



I've seen them. The women in Bangladesh touching cursed turtles in hopes of being blessed with a child. The worshipers in Nepal banging gongs or turning prayer wheels to get a god's attention. The ceremonies for the dead in Indonesia. The beggars. The street children.

You've seen them. The frustrated man cutting you off in traffic. The female victim who hides behind makeup and a career. The homeless veteran. Perhaps even the well-dressed family in a nearby pew at church.

God sees them. The lost, hurting, those trying to fill their empty lives with empty things.

And oh, how God cares. We pass by so many lost people, only truly seeing when we choose to. But God sees each one, knows each one, and wants each in His family.

It is the old man in Zambia offering sacrifices to appease evil spirits. It is the teen boy in America on the internet late at night, looking for something to keep his mind off the temptation of pornography. It is the mother in China who does not want to have an abortion, but sees no other choice. It is the girl in Europe looking for love in dangerous places.

They are all around us, all around the world. The lost. The hurting. The dying. The alone.

The ones Jesus came to save.

He did not, however, only come to save. Jesus is the living Word of God, and every word He uttered is significant. He said He came to save the lost, but He put another word there, before "save."

"Seek."

Henry Martyn, a missionary to India and Persia, wrote, "The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become."

Why should we care about missions—about seeking and reaching the lost? Because God does. God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God wants the lost to be saved, but "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14). Missions is in God's heart and therefore should be in every believer's heart as well. Salvation is not just something we keep tight hold of in our churches, assuming the lost will come if they want to know. We are called to seek the lost so they might be saved.





Scottish preacher James S. Stewart said,

The concern for world evangelization is not something tacked on to a man's personal Christianity, which he may take or leave as he chooses. It is rooted in the character of the God who has come to us in Christ Jesus. Thus, it can never be the province of a few enthusiasts, a sideline or a specialty of those who happen to have a bent that way. It is the distinctive mark of being a Christian.

It might be easy to think that the gospel is clearly presented in our modern digital world, that with so many churches, anyone who is seeking has easy access to the truth of the gospel. Those in missions, however, know the dark reality that there are still so many who need to hear of Jesus.

An internet ministry receives messages from around the world. Here are a few.

I'm at the end of the road and I have no one to turn to. I don't want to live like this anymore.

I want to see Jesus when I die. I try to live right and go to church and I do believe I am a good person. What else do we need to do to be ready?

I am at the end of my rope and suicide seems like my only alternative.


Are my prayers pointless? Who am I to be heard?

I'm 11 years old and I'm mean to my 6 year old brother. I hurt him sometimes like slap him when he aggravates me. And I'm very scared that I'm going to die and end up in a lot of pain and harm and burn up in Hell. I asked for forgiveness like 2 or 3 times while sobbing. I'm SO scared. Where will I end up?

My family is Muslim and most of the people in my country are Muslim. If they can know that I am converting, they will kill me. So than what will I do?

The gospel is the only hope for a lost and hurting world. It is the only path to true healing and forgiveness. After World War II, famed general Douglas MacArthur sent an urgent plea for at least a thousand missionaries to come to Japan. Because of his request, the Pocket Testament League sent ten million Bibles to Japan. People crowded to receive them! One Bible recipient was a man who had been captured and tortured by the Japanese for three years. After he was freed, he returned to Japan as a missionary. One person he led to the Lord was Mitsuo Fuchida, the commander who had led the aerial attack on Pearl Harbor.





The gospel is the only hope to change any of our savage hearts. Did you know that Charles Darwin supported missions? He was friends with a man in the South American Mission Society. Darwin told his friend it would be impossible for the Society's missionaries to make any change among the "savages" of the tribes in Tierra del Fuego, whom he considered among the "lowest" of the human race.

The gospel was shared in that area, and lives and souls were changed. Amazed at the extensive transformation, Darwin admitted he had been wrong. His strong, prejudiced belief in the status of humans based on race and behavior was disproven by the power of Christ to change people. Darwin donated to this work for the last fifteen years of his life.

Missions matters because it is God's heart, and it is also God's command. Amanda Berry Smith, a slave who taught herself to read and later served in India and Africa, said, "To stay here and disobey God—I can't afford to take the consequence. I would rather go and obey God than to stay here and know that I disobeyed."

The harvest is great, but the laborers few. It should not be so. An estimated billion people in our world call themselves Christians. If every one of those billion reached only one other person, that would be two billion. If that new one billion then reached one each, and so on, the entire world could have the gospel within a generation or two. We realize that those who truly are followers of Christ are fewer than those who call themselves Christians. Nevertheless, it can surely be said that God's children are not doing all they can to "go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

Missions is often thought of as sacrifice, hardship, and loss. Sometimes it is so. But sometimes our calling into missions can be through doing something we love, in an area in which we thrive. Regardless of the setting or circumstances, we can agree with D. L. Moody when he said, "There is no greater honor than to be the instrument in God's hands of leading one person out of the kingdom of Satan into the glorious light of heaven." ■

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