

God's MISSION ~ and us

Have you ever asked yourself the question since coming to work for the Lord: What am I really doing here? What's the point? Did I make the right decision in becoming a "missionary"?

Most of the people around us seem so unresponsive. So taken up with their own lives. Has it seemed to you at times almost like a mission without too much hope?

What is God doing? Why has He sent me to this people when it almost seems as if I won't be able to do very much? As we say in English, my little bit will seem like a drop in a bucket. Hardly worth worrying about.

Doubts about the worth of our work. Or even about our own worth. Doubts about our own significance – feel like a little child who can hardly say anything or do anything. Doubts about our own competence in doing the work that we are expected to do.

What is God doing? Why??? How can it all make sense? What is His purpose in my life? What is His purpose through my life when I feel so absolutely weak and insignificant most of the time? What is His purpose in the life of the nation where He has placed me? How do all these parts fit together?

It's good to get back to some basics – to regain perspective. To understand God's purpose in all He's doing in our lives, and also all around us. The bottom-line truth is that God has a MISSION. He is a MISSIONARY GOD. He is out to have a people for Himself from among all the peoples on the face of the earth. And He will accomplish it – by His zeal. It's been happening since the beginning of time, and He will finish what He has begun. And nothing, and no one, will stop Him. ("The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this!")

And you and we are here as a vital part of His accomplishing His mission.

But while God sees the world as full of rebels, He has another very different perspective: He is accomplishing a task. He is at work and He cannot fail in what He is doing.

What we need desperately is to see life through God's eyes. To live among rebels, among spiritual apathy, among a majority who do not know the truth – and to see through the eyes of faith what God will accomplish. Then to see our part in His overall plan. This is the only way that we will be able to see value or worth in what we are doing, to have a genuine sense of significance in the seemingly little that we are able to do, and to believe that through us something of eternal value will take place. This will then keep us going

strong even when we are tempted to give up or feel discouraged with the immediate present.

All of this is happening because of who GOD is. Fundamentally God's very nature is LOVE. And true love cannot remain silent or passive. We see the world in a huge mess, with people doing their own thing, without fear of God, going their own way, and totally without knowledge of the truth about what life is all about, or about where they are heading in their indifference and rebellion.

But God knows that among all these peoples, HE IS CALLING OUT A PEOPLE UPON WHOM HE CAN LAVISH HIS LOVE.

It is so important that we base all that we are doing upon this one foundation: We are here to do God's mission, not our mission. We are here so that through us, He might be able to show His love to many people in Central Europe, in the nations where He has placed us, and through our faithful sharing, He will have the pleasure of showing His incredible love for all eternity to this people.

GOD'S MISSION: TO HAVE A PEOPLE UPON WHOM HE CAN LAVISH HIS LOVE. See Deut.7:6-8. This is the truth that I believe God wants us to lay hold of today.

Some absolutes:

- * The Bible declares very clearly that God is by very nature LOVE. See 1 John 4:8.
- * The Gospel is summed up in John 3:16.
- * God proclaims Himself over and over again in such words as those found in Exodus 34:6-8; Psalm 36:5ff; 103:8; 145:8.

One of the primary biblical pictures of God is as a LOVER. This is a profound and important revelation of God which we need to keep meditating upon for the rest of our lives – though not seeing “love” in the worldly sense but in the purest sense as taught us in the Scriptures and revealed to us in the Person of Jesus.

I invite us to meditate with me on two simple truths and realities:

Firstly, I want us to meditate on the truth that GOD'S LOVE IS ALWAYS SEEKING TO FIND AND EXPRESS ITSELF TOWARDS THE OBJECTS OF ITS LOVE.

So why does God want a people for Himself? Because He MUST have a people like Himself whom He can love. He made man “in His image” – not because He wasn't pleased with the animals that He had made, but rather so that He might have this most intimate relationship with a being like Himself.

David in Psalm 8 writes: "He made us a little lower than God, and crowned us with glory and majesty."

God shows His very beautiful and perfect loving nature in so many different ways. His love is mixed with all His other graces. For example, He is also a generous Lover, who longs to give His gifts generously to the objects of His love. See Titus 3:4-6. So His people taste His love in the form or shape of His abundant goodness and kindness.

He is also a merciful and gracious Lover. He can't help Himself. He cannot but show His mercy and grace to the objects of His love. He must find ways to show them how gracious He is when they are totally undeserving of His kindness. Even to the point of allowing them to fall in order to show them His grace in restoring them and lifting them up once again. What an awesome God!

AND YOU AND WE ARE AMONG THE PEOPLE UPON WHOM HE HAS ALREADY BEEN POURING HIS LOVE. See Eph.1:3-6. It's too wonderful for words. Just think of why He chose you and set us apart for Himself:

- * He wanted to show His incredible kindness towards a people who did not deserve anything, only rejection from a holy God.
- * He wanted to show His power to people who were weak.
- * He wanted to show the greatness of His love to a people who were ugly and without hope.

How can we hold back our praise? Our worship of God flows from His "chesed" love & faithfulness for us, His chosen people. See Psalm 100:4-5.

The more we realise the awesomeness of God's love for us, the more we fall down in awe, wonder, love and praise before Him. And this part of our lives is as important to God as all we want to do for Him.

If ever we feel that God doesn't love us, this is NOT because God has temporarily withdrawn His love, but rather because our understanding and appreciation of how God loves is so shallow and weak, infected by our own self-love.

During this past week, I was meditating upon the word of Christ to His disciples just before He was taken to be crucified. He told them: John 15:9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you." I realised that His disciples knew that He was speaking the absolute truth – that not even for one split second did Jesus lessen His love for them, even when their responses to Him were so "human" and foolish.

But then I thought to myself: What about those times when Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief? When He called them: "O you of little faith"? Couldn't such words from the lips of Jesus be construed as His being really

impatient with them? Was this a moment when Jesus was not loving towards them?

But then I realised that I am thinking this way because I in my human way of loving feel a conflict between true love and speaking such strong words with someone. To be loving is to be nice! To be sugary sweet! But this isn't true love. No, Jesus was in reality rebuking His disciples so that they would believe in Him and in His Father, so that they could then enter into the fullness of the pleasures of that divine relationship.

How we need to let go of our human way of understanding God's love so that we won't misinterpret some of God's actions as being "against us" or "unkind". ALL His actions towards His called-out ones are totally loving and kind.

How we need to believe that God loves us ALL THE TIME. To believe it no matter what our feelings might tell us. To give up our evil, unbelieving heart that says: "God cannot love such a poor, weak failure as I am! I am so imperfect." Or "why is He doing this to me? I must have done something (I don't know what!) so that He is angry towards me!"

How sad it is when we act towards God like a wife who disbelieves the affirming, loving words of her lover-husband, and so cuts off from herself the flow of love that he is wanting to pour out upon her. "I'm not worthy of this love! It can't be real!" And so the much loved wife can miss experiencing the wonderful love of her husband through her unbelief.

YOU, WE are His people upon whom God is lavishing His love day and night, unceasingly, 100% love, 100% of the time. If we feel ourselves to be "unloved", it's not because God's love has dried up. Rather it's because we have stopped believing, or become consumed with our own selfish desires and interests, and have closed our heart in some way to His love.

HALLELUJAH! WHAT AN INCREDIBLE TRUTH! WHAT A MARVEL THAT GOD SHOULD CHOSE ME / US FROM AMONG ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH TO BE AMONG THOSE WHO MAY TASTE OF HIS ETERNAL PLEASURES AND RICHES.

How does all of this link up with GOD'S MISSION AND OUR MISSION? God as the great LOVER seeks and pursues and finds a people to love from all the peoples on earth – and this is what God is going. And this is what we are to be about.

And this is what He has already accomplished so powerfully all over the world. We might see "just a little", like a few grains of sand on the vast seashore, but in reality, all over the world God has already been doing great

things in bringing many to Himself. His mission is being accomplished and it will be completed, perhaps even in our life-time.

The work that He has for us to do isn't primarily just going out there to preach the Gospel, to witness to others, to "do", to "work" for Him. We are out there so that through us, people might hear of His love for them, and then become like us, RECIPIENTS OF HIS INTENSE AND IMMENSE LOVE.

We are a small but significant part of what God is doing all over the world. And knowing this will give us a strong sense of the importance of what we are doing, and motivate us to press on even when we feel so small and weak.

Our task, therefore, is to proclaim the true nature of God's love to the people to whom God has sent us. To declare His heart to the nations – His heart of love, mercy, kindness, grace, generosity et al. To call the peoples of every nation to welcome His kindness to them, that He is still showing His great patience to the peoples, that instead of pouring out His wrath upon them, He is still giving them time to repent.

He is faithful in His calling people to Himself. We don't have to worry about the "success" of our Mission – how many people He draws to Himself through our preaching, teaching and witnessing. That's HIS business.

This reminds us again that our mission to the world cannot fail.

For that very reason, God calls us, His workers, to remember how kind He has been to us, how faithful He has been despite our faithlessness, how powerfully He rescued us from a life of hopelessness and misery. And to believe that He is able to accomplish the same work in others, and He is – and He will – and through us, weak and ordinary people.

For in this way, He manifests His power and draws forth praise from among us – as we realise the great things that He is doing through weak vessels, all we can say in response is: THIS MUST BE OF GOD. PRAISE BE TO HIS NAME.

So if today you are here with questions and doubts, let's admit openly to God that we've had these, but then let the Word of God renew our faith and trust in God – our LOVER, and the God who is at work all over the world in order to have a people upon whom He can lavish His love – and who will then love Him in return.