

## A Biblical Philosophy of Missions

Acts 13:1-4 & Philippians 3:1-10

Pastor David Beakley, June 16, 2019

Well, good morning. And as Jeremy introduced me, I am David Beakley, originally from Arizona. But I spent quite a bit (after graduating, getting married) going around the United States, and then getting saved and then going to South Africa.

And just to give you an idea though, as I know we've got visitors coming and going here, you need to understand, I grew up in a Baptist Church, my wife grew up in a Baptist Church. And we got married, we did not attend church. I think we were not saved but believing that we were, because we went through the doctrine and believed in the Gospel, got baptized. But we were following our path of being successful corporate people. And a neighbour lady invited us to church, which we fought. But kicking and screaming, you can only fight your neighbour so long and then you have to go with her to church. And it was a Baptist Church, so the pastor was great. But we went there and to our surprise, the pastor wasn't there, he wasn't speaking. It was a missionary that came from Africa. And my perspective was that pastors, they're people who can't get jobs, really. That's literally what I believed. Pastors can't get a job, so he'll take a church and he'll preach. But more than that, a missionary is a guy who can't even be a pastor. And today, was where the missionary showed up. And it was a horrible day. So, my wife and I swore an oath that we would never go back to that church, again. And so one year later, as providence would have it, God in His plan saw to it that my wife and I got saved in that church. He saved us. And just through a miraculous set of circumstances, we ended up going back into that church and got saved. And about 14 months later, I decided to quit my job, go to seminary, and then the Lord sent us to Africa.

So, if you're here this morning and somebody invited you and you want to come and were told, "We've got a great pastor, an amazing guy, preaches," and all that, this morning you should probably be afraid, if not very afraid. Something's going to happen. He does amazing things sometimes despite what we want to do.

But it's just an honour to be here. We actually have several church members from our church in Polokwane here today. So, there are actually six people from Polokwane that are actually here in this congregation, believe it or not. So, if you want to talk to real Africans, actually real Africans, there's four of them sitting out there amongst you, today. You have to find them. They're there. Because we're transplanted. So, we're actually American Africans, I guess is the way we would put that there, because we've been there 17 years. And there's been a great relationship here. We've connected in, we've had some folks here, I know, Beth Petkau (not Petkau now, but she was then) came to visit us. And we've had several folks in and out. So, we have a connection here in Chilliwack, believe it or not. And it's just amazing. And so, we're very thankful to be here.

Just before I go, I need to make sure I clarify, when do I need to be done? It's going to be plus or minus 15 minutes or 20 minutes. It'll be some time this morning. I know you rent this facility, so

I'm trying to ... 11 o'clock, will try. I don't know that I've ever made it in that amount of time before. Because my average is very different than what it is here in America or in Canada.

To speak on a Biblical philosophy of mission sounds very exciting, I know. But missions is an area that I just want to help us kind of jumpstart and get to where we need to be. Because missions is one of those areas that churches who are especially tied to their doctrine, Reformed doctrine, Doctrines of Grace, God - we sang the song I mean, if God hadn't acted first, we would have no chance - and we are Scripture-driven, and then we turn to missions and I would say a huge majority of churches then turn, and then we say, "Why don't we send people or our kids out into the mission field to see if they kind of like it. See if maybe they'll get an experience. And maybe they'll get into missions." But we would never say that when you say, "Come to church and maybe you'll have a good experience." You say you come to church and God will do a work. And so, missions is no different than how we do church. It's no different than how we think. But because it's kind of far and it's almost like it's not part of the church, it's a little mystical and that, we think a little bit different. And I want to just use the Scriptures here this morning to say, what does the New Testament tell us about missions? What does the New Testament tell us about how missionaries function and how the church functions? And so they're using that as a model. We here, in Chilliwack might be able to say, "Wow, how should we think and what should we begin doing and what kind of plans can we put in place?" So, that's my objective here this morning. And so we want to have a focus on missions.

And I heard this, this is a term used by somebody that was at the Shepherd's Conference in Los Angeles. I mean, it's going to be a bit of a sermon, but it's also going to be a lecture. So, we're going to call it a lermen. And that's what you're going to get here this morning. I did have – it's up there. So, now I'm going to be ... because I can't see here, so I don't know where I am. And I had it so I can do some interactive stuff on the iPad here, but it's not technically working, because I guess the Seventh Day Adventists turn off the internet on the Sabbath. So, we understand. So, we will operate accordingly. We're talking about a Biblical philosophy of missions. And I want to tackle this just in a very simplistic way. It's going to be two points, and it's the responsibility of the church - point number one. And point number two, it's going to be the responsibility of the missionary. I think those are two things that we should be thinking about as a church. If I can get those down, then I'll begin to know how to think as I think about what we should be doing. And then if we look at missionaries, what should they be doing? What am I looking for in the missionary? That's what I want us to look at in a Biblical philosophy of missions.

So, we take a look at the responsibility of the church here. (Oh, it works this way. Doing this does nothing. Okay, got it.) So, the responsibility of the church, we see it in Acts 13. Now, if you got your Bibles, I do have some texts up here. But I can take a look and on the responsibility of the church, I just have it broken up into three sub points here, which is sending is the first sub point here. Kind of sending, supervising and supporting. But I'm sending who? Who goes to the church? Who are the ones that we should send? When we're talking about sending and why and those kinds of things, let's take a look at this. And on sending, we want to take a look at people who are currently serving.

Here we go. So, here we are in Acts 13. We taking a look at this and we say, in Acts 13, let's just follow along in the text. (I want to take us in the text and extrapolate some of these points.)

Verse 1, we get started in Antioch even though I'm going to show you that it doesn't start right here in Acts 13. But let's read this,

13 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering or worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work in which I have called them."

Now, we see the introduction here in Antioch that they would define their prophets and teachers and then we name them right there. But actually, if you take a look, I'm going to have you walk backwards in your Bibles because I don't have this on the slides, so you've got your Bibles there to turn here. But just go back a couple of verses, a lot's going on in Acts chapter 12 regarding Peter in Jerusalem. "And the Word of the Lord (verse 24 says) continued to grow and to be multiplied." So, out of trial, God's Word was multiplying. People were hearing it, receiving it, and this was in Jerusalem where they were going to really take and actually kill Peter. But people were growing and multiplying in their belief. And verse 25 tells us, a man named Barnabas - there he is - "Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they'd fulfilled their mission, taking along with them, John who was also called Mark." So, Barnabas and Saul were in Antioch and they ... they actually returned from Jerusalem. They had gone to Jerusalem from Antioch, and then they went back home to Antioch. And then took with them someone called Mark.

Now, Mark was introduced actually in chapter 12:12 when Peter got out of prison and he's walking around, he's trying to find where the people are. And he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. And you know the story. He gets there and he knocks on the door and they say, "Who is it?" "It's Peter?" And they said, "Not a chance, we're praying for him to get out of prison. You need to get here and pray with us." He said, "But he's standing right there." And so that was going on. That was at the house of Mary who was the mother of Mark. So, Mark's in Jerusalem and Barnabas and Saul went to Jerusalem to give some money to the church that was there because they were hurting. And they came back to Antioch and took Mark with them. So, that's what happened. We're just getting a little context here so we can understand Acts 13 a little bit.

So, we get that. Now let's go backwards just a little bit more to Acts chapter 11. This helps us get a perspective in what we're talking about here. Chapter 11:19, "So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen ..." Stop there for a second. What is that? That's when a man named Stephen, who was, some people could say, he was the first deacon. He was really a key servant in Acts chapter 6 that solved the problem or helped solve a problem in giving food to widows that were both original Hebrew widows and those who were maybe culturally Greek but became Jews, proselyte widows. So you've got those, "You're not really from here" kind of people and the people who, "I was born here five generations". And the widows were not getting the same amount of food. And so, they tried to solve this problem. They selected a man named Stephen to help sort this out so that the Apostles could concentrate on preaching and the Word of God and prayer. And so, that's Stephen. And then through this, Stephen really was talking to the Jewish people and evangelizing and he fell under great

persecution, under trial. And they held him up on trial and he got stoned. And Saul, at the time, was part of that process of conviction and stoning. And that's the persecution there we see in verse 19.

So those who were scattered because of the persecution and the scattering took place, but we also understand that the scattering occurred because God said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. You need to get going." And all the way up to this point in chapter 6 and 7, the church was only in Jerusalem. It was going nowhere. They're happy. "We're not ready yet, Lord. We're not ready to go. We need more people, we need more deacons, we need more of this. We need a youth program. There's other things we've got to be doing, other priorities in the church. We just hired a facilities guy and we got this stuff. I mean, God, what happened in Acts chapter 5. We got all this money, we've got to figure out what to do with it. We need a security system. We need all this stuff. We've got planning." God brings persecution, so they scatter, and they're out.

Scattering, what does that scattering do? Well, they scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen. There we go. They made their way. So, those who were scattered, what do they do? They made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch. And what were they doing? Speaking of the Word of God to no one except to Jews alone. Now, I guess there's a good thing there and not so good thing there. Speaking the Word of God, which is what they did. They scattered away. Actually, the first missionaries are right there. I mean, they scattered and they began speaking the Word of God. But their perspective was what? To Jews alone. So that's what they're doing. They're going to Jews alone. Because who would know? It's got to come from the Jewish religion.

Well, verse 20 introduces something to us: "But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene." That's a very important little phrase that I'm going to pull up for you in a second. But men from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch. And these men began speaking to Greeks, also preaching the Lord Jesus. Saying the same thing that everybody else was saying, but only to Jews. But somehow, these men from Cyprus and Cyrene went and said, "No, no, no, no, no, we've got to go out of our comfort zone and speak to Greeks." "And the hand of the Lord was with them and a large number who believed turned to the Lord." So, now you've got this case where people are turning to the Lord and it's Greeks. First time ever, right here. First time ever, whoosh, coming in.

And the news about them reached the ears of the Church of Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. So, the church in Jerusalem then said, "Barnabas, you've got to sort this out. Like we chose Stephen, you need to go sort this out." So, now Barnabas is in the picture here. And it's not in this text here, but I'll just give you ... Barnabas and his cousin was Mark. They're related.

And so, Barnabas arrived, verse 23, "...witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord." He had no problems that Jews and Gentiles are mixing - no problems. And he sees the grace of God. So, he understands this. And we know why, verse 24, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord."

So Barnabas is a man who had a reputation, a man who was known in Antioch. They sent him down to Antioch to figure out, "I heard a bunch of Greeks have now come to the Lord. The church, it's all over. We got to figure this out." You can imagine the church in Jerusalem, full of Apostles. They're all there and they're doing a lot of ... it's very Jewish. It's all Jewish. And now we hear there's just a ton of Greeks in this Antioch church, but it came from the people going off speaking the Word of the Lord. I don't know about this. I heard about Peter in Acts chapter 10, and we just also heard the reply in Acts chapter 11. Acts chapter 11 is when Peter is telling the church in Jerusalem, "Hey, it's unbelievable what happened. I met this guy named Cornelius." "Now hang on, sit down. I know Cornelius is a Gentile and all that." "But you got to hear. When I saw that God gave them the Holy Spirit in the same way that He gave to us, who was I to refuse them?" "Oh something new just happened there." That's Acts 11 right there. And then at the same time here goes these these people and then some of them decided to talk to some Greeks. So, they sent Barnabas to sort that out. Why did they send Barnabas? I'm going show you.

But here Barnabas is seeing them and he is seeing them receive the grace of God. Everything is happening just like it was in Jerusalem, and so he's just encouraging them to remain true to the Lord. He's full of the Holy Spirit and of faith; two things Stephen was full of: full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. Maybe we can speak on what that is. But it was evident that they saw that.

But then notice verse 25. People were getting saved, it's moving. "Hey, we got something going on," but Barnabas knows there's some need that is not being met, and he leaves Tarsus to go find Saul. Strongly implies something right here. He knew who Saul was. He knew what Saul could do. He knew Saul's gifts because he went to Tarsus to look for specifically Saul. Nobody told him. He wasn't on assignment. He said, "Saul is what is needed here." "And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch..." So, he sees him and he won't take no for an answer. He says, "You're coming with me," and goes to Antioch. "...And so, for an entire year, they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." That's when the word "Christian" came in - when Barnabas went and got Saul and brought him. Nobody told him to get Saul, but he went and said, "This is what this church needs right here." Saul said, "Okay." He came there to another church and he began teaching.

And at that time, verse 27 tells us some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them was named Agabus and began to talk about a famine that's taking place all over the world, all over the known world where they were at. And verse 29 says, "And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea." They were having a tough time with the famine. They got some money. We see it. It even happens in the 20th century, 21st century. "And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders." This is what we were talking about just before Acts 13. The assignment to say, "Take this money, we trust you men with the money to go there."

But I also want you now just to go back to Acts chapter 9 for a moment. And we see verse 26, Saul had gotten saved and upon getting saved, he was found at the house of Ananias. He prayed, his eyes, he could see now. The scales fell off his eyes and he got baptized. And he immediately understood the doctrine because he'd been trained as a Pharisee under Gamaliel. He understood the doctrine of the Scriptures, the Old Testament. But the prophecies all came alive, and he

understood this is the Messiah. All the prophecies point to the Messiah. He had a different compass that pointed to a different Messiah. Now, this is right, it's no longer a heretical sect. And so, he's preaching and he's refuting the Jews everywhere and he's causing a big problem, and he's not making friends. And so he is continually preaching, but it's creating great confusion. And so verse 26, "When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple."

Now here's his other problem: going into the church and they're saying, "Not a chance." I mean, when the premier of China gets saved and wants to come into a church and worship, it's going to be a while before we can get some comfort in the church, I think. And that's what they had to deal with when Roman guards got saved. What do you do? I mean, stuff was happening that we just can't understand. When James was executed in Acts chapter 12 (he was beheaded in the first couple of verses there), history or you can say tradition - history wasn't as well recorded back then - but it records that the guard that was holding James when he went up to be beheaded, had to drop his sword, came out and says, "I need to be next because I also believe." And he was executed. People were seeing that. I mean, what do you do with that? It's just you're seeing conversions take place and people are dying right after they get converted. We don't understand that. That's what they're living with here.

And so, also, Saul was infiltrating and taking people away, and this is the only weeks after he got saved. They didn't have email. So, it's not like Instagram. "Have you seen the pictures of Saul when he's doing this and that?" That's not flying around here. Even in the last chapter of Acts, now Paul and he's talking to them about, "These men, these are Jews speaking against me and saying that I'm against the temple and against Christ and all of that, and they're saying, 'We haven't heard anything about you. So, tell us about yourself and tell us about this sect. We don't know anything about you.' They're talking about that but nobody's talking about you." Well, because information doesn't travel that fast. "So, Saul, yeah we know Saul."

But here comes Barnabas in verse 27, "...took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he'd seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord." Because Barnabas was standing right there saying, "Hey, listen, you got Saul here. I stand for him." Barnabas was well known and notice how he just took a highly risky character named Saul, and helped him here. And then knowing him and seeing him in this activity, teaching with enemies, teaching in the church to people who didn't want to receive what he was saying. So, now when he's in Antioch - and Barnabas is the man. He very specifically as the man going to these people who I want to again point out that they were from Cyprus and Cyrene who originally started the church talking to Greeks. And Barnabas was sent there, and through his encouragement, because Barnabas is not known as a teacher, he is an encourager, but he understands the doctrines. So, he's working with the people. He's a shepherd. But he sees right away, "We need Saul." "Why?" "Because I've been with him. I've been with him in the middle of the Jews, I've been with him in the middle of the doubting disciples. This guy can turn a corner sharp 90 degrees. You need to hear him." He knew that.

Even of all this, you've got to go back to Acts chapter 4, the very last few verses of Acts chapter 4. The church is now really early, probably weeks after Pentecost, the ascension of Jesus, and they had to deal with ... just before Ananias and Sapphira had died, they were collecting all kinds of money. And you could imagine, 2,000 get saved, 3,000 get saved - it's a pretty big number now that's following the 12, "What do we do next? What do we do next? I mean, this is a new church. I don't anything about this. What do we do next? What's the thing that we do next?" You can imagine this. They're meeting, "When are we going to meet next? What are we doing tomorrow?" I mean, that's the conversation. "Well, we need to do something. We need to meet someone." And there's a lot of poor people because there's compassion. It doesn't tell us what was preached. I'm sure there's all kinds of things that were preached in terms of being saved, but how you live and all of that. And so verse 32 tells us, "The congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; so much so that not one of them claimed anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them." That that's amazing.

See, notice it doesn't begin with, "You need to help the poor." Notice it doesn't begin with, "You need to give." There's none of that in there. There's no rich give to the poor. You know what there is? "None of this is mine. The Lord has given me an opportunity, but none of this is mine. So I just bring it and whoosh, there goes." Can you imagine there's a pile of stuff that's now accumulating; deeds, tracts and land and all that. And so now there's grace, abundant grace - verse 30 says, "was upon them all." You need grace. You have all this stuff flying around thousands of people. Verse 34, "For there was not a needy person among them." Well, of course not. It's God's stuff, it's right here. What do you need? God will be happy to give it to you.

And so, everybody was selling their land or selling whatever they had because ... and this is obviously not land that they need to go home and fix dinner and eat on, this land that they have that, "I'm not using it. I'm going to give it to my kids. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that." It's land that they've got. Everybody had land in Jerusalem by family. "They laid it at the apostles' feet, and they'd be distributed to each as any had need." Now, verse 36, here it is. "Now Joseph, a Levite (and get this next phrase) of Cyprian birth who was also called Barnabas." "Barnabas the Cyprian (translated, it means Son of Encouragement) who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet." He himself also then said, "I'm not like a leader, and you guys give and we'll administer it. No, no, I give too. I don't have anything. This belongs to God." Cyprian, wait a minute here. What did we learn in Acts 11:20? "But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." Why did they send Barnabas? He's from Cyprus. He knows the dialect, he knows the customs, he knows the personality. "Barnabas is from Cyprus, we'll send him." And not only that, Barnabas has got a track record, a pretty significant track record, I would say.

So, now we take a look here, people who are currently serving is kind of the first thing a church should look at. Who should go into missions? People who are currently serving. You'll look at 13:1, "There were at Antioch...[people serving]...prophets and teachers: Barnabas...Simeon...Lucius...and Saul." They're serving. They're known. They're 24/7 Christians. They're busy. Barnabas is massively serving. He gives as well as everybody else. He doesn't hold back what he expects other people to do. He gives in the same way he's telling people to give. He is helping Saul. I mean, he is known as the guy who actually got Saul an audience. He'd be known for that.

Everywhere Saul went, he's going to be there. He was the warmup act, and then Saul comes on. They knew him, he served.

But then Saul, what was he known for? Well, he came here. He's busy in the churches serving as best he can. What do you do when you're Saul and you just put your - everybody's brother and sister and cousin in jail and killed some? How can you serve in the church there? Many, even stories we know, you know the Nate Saint in Jim Elliot Story. And when his wife, after he died, after they killed him, the Indians killed him - his wife came back in the village and everybody got saved. And now, you've got the very person who killed Jim Elliott's husband and who killed Nate Saint, the very person is an elder in the church. He becomes a grandfather to their kids. That's a true story. There is.

We had a case in South Africa. We had two men - four people will really understand the depth of the story and you guys can talk to them. This is from South Africa - but two men, one of the named Martin Seliane, who was just a troublemaking, anarchy-driven, rebel-rousing person that many who opposed him would call a terrorist. And he was an African National Congress supporter and instigator. And the other was a man named Adriaan Vlok, Minister of Secret Police. You can see a collision happening, back in the 1980s. Martin Seliane's name was on Adriaan Vlok's hit list. There was a list. Martin even told me once, he was coming home one night and he saw torches or flashlights in the house. So, he said, "I'd better not go in just yet. Let them get through and then they leave. Then I can come back in." So, they were looking for Martin. Adriaan Vlok was a frightening person, and I've met him. He is frightening. You want to shake his hand and you want to go ... and as the joke would be, when you get near him or sit next to him and you shake your hand, you want to check for bugs. A different kind of bug. And Adriaan had tried to assassinate a major political character in the ANC in the '80s. Actually in America, he tried to do that. Eventually after 1994, Adriaan Vlok goes to prison, gets saved radically, comes back out of prison, gets an appointment with the man that he tried to assassinate. And he'd snuck in a little wash basin and a towel and he said, "I want to wash your feet and ask for forgiveness. Here's a Bible. The Bible has John 3:16, God forgave me, would you forgive me?" In front of all the people, black and white, both looking down, saying, "How could this happen?" Well, he got saved, and he's making known his confession and his repentance in the ... this is no different than Paul. Saul is probably worse. And here, when this happened, Martin Seliane got saved. Martin Seliane comes to Christ Seminary. He's a student of Christ Seminary. He's being taught and trained to be a pastor. Martin hears that Adriaan Vlok was in prison, he's let out and this is what he's doing, here's how his heart was changed. Martin knows that they were enemies. He calls Adriaan Vlok and they talk, and he had Adriaan Vlok in his church, at a township filled with just nothing but township people and squatters and all are moved - there they go. And together they preach. Here's Ephesians 2 that talks about the wall of separation being broken down and enemies coming together in Christ. This is what the text says. This is what it looks like in life standing. You can see Barnabas and Saul having that very same conversation.

There's credibility in serving. Sometimes serving is costly, but you want somebody who is credibly serving that says, "Okay, that person I think will serve the Lord when it gets tough in that way." People are currently serving.

The second one, people who have a proven testimony. Well, I don't think I even need to explain much of that. I think Barnabas and Saul had a proven testimony. We want to know out of the four men who were there, which one of these, all of having a proven testimony are going to be sent off. But that was their grouping. They didn't say, "Who in the church wants to go to missions?" They didn't say that. If you feel called - that's always kind of a tough one. I mention churches always say, "Let's give people that experience." This is again where I battle with churches because someone feels called, who can argue with that? And I hear this from churches with Reformed doctrine. And if someone says, "I feel saved because I know," and the feeling had nothing to do with it. "I need to hear from you repentance. I need to hear from you a confession and an understanding of what the Gospel is and the Gospel applied to your life. And we'll talk about that. And then we watch your life. And then eventually, when we see your life, and then you're going to get baptized. And we're real careful about that because we don't want any false professions here. We're protecting the church and we're honouring the Lord and we do this." "But I feel called to missions." "Whoa, really? Tell me about that. That's great. Where do you want to go? We'll send you." Why is that different than getting saved? It's not. It's exactly the same. We can't leave our theology at the door once we leave the church. It's exactly the same. This is what they did here. A proven testimony - that means a tested testimony, not just a verbal, "I agree with these and I pass the test." There're so many people that have done that and the fallout rate, I don't know what the percentage is, but it's not 1%. It's not 1% in the Bible. Paul's disciples weren't all that good. A proven testimony - that's what a church should look for. Have you been serving? Because if you're not serving in the church today, you're not going to be serving a whole lot when you leave our eyes and ears. You're going to be doing kind of what you want to be doing today. Nobody changes like that. You're going to be doing what you're doing here. So, you look for that more than anything else. And if you're getting a referral recommendation, you look for them to say, "Tell me about this. Don't tell me about how he's a good guy. Tell me about this."

Thirdly, you look for people who can teach the Scriptures. Barnabas went to get Saul. Acts 11, Barnabas went to get Saul. This was Barnabas' show. I mean, he was sent by the elders in Jerusalem to go to Antioch, "Figure out what's going on because you're the Cyprus guy. I don't know those people. I mean, you know how they are; Cyprus, Crete (Titus would read about Crete), they're all crazy gluttons. Who knows about those guys? Those Greeks, they're not like us disciplined Hebrews. Barnabas, you're kind of one of those halfway people. You're a Jew with us and Levite, but you're a Cyprian, so go take care of it." This is his church. I mean, this is his deal. It says, "He was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith and considerable numbers were being brought to the Lord." Why do we need Saul? Why do we need Saul? "I've seen how he handles Scripture and you know what? That's what we're bringing. A man with humility that says, 'We need to teach the Scriptures.'" Saul came, "What do you need? Got It. Done."

People need the Lord. I told the leadership this yesterday. Paul Washer said this, that a man came to him and said, "Brother Paul, I want to go to Peru and serve the people of Peru. I love the people of Peru." He said, "That's great. Tell me about what you've been reading. What have you been reading?" He says, "Well, I'm not much of a reader. I don't read very much. I am a guy who just loves an acts." He goes, "Okay, I understand some of that. So, tell me about your Bible reading. You've been reading the Bible. What about the Bible?" "It's the same thing. Books are books, I don't really read that much, but I really want to serve the people of Peru." And he said,

“You need to stay home, you're not geared for missions. Because the people of Peru do not need your love, they don't need your care. They need the Word of God. They need the Gospel and you can't give it to them, because you can't give it to them if you don't know it, you won't know it if you don't know the Word.”

So, what people need is change. This is something you got long discussion on because people come to Africa, it's so different. It's no different than South America. But Third World countries do not look like First World countries. People eat once a day, maybe twice. It's their normal thing, and they have to walk maybe a kilometer to get water. And so, there's this feeling that somehow I am compelled by Christ to fix their situation. And I'm telling you, it's not a black and white answer. It's not a simple thing. But the reason people are where they are in these situations is largely because of governance. You've got bad governance, you've got a lot of poverty. You've got - and I hate to say good governances because we're all going to complain here about what's going on in Canada, what's going on ... get into all the North American politics about what's good and bad. But believe me, the arguments about what good and bad here is very different than what's good and bad in Guatemala or Africa. And so, there is a sense where because of decisions of some, many suffer. We're not called to go fix governmental issues. We're called to help people so that they fear the one who can put to death the body and the soul in hell. Not just put to death the body.

But does that mean we turn a blind eye to needs? Of course not. The Western church has tremendous wealth. I mean, it's a 100 to 1 or 1,000 to 1 compared to what's in the First World or the Third World church. Can we do some things? Can we do some things well-planned out that help that provide a great need? Yes. But it should always be done in the context of the local church or what the local church can do. For example, we give food packs tying with an organization here in the States that gives food to pastors, so that pastors can give these food packs to people in their community that they can use through evangelism to help establish relationships to say, “The church cares for you” because to these people ... this is what we hear. The people that are saying, “You guys are different because most churches tell us we need to give you stuff. Most churches say, you got to give the pastor money. You've got to give to the church, give to the pastor. They're always asking us for something. You guys are coming here saying, ‘We want to give to you.’ Nobody does that,” and it creates a relationship through the church. That's very different than saying, “Let's be an NGO and just give food, dig water, those kinds of things.” And we lose sight of that.

And I'll just give you this one perspective and move on. You can tell there's a lot really to bring up and talk about. I'm speaking now from my own personal perspective. I'm just telling you what I feel. But we will fight our government tooth and nail to not give up billions of dollars (American and Canadian) to send over to the Middle East, especially to Africa, to Third World developing countries because of a climate change thing, and because of industrialization has caused countries to succeed on the backs of Third World countries, and all these arguments that are out there. And it's a big political argument, and we don't want to transfer this. And so, politically, “That's our tax dollars. That's our money, you can't do that.” We don't think it should go that way. But then we go into the church, and we say, “Let's have a bunch of programs to dig and build and paint and do stuff.” And we're happy to do it through the church. And missions-wise, there we go. “And our guys are going to dig and paint and go,” and the Gospel is kind of in

there somewhere, maybe. “But we’re really helping the people.” What are we doing? It’s interesting, we fight on one thing, but when it’s in the church, we just kind of open the doors and say, “Hey, I’ll do what I don’t want my government to do, but I’ll do, because they’re in some sense.” And what I’m saying is in the church, it’s Gospel-focused, teaching the Scriptures. People were Third World people back in the New Testament. But when you’re there, you give compassion and you do what you can, and we can do a lot. It’s easy to do things to help the people locally. You want it through the church, not, “We’re doing a lot.” Because once that happens, there’s collaboration with people who don’t want to plant churches, but you’re working with them because you need their money or you need this and that. And I’m kind of going off here, but there’s a prominent Baptist pastor in the States and he came up with what’s called a “Peace Plan”. And the first P, the P was “plant churches” and “equip” was E, and they’re dealing with this in Africa. It’s fine. You’re going to have this big initiative (a big money church so they can throw a lot of money at it), but after some time change the P to “promote reconciliation” from planting churches. Because see, if you have plant churches that doesn’t allow you to work with the Muslims. But if you say “promote reconciliation,” now the Muslims will work with you. How can that be missions? How can that be anything of any good at all? This is what I’m saying, when the motive, it comes right through the church. But it’s funny how we get outside the church, we’ll fight and say, “No, that’s not the right principle. I’m going to fight for these things.” Go in the church like, “Oh, that’s probably a good idea.” What?

They were focused on teaching the Scriptures here. Focus is on a people, not a place. The issue was when they sent Paul and Barnabas out, they didn’t tell them, you know, worried about where to go. Now, at the time, there was no other place. It’s just, “Go. Go west, you’re going to hit something. It’s okay.” But the focus was on what? People. The church should not be enamored with “where are we going” but “who are we sending” and rely on prayer and not feelings. They were worshiping, ministering to the Lord with fasting and prayer.

And fasting isn’t a formula to make your prayer supercharged, fasting is causing your mind to be super focused. So, your mind is focused on what you should be praying for. So, you rely on prayer, but not feelings. So, when people and opportunities come up, don’t listen to their stories. “Oh, that really gets me,” because every story is going to pull your heart for sure. Let’s take it to the Lord in prayer. See what He does through hearing what people say. So, this is the sending process.

Next is the supervising. (I got to do this real quick to get to the missionary part.) This is the supervising part - what are we doing? The mission must be defined, otherwise, a missionary who tends to be pretty self-willed because you’re sending them out there on their own, and they’re pretty autonomous, whatever they kind of do on the ground is going to improvise. They’re going to go. Now, the mission better be defined. Otherwise, this thing changes course all over the place.

“From where they had sailed to Antioch, from which they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished.” So, they came back to Antioch after their work, but they’d been commended to the grace of God for a specific work. And now, they’re going to come back and report on it, which is the church must get reports. When you’re sending people, okay, great, but now the church must supervise the missionary. There’s accountability. This

really gets lost, because once you go overseas, your accountability is kind of whatever they put on Facebook, today. I stay off Facebook. My thing is Facebook's too dangerous. It's like leaving every window and door in your house open, and anybody can post on their....But Facebook tends to be a big thing that you put on. But you want to tell your missionaries, "Be careful on Facebook. Everybody's looking, especially the nationals." So, when you start saying, "This was great. I just did this and I just upgraded that and I went on this great holiday here and all that," the nationals are going, "It must be a nice life." You're saying here's how you and your kids are having a great time where you're at. Then you're supervising, you know what? Let's talk about this for a second. Better to not do that. Make private information, but the connection here is better to keep between us. See, you would know that. But the church needs to get reports; reports of what's going on so you can help them. You can guide them, not control them, but give advice.

They came back and they had those reports. And then "...they arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all the things that God had done with them and how He'd opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." See, the church needs to get energized. This is where the churches' responsibility comes in. "I know the missionary and I know what's going on, and I ask questions."

Let me tell you about the best missions trip there ever is. Because you're going to get missions, then you're going to start talking about your missions trip. Which is not bad. But the first thing you got to get out of your mind is we send a short-term mission team, some youths, some adults, whatever, that you need to do something. Because if you don't do something, it's not worth the money, and people who give for the mission team to go want to know what you're doing, so we can keep track and say, "What did you accomplish?" Okay, that's bad planning. Because the missionaries are already doing stuff. Unless the missionary calls us, "I need help." They'll tell you exactly what they need, so send that. But if not, we want to send to encourage. Don't think you've got to be doing something. That's always the first thought. "We can build something." I know, but nationals can build something. They'd rather you not take their job. But what would they want? What would be a great mission trip? Go to encourage the missionary. Let me just be here, sit with you in your house, watch what you do and take a lot of video and pictures and report back. Because you know what really encourages a missionary? Not going there to be with them doing stuff. What really encourages a missionary, when he comes here to see you and you ask them all kinds of detailed questions about what he's doing. Like, "Have you been there recently?" "No, no. I keep up with the updates. I know what's going on." "Really? Like you're tracking?" "Yeah." You want to know what that does to a missionary's heart? You guys really know which means you're praying, which means whoa, this is like huge. And that way you only have to send a couple of people necessarily. Some wise people who know how to encourage, know how to be Barnabas. You do that, you will supercharge your missions endeavor. Just get rid of the idea that we can help physically. No, that's why you're sending somebody. Don't go do their job.

I had one guy come, he was going to come on a short-term mission trip from Grace Community Church and Master Seminary, and they're all excited. They want to come. And my wife and I are trying to figure out how we're going to help these people, keep them safe. It is Africa. So, you're doing a herd of people and you've got to keep them safe. There always a problem because there are always stragglers that go on. And they were going to literally (now I know some people are

going to laugh here), but they literally said ... and it was at a time when the Olympics were in Greece. So all Greece people were in Olympics. These guys were going to come on their own, we were gone and we were going to have to be here like a day after they arrived in country or two, and we're going to ... "It's not going to work." "It's okay, we'll just rent a combi and then we'll drive to Kruger and set up some tents." That's what they said. I said, "Do you understand what you just said? I mean, you can't do that." This is like 2003, 4, 5, and when syndicates were just taking every combi in the country. You're going to get hijacked, number one. People see a bunch of Americans come in, they're in a combi, I mean, they've got you spotted all the way. And then you're going to go into Kruger, pay exorbitant fees because you're an American, and pitch a tent as if you can do that in Kruger. And you think maybe a tent is going to spare you between you and the lions and you and the elephants? And then you're going to drive and you're going to be Americans and you're going to drive and you stick your hand out the car to the elephants, "Here, eat this," and that kind of stuff is going to go on. You have no idea because that's what they want to do. And he said, "We're just going to evangelize the country. It's going to be amazing." - as if no evangelism has been taking place with the missionary. "Oh, we're going to be successful."

No, you report so that the church can keep up. And you spend a long time with the Gentiles and what is that? What that is the missionary must still be involved with the local church. Yes, they're out there, but you've got to pull them in on the fishing rod. You've got to pull them in, come on in. Stay here for a little bit. Get involved with our youth, get involved with our stuff because you're part of the church. Paul and Barnabas were part of the church. They spent time with the disciples.

Lastly, what does the church do? Supporting. That's always a big question. How do I send to missions? How do I make the mission thing work? Well, it's new ministries that come up. It's an ongoing ministry – the special needs. Let's take a look at this. New ministries that come up. Paul's going to Rome. He says, "Look, whenever I go to Spain for I hope to see you in passing, that I be helped on my way there by you." So he's going to go to Rome, but he says, "But you're going to be my supporting church and send me on to Spain, because I've done everything here. I got to move on." So, there's got to be needs. You've got to keep up with that. Reports is, "Why is he over there?" "Well, because we've got Christ Seminary." "But now we have Christ Seminary in Zimbabwe. It's a new thing. We have a seminary in Zimbabwe that takes travel time and there's all kinds of different expenses that take place. We've got to inform our supporters, say, 'You want to help with that?'" It's special needs that come up. But also ongoing.

"When I was present with you and was in need," he's talking to the Corinthian Church. He says, "I was not a burden to anyone, for when the brethren came from Macedonia, they fully supplied my needs." You see, the Macedonian churches were supplying Paul's need, because Corinth wasn't going to give it to him. So, the church was supplying Paul's needs on an ongoing basis. You set up budgets, you have accountability. With today's communication, you can communicate all the time. "How are you doing? What's happening?" Many missionaries need help with budgeting and those kinds things because they don't know to plan. And all of a sudden, something just came up, "Why didn't you plan for that?" Because churches operate on budgets, and they don't understand that you can't just tell a church immediately, "Help." Well, the church

might not be able to help right now. We could have if we'd have been budgeting, and so there's the ongoing need here.

But there's also then, here that this happens, whenever he's in trouble, "You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs." He was in prison. He sent Epaphroditus to get a gift for him.

Support - basically, here's kind of a rule. I'm going to run to the other components. It's 11, I failed, but I'm sorry. And I'm trying to go fast. Paul and Barnabas, proven testimony, working in the church. Here's a good standard. Any missionary that you decide to be part of the church and we really want to send you out, you should be willing to hire them on as part of your pastoral staff as the first rule. If you're not willing to pay for them to be here 24/7, you shouldn't be willing to pay for them to be a missionary. They should be at a place where you say, "That's my pastor." If they're there, then you'll support them there because they're your pastor. And they're doing missions work.

So, that's what the church should do in terms of selection and getting planning and all that. And you guys can work out the details on how you have to do that, but these are the principles that you want to get involved. Now, I just want to just do this thing and I'll just go a little faster.

But what's the responsibility of the missionary? That's in Philippians 3. And I've just got two points on this in Philippians 3. And really I'm going to make the bigger point as the second point on this. Philippians 3, Paul is saying, "To write the same thing again is no trouble for me to be a safeguard to you." I'm going to tell you something here. This is a picture of Paul as a missionary who went across into Philippi. And the first thing you want to have as a missionary - I've got to points. (Now, there's a lot of things you want in a missionary, but I wanted two because I know we had limited time. I just want to give you a shot of adrenaline right here just to get you kind of motivated.) The first, a missionary needs to understand you have to reject any cultural superiority you have. Because typically, missionaries, unless you go ... this probably could apply in Canada, but we're not going to talk about that. But yeah, you're going to go over there, but we're better. That's why we're sending you over there. There's always that perspective. "If I'm going to a Third World country, there's a subconscious idea that, I'm just superior because I've had the Gospel, I was raised in First World. You really need us and you need me." That's there in all of us. And so, Paul's point here, what he says in Philippians 3:4, he says, okay, let's talk about bad doctrine and people with bad doctrine that had confidence in their flesh. The Jews that were coming after him. And he said, "Although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more, I'm far more superior to any of the Jews in any way." And of course, the Jews say they're far superior to everybody else.

Well, let's describe it. Circumcised the eighth day, literally in the Greek text it says, "An eighth dayer. I'm an eighth dayer." Because not every Jew is going to get circumcised on the eighth day because in Hebrew culture has moved to where, "We don't have time to wait for the eighth day, circumcise him now." Paul's family was, "Eighth day buddy." Now, we're right to the Law of Moses. "Of the nation of Israel." That means, "I'm not from Cyprus like my buddy Barnabas.

I'm of Israel. I was born there, specifically of the tribe of Benjamin." They were the ones who fought with David. They were the ones who didn't go with the ten. They were the tribe that stuck with Judah. They were the ones who were warriors. Take a look at David's mighty men. They were the ones who could shoot a bow left or righthanded. Those are kind of hunters you want in Canada. If the bears come into the right or the left, it doesn't matter. That's the guy you want, from Benjamin. "A Hebrew of Hebrews" - you know what that means? It means he knew every cultural rule there was to follow.

Believe me, living in South Africa, there's a lot of cultural rules, and I come as a big flat footed American that steps on all of them. But they're there in every culture. What you do ... it's kind of got an interesting, our culture, chivalry, right? You open the door, women go through first. No matter what, women go through first. Every black African will look at you and just shake their heads. You have no sensitivity. Because in an African culture, the man goes through first because you never know what's on the other side. That is the rule. That's life. It's not funny. It's like, you couldn't care less about the women when you just kind of shove them through first. That's like Jacob. "You guys go first, go see Esau. I don't know what's going on." All kinds of rules.

He's saying, "According to this, according to that, right there, Hebrew of Hebrews, I know the culture. I'm of the best tribe. I'm of the country, as to the Law, a Pharisee. That means, religiously, I got it nailed. I mean, I know everything about Scriptures. As to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. Meaning I obey it perfectly." Who's better than this? This is culture right here. This whole thing is wrapped up 5 through 6, this is culture. And he's saying, "There's no one more superior to me, closer to God than I am." It is so easy to stand up in front of a group of people that have come from a very different set of circumstances and just by talking and just dressed the way I am, the fact that I drive in in a vehicle demonstrates that I'm superior in their mind. Nothing I can do about it.

But here's what Paul says, "Whatever things were gain to me, these things I've counted a loss for the sake of Christ." That word "lost" doesn't mean I lost it, like I have to give it up. That's not what that means. The word "lost" there is what's used in Acts 27 when Paul was on a shipwreck. And he's saying, "Boys, if we don't get rid of this wheat, we're going to die. If we don't get rid of the ship's tackle and the anchor, we're going to die. It's dragging the ship down and we're going to die in the storm."

The word would mean "forfeit". It means "damage". "I consider everything as damage, as forfeit, it's in the way - we're going to die." Not, "Okay, cost, I'm going to have to lose it." It's, "This is killing me here," it's what he says. "My culture is killing me. My culture is now impeding my ability to connect Christ with others. And for Paul, what he's saying here is, "It's keeping me from connecting Christ with me because I'm believing my culture is Christ." Oh, we North American Christians, ooh, that's scary. That's scary territory. Because the church and the Christianity and the "who we are" and our capitalistic economic society are all kind of one. And you know what? That's exactly what it has been in South Africa as well as my four Polokwane friends understand. That's South African Christianity in many ways. The Dutch Reform Church has really just merged, and that's what it is. And every one of them is Paul. And Paul is saying,

“My cultural superiority in the way of my seeing Christ clearly. And it's actually in the way of people who see me because they would say, ‘I have to be like Paul to be like Christ.’”

So, a missionary needs to understand, “I'm coming to people who I can't let them think that there'll be more Christian if they're more Canadian or more American. Because we just have had the church for so long. We've just been going Christian and we're developed. We've got these schools, universities, and all this blessing that God has given ... Yeah, I'm sorry. But if you just kind of follow me, and if I can get you to go to one of our schools and I get you to go to one of our things, it's really going to go well for you.” It's hard for them to say, “What are you trying to say? Are you trying to say that I need to delete my people because God's not going to bless them? God doesn't care about them because of my culture?”

He's saying, “I counted all things as loss for the sake of Christ.” So, it's your cultural superiority. You recognize that Western culture is not more favourable to God, but you know what you also do? You got to recognize the attraction of Western culture as being a blessing from God. You've got to reject that. “Because we're from the west, God is blessing us. He's not blessing you guys. And I am now kind of your intermediary between God and man. It's me, the missionary, and I'm out there in the ...” You got to break that because that's such a great temptation. Look at all this. This is his culture, who he is. He says, “I got to count that as loss.”

Let me give you a picture. Loss means a forfeit. It means I got a problem. It means when you want to see the best theater presentation of the best play, you pay the most for the tickets. Orchestra, you're there, your child is now in the professional circuit and there he's going to be in the thing and it's a big deal, you bought the front row. You're on like the third row and the orchestra is kind of warming up. And then all of a sudden, here comes this lady. She walks in and she's got one of these bouffant hairdo deals. It just happens to have a set of twins. That's loss. “What are you doing? You're in between me and what I want to see here.” That's loss for the sake of Christ.

But the blessing part of it is this right here? “More than that,” get those words, right there. “More than that,” which means more than what came before. “More than his culture getting between him and Christ, more than that (notice this word here), I count”. Do you see that? I want you to see that. You'll see it in your Bible there. Notice what he says here, “I have counted.” Do you see that? That's what he says in verse 7. “My culture, I have counted.” Meaning, “In my path, Acts 9, I got saved, I counted as an obstacle for me, my culture, the way I am, the way I view myself superior, I have already counted that as loss. Great. I took care of that, I'm humbled and I'm down, and I'm looking up at Christ and I've done that.” “But now more than that” - notice, it's a present tense word. Meaning, “I currently count, after I have already counted, I'm now counting again all things to be loss [same word], all things to be loss there in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ, Jesus, my Lord.” He's saying everything else in life. “The blessings that God gives me, I count as an obstacle. All the things that God is providing, today. That means my current prosperity, everything that's coming my way, I still count that as an obstacle for knowing Christ, and count them all but rubbish.”

The Greek word is *skubalon*, and I have no problem saying that here because nobody understands Greek. But if I actually gave you the literal translation of what it was, you would

never invite me back, because it's the word you just don't say from the pulpit. Yesterday, I was at a lake with Lourens and he had a big complaint; you got geese everywhere, you're not allowed to shoot them because you can't shoot geese. And the reason you can't shoot geese – there they are, but the problem is with geese, they bring something else. I mean, when they get a big flock, they're going to come, they leave. But then you know where they've been because there's *skubalon* everywhere. *Skubalon*'s everywhere. It's there, it's in the lake, it's all – *skubalon*. That's *skubalon*. *Skubalon* is things you don't want to walk on. That's the word Paul uses to describe what he benefits from day after day. Wow! That's got to be a pretty compelling thing to drive you to consider everything else as being not worth holding onto.

And so, therefore, the second point is this (this is where I want to get you guys fired up), is to know Christ more in every situation. “And I may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ.” This is Reformed theology. “It's not my righteousness, but it's Christ.”

But you know what that drives him to do? It's not to say, “I bask in the righteousness of Christ, that I will sing of His glory and I'll do that.” No, that's not what Paul does. Paul says, “That I may know Him.” “Wait a minute, Paul, don't you already know Him?” “Yes, but not enough. I may grow in my knowledge of Him, two ways; the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings being conformed to His death.”

Christ is found in suffering because He suffered. Why? Because the flesh and sin hates Christ. But that's where He is, because He died for us. Because of our union with Christ, because He died, we die. Because He resurrected, we resurrect. We don't resurrect because God forgives us, we resurrect because we're tied to Christ. And because I'm tied to Christ, everywhere He goes, I go. The reason I'm going to be saved forever in heaven is because I'm tied to Christ. I'm strapped to Him.

Now, what this says is Paul says, “I want to know Him more.” He's found in suffering here, fellowship of His sufferings, the power of His resurrection. And Romans 6 tells us, that's it's a power of a newness of life. I'm resurrecting this new life, I'm there. There's power to have that resurrection. Paul wants to know this a lot more. Notice he doesn't say to know the Scriptures. He didn't say know the Scriptures. He didn't say know doctrine. He didn't say fundamentals of the faith. He didn't say grow in spiritual maturity. He says just one thing, “Know Christ.” How do you know Christ? You know what? When you're in the middle of suffering, that's when you tend to know Him. That's when He's more real. And Paul said it's worth it to dive in the pool of suffering to know Christ. Because knowing Him more tells me it's a variable. You can know Him more than you knew Him. I can know Him more than others are currently knowing Him. I can increase my capacity to know Him. And it's worth it to throw everything else that's keeping my vision from seeing Him and knowing Him in the Word as applied to my life. And if I'm fired up about knowing Christ as a missionary, now you're telling people the right thing.

Because you could be talking to people who can't read. It doesn't help them to tell what the Greek says when they can't even read. But it does tell them when they see it in your eyes, “I want to know Christ.” And they will say, “Tell us about this Christ.” They will say, “How do I have this? I want to know Him.”

We talk about the passion of Christ. Passion is when He was suffering, that last night, the passion of Christ. He's scourged and all this. Because what is suffering? The Greek word for suffering, a meaning for it, rendered is “passion”. Suffering and passion are equivalent. He was suffering in His passion for God. He was passionate to do God's will. He was passionate to redeem people that God had given Him. He was passionate for that, and He would do this and His flesh was an obstacle. So, He's willing to take all this suffering for us because He was passionate. Because the passion was eating Him alive. That's why John 17, He prayed, “Father, I just wish I had the glory with You that I had with You before the world was. I'm desperate for that and I want that. And I want to know Him.” And Paul said, “Yeah, I want to know You. I'll do everything to know You.”

Which tells us this, folks, you can increase your capacity to know Christ. It's not getting saved, having counted all things loss. It's counting currently all things loss because they get in the way of you knowing Christ more. Jonathan Edwards said this, “Surely all cups as they are dipped into the ocean of God's grace are full to the brim, but not all cups are the same size.” Which means you can increase the size of your cup while you're here on earth, and that's the size of the cup you have, that you take with you when you're in heaven. And that's how much you would know Christ. The capacity to know. Peter knew Christ more than Nathaniel did. The 12 new Christ more than the 70. The 70 new Christ more than the masses, but they all knew Him to some degree. If you had the ability to know God's greatest gift that would give you the greatest joy and God who is so very good, wants to give you the best. If you could increase that and knew that that really was the plan, and you could do that, you'd throw everything overboard to get that.

If the church is focused on that, they'll choose a missionary who is focused on that. And then they will focus on reports, support, accountability, talking to them, their family, taking care of them, interest and all of that, because the church has this. If the church has this, the missionary will have this. If the missionary has that, you're going to start seeing people now connecting.

Which then leads to family relationships. Why? Because everybody the missionary connects, that you're connecting missionaries to, you're now connected to. Which now ties to another principle which is “make friends for yourselves with unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails, they will receive you into a heavenly home.” When you use your resources to go after those who don't have the Gospel and can't get it, and they receive the Gospel and come in, you are now connected in as family. Make friends for yourself. They are yours. And when you get to heaven, they're there welcoming in, so that means you're not in heaven alone. You could actually increase the amount of people you know in heaven.

If you tie those two things together: people and knowing Christ (meaning knowing people, Christian people forever, Christ forever). He says, “Store up rewards for yourself in heaven where moth doesn't eat and rust doesn't take and thieves can't steal.” Store a treasure in heaven. What two things can't be taken? Your knowledge, your relationship with friends, your knowledge and relationship with Christ. What are the two greatest commandments? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbour as yourself. Doesn't it make sense that all of our rewards are tied to the two commands God gives us and say, “Do this.” We're all thinking He's telling us to do it to get in line. Maybe He's telling us to do it to say, “Because you will reap great rewards as you do that, and you'll have more of Christ and

more of people.” That's what missions does. You can do this. So, it begins actually with the church, not the missionary as much.

So there is a Biblical philosophy of missions, and I really blew it here today. But I just kind of do threw it all out there. I thought, “Just go for everything, just do that.” It's what we call swinging for a six. That's what I was doing there. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for Your Word and just how You give us great instruction and what to do to know You, to love You. The idea of missions is a daunting task, complicated, needs lots of prayer. Lord, I pray for this body, I pray for its leadership. As they just plan to go ahead, we've seen how You've just brought this church up. Many people coming, people are getting saved. I thank you for them. Thank you for what you're doing in Chilliwack and beyond.

So, I'm praying for them just that they would know You more than Your heart to be excited to know how to serve You, realizing none of us do anything perfect or right, but know that You will smooth everything out if we just pursue these principles. In Christ's name, amen.