Daybreaker, church planting in lower income areas. As you're able to give over and above your regular giving to the church, I want to invite you to give to The Fund. I'll report to you along the way what we're doing through The Fund. Again, over and above regular giving, I want you to have a place where, as God provides you with extra resources, you can give and know that it's all going to urgent physical and spiritual needs—here in Metro Washington and to the ends of the earth.

We're also going to fund work in places where the gospel has not gone, like the Himalayas, Yemen, across Asia, North Africa, the Middle East. I'm working with a team of leaders, both from our church and from around the world, to develop an excellent system that expertly vets and strongly supports partners who are doing the most biblically faithful and practically effective work among the most urgent spiritual and physical needs in the world. We as a church are going to get behind them.

As of today and in the days ahead, you can give to McLean Bible Church designated for The Fund to help us send from the church with our resources into a world of urgent spiritual and physical needs. I use that wording specifically, because both needs are important and both are urgent. Physical need is evident: children dying of preventable disease, families in need of clean water, medicine, education, trafficking prevention. Yet the spiritual need is ultimate, because the reality is, as great as a water filter is, it won't get anyone to heaven. As great as medicine is, it will only help for a time. The Word of God is people's greatest need and we must proclaim it. Urgent is the right word. People in the Himalayas don't have time for us to debate whether or not we're going to share and show God's love to them.

I'll close with this picture. Just last week, I was at a river which is a Hindu holy site. They believe it's a holy river, so they have funeral pyres set up over the river. The custom is whenever a friend or family member dies, within 24 hours of them dying, they bring the body to that river, place it on a funeral pyre and set the body ablaze. The ashes go down into the river which they believe helps in the process of reincarnation. Just picture the sight and smell.

As I was standing there last week, looking at these bodies burning, I realized that according to what the Bible teaches, I was looking at a physical picture of a spiritual reality. These people were alive 24 hours before, but now they're dead. They are separated from God for all eternity. If that wasn't heavy enough, then it hit me that most if not all of them are now eternally separated from God, because nobody ever told them how they could go to heaven.

What will it take for the concept of unreached people to become totally intolerable to us as a church? We have this Word and they need this Word. Your life, your family, this church can count for the spread of this Word in the world. So let's not put any limits in our lives or our families or in our church on what that might look like. Let's ask God to spend us for the spread of His Word, His grace, His glory to the ends of the earth.

Will you bow your heads with me? As I prepare to pray, I just want to ask you to pray. I don't expect you to know what all this means for your life now, but would you say to God, "Whatever this means, I will do it"? Just say that to God. "Whatever this means, whatever You want me to do, wherever You want me to go—right here or wherever You might lead—however much You want me to give, I will do it. Use my life, use my family, use Your grace in me to make Your grace known in the world."

God, please, give us faith to surrender to You in this way. We pray that You would answer this prayer and that You would lead, guide and direct us in the days to come for the spread of Your grace and glory right here in Metro Washington. We pray for the spread of Your grace and Your glory to the ends of the earth and that You would use us, use this church, toward that end. We pray this in the name of Jesus, our Savior, Who is worthy of our lives. Amen.

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